

# Copame – Giving Children a Better Life // Brazil

**“We are grateful to see our children grow and find permanent homes,” says Derk Lambers, fundraiser for Copame, the Children’s Aid Communitarian Association in Santa Cruz do Sul in Brazil.**

Copame’s facility can host 45 orphaned, abandoned or maltreated children, from newborn to age 18. The project is more than just a place to stay, however. Since its foundation in 1984, the charity has found placement homes for 302 of the children who went there. All others, 1,702 of them, were returned to parents, grandparents or family members, or moved on to a facility for older children.

The site includes residential and play facilities as well as an on-site bakery which supplies bread to the area and is an important source of income. Other financial support comes from individual donations, corporations, members’ fees, projects, resources provided by the municipality and overseas donations.

Management and maintenance of the facilities remains a major challenge, however, and is dependent on external funding. The Smurfit Kappa Foundation supported this, to ensure that resident children have the best quality accommodation possible.

The facility also provides for its children’s future well-being by partnering with the local university. University teachers and students offer expertise with medicine, dentistry, psychology and nutrition. Copame employees and volunteer-drivers also commute between three different schools, taking the children to sport, musical and religious events, as well as medical and dental appointments.

“Our 26 permanent and 38 on-call volunteers are indispensable in supporting these young people,” says Derk Lambers. “They help our children get a better start in their lives.”

