STILL ON THE STREET – STILL SHORT OF RIGHTS

Analysis of policy and programmes related to street involved children

CONSORTIUM FOR STREET CHILDREN

Plan

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Acknowledgements

Cover photo: Street boy with his faithful dog. Photo from the Bangladesh street children project 'Through our own Eyes' (Plan/Kamrul).

Backcover photo: Boy working at scrap metal workshop in Dhaka. Photo from the Bangladesh street children project 'Through our own Eyes' (Plan/Hasina).

Children play in the street in northeast Brazil (Plan/Leo Drummond).

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Boy sleeping on street in Dhaka. Photo from the Bangladesh street children project 'Through our own Eyes' (Plan/Kamrul).

Acronyms

CEACR	Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations
CHETNA	Childhood Enhancement through Training and Action
CHI	Child Helpline International
CRC	Committee on the Rights of the Child
CSC	Consortium for Street Children
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOWAS	The Economic Community of West African States
EFA	Education For All
ENDA	Environmental Development Action
GCPS	Global Child Protection Services
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LABS	Livelihoods Advancement Business School
MDG	Millenium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PCAR	Protection of Children At Risk
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
STD	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
TB	Tuberculosis
UN	United Nations
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlement Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Children living on a small boat in Hue city, Vietnam (Plan).

The aims and outline of the report

This report, commissioned by Plan International, and supported by Consortium for Street Children (CSC) through collaboration and information, and written by GCPS, provides an analysis of the situation of street involved children, how their issues are currently addressed within legislative and policy frameworks, and highlights programmatic initiatives being implemented by International and local NGOs. Its aim is to inform and provide suggestions for improved practice by NGOs working with street involved children.

This analysis has been informed by a review of development literature, legislative instruments at international and regional level, and information from International and local NGOs drawn from a survey and interviews. The survey was conducted with 24 organisations recommended by Plan and CSC comprising International NGOs, local NGOs, donors, academic institutions and a congregation. The interviews were conducted with seven INGOs.

This report is designed to complement a paper that maps and examines the gaps in the literature on street children from 2000 to 2010, which has been written by Dr. Sarah Thomas de Benítez and will be published in 2011 as 'State of the World's Street Children: Research' London: Consortium for Street Children.

The report begins with an explanation of why this research was conducted. It continues with the following main chapters, each of which end with a concluding section that pulls together the main points of the chapter.

- Chapters 2, 3 and 4 discuss who street involved children are, how they come to be there and what they experience whilst involved with the street.
- Chapter 5 analyses the legal frameworks which are pertinent to street involved children
- Chapter 6 describes approaches to policy and programme work with street involved children.
- Chapters 7 and 8 examine the prevention and response to street involvement by children.

In Chapter 8 the main conclusions and recommendations of the report are brought together under the following main headings.

- 8.1. Inform programmes through in-depth understanding of street involvement and an evidence base for programme effectiveness
- 8.2. Improve the use of a flexible individual case management approach
- 8.3. Place street involved children more firmly on international and national development agendas
- 8.4. Build the capacity of different actors concerned with the prevention and response to street involvement
- 8.5. Integrate the response to street involved children within national child protection systems
- 8.6. Improve co-ordination and collaboration

Why this research, why now?

Working Bangladesh street children. Photo from the Bangladesh street children project 'Through our own Eyes' (Plan/Sujon).

Plan International and the Consortium for Street Children (CSC) both commissioned research on street involved children in preparation for events in 2011.

A group of Plan offices, spearheaded by Plan West Africa and Plan Netherlands, and in consultation with Plan's liaison and advocacy office in Geneva, commissioned an analytical study of the work of Plan, its partners and other organisations with street involved children, with the aim of developing its programme policy and practice, and sharing its experience with other stakeholders. The study entitled 'Street involved children: An Analysis of Current Policy and Practice and the Implications for Plan's Work', was written by Global Child Protection Services (GCPS). It will also serve as an input to Plan's participation in the Human Rights Council (HRC) Annual Day on the Rights of the Child in March 2011 focussing on 'children living and working on the streets'.

The Consortium for Street Children (CSC), the leading international member-based network dedicated to advocating, promoting and campaigning for the rights of street-involved children, is playing a leading role in coordinating NGO efforts for the HRC event. CSC is also launching the International Day for Street Children on 12th April 2011. To inform these events, and to build a strong strategic base for the development of advocacy, policy and programme design initiatives, CSC commissioned a study

which draws together and interprets advances in the academic and development research about street children during the last decade compared with the earlier street children research. The Mapping and Gapping Review, written by Dr. Sarah Thomas de Benítez, will be published in 2011 as 'State of the World's Street Children: Research' London: Consortium for Street Children.

This paper: Still on the Streets, Still Short of Rights, written by GCPS, provides an analysis of the situation of street involved children, how their issues are currently addressed within legislative and policy frameworks, and highlights programmatic initiatives being implemented by International and local NGOs. Its aim is to provide suggestions for improved practice by NGOs working with street involved children. It is designed to complement Dr Thomas de Benítez' wider study of the academic and development research.

The analysis has been informed by a review of development literature relevant to street children, legislative instruments at international and regional level, and information from International and local NGOs drawn from an on-line survey and interviews. Participating organisations were recommended by Plan and CSC, and are listed at Annex I.

When appropriate, this study also draws on material gathered during field visits to three countries (Bangladesh, Egypt and Senegal) for the Plan study.

1. WHO ARE THE CHILDREN WHO LIVE AND WORK ON THE STREETS?

There has been much discussion and controversy about how to view children who live and work on the streets; the terminology and definitions to be used; and the magnitude of the problem. It is now recognised that girls and boys of different ages use the streets in a wide range of different ways and that their the relationship to the streets is fluid and dynamic.

During the last decade it has also been recognised that the labelling and categorisation of children into specific groups of 'street children', 'trafficked children', 'orphans', etc. led to programming that focused predominantly on the most visible and socially controversial groups of children, while neglecting the rights violations experienced by their often equally vulnerable peers, such as child domestic and agricultural workers, children living in absolute poverty, or those experiencing neglect and abuse within their families and communities[1]. There is now greater recognition that many children belong to more than one category and/or move between categories over time, and that greater efforts need to be made to address the common underlying causes of childhood vulnerability and social exclusion[2].

1.1. Street involved children as one group of socially excluded children

In terms of policy at international, regional and national levels, street involved children are generally treated as one group of socially excluded or marginalized children. Thinking about how these groups of children should be regarded within policy and programmes has evolved over the last 20 years.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the international child focused organisations orientated their programming for socially excluded children around groups of 'Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances', 'Children in Special Need of Protection' and 'Orphans and Vulnerable Children' (still persisting in the context of the HIV and AIDS pandemic).

In recent years, the issues facing excluded and marginalised children have been re-conceptualised under broader umbrellas. Organisations such as UNICEF, Save the Children and EveryChild are now working with concepts such as: 'children on the move' (rather than the narrow lens of child trafficking); 'children without parental care' (rather than orphans); and 'children affected by conflict' (rather than the focus just on child soldiers). Responses are organised into larger frameworks of prevention and response, such as safe migration programmes, child protection and welfare systems, and disaster risk management.

Street children fall within many of these broader umbrellas. For example, children who have migrated in an unsafe manner for work may end up on the streets at their destination; children without parental care include homeless street living children; and conflict swells the numbers of children who are forced to live on the streets.

However, working directly with street involved children is challenging and requires skill and experience. In reality, specialist organisations will continue to be needed to interact with children as they live and work on the streets. They also have a role to play to ensure that the interests of street involved children are included in broader agendas.

The funding organisations that participated in the survey are increasingly aware of overlaps between groups of marginalised and vulnerable children, but currently still categorise them separately for funding and operational purposes.

The table below shows the frequency with which these organisations work with different groups of socially excluded and marginalised children. Not surprisingly, given the focus of the study, street involved children were the group most frequently represented, followed by working children, children orphaned by AIDS, and children without parental care. Currently, relatively few organisations working with street involved children are also working with children on the move, despite mobility being a significant (though only recently recognised) contributing factor to becoming street involved. Children in conflict with the law is also a neglected area. This is concerning given the high risk that street involved children face of coming into conflict with the law.

1.2. Terminology and definitions

In trying to classify a street child, many practitioners use the following definition, ascribed to UNICEF: 'Any girl or boy who has not reached adulthood, for whom the street in the widest sense of the word, including unoccupied dwellings, wasteland, and so on, has become his or her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood, and who is inadequately protected, directed, and supervised by responsible adults.'

Attempts to further define children for whom the street plays an important role has led to the following categorisation:
- Street living children: those who sleep in public places without their families
- Street working children[3]: those who work on the streets during the day and return to their families at night.
- Children from street families, who live with their families on the street.

In reality, street children are not a clearly defined, homogenous population. The use of the street by any one child is fluid, depending on his or her age, gender and experience. This has led some researchers to think in terms of children's 'careers' on the street, which entail various stages of involvement and different activities over time[4]. Furthermore, 'the street' represents only one phase or facet of many children's lives. It is important to consider their origins, the other influences on their lives, and what happens to them after they leave the street (if they do). Rather than trying to arrive at watertight definitions, for programming purposes it is more important to develop a clear and contextualised understanding of the life experiences and relationships of the street involved children who will participate[5].

The term 'street child', has now been recognised by researchers

Street worker selling bracelets to tourists in Cambodia (© Alf Berg).

Figure 1: The proportion of organisations participating in the survey that work with different groups of socially excluded children

as a social construction[6] reflecting society's disquiet at children who are very visible, but who are deemed 'out of place'. It has come under increasing criticism as labelling and stigmatising due to its connotations of delinquency in many societies, and for this reason is disliked by children themselves[7]. For this reason some organisations have started to use terms such as 'street active children' or 'street involved children'.

1.2.1. Terminology and definitions adopted for this report

While recognising that as yet there is no satisfactory alternative to 'street child', we have adopted the term 'street involved child' for the purposes of this study. We have used this as an umbrella term that encompasses street living children, street working children and children from street families. We have adopted the following broad definition of street involved children: 'Children for whom the street is a reference point and has a central role in their lives.'[8]

1.3. Numbers

The global numbers of street involved children are not known. It is now generally acknowledged that initial estimates were very over-inflated. The figure of 100 million street children, credited to UNICEF, though still widely quoted, has been largely discredited by researchers. UNICEF itself now puts the figure at tens of millions of children worldwide[9].

Realistic estimates of the numbers of street involved children in each context are necessary and desirable for effective programming and for advocacy and policy work. In particular, it is important to understand the proportion of children who live on the streets without parental care, and the proportion who work on the streets but who live with or retain contact with their families, as programme approaches are different. In addition, many organisations feel pushed by donors to come up with numbers in an effort to demonstrate impact.

Conducting an accurate census of the number of street children is challenging due to the difficulties of definition, and to the fluidity

of children's circumstances[10]. Due to the dangers of street living, some children, particularly girls, keep out of sight to protect themselves, and may be underestimated in surveys. This is compounded by the fact that the children, due to their general distrust of authority may not give accurate information. Conducting a precise census of street children is also costly in terms of human and financial resources.

Some innovative efforts have been made to establish the numbers of street children in specific locations. These have tended to focus on children who are separated from their families, and who sleep on the streets. However, they are a small proportion of the overall numbers of children who use the streets, who are visible to the public, and who may make use of NGO services. They were found to be around 10% in a review of studies conducted in Latin America[11], but may be as few as 1% in other some cities[12].

It is frequently claimed that the number of street children worldwide is increasing, though, of course, this is difficult to establish with certainty. Staff at JUCONI describe a 'trickle' of new children coming onto the streets in Mexico City[13], whereas the numbers of street children in the rapidly growing urban centres of Africa and Asia may indeed be growing, particularly in those countries that are also seriously affected by HIV and AIDS, conflict and disaster. Observers in Bangladesh refer to a 'phenomenal growth' in the numbers of street children over the last decade. Similarly, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Human Rights Watch reports 'an explosion' in the numbers of street-involved children, with an estimated 30,000 in Kinshasa[14].

1.4. Age, gender and the representation of discriminated groups

According to the organisations participating in the survey, and to studies of different groups of street-involved children, generally there is a predominance of boys in their teens among children using the streets[15,16,17]. One exception is in Ghana where the gender ratio between girls and boys living on the streets is roughly equal[18]. This seems to be due to a complex interaction between traditional expectations of girls and modern life, for example girls

may leave home to escape early marriage, others to raise money for their dowries.

In many cultures, boys are encouraged to be independent, to socialize outside the home and to work, while girls are kept at home. Girls are more closely supervised and are more likely to endure violence and exploitation in the home than to rebel. However, with the breakdown of traditional culture, the increasing unwillingness of girls to submit to violations such as early marriage, and the attractions of modern life in the cities, the numbers of street involved girls appear to be increasing, even in conservative countries such as Egypt.

Discrimination and social exclusion increase the socio-economic stresses on families, and make it more likely that children migrate to the streets. A review of street-involved children in Asia concludes that a high proportion of the children on the streets in India are from discriminated castes[19]. Organisations from Guatemala report that the majority of street involved children are from families living in extreme poverty, a high percentage of whom are from indigenous families, reflecting the institutionalised discrimination against the indigenous population.

In India, many children on the streets have disabilities, and work as beggars. Some of these children are said to have been deliberately mutilated[20,21]. There are also accounts of children being maimed for this purpose in Egypt[22]. UNESCO estimates that up to 30% of street children may have a disability, though it is not stated on what basis this estimation is made[23].

In the DRC as a result of the HIV pandemic, and in the context of war and severe socio-economic disadvantage, an extreme form of discrimination has led to an increase in numbers of street children. Here, AIDS orphans are frequently accused of witchcraft. These children are often shunned by their extended families, and have no alternative but to struggle to survive on the streets[24].

Once on the streets, children experience high levels of stigma and discrimination, especially after they reach puberty, boys being regarded as delinquent, and girls being regarded as shameful, fallen women[25].

The make up of groups of children and youth using the streets in any one context changes over time, posing challenges to organisations to adapt their programmes appropriately. NGO staff in many countries are seeing more young children and more older youth on the streets, marriages between street youth, babies being born to girls living on the streets, and an increasing emergence of street families. Broad coalitions of government and non-government organisations are necessary to respond appropriately to these developments.

1.5. Groups of street involved children with whom organisations work

Organisation participating in the survey work fairly equally with girls and with boys who use the street. Many report working with children who have newly arrived on the streets and with children who beg on the street. A few organisations work with the more location-specific groups of children, such as talibés, and those who live and work on the railways[26].

1.6. Conclusions on who are the children living and working on the streets

International organisations increasingly view children who live and work on the streets as one group under broader conceptual and programmatic umbrellas, such as 'children on the move' and 'children without parental care'. However, specialist organisations, with relevant skills and experience, will still be needed to work directly with street involved children, and to lobby for the inclusion of their interests in broader agendas.

Children who use the streets are difficult to define because they are not a homogenous group, and the way they use the street varies widely. Rather than trying to arrive at watertight definitions, programmes should be based on a clear, contextualised analysis of the sub-groups of children who will be involved.

The use of terms that label and stigmatise children should be avoided as much as possible in order to preserve their dignity, and generate improved public and official attitudes towards them.

It is very difficult to establish the numbers of street involved children in each setting. Programme and policy work should be
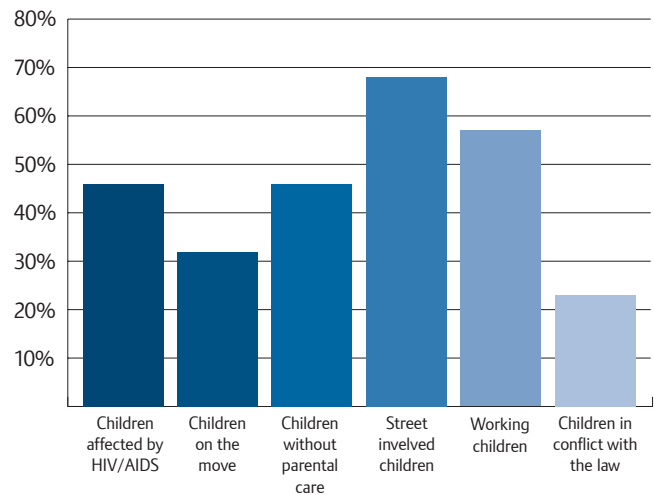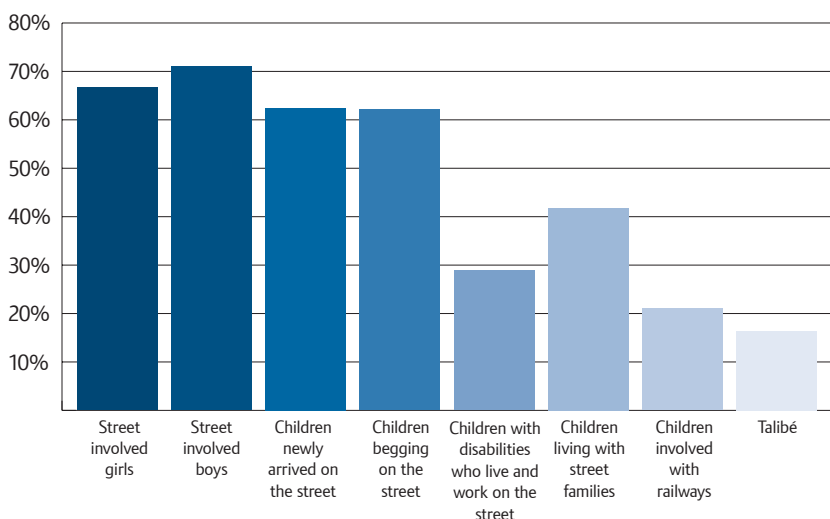
Figure 2: The proportion of organisations participating in the survey that work with different groups of street involved children

Boy scouring street for rubbish to sell. Photo from the Bangladesh street children project 'Through our own Eyes' (Plan/Riaz).

based on the most realistic available estimates of the numbers of street living and street working children.

The nature of the phenomenon of street involvement by children and youth varies between contexts and over time, and has become more complex in many countries. This poses challenges to organisations to adapt their programmes appropriately, and requires broad coalitions of government and non-government organisations for an effective response.

1 Feeny, T., Boyden, J. (2003). Children and Poverty. Shaping a Response to Poverty. A Conceptual Over view and Implications for Responding to Children Living in Poverty. Children and Poverty Series. Part III. Christian Children's Fund.

2 Ray, P., Carter, S. (2007). Understanding and Working with Children in the Poorest and Most Difficult Situations. Plan.

3 Street living children have also been termed 'children of the streets' and street working children 'children on the streets'. These terms are confusing and the meanings are not self-explanatory. Their use is therefore not advised.

4 Ennew, J., Swart Kruger, J. (2003). Introduction: Homes, Places and Spaces in the Construction of Street Children and Street Youth.

5 James-Wilson, D. (2007). Building Bridges to Mainstream Opportunities. Displaced Children and Orphans Funding Guidance on Funding Priorities and Parameters for Street Children Programming. USAID.

6 Glauser, B., (1990). Street Children: Deconstructing a Construct. Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood; In James, A., and Prout, A. eds. Contemporary Issues in the Sociology of Childhood.

7 Ennew., J. (2003). Difficult Circumstances. Some Reflections on 'Street Children' in Africa. Children, Youth and Environments 13(1), Spring 2003.

8 Thomas de Benitez, S. (2007). State of the World's Street Children. Violence. Consortium for Street Children.

9 UNICEF, State of the World's Children 2006: Excluded and Invisible. New York: UNICEF

10 Thomas de Benitez, S. (2007). State of the World's Street Children. Violence. Consortium for Street Children.

11 Rizzini, I., Lusk, M. (1995). Children in the Streets:. Latin America's Lost Generation. In: Children and Youth Services Review, Vol. 17, No. 3.

12 David James-Wilson (2007). Building Bridges to Mainstream Opportunities. Displaced Children and Orphans Funding Guidance on Funding Priorities and Parameters for Street

13 Children Programming. USAID.

14 Personal communication.

15 Human Rights Watch. (2006). What Future? Street Children in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

16 The World Food Programme, UNICEF, UN Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention. (2001). Rapid Situation Assessment Report on The Situation of street children in Cairo and Alexandria, including the children's drug abuse and health/ nutritional status.

17 Diaspora Social Development Consultants. (2009). Street Children in Delhi: A Participatory Situation Analysis. Needs, Gaps in Services and Scope of Intervention. Plan India.

18 Kwankye, S. et al. (2007). Coping strategies of Independent Child Migrants from Northern Ghana to Southern Cities. Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty.

19 West. A. (2003). At the Margins: Street Children in Asia and the Pacific. Poverty and Social Development Papers. No. 8. October 2003. Asian Development Bank.

20 West. A. (2003). At the Margins: Street Children in Asia and the Pacific. Poverty and Social Development Papers. No. 8. October 2003. Asian Development Bank.

21 For a chilling fictional account of the activities of a 'beggar master' in India see 'A Fine Balance' by Rohinton Mistry.

22 Bibars, I. (1998). Street Children in Egypt: from the home to the street to inappropriate corrective institutions. Environment and Urbanisation, Vol.10, No. 1, April 1998.

23 http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/strengthening-education-systems/inclusive-education/children-with-disabilities/

24 All Party Parliamentary Group on Street Children. (2006). 'Child Witches, Child Soldier, Child Poverty and Violence: Street Children in Crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

25 Plan. (2010). Digital and Urban Frontiers: Girls in a Changing Landscape. Because I am a Girl. State of the World's Girls 2010.

26 Talibes are boys from Koranic schools in West Africa who beg on the streets. Although this is part of the religious tradition, it has been used as means of extreme exploitation of the boys in many cases.

2. WHY CHILDREN LIVE AND WORK ON THE STREETS

Girl working alongside her mother breaking stones. Photo from the Bangladesh street children project 'Through our own Eyes' (Plan/Hasina).

The causes of street involvement are complex, multi-faceted, context-specific and personal. They operate at all levels: internationally, nationally, at the level of the district, community, family and the child.

The involvement of children with the streets is seldom due to one event, but often to a process of increasing vulnerability. Families who are living in poverty near the margins of survival do not have the resilience to cope with additional shocks, such as the death of a parent or the loss of a job. Such crises may cause children to drop out of school and go to work to help support the family, and parents to reduce the level of care and supervision they provide. There is also the risk of violence within some families. Children may start street work, or may leave their families to live on the streets[27]. They are also vulnerable to abandonment and trafficking. The World Bank calls the process of increasing family stress leading to the separation of children the 'spiral of vulnerability'[28].

Studies from Latin America describe the process of street involvement as a complex and gradual one, with the interaction of 'push' and 'pull' factors. Difficulties at home lead to children frequenting the street during the day, and then beginning to sleep on the streets, but existing in a state of flux between the home and the street, before some of them completely lose touch with their families[29].

If children's rights are being seriously violated at home, separation and street living constitutes a rational act, though not one necessarily in their long term best interests. The child's own perspective of his or her situation is therefore critical in assisting him or her to look for possible alternatives to street living.

The main causes of children living and working on the street are discussed in the sections below. The sections have been structured to lead the reader from the broader structural causes, to those that operate at the individual, family or community level. The ordering of the paragraphs does not reflect judgements about the relative importance of each causal factor.

2.1. Poverty and social exclusion

Between 1981 and 2005, the proportion of the world's population living in absolute poverty (under 1.25 USD per day) declined from 52% to 25.7%. This reduction in poverty has been fuelled largely by economic growth. Regional trends, however, show that the numbers of people living in absolute poverty have increased in areas of the world that have not experienced strong economic growth, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, whose relative share of the world's poor has increased dramatically from 11% to 28%[30].

Thus, globally there has been an increase in income inequalities both between and within countries, with poverty becoming increasingly concentrated among socially excluded populations, such as discriminated castes and ethnic groups, rural populations and urban slum dwellers.

Children living in the poorest families in both urban and rural areas in developing countries experience serious deprivations of their rights. In Egypt, UNICEF estimates that 47% of children in income-poor households experience at least one severe deprivation[31] of their rights compared with 14% of non-poor children.

Poverty and marginalisation make families particularly vulnerable to the social and economic stresses that result in children

dropping out of school, engaging in hazardous and exploitative working situations or becoming involved in street life. Poverty and the need to earn a living is one of the most common causes stated by children for being on the streets[32].

2.2. Conflict, disasters and climate change

Conflict and disasters also create or exacerbate the conditions that precipitate street involvement and lead to increases in children arriving on the streets. In the DRC there was a rapid increase in the numbers of children living on the streets after the start of civil war in 1996. Between 1996 and 2006 it was estimated that 4 million people had died as a result of the war, that there were 2.33 million internally displaced people of which half or more were children, and that more than 250,000 children were homeless, some of whom were obliged to live on the streets[33].

War also impacts on the wellbeing of children by destroying infrastructure and livelihoods, thereby deepening poverty and disrupting the delivery of basic services. This puts family units under increasing stress and destroys their capacity to care adequately for their children, thus precipitating street living in some instances.

In addition, children and young people, particularly girls and young women are inadequately dealt with by Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) processes. Following the peace agreement in Sierra Leone in 1999, many who were involved with the armed forces during the civil war were left without support and were unable to make their way home, or were rejected by their families. Some of these children and young people were forced onto the streets, many turning to commercial sex work, drug use and criminal activities[34].

Natural disasters also cause displacement, destroy livelihoods

and deepen poverty. Bangladesh is already one of the most disaster prone countries in the world, and will become even more disaster-prone as a result of climate change. In 2007, 5,635 people were killed by natural disasters and 23 million were affected[35]. It is projected that the rise in sea level will inundate coastal areas and displace millions of people from their homes and livelihoods, forcing children out of school and into hazardous occupations, and increasing the street involvement of children and families in towns and cities.

2.3. Migration and urbanisation

Migration both within and between countries has increased massively since the 1960s. Movement from rural to urban areas has been so great that it is estimated that half the world's population now lives in cities[36]. Currently, the highest levels of rural-urban migration are taking place in Africa and Asia, and this is set to continue during the first half of this century.

Rapid urbanisation has resulted in large informal, unplanned settlements and urban slums. These are characterized by poor or non-existent public services, a stressful, crowded, unsanitary and polluted environment, and the threat of eviction. In some cities, even the urban slums cannot accommodate the numbers of migrants, and in cities like Dhaka many families live on the streets in a 'floating' existence, frequently moved on by the police.

Some children migrate with their families. Rural-urban migration of poor families increases children's vulnerability to school drop out, exploitative work and street involvement at their destinations[37].

Other children migrate alone to pursue educational and work opportunities. In Ghana a clear link has been found between

Children attend vocational training center for street children at the Egyptian Association for Community Development facility in the Fostat area of Old Cairo. Plan Egypt is working to reduce the number of street children, as well as to improve the quality of life and future prospects of this marginalised group (Plan).

independent child migration and street involvement. Many children migrate from Ghana's three northern regions to the capital with little or no education and are unable to find work in the formal sector. They therefore resort to living and working on the street[38].

Until recently, children's organisations focused on trafficking, and did not recognise the complex and multi-dimensional aspects of children's migration. These are now being considered more holistically under the 'children on the move' programme umbrella.

2.4. Cultural attitudes and behaviours

Prevailing social norms and cultural attitudes towards children often permit abuses of children's rights to care and protection. In many cultures, difference and diversity are poorly tolerated, leading to the neglect, abandonment or exploitation of children with disabilities, whose very birth is regarded with shame. Authoritarian approaches to raising children mean that those who rebel, or girls who are judged to have dishonoured their families, are dealt with harshly, sometimes leading to childhood separation and resort to the streets.

Certain traditions and beliefs may be used as an opportunity for abuse and exploitation of children, the use of Koranic schools in West Africa for the exploitation of boys through begging being one example[39]. In DRC, Christian pastors also abuse people's belief in witchcraft to denounce children as witches and then receive fees for their exorcism[40].

2.5. Lack of access to quality education

Although much has been achieved in increasing access to education, there were still 72 million children out of school worldwide in 2007. The 2010 Education for All Global Monitoring Report notes that governments are failing to address the root causes of marginalization in education, and that the gains that have been achieved are vulnerable due to the prevailing economic and food crises[41].

The poor quality of education, its cost, its lack of adaptation to children in poor and vulnerable situations, and low educational attainment by parents contribute to educational failure and school drop out among poor and vulnerable children. In Egypt, according to the census of 2006, 12% of boys and 20% of girls from the poorest households have never been to school.

Attending school is seen by many as key to children's inclusion in the mainstream of society, and as a protective factor against vulnerability to hazardous work, being trafficked and street involvement[42]. Situation assessments of street children consistently show that the majority have either never attended school or have dropped out during primary school. School drop out interacts with other push and pull factors at the level of the individual child to precipitate street involvement, such as living in poverty, being orphaned, gang involvement and peer pressure[43].

2.6. The HIV pandemic

The HIV pandemic has fuelled poverty and social exclusion, most seriously in East and Southern Africa, and has led to increasing numbers of children without parental care. UNAIDS estimates that there are 16.6 million children who have been orphaned by AIDS, of whom 90% live in Sub-Saharan Africa[44].

When the extended family network becomes overloaded, some children fall through the net and end up in vulnerable situations, such as living in child headed households, engaging in hazardous labour or migrating onto the streets[45]. The stigma that children affected by HIV and AIDS experience is extreme in some cases, and has contributed to the rising trend in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa of accusing the children of parents who have died of AIDS of witchcraft.

2.7. Violence against children

The UN Study on Violence Against Children confirmed that violence against children in the home, school, community, workplace and institutions is widespread[46]. For example, in Egypt, corporal punishment is a social norm, is not legally prohibited, and is commonly practised. It is experienced by 81% of children in the home and by 91% of children in school[47], although it is against the policy of the Ministry of Education.

It is now generally agreed that the experience of violence is one of the key triggers that precipitates children to move to the streets[48], and that it determines why some children and not others separate from their families and end up on the streets.

In a wide range of contexts, children most commonly cite violence as one of the causes for them being on the streets. For example in Bangladesh, one study found that 98% of street involved children had experienced violence in the year prior to moving onto the streets, with many describing repeated and multiple forms of violence[49].

2.8 Exploitative and hazardous child work

Perceptions of children as contributors to household economies are common in many countries, and another reason many children become involved in the streets. Children who are employed in unsafe and hazardous occupations experience high levels of verbal and physical abuse and exploitation. Children who are forced by their families to work, or who have migrated into the cities for work, may find it difficult, or may be unwilling to return home following a rupture with their employers. One study in Egypt found that many street children were working children who had left their employment due to violence or dismissal by their employer[50].

The links between child domestic work and street involvement are being increasingly recognised[51]. Girls who have migrated or been trafficked into domestic work are often dismissed when they reach puberty, or run away due to bad treatment. If they have lost their links with their families they may be forced into life on the streets. Of a group of adolescent commercial sex workers in Ethiopia, around 50% were found to have previously worked as domestic servants[52].

2.9. What the future holds

Organisations that participated in the survey feel that the causal factors of street involvement are likely to increase in scale over the coming years. Globally, economic downturns and the imbalance between economic development and population growth will continue to increase the risks of street involvement by children from families on the margins of survival in poor rural and urban

areas. This will be exacerbated by climate change, which will make it increasingly difficult for families to maintain a viable livelihood in rural areas.

Organisations also feel that the loss of values within families, and a rise in family breakdown will increase the risks of children leaving home to live on the streets.

The trend in governments' desire to "roll back the state", coupled with a focus on improving states' fiscal positions must also be considered. It is likely to mean less financial provision to support families and children. This will place additional burdens on NGOs to fill the gaps, at a time when they are also likely to be constrained in finding funding.

2.10. Conclusions on why children live and work on the streets

The complexity and specificity of the causes of street involvement mean that responses need to be based on thorough research in each context, and require broad based multi-sectoral approaches with the collaboration of all stakeholders.

The involvement of children with the streets is seldom due to one event, but often to a spiral of increasing family and childhood vulnerability. The arrival of a child on the streets may represent an active decision on the part of the child, often in response to situations of serious rights violations at home. An individual case management approach in which full account is taken of children's own perspectives is therefore critical in working with street involved children and their families.

The process of street involvement may take place gradually over a period of time, ultimately leading to street living for some children. Understanding this process is important in order to identify how street involvement can be prevented, particularly street living, which entails the greatest risks.

It is now thought that the experience of violence is one of the key triggers that precipitates some children from poor and disadvantaged families, and not others, to separate from their families and move onto the streets.

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3. THE EXPERIENCES OF CHILDREN LIVING AND WORKING ON THE STREET

In the literature on street involved children there is a tension between those who see homelessness and street living as one of the greatest risks that a child can face, and those who question whether street children are at any greater risk than other groups of socio-economically disadvantaged children[53]. In fact, there is a lack of studies that compare the wellbeing of street involved children with other groups of children at risk in the urban environment.

Street involved children strive to mould their own destiny and make sense of their existence. Beazley describes the street subculture in Yoghakarta, Indonesia, created by street boys, involving the way they dress and the language they use, which has evolved as a result of resistance to their negative stereotyping by the public. This provides the boys with peer support, survival skills and a positive self-image. Ironically this subculture transgresses the norms of society, and results in the youth being even further stigmatized and regarded as deviant[54].

It is important neither to regard street involved children as helpless victims, nor to romanticize their lives. It is also important to recognize that different subgroups of street involved children have different experiences and face different risks, based on their age, sex, length of stay on the streets and the different street environments of which they are a part.

Although some street living children, with the support of an organisation or on their own initiative, are able to create alternative lives, prolonged street living has serious risks. These include lives of crime, drug dependence and prostitution with all the implications that these have for individual wellbeing, the ability to raise a family, and the costs and risks to society.

3.1. Where they live and what they do

Street involvement has many manifestations, and where children live and what they do vary considerably between contexts. Street involved children in Egypt are to be found in locations where they can not only earn a living but also buy cheap food, rest, play, take drugs and have sex. Typically, the children work in crowded areas, such as train and metro stations; areas frequented by tourists, such as shopping malls and restaurants; and around mosques, where food and clothing are often distributed. They sleep in parks, gardens, under bridges and behind shops and restaurants where they sort garbage. Children from urban slums often work on the streets of wealthier neighbourhoods, from which they return home at night[55].

In Egypt, as in other countries, many street children are now organised in gangs by older youth and sometimes adults. The leader facilitates the work of the street children by bribing police and security guards, maintaining good relationships with shop owners and keeping order among the children. They also keep members of other gangs away from their working patch. For these services, street leaders take a cut of the earnings of the street children[56].

Children scavenging at rubbish dump. Photo from the Bangladesh street children project 'Through our own Eyes' (Plan/Hasina).

Although street leaders may provide some degree of protection to their gang members, they also exploit and abuse them in situations of forced begging and prostitution[57,58].

Child street involvement takes on very specific forms in some contexts. For example, child mendicancy has become a serious problem in Senegal and other parts of West Africa. ENDA recently estimated that there were 20,000 mendicant children in the Dakar region. Here, the vast majority are boys, with girls representing just 3%. Mendicant children include children from extremely poor families, children who have separated from their families due to neglect or maltreatment, children with disabilities, children who accompany disabled adults, and children who have migrated or been trafficked from other parts of Senegal or from neighbouring countries[59].

Most mendicant children in Dakar, however, are talibé, students of Koranic schools. The talibé come from families living in the city, from other parts of Senegal and from neighbouring countries, particularly Guinea-Bissau. Families often abandon their sons to the Koranic schools without any provision for their upkeep. The children are usually housed in very poor and unsanitary conditions, without access to health care. Some are forced to bring in a certain amount of money per day, spending long hours on the streets and receiving little or no religious training. They are given no basic education, and are not able to develop skills that can help them adapt to the modern world. The government has been very slow to respond to the extreme exploitation and abuse experienced by many talibé, although currently it is piloting efforts to regulate schools[60].

3.2. Health and access to health care

Many studies have found that the physical and mental health and nutrition of street involved children is no worse, or can even be better, than those of their peers from urban poor families[61]. However, this may depend on factors such as age, gender and length of stay on the streets. Children who start life on the streets at an early age, for example, are likely to be at high risk of malnutrition, while boys in their teens who are able to earn enough money for food may be better nourished than their peers who live at home.

There is no doubt that street involved children are subject to a number of specific physical, mental and sexual health risks. Physical health problems may be related to work, such as musculoskeletal problems due to carrying heavy loads, or to injuries sustained during fights among themselves or as a result of violence from the police or the public. Skin infections due to lack of washing facilities are also common[62]. Children may suffer from infectious diseases such malaria, TB, dysentery and hepatitis where these are endemic.

Sex plays an important role in the lives of street involved boys[63]. Some boys and many girls experience high levels of sexual violence on the streets, such as gang rapes and violence during commercial sex work[64]. High levels of violent and unprotected sex give rise to sexual and reproductive health problems, such as STDs (including HIV and AIDS), injuries, early and unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions.

The empirical evidence for the mental health of street involved children also suggests that in some situations they have better mental health than their peers, displaying resilience and creative coping strategies for surviving in a difficult environment[65].

However, some studies also report children demonstrating signs of stress, such as nightmares and crying for no reason[66]. Given the extreme violence and discrimination that girls experience on the streets, there are indications that they have more difficulties than boys in adapting to life on the streets, and suffer more mental health problems[67].

3.3. Access to education

Studies show that most street involved children are not in school and have either had no education, or have dropped out of school during the primary school years[68,69,70]. Once living on the streets, children have limited access to formal education due to their lack of a parent or guardian, an address and documents. Some street working children try to combine school and work, but have difficulties in coping with the hours, are frequently absent and have poor grades due to lack of time to study[71]. Government agencies and NGOs provide a range of non-formal education programmes that some street involved children are able to access.

3.4. Vulnerability to violence and exploitation

Many children experience a high risk of violence on the streets and also in the residential facilities and institutions in which they may later be placed. As the phenomenon of street living becomes entrenched with the development of a street culture, the formation of gangs and links to organized crime and prostitution, the risk of violence increases. Violence is perpetrated on the streets by other street involved boys and youth, adults with whom children relate through work or in organized crime, the general public, government workers, the police and, sometimes, NGO workers.

Police violence against street involved children is well documented, and first came to public attention in Latin America in the 1990s through such events as the Candelaria Massacre in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, when 6 street children were shot as they lay sleeping on the steps of a church. Berkman describes the complex relationships in Latin America between the police, street children, youth gangs and the general public. The public demand more security, sometimes taking matters into their own hands in the shape of vigilante groups whose aim is to 'eliminate' the street children problem[72].

Brutality by the police against street children happens worldwide, and Human Rights Watch has published a series of reports on the topic from several different countries, including Egypt, DRC, and Vietnam. The reports attest to the arbitrary arrest and detention of street children and the 'sweeps' that take place at times of political sensitivity, such as during elections and while hosting international events. Children are incarcerated in unsanitary conditions, often with adult detainees, with inadequate food, bedding or health care, and are subject to verbal, physical and sexual abuse. Police may extort sex from girls in exchange for protection from sexual violence from other men[73]. Violence and the criminalisation of street children persist throughout the juvenile justice system in many countries, in the courts, prisons and juvenile institutions[74].

Many street involved children experience economic exploitation by their families, gang leaders, employers, pimps and brothel owners. Children are also exploited by drug dealers who provide them

with drugs in exchange for money from begging. Forced begging is very common in countries such as India, often involving young children who are obliged to work long hours. They are denied access to education, and are intimidated and punished by the police[75].

3.5. Realising their right to participation

Street children face particular barriers to the realisation of their right to participation, and are usually excluded from the decision-making processes that have consequences on their lives. As a result, efforts by government agencies and NGOs to address the 'street children problem' often fail because they do not take into account the experiences and perspectives of the children themselves. Street children are seldom given an opportunity to explain their story when arrested by the police, and usually have no one to speak up for them during court proceedings.

Within communities, street involved children are excluded from participation in children's activities due to fear and stigma on the part of the adult organisers and other children. As they spend longer on the streets, children find it progressively more difficult to participate in mainstream activities, due to their addictions, stress levels and difficulties in concentrating.

Street living children are not counted during a census, and frequently do not have any identification documents. They are therefore unable to access government services, which in any case are generally poorly adapted to their needs. They find it difficult to cope with the hours of formal schooling while they work, and the stigma and discrimination they experience from teachers and other students.

At the time of the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa, boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 16, from different continents, participated in a Street Child World Cup in Durban. The event was held to raise awareness of street children's rights, and included a conference at which they discussed their experiences and their rights, resulting in the production of the Durban Declaration.

The children emphasised the need for government and civil society to listen to them and understand why they are on the streets, the violence that they have experienced at home, and the economic pressures that lead to some children seeking money on the streets. They also wanted government and civil society to work together to help them overcome the difficulties they experience in returning home.

3.6. The particular experience of girls on the streets

The different patterns of socialisation of girls and boys condition their experiences on the streets. In Nairobi, it was found that while boys on the streets were outgoing, resourceful, had strong peer groups and often maintained close links with their homes, girls were dependent on their male 'protectors', had little contact with other girls, and did not maintain contact with their homes[76]. In other situations, such as in Ghana, researchers have found that many street involved girls find innovative ways of surviving and constructing their own lives, and aspire to a better life within mainstream society[77].

Street-involved girls in many countries are particularly stigmatized. In Egypt, a street-living girl is popularly viewed as a shame-

Former street girl living at Plan-supported shelter (Gideon van Aartsen/Plan).

ful, fallen woman, and is seldom accepted back into the family[78]. In some contexts, life is so difficult for girls on the streets that they are barely visible, coming out onto the streets only at night. Some girls disguise themselves as boys to avoid trouble.

Often, work on the streets is separated into occupations reserved for boys and those undertaken by girls. Many girls are forced to engage in commercial sex work for their survival. Due to their stigmatization, the future for street involved girls is very bleak. In many cultures families will not accept them back, and the prospects of marriage are not good[79].

Girls experience high levels of violence on the streets, including verbal abuse and physical and sexual assaults by other street involved children and youth, the public, the police and their customers. Due to high levels of violent and unprotected sex, unwanted pregnancies are common. Girls find it difficult to get the reproductive health care they need, and many are obliged to give birth and raise babies on the streets.

The situation of street involved girls and their experiences is not yet fully recognized by child focused and specialist street children organisations. Until recently, facilities and services have been largely orientated around boys, although the balance in terms of addressing the rights of girls on the streets is now beginning to be redressed.

At the conference that was held at the time of the Street Children World Cup in Durban in 2010, Plan organized some girls only sessions. The girls talked about their experiences with an openness that had not been possible for them when the boys were pre-

sent80. This reinforces the need to include a gender perspective in working with street involved children, and, more broadly, not to assume that street involved children are a homogenous group, but to listen to and understand the experiences of different groups of girls and boys of different ages and experiences.

3.7. Conclusions on the situation of children living and working on the streets

Despite their very challenging circumstances, some street involved children find innovative ways of surviving and constructing a life that is meaningful to them. These need to be borne in mind in efforts to assist them.

Street involved children share many risks to their wellbeing in common with other groups of urban poor children. However, street living involves specific risks that have serious consequences on children's enjoyment of their rights in the short and long term.

Children of different ages, sex, lengths of experience on the street and in diverse contexts have different experiences of street involvement. Girls' experience differs to boys due to their upbringing and the norms and expectations of society in relation to girls, though this has not yet been fully recognized in efforts to assist them.

Street involved children experience a range of emotional, physical and reproductive health problems, lack of access to education and high levels of violence and exploitation. They are denied the opportunity to contribute to and participate in their societies, and have difficulties in accessing the services they need.

It is imperative that organisations thoroughly understand the situation of the subgroups of children with whom they plan to work, and their hopes and aspirations for the future.

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4. LEGAL FRAMEWORKS RELATED TO STREET INVOLVED CHILDREN

Due to the multiple factors that play a role in street involvement by children, and the multiple deprivations they experience, there is a wide range of legislation relevant to them. However, street involved children are seldom specifically mentioned, and their rights and issues are not specifically addressed except in some national legislation.

There is no internationally accepted legal definition of a 'street child'. The CRC and its Optional Protocols are the main international legal instruments of relevance, though street involved children are not specifically mentioned. The CRC demands a holistic approach that guarantees the rights of all children, and its development over 20 years ago marked an important change in how governments are required to view children.

4.1. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989

The CRC lays out principal responsibilities of governments under international law in protecting and fulfilling the rights of all children. The application of the guiding principles of the CRC to actions designed to assist street involved children is critical to the achievement of positive outcomes for them[81].

The majority of articles in the CRC relate to the situation of street involved children because of their experience of extreme poverty and particular vulnerability to: violence (Art. 19), disease (Art. 24), discrimination (Art. 2), sexual abuse and exploitation (Art. 34, 32), substance abuse (Art. 33), emotional deprivation (Art. 19, 31), exploitative and harmful child labour (Art. 32), denial of rights within the juvenile justice system (Art. 37, 40), arbitrary execution (Art. 6), torture (Art. 37), lack of access to education (Art. 28, 29) and healthcare (Art. 24), and lack of identity documents (Art. 7)[82].

The Optional Protocols to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography are also relevant to street involved children[83]. Armed conflict is one of the precipitating causes of street involvement by children, and children on the streets are particularly vulnerable to involvement in child prostitution.

The Committee on the CRC also publishes General Comments that provide further interpretative detail on a number of themes, several of which have particular relevance to street involved children[84], as do the two major studies that have been undertaken by the UN on children, 'The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children' in 1996, and 'Violence Against Children' in 2006.

4.2. Other international standards important to the protection of street involved children

There are several other international instruments that are also important in protecting street involved children, such as those dealing with child labour, juvenile justice and the alternative care of children.

4.2.1. International standards on alternative care of children

Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children were developed as a result of a recommendation by the Committee on the CRC, and adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2010. These aim to

Former street children in their bedroom at Plan-supported shelter {Plan/Benno Neeleman}.

enhance the implementation of the CRC and other international instruments regarding the protection and wellbeing of children deprived of parental care by providing guidance on policy and practice for the alternative care of children[85].

4.2.2. International standards on juvenile justice

Articles 37, 39 and 40 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child provide guidance to States Parties on the establishment of systems of juvenile justice, as do several other non-binding instruments governing State law and practice in relation to juvenile justice[86].

The Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment No. 10 (2007) on the rights of the child in juvenile justice brings together the key elements enshrined in these instruments, as well as drawing on the Committee's extensive experience in monitoring the implementation of the CRC. Crucially, the General Comment notes that States' approach to juvenile justice should also be bound by child rights principles.

4.2.3. International Labour Organisation (ILO) instruments

ILO Convention 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment (1973), and Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999) are the key international instruments governing the protection of children from child labour.

Both conventions are considered to be 'core standards' which means that adherence to them is mandatory, not just by ratifying states, but as a condition of ILO membership. Implementation of the conventions is monitored by a Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR). The CEACR has raised concerns about the situation of street children and abuses against them on numerous occasions, sometimes also through the use of Convention 29 on Forced Labour, another core standard.

4.2.4. UN Trafficking Protocol

Child trafficking, to which some street children are subject, is prohibited in a number of international standards, and is dealt with specifically in the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol (Trafficking Protocol). Article 3 defines child trafficking as: (c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation[87]. Under international law, threat, coercion, deception, and other means are not necessary to meet the threshold of trafficking when a child is involved.

4.3. Regional standards: their use and limitations for street children

Regional standards and mechanisms for protecting human rights, including children's rights, have so far been established for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe, but like the international standards, they do not make specific reference to street involved children. Regional standards more closely reflect the values and realities of the regions they cover than international standards, and can take different approaches to enforcement[88].

There are differences in the degree of child rights protection afforded by different systems. However, where there are protection gaps, regional systems can draw on the UN or indeed other regional systems to interpret how the provisions of human rights instruments apply to children.

Complaints can be brought before regional human rights systems in situations where all legal avenues at national level have been exhausted, or in cases where the complainant has been prevented from seeking justice. For example, in January 1999, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights heard a case concerning the murder of five street youth in Guatemala, three of whom were under 18 years of age. It ruled that the State of Guatemala had violated numerous Articles of the American Convention of Human Rights[89].

4.4. Domestic legislation and implementation of the CRC

Countries that have ratified the CRC and the other international treaties are obliged to modify their domestic legislation so that it is in harmony with international standards, and put in place measures through which the treaties can be implemented, including appropriate structures, data collection, awareness raising and training, policies, programmes and services.

Countries vary widely in the degree to which their domestic legislation is in harmony with the CRC. Once legislation has been passed, mechanisms have to be put in place to enact and enforce them. This can be challenging and can take time, and often government officials do not have the training or resources necessary to put them into practice.

The Committee on the CRC reviews the situation of street children as appropriate under different sections of its reporting format, and specifically under the section on Special Protection. The Committee frequently comments on the progress of countries in securing the rights of street involved children. For example, in its 2010 Concluding Observations to Bangladesh, it noted its long-standing concern about the rising number of street children, their vulnerability to trafficking, their inappropriate treatment by the judicial system as vagrants, and the lack of appropriate alternative care facilities. It also noted the inconsistency of various aspects of Bangladeshi law concerning the protection of child workers and its juvenile justice system.

In response to these criticisms, the Bangladeshi Government has prepared a draft national child policy, the key legislative aims of which are: to consider the ratification of international and regional treaties to which it is not yet a party; to harmonise national legislation with the CRC and other international standards for children; and to take appropriate action to enforce legislation related to children. Critical gaps in legislation remain in the areas of child labour, juvenile justice and alternative care.

4.5. Conclusions on opportunities for change in legal frameworks

Given the paucity of specific references to street involved children in international human rights instruments, it is recommended that the Committee on the CRC develops a General Comment on "Non-discrimination and Street Children" in order to provide more

detailed guidance to States Parties. It is proposed that the General Comment contain guidance on prevention and how the economic, social and cultural rights of children should be respected, protected and fulfilled. It should also include guidance on how the autonomy of children to react to their circumstances can be reconciled with their right to protection.

As children's movements between countries sometimes play a role in precipitating street involvement, regional human rights bodies and sub-regional entities such as ECOWAS should develop regional frameworks to ensure legal protection for children from other countries, and should collaborate to improve the safety of children who migrate across borders.

Judicial reviews of national legislation and its enforcement need to be conducted by governments to establish where the gaps are, and steps taken to harmonise legislation with the CRC and improve enforcement. The changes that will make the most difference to the lives of street involved children, and the advocacy goals that civil society should pursue, will depend on the context.

Jessica from the Nicaragua team training for the Street Child World Cup held in South Africa in March 2010. Street Children from eight countries came together to play in the cup, each national team has to include at least one girl. Plan / Shona Hamilton.

81 The CRC guiding principles are: the best interests of the child (Art. 3); non-discrimination and inclusion (Art. 2), the right of all children to life, survival and development (Art. 6) and participation (Art. 12). The theme of the evolving capacities of the child is found in Art 5.

82 See the Consortium for Street Children http://www.streetchildren.org.uk/ for more information.

83 Information on the CRC and its Optional Protocols can be found at: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/index.htm; or www.crin.org

84 The General Comments of particular relevance to street involved children are: HIV and the Rights of Children (3), Adolescent Health (4), Treatment of unaccompanied and separated children outside their country of origin (6), The right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel and degrading forms of punishment (8), The Rights of Children with Disabilities (9)to Children's Rights in Juvenile Justice (10).

85 UN General Assembley. (2010). Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children. Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly.

86 The key non-binding instruments providing guidance on juvenile justices are:
• Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules);
• Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (the Riyadh Guidelines);
• Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (the Havana Rules);
• Vienna Guidelines for Action on Children in the Criminal Justice System;
• The Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment No. 10 (2007) on the rights of the child in juvenile justice.

87 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime (Trafficking Protocol), adopted November 15, 2000.

88 For more information on regional mechanisms, see CRIN: http://www.crin.org/law/mechanisms_index.asp

89 Extracted from International action against child labour: Guide to monitoring and complaints procedures, Anti-Slavery International, 2002. Available to download from www.antislavery.org

5. APPROACHES TO POLICY AND PROGRAMME WORK WITH STREET INVOLVED CHILDREN

Interventions to address the issue of street involvement by children are generally categorised according to the following programme phases:
- prevention (work to 'stem the flow' of children onto the streets);
- protection and support (interventions to address the rights of children on the streets);
- rehabilitation (activities aimed at supporting children to stabilise their lives)
- reintegration (returning them to their families or placement in an alternative setting).

Overall, the programme budgets of the organisations that participated in the survey were fairly equally distributed between these four programme phases.

Effective prevention and response to child street involvement needs to be based on adequate research into the causes and nature of children's involvement on the streets. Children's active participation in the development of interventions designed to assist them is crucial, as is the collaboration and coordination of efforts by families, communities, civil society and government.

5.1. Applying research to policy and programme work

The need for programmes to be based on an in-depth understanding of the causes and process of street involvement, and the experiences of different groups of street involved children has been reiterated throughout this report. It is therefore important to explore how organisations working with street involved children use research to inform their work, and also to complement the findings of a mapping and gapping exercise on academic research of street involved children being conducted at the same time as this study[90].

Around 86% of the organisations participating in this report

use research in their work. 66% use their own studies; 74% those of other NGOs; and 50%, research from either government or academic sources. A list of the publications referenced by participants as most important to their work is at Annex II. The predominant source of research used by organisations is the Internet. The limited use of journals means that organisations working with street children probably make very little use of the wealth of academic research that exists on street involved children to inform programme design[92].

Just over half of the organisations who produce their own research use it as the main source of guidance for their programme designs. This research, however, consists mainly of situational assessments and evaluations, rather than empirical research.

Around 37% use their research to inform their advocacy efforts. These organisations describe research as being used to bring together policy makers, practitioners and academics to understand the situation of street involved children, and better inform national policy making.

Organisations disseminate their research largely through electronic publications and websites; around half publish their research in printed form. Most organisations state that other I(NGO)s, donors and governments would benefit from accessing their research, but doubt that universities and research institutions would benefit. This tends to confirm the view that development and academic research are conducted independently and do not inform each other.

5.1.1. Future plans for research

Organisations participating in the survey have plans to conduct research on the scale of street involvement by children, and on ways to expand and improve service provision, case management and interagency family reintegration processes. A network of NGOs
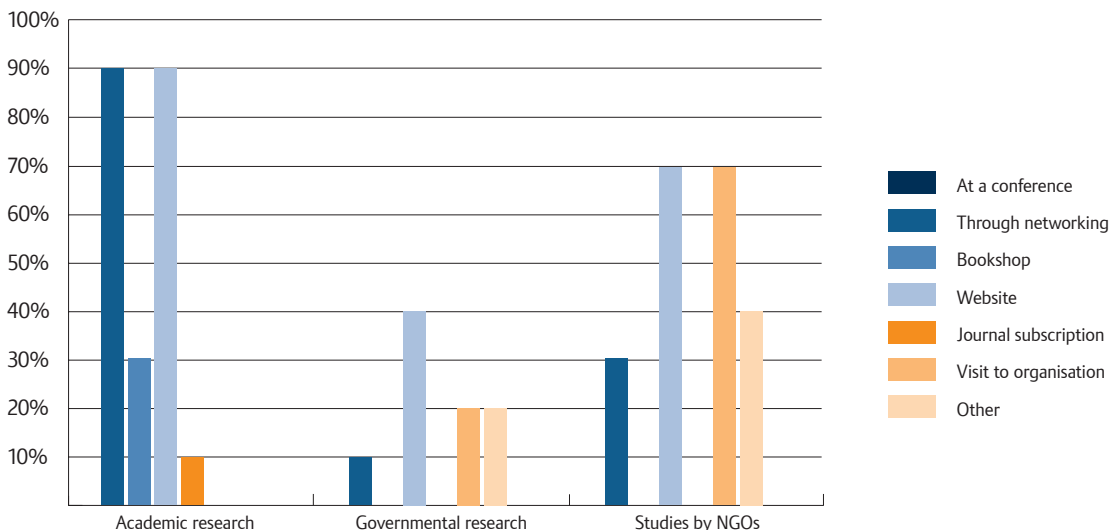

Figure 3: Sources of different kinds of research used by organisations

Children eating snack on bridge over Dhaka slum. Photo from the Bangladesh street children project 'Through our own Eyes' (Plan/Kamrul).

and grassroots partners is also working with SOAS to develop a research programme in Africa to ensure street involved children are integrated into child rights initiatives.

5.2. Children's participation in policy and programmes

Children's participation should be integrated into all stages of the project management cycle at both group and individual level. Dr Sarah Thomas de Benitez further concludes that, as standard practice, children should also participate as informants and co-researchers in research about themselves[92].

Organisations participating in the survey state that the participation of street involved children in policy and programme development and implementation continues to prove challenging. There are particular difficulties in facilitating the participation of groups that are not yet involved in agency initiatives, that are less visible and harder to reach.

Some organisations support children to form their own groups and clubs, and involve them in decisions about activities undertaken in the centres. CHETNA in India has facilitated the formation of peer support groups, and has federated these groups into an organisation called 'Stepping Forward' that has 2,500 members. Stepping Forward builds the capacity of its members, and advocates for street children's issues to service providers and policy makers.

There are also wider networks of children that include street children in some countries and regions. For example, the African Movement of Working Children and Youth was set up in 1994 with support from ENDA Third World. It consists of 1,020 grass-roots groups at the neighbourhood or village level, and 126 associations located in the towns and cities of 21 African countries. It has 148,194 members who are mainly housemaids, apprentices, small vendors, and working children and youth in streets and markets. The activities of the movement include training for members,

support to their livelihoods, and participation in lobbying and campaigning on child rights issues.

5.3. Family and community based approaches of prevention and response

Ideally, programmes of prevention and response should be implemented in an integrated manner in which families and communities are supported to care adequately for their children (thus preventing street involvement), and to accept the reintegration of children who have already been active on the streets. Preparation of a family and community to receive back a young person who has spent time on the streets is an important opportunity to raise awareness of the rights of all children, and the dangers of the street. Periods of intensive individual family support may be necessary to prevent street involvement of children at specific risk, and to facilitate reintegration of children.

In communities in which street involvement is a common phenomenon, children's and community groups can be formed to identify children at risk of moving onto the street, and trigger support to these families. They can also support and befriend young people who have returned.

Positive community attitudes towards the least advantaged children and their families need to be built by raising awareness of their circumstances and their rights, and by promoting community action and responsibility for their wellbeing. Community interest groups and local organisations should be developed to manage activities and community based services for children, with the participation of all groups of children and youth.

5.4. The accountability of governments

Governments have the primary responsibility to establish the conditions in which the rights of all children can be realised, and in which families and communities are able to care effectively for

Haitian brothers with photo of their sister who died in last years earthquake (Gideon van Aartsen/Plan).

children. The wide range of preventive measures mapped out in Chapter 7 depends largely on government efforts to establish effective pro-poor poverty reduction programmes and social services that are inclusive of poor and marginalised children, families and communities.

Governments have ultimate responsibility for the realisation of the rights of street involved children. Although many governments do not have the capacity to work directly with street involved children, civil society organisations could collaborate with governments to strengthen their capacity in the following areas:

- Monitoring the situation of street involved children, and developing and implementing national strategies and plans of action for the realisation of their rights.
- Including information on the situation of street involved children in reports to the Committee on the CRC and other treaty bodies
- Developing national child protection and child welfare systems sensitive to the rights of street children to care and protection
- Addressing the rights of street living families and children in urban renewal programmes
- Training the police, judiciary, health staff and social workers on the rights of street involved children, and how to treat them in non-violent ways
- Coordinating the work of government and non-government agencies that work with street involved children, and establishing standards and good practices.

5.5. Building quality and coordination among government and non-government organisations

In many contexts there is a lack of coordination, quality, monitoring and evaluation of the services provided to street involved children. In Egypt in 2006, UNICEF conducted a survey of 24 organisations, and found that less than half had the minimum capacity required to provide adequate services. Specialist street children organisations themselves point to the lack of clear evidence based models and quality standards, a lack of coordination between and among government agencies and civil society organisations, and competition for funds (and children!). In response to this, UNICEF and Plan work together with street children organisations and local government to build capacity, identify good models of practice and promote coordination and networking.

Individual organisations working with street involved children have difficulties in responding appropriately to boys and girls of different ages, and to the wide range of different situations in which children find themselves on the streets. One organisation described a participatory needs assessment during which children's expectations were raised, only to disappoint them with the services that the organisation could realistically support.

Coordination between organisations working in the same locality helps to expand the range of services that organisations can offer together to different groups of children. There is also the need for networks to be developed with organisations working in different areas of the country to facilitate the safe return of children to families which may be many miles away.

Coordination and collaboration is also necessary to strengthen advocacy efforts. Some of the larger specialist street children organisations experience difficulty in engaging with generalist child focused agencies. These organisations, however, have an important role to play in ensuring that the issues confronting street involved children are addressed within a broader context.

5.6. The role of the media

The media has a significant impact on how governments and societies respond to street involved children. Extensive media coverage in some countries during the Street Child World Cup portrayed street children as champions, and has encouraged governments and societies to consider these children as citizens with potential. In other countries such as Nepal, however, the media has focused on the most visible behaviours of a small number of children which has resulted in a government initiative to 'eliminate' street children.

Child focused and street children organisations have the responsibility to monitor media portrayals of street involved children, to raise awareness of the media of children's rights and the harm that negative reporting can do, and to engage the media in positive portrayals of children.

5.7. Support to human and financial resource development

Working effectively with street involved children requires experience and skills, but there is a lack of resources for staff training, which can lead to 'burn out' and high turnover. In addition, in many countries physical punishments of children is a social norm.

Staff need training, both in working with street involved children generally, and specifically in positive methods of discipline. The establishment, application and training of staff on child protection policies by street children organisations is critical.

Organisations participating in this research highlight the lack of resources for initiatives supporting street involved children. This has, perhaps, dictated the type of initiatives which can be implemented. Centre-based approaches, for example, can impact on a larger number of children, and are therefore seen as more 'cost-effective', rather than individual case management which may be more effective but will reach fewer children when funding is constrained. Funders, with NGO support, need to consider what impact they are trying to achieve and what that really costs.

Many national specialist street children organisations have been dependent on international child focused organisations to sustain their activities. As the agenda of these organisations shifts to broader issues, there is a risk that the specialist organisations may find it difficult to maintain their level of activity. Specialist organisations may need to develop more comprehensive and systematic strategies for working on street involved children's issues, which demonstrate the links with international funding priorities, such as MDGs and HIV/AIDs, and describe the benefits and cost-effectiveness of their interventions.

International child focused organisations could consider supporting specialist organisations to develop resource mobilisation strategies to access funds and resources from a range of sources, including the government and the private sector.

5.7.1. Budgets for children

The social sector is extremely poorly resourced in many countries. Government budgets for children's care and protection and street involvement are extremely small. Child budgeting can be used as a tool to lobby for increased government spending in this area.

Child focused budgets began as a way of linking macroeconomic development with children's rights[93]. The process of developing children's budgets provides opportunities to analyse what is being spent on children generally, but also highlights groups of children, or issues, which are under-funded or not included at all.

In considering the financing of children's services, governments should review the cost of maintaining the status quo versus child welfare reform. NGOs can play a useful role in supporting governments to conduct comprehensive cost-benefit analyses. Existing costs related to street involved children include: the institutionalisation of those who are without parental care, imprisonment of children who come into conflict with the law, costs to a country's economy of children reaching adulthood without adequate education or jobs, and the social costs of children reaching adulthood with emotional and mental difficulties. These can be balanced against the costs of reforming the existing child protection and child welfare systems, and the benefits of children remaining with their families, completing their education and becoming productive adults who are able to care adequately for their children.

Exercises such as this have proved successful in some countries in Central and Eastern Europe where NGOs have been advocating for a reform in child welfare to prevent children being placed in institutions. Whilst there is a not a large body of literature comparing the costs of community based care with the costs of institution-

alization, research[94] does indicate that reforms can result in cost savings for governments. This has proved persuasive in achieving change.

5.8. Conclusions on approaches to policy and programme work with street involved children

The importance of adequate participatory research into the experience and relationships of street involved children as the basis for effective programming and policy work is clear. Currently practitioners are not benefitting from academic research on street involvement, and a gap exists between development research and academic research. Steps on how to bridge the gap have been proposed by Dr Sarah Thomas de Benitez[95].

Challenges still exist for organisations in understanding the scale of street involvement (the 'numbers' issue addressed in Chapter 2), and in accessing and understanding the situation of hard to reach children. Collaboration between development practitioners and academics could help address these issues.

Greater opportunities are needed for street involved children, particularly the hard to reach, to participate in their own protection, in the design of interventions that assist them, and in lobbying for their rights to policy makers.

There needs to be increased integration of prevention and response with the promotion of a sense of responsibility by families for the care and protection of all children, and support by communities for the reintegration of street children within their families.

In general there is a lack of quality, coordination, and monitoring and evaluation of the services provided to street involved children. Larger organisations can play a critical role in facilitating coordination between and among government agencies and NGOs, the development of models of best practice and quality standards, and in the establishment of systems of monitoring and evaluation.

Financial resources for working with street involved children are constrained. Child budgeting is a useful tool in lobbying for increased support by government to child care and protection. In the future, specialist street children organisations may need to show the relevance of their work to broader development priorities, such as the MDGs, to gain funding.

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90 Thomas de Benitez, S. (2011: forthcoming) State of the World's Street Children: The Research London: Consortium for Street Children.

91 ibid.

92 Thomas de Benitez, S. (2011: forthcoming) State of the World's Street Children: The Research London: Consortium for Street Children.

93 Working with Street Children: Exploring Ways for ADB Assistance, ADB 2003.

94 Carter, Richard. 2005. Family matters: a study of institutional childcare in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union: London: EveryChild; Center for Fiscal Policy. Analysis of Long Term Economic Impact of Child Welfare Reform in Tomsk Oblast. 2007. Moscow: Center for Fiscal Policy; Tobis, David. 2000. Moving from Residential Institutions to Community Based Social Services in Central and Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union. Washington DC: World Bank.

95 Thomas de Benitez, S. (2011: forthcoming) State of the World's Street Children: The Research London: Consortium for Street Children.

6. POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES FOR PREVENTING STREET INVOLVEMENT

Prevention is problematic because it involves stopping an event from happening (the street involvement of a child), therefore its success is difficult to prove. As has already been discussed, the definition of street involvement is difficult to establish and is a relatively rare event. It may therefore be difficult to see the impact of broad based social welfare programmes on prevention.

Organisations participating in this research report that they work on the following areas of prevention:

- livelihood interventions for parents to reduce the need for children to work, and offering crèche facilities so mothers can work;
- support to families to reduce the level of violence in the home and possibilities of family breakdown;
- awareness raising with families on the reality of life on the streets;
- ensuring children return and/or remain in school;
- efforts to change perceptions and awareness targeted at increasing the visibility of children living alone and needing care and protection within the community.

Preventive programmes should therefore be divided into two types. 'Developmental prevention' refers to those programmes which provide a range of facilities and services that support poor families and communities to care for their children and improve their quality of life, thus reducing social exclusion, the likelihood of family stress and breakdown and the conditions that lead to street involvement. These programmes are necessary to provide an enabling environment in which the rights and interests of all children can be secured.

'Responsive prevention' refers to those programmes which involve more focused strategies that target specific families and children who are thought to be at particular risk of street involvement[96]. Through their years of experience of working with street children in Latin America, JUCONI identified these children and young people as being from families 'who lack the emotional, cognitive and economic resources to access services, and do not participate in their local community'. They are therefore not reached by government services or by community based NGO programmes, and much more individualized approaches are needed[97].

6.1. Developmental prevention: reducing vulnerability and social exclusion

Programmes of developmental prevention address the main causes of street involvement that were outlined in Chapter 3.

6.1.1. Poverty reduction and social protection

Since the World Summit for Social Development in 1995, poverty reduction has been the overarching objective of development, reflected in the MDGs and in the target of halving extreme poverty worldwide by 2015. Progress towards this target has been largely dependent on economic growth in China and East Asia. In many countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, the absolute numbers of people living in poverty have increased, and any gains that have been made are being threatened by the global economic crisis and by climate change.

It is now being recognized by intergovernmental organisations that, rather than a narrow economic view of poverty reduction, a broader approach is needed that focuses on sustainable economic growth, that integrates social and economic policy, and that is inclusive and pro-poor. There also needs to be a greater focus on social protection, health, education and job creation for the poor[98].

The international development agenda is dominated by efforts to achieve the MDGs. There is evidence to suggest that one of the issues that has impeded the achievement of the MDGs is their lack of explicit reference to the care and protection of children[99]. There has also been a failure to reach marginalized groups through economic and social programmes[100].

This understanding of the need for a change in approach provides an opportunity for NGOs to lobby for the rights of marginalised groups of children in poverty reduction and social protection policies by the international development community and by governments. There is also the opportunity to advocate for a post MDG agenda that more fully recognizes children's rights and interests. One such effort is being spearheaded by a group of organisations led by EveryChild[101].

Civil society organisations contribute to poverty reduction through a range of livelihood activities. Many of these, however, require contributions and assets from the participants that have precluded the participation of poor families. For example, very poor families seldom have the assets to set up their own businesses, and are unable to maintain the repayments that are required by micro-finance programmes based on the Grameen Bank methodology. Alternative livelihood methodologies, such as Village Savings and Loans, are now used extensively by many organisations. They provide flexible savings based approaches that allow very poor families to participate. The Village Savings and Loans method has been adapted by Plan for working with particularly vulnerable young people, including street and working children, in Sierra Leone and Egypt.

6.1.2. Urban renewal

UN-HABITAT has a range of programmes to improve the urban environment, such as its Safer Cities and Slum Upgrading Programmes. It has also launched a Sustainable Urban Environment Development Network, which is a network of global partners working with a multi-lateral and inter-disciplinary approach to sustainable urban development. The aims of the network are to build the capacities of national governments, strengthen the power of local authorities, and promote the inclusion of the community in the decision-making process.

The renewal of the urban slums, and the recognition of street living families and children's right to shelter is an essential, though

Children living at Plan-supported care centre for street children in Haiti (Gideon van Aartsen/Plan).

neglected, component of the prevention of street involvement. Only one of the street children organisations participating in this research, Concern Worldwide in Bangladesh, stated that it worked with street families. There is scope for civil society organisations to lobby for the interests of street dwelling families and their participation in urban renewal programmes.

6.1.3. Social protection

Research indicates that social protection can contribute to relieving poverty and addressing vulnerability and social exclusion in developing countries. If appropriately designed, it can be effective in improving the wellbeing of children and decreasing their risk of exploitation and abuse. In 2009, a group of UN organisations, international NGOs and academic organisations issued a joint statement on child sensitive social protection with recommendations on how programmes should be designed[102].

In Bangladesh, children who were orphaned or made vulnerable following 2007's Cyclone Sidr were assisted through a pilot initiative entitled Amader Shishu (Our Children) implemented by the Department of Social Services with support from UNICEF. This scheme targeted the seven most-affected sub districts. Families were provided with monthly cash transfers and local government social workers were trained to provide case management, including referral to services. There are plans to scale up this pilot initiative in urban areas.

In Egypt, studies have shown that the range of social subsidies provided by the government does not adequately reach their target population. NGOs have a role to play in lobbying government to improve the design of their social protection programmes, in assisting families to claim their entitlements, and in promoting the responsiveness of government departments to the poorest families.

6.1.4. Education for All

The Education for All (EFA) Movement was launched at the Dakar World Education Forum in 2000. Six goals were agreed, the second of which is particularly relevant to street children because it aims to ensure that by 2015 all children, including those in difficult circumstance, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

It is unlikely that the EFA targets will be met by 2015. The recent EFA report points to the threats to progress from the global economic crisis and the failure of donors to provide promised funds[103]. It particularly highlights the failure to reach marginalised groups, and proposes measures by which this gap can be filled. These include reducing cost barriers to education, developing 'second chance' programmes, providing increased support to disadvantaged schools, and instituting social protection programmes that enable school attendance.

One issue not highlighted in the EFA 2010 monitoring report is the detrimental role that violence plays in schools. A high level of violence in schools was identified by the UN Study on Violence Against Children. It is a major contributor to school drop out, especially by girls. Through its Learn Without Fear campaign, Plan targets three of the most common forms of violence in schools: sexual violence, bullying and corporal punishment. Plan's campaign dovetails with other international efforts to reduce violence in homes and schools, such as the Campaign to End All Corporal Punishment Against Children.

6.1.5. Children on the move

The concerns of children have been largely ignored in international policy on migration, the assumption being that they accompany

their parents. Among international children's organisations, the main focus of attention related to child migration during the 1990s and early 2000s was on child trafficking. This agenda failed to set the issue of trafficking in the context of the broader picture of children's movements, with and without their families, and within and between countries. Children move for many reasons and in many circumstances. These need to be understood in order to take measures to secure children's safety at all points on their journey, including minimizing the risk that they will end up on the streets at their destination.

A number of international child focused organisations are now exploring the issue of children on the move. UNICEF has several pieces of research underway, including looking at the link between migration and environmental degradation and climate change. Save the Children has provided guidance to organisations working with children on how children on the move can be protected, and makes a series of recommendations to governments and the relevant intergovernmental agencies[104].

In 2008, eight intergovernmental organisations and NGOs formed a common platform in West Africa for researching and understanding child mobility. Research has been conducted across twelve countries. This is now being synthesised in order to produce a document that will define the positions and recommendations of the platform. Initial findings have pointed to the assertion that even though mobility may have a beneficial impact on children, it also increases their vulnerability.

6.1.6. Violence against children and child protection systems

The UN Secretary General's Study on Violence Against Children was presented to the UN General Assembly in October 2006. The study examined violence at home and in the family; in school and educational settings; within the care and justice systems; and at work and within the community.

In 2009 the UN Special Representative on Violence against Children was appointed as an independent voice and global advocate to promote action on the findings of the study, and learning on best practices. In addition, the Committee on the CRC has now started to question States Parties about their response to the findings and recommendations of the study.

The first recommendation of the study was that 'all States develop a multi-faceted and systematic framework to respond to violence against children which is integrated into national planning processes'. This recommendation has stimulated government and non-government organisations to examine how they can work towards the development of comprehensive national child protection systems, rather than addressing violence against children on an issue-by-issue basis. The development of integrated child protection systems is crucial for preventing the separation of children from their families due to violence, for reducing violence against children on the streets, and for facilitating appropriate care for homeless street children.

The development of integrated national child protection systems in developing countries is in its early stages, though there are some examples of progress. In Bangladesh, the Protection of Children At Risk (PCAR) project is being implemented by the government in collaboration with local NGOs and UNICEF. It ap-

plies UNICEF's global Child Protection strategy to the Bangladeshi context, and focuses on strengthening child protection systems through the development of necessary legislation, policies, services and capacity building.

Some international organisations, such as Save the Children and UNICEF, are now focusing their support to child protection on the development of comprehensive and holistic national child protection systems[105]. Research is being conducted into how child protection systems can be evolved that are appropriate to the developing country context, and existing systems are being mapped in order to identify gaps.

In resource poor environments, national child protection systems are not able to reach to the community and family level, yet children's experience of family life seems to be the key determining factor of street involvement. It is therefore critical to develop community based responses to violence against children that help families to protect their children. In Malawi, Plan has supported the development of community responses to child protection linked to the formal child protection system, and the integration of children's participation at all levels of the child protection system[106]. This includes support to families on parenting and positive methods of discipline.

6.1.7. Children without parental care

International concern about children without parental care has arisen over the last decade due to the large numbers of children being orphaned worldwide by the HIV and AIDS pandemic, and by the increase in the numbers of children being placed in institutional care, particularly in Eastern Europe and Central Asia following the collapse of the USSR. Concern about the lack of adequate guidance on the care of children without parental care[107] led to the production of Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, which were

Boys on Cairo street (Plan/Benno Neeleman).

adopted by the UN in 2010[108]. Children without parental care are defined as: all children not in the overnight care of at least one of their parents.

EveryChild focuses its work on children without parental care[109]. It recognises six categories of children without parental care[110], of which street living children are one. The other categories are situations that street involved children may have come from (such as living in a child headed household), or may go to (such as being placed in detention). EveryChild defines 15 principles of good practice based on the CRC for working with children without parental care, all of which are relevant to work with street involved children.

The concept of children without parental care provides a useful lens through which to view street involved children. Adequate alternative care of children who lose their parents or guardians is an important measure to prevent them from being forced to live on the streets. The UN Guidelines are an important tool with which to lobby governments for the provision of appropriate alternative care options, and to guide civil society in developing appropriate care for children. They make it clear that the use of residential care for children should be the last resort, though in many countries there are few other options. In Bangladesh and Egypt, for example, there is a reluctance to consider alternative care options due to perceived constraints of Islamic law.

Social welfare departments are often very poorly funded and they do not have the resources to establish effective alternative care options. In many cases NGOs step in to fill the gap in the provision of alternative care for children, though they can only offer this to a small minority of those who need it.

6.2. Responsive prevention: targeted approaches to children at direct risk of separating from their families to live on the streets

Responsive prevention requires a detailed understanding of the causes and process of the separation of children from their families and of street living, as well as a clear definition of those who are at risk.

When JUCONI reviewed the results of its community based programmes of prevention in Puebla, Mexico, it concluded that these were not reaching the children and families who were most at risk of street living[111]. JUCONI reformulated its approach and targeted the families and younger siblings of those children who were already street involved, providing a flexible and individualized approach to each family. JUCONI works intensively with the families of street involved children, generally over a period of 18 months, with follow up thereafter. The aim is to enable families to provide a supportive and stable environment for their children, facilitating the reintegration of children who have already separated if this is in their interests, and preventing the street involvement of siblings.

6.3. Conclusions on strategies for prevention

'Developmental prevention' efforts, in the areas of poverty reduction, social protection and basic service delivery, to prevent the social conditions that create the risk of children becoming street involved need to be more clearly focused on the problems and issues of the poorest and most marginalised children.

The recognition of the need for a change in approach to the achievement of the MDGs provides an opportunity for NGOs to lobby for attention to the rights of poor and marginalised children who are at risk of street involvement. There is also the opportunity to lobby for a post MDG agenda that more fully recognizes children's rights to care and protection.

The newly emerging areas of 'children on the move' and child protection systems provide the opportunity for NGOs to take part in research and policy development, and to lobby and support governments to establish comprehensive national child protection and child welfare systems that reduce the levels of violence experienced by children that contribute to them leaving home for life on the streets.

Child protection and care is greatly under-funded by governments. The use of children's budgets and cost analysis can be used to lobby for the needed increases in funding.

The prevention of the street involvement of children through 'responsive prevention' needs to be based on a clear identification of the families at specific risk, and requires individualized support to these families.

A wide range of policy areas have potential impact on the prevention of street involvement by children. The priorities for advocacy depends on the national context and the particular issues that underlie street involvement in that context.

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107 International Social Service, UNCEF. (2004). Improving Protection for Children without Parental Care. A Call for International Standards. A Joint Working Paper.

108 UN General Assembly. (2010). Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children.

109 EveryChild. (2009). Every child deserves a family: EveryChild's approach to children without parental care.

110 The categories of children without parental care recognised by EveryChild are: children living in residential care; children living in alternative family-based care; children living in child only households; children placed in detention; children living on the streets without their parents; children living with their employees or exploiters.

111 Lane, A. (2000). Identifying ad responding to the high risk population: JUCONI's prevention programme. In: Resource Pack. Consortium for Street Children and University College, Cork.

7. POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES THAT RESPOND TO CHILD STREET INVOLVEMENT

Girls taking part in Street Child World Cup attend Plan workshop (Mary Matheson/Plan).

Following their ratification of the CRC, during the 1990s many governments developed National Plans of Action for Children. Under these plans, the rights and issues of street involved children were dealt with as one of the groups of vulnerable children needing protection. Street involved children are now generally being included in policies and plans for national child protection systems. Some governments have specific national strategies or action plans for street involved children. Responsibility for child protection and street involved children is usually placed within the social welfare department.

Most governments spend a tiny proportion of their budgets on child protection and child welfare. Due to under-development under-funding of social work in many countries, social welfare departments are often relatively weak. They have limited influence in multi-disciplinary policy groups that coordinate children's issues, with the result that child protection and the wellbeing of street involved children have a low priority on the agendas of most governments.

In most developing countries, government agencies do not have the systems or capacity to work directly with street involved children, though they do have ultimate responsibility for monitoring their situation, developing action plans to address their rights and coordinating their implementation, and setting standards for services with street involved children. Specialist civil society organisations usually provide direct services to street involved children.

As was discussed in Chapter 2, many international organisations are moving away from supporting programmes that focus specifi-cally on street involved children, including them instead under broader concepts and programme frameworks, such as children on the move or child protection. However, specialist organisations continue to be needed to interact with children as they live and work on the streets. There may be challenges for funding and for policy and advocacy space in the future, and there is a danger of specialist organisations becoming isolated.

Efforts will need to be made to maintain coordination and ensure that the specific issues confronting street involved children are adequately addressed. For example, the Consortium for Street Children, an international membership organisation, develops policy on street involved children, runs campaigns and promotes the rights of street children within broader policy issues.

7.1. Working with street involved children

Organisations working with street involved children generally aim to provide a phased approach to rehabilitation and reintegration by supporting them to stablise their lives and find alternative life options. There is general agreement that the overall aim of organisations working with street involved children should be to make every effort to re-connect children with the systems of care available to them within their families and communities[112].

Some organisations stress the importance of distinguishing between different groups so that activities can be better targeted. JUCONI, for example, identifies and focuses its activities on three groups of children and their families; street living, street working,

and market working children. It also recognize that children who have spent different periods of time on the streets have different issues and require different responses.

In practice, however, many organisations do not make a clear distinction between the provision of services for street living, street working and children from street families. Children from all three groups participate in street outreach activities and in drop-in centres, though clearly residential facilities are aimed at homeless street living children.

There is a danger in street working children becoming involved in activities that replace the care and protection provided by their families, and that further loosen their ties with their communities. Resort to residential care may replace efforts to fully explore care and support options with the extended family and community. The involvement of families and communities in prevention and response as described in Chapter 6 is very important to reduce these risks.

Due to the complexity of children's lives and the routes by which they have arrived on the streets, practitioners stress the importance of an individual case management approach, particularly in the areas of rehabilitation and reintegration.

Services for street involved children began with the first groups of children who appeared on the streets, who were mainly teenage boys. The situation is now more complicated, and there needs to be further research and the development of models to address the rights and issues of: street involved girls, street living families, babies born on the streets and youth over the age of 18.

7.2. Intervening early

A significant number of organisations target children newly arrived on the street. These children are frightened and very vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. For example, girls may be quickly picked up and trafficked into commercial sex work. Newly arrived children have not yet become accustomed to the streets, and some regret their decision to run away. Early interventions are therefore important for children's protection, and in order to take advantage of their willingness to consider returning to their families or accepting other care options.

In India, many children move about by means of the extensive railway network, and use the station environment as a place to live and work. Plan works with CHETNA on its Dreams on Wheels programme in which children living at the stations are facilitated to form peer support groups, which are trained to identify newly arrived children and offer them emergency support and referral to the staff of the organisation[113].

7.3 Street outreach

Street outreach work involves staff and volunteers engaging with children where they are, in order to build trust and develop relationships. Teams provide support and advice to children on the streets and may conduct educational and recreational activities with them. They support them in accessing health care and also refer them to other services, such as drop in centres and residential shelters.

Where possible, contact may be established with families and communities, and attempts made to strengthen family and commu-

nity care for children. This is particularly important for street working children who retain links with their families, though they may be reluctant to provide information about their home backgrounds.

Some NGOs emphasize the importance of the attitude of outreach workers, and the need to accept children's reality and support them to live on the street, rather than pressuring them into accepting centre-based support. West notes the importance of harm reduction and protection by providing children with information about the risks they face, such as in relation to sexual activity and drug taking, and how to minimise these[114].

Organisations may establish regular activities on the streets in places frequented by street involved children, such as the 'open air school' of Aparajeyo Bangladesh. Other organisations, such as El Horrea in Egypt, use mobile units that visit areas frequented by street involved children on a regular basis. They offer a wider range of services, such as simple health care, counselling, informal education and recreation.

Special efforts are required to make contact with children working in sensitive areas, or those that are generally not visible, such as commercial sex workers and domestic workers. This is outside the scope of most street children organisations.

7.4. Centre based approaches

Centres based approaches include those, such as drop in centres and night shelters, that provide services and support to children while they continue to live and work on the streets, and residential shelters where they are engaged full time in education, vocational training and other activities. Organisations provide counselling, life skills training, education, health care, savings, vocational training, recreation and sports.

In some cities there has been a proliferation of drop in centres offering food, washing facilities, clothing and recreational facilities, sometimes resulting in a 'competition' between agencies for children. There is a danger that these centres simply equip children to continue their lives on the street and lead to children 'shopping around' for the best deal, while failing to help them consider their situation and what the alternatives might be. This welfare approach is expensive and may be difficult to sustain, and has been rejected by some organisations like CHETNA in India, which does not provide the daily needs of children, but focuses on their protection

Girls learn maths at vocational training center for street children at the Egyptian Association for Community Development facility in the Fostat area of Old Cairo (Plan).

and participation in improving their own situations[115].

Children stay in residential facilities in the short or long term while they participate in activities that develop their skills to engage with the mainstream of society, and while reintegration with their families or alternative living arrangements are sought. There are risks of the institutionalization of children in these residential facilities, particularly if they stay for prolonged periods, and risks that they will simply return to the streets when they become too old to remain. The UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children view the placement of children in institutions as the last resort, if no other options are available[116].

7.5. Specific areas of support to street involved children

7.5.1. Building resilience – counselling, life-skills, recreation and sports

The link between violence and children leaving home to live on the streets is well recognized. However, the need to address the trauma resulting from these experiences as part of supporting street involved children is much less evident. JUCONI and a number of other agencies in Latin America have joined forces as the Safe Families, Safe Children coalition to draw attention to children's experiences of violence, the impact on them in terms of precipitating separation from their families, and the crucial importance of intensive counselling, both individual and family therapy, in order to support effective resolution of trauma-based issues[117].

Many NGOs provide more broad-based psychosocial counselling and practical advice, designed to assist street involved children in managing their situations and the challenges they face in their everyday lives. Street involved children typically describe feelings of low self-esteem, lack of self-confidence, a sense of worthlessness, shame and stigmatization, and it is important that they are supported, through individual inputs and participation in programmes designed to increase their life and coping skills, to develop a positive self-image and the capacities to manage their situation.

Participation in recreational, sports and cultural activities can also assist children to develop self-esteem and a level of social interaction that will support their overall development. However, as JUCONI and other commentators point out, without addressing underlying issues of trauma for those children that have experienced violence and abuse, the effectiveness of such practical support may be limited.

7.5.2. Health

Many NGOs provide simple health care, health education and support in using the government health system to street involved children. Attitudes of health staff are often negative, and some NGOs offer them training on children's rights and how to work with street children.

Support to girls for their reproductive health needs is particularly important, as they may be refused attention if they try to access services on their own. Street children are at increased risk of HIV and AIDS, but testing them is problematic in many countries and involves ethical dilemmas.

Shoe shine boy working in Haitian market (Plan/Mary Matheson).

7.5.3. Education

Government agencies and NGOs have developed a variety of non-formal education opportunities to meet the learning needs of street involved children. These include simple educational activities conducted on the street, non-formal education classes, and the facilitation of children's participation in formal education. A variety of different options are necessary in order to accommodate different educational backgrounds, and to allow children to become accustomed to learning again. The linking of non-formal education systems to formal education in terms of entry requirements is critical in allowing children to re-engage in the formal sector.

Aparajeyo-Bangladesh, for example, operates a four-tier educational system for street involved children. 'Open Air Schools' are open for two hours each day in strategic parts of the city, such as at railway stations, bus terminals and markets. Literacy and numeracy classes are provided in drop in shelters. Those demonstrating a commitment to a more stable life are referred to a residential shelter where they receive non-formal education and skills training. Finally, support to enter formal education or vocational skills training is provided for those who have the aptitude.

7.5.4. Protection

Street involved children interact with a range of people including their peers, gang leaders, employers and the police. Mapping exercises can be done with children to explore their social networks, and determine which relationships are harmful and which provide protection. White provides an example of such a tool[118]. On the basis of the mapping, decisions can be made with children about how to involve different groups of people in activities to reduce their risks and promote their protection. CHETNA in India, for example, raises the awareness and conducts training of station staff, vendors on the station and the police on the rights of street involved children, and actively collaborates with the railway authorities for the protection of children.

Many street involved children are in conflict with the law, and are vulnerable to abuse by the judicial system. Judicial systems in developing countries are often ill-equipped to deal with juveniles, who are usually held in cells with adults and tried in open court. Probationary systems also provide inadequate support to children. In addition, crimes against the children are seldom punished.

The collaboration of street children organisations with specialist legal organisations is crucial to both supporting children who are accused of crimes, and filing cases against those who perpetrate crimes against the children. This process, however, may be traumatizing to the child and needs to be done with care and in accordance with his or her best interests.

The CSC has launched an international campaign to address violence against street involved children entitled 'Realising Rights: Stop Violence Against Street Children'. This is calling for:

• Training and sensitisation of police in street children's rights, needs and protection issues
• Decriminalisation of so-called status offences
• An end to all round ups of street involved children
• Awareness-raising campaigns on violence against street children

Specialist street children organisations welcome the moves towards the development of comprehensive child protection systems approach in developing countries. This can be a vehicle by which governments and NGOs can address street involved children in a more holistic manner. There is a need for networks of specialist street children organisations to work collaboratively with child protection committees at each administrative level to ensure that the protection issues of street involved children are adequately addressed.

7.5.5. Child Helplines

Child Helplines have proved an effective means of linking children with services at times of crisis, and of stimulating the development of more effective and comprehensive child protection services. The child help line movement has grown rapidly.

In 2003, Child Helpline International (CHI) was established as a global network of child helplines with the aims of responding to the needs of children for protection and care, voicing their concerns to policy makers and providing support to individual helplines. CHI has established principles and standards of practice, and works with the telecommunications sector to channel new technology. Helplines need to be coordinated with child protection systems in responding to children in crisis.

7.5.6. Livelihood

The lack of education and job-related skills of most street involved children means that vocational training is an important component in preparing older children and youth for alternatives to street work. The quality of vocational training provided, however, is patchy.

There is often not a clear differentiation between activities that are conducted for recreation, like crafts, and training that will be useful in finding a job. Many organisations do not base their vocational training schemes on an assessment of the job market, or provide trainees with a qualification that will help them find work[119].

Plan in Egypt has adapted the Livelihoods Advancement Business School (LABS) model of vocational training developed by Dr Reddy's Foundation, one of Plan's partners in India, to the Egyptian environment in the shape of a model called FORSA. The vocational training programmes are based on labour market assessments and include literacy, numeracy and lifeskills training. They are followed by supervised job placement and the provision of necessary tools and materials. Four street involved youth were included in the first batch of young people to participate in the scheme.

Developing the skills and providing the facilities for children and young people to save is another important aspect of improving their livelihood prospects. Plan in Egypt uses the Aflatoun model of social and financial literacy with child workers, and will introduce this to its partners working with street involved children in the future. Similarly, Plan in Egypt and in West Africa has been working to adapt the Village Savings and Loans methodology for the participation of street and working youth.

Aparajeyo-Bangladesh has set up a Children's Development Bank[120] which is available both within their drop in centres and through their outreach service. Figures from 2009 show that of 714,000 taka invested in the savings account (around $10,000) only 38,000 taka ($542) was withdrawn during that year[121], demonstrating the enthusiasm of children to save their money if provided with the means to do so. Loans are also available to children with the Aparajeyo-Bangladesh model, but only for groups who wish to set up a business or project.

7.6. Expanding children's choices for the future

Where it has become possible for children to stabilize their lives, they can be assisted to plan their future. An understanding of the views and perspectives of each child is very important if solutions are to be sustained. The instinct of many separated children, often with good reason, is to resist the idea of reintegration with their families, and this possibility needs to be raised with sensitivity. The Consortium for Street Children identifies a 3 Stage Choice Process to guide those who work with children[122]. The three stages are:

Understanding choices: Staff need to understand why children have made the choicest that they have. Often children have chosen life on the street as preferable to a life of abuse at home.

Expanding choices: Staff then help children to expand the range of choices that are open to them, such as reunification with their families, living in a group home or taking up a job that is less hazardous.

Empowering children to make choices: children are helped to think through their options and make choices themselves.

Feeny argues that ultimately children have the right to remain on the street if they feel that is the only option for them[123].

7.6.1. Reintegration

In recent years there has been a focus away from long term centred based rehabilitation towards the development of methods for family and community reintegration[124]. This was reflected in the responses of participating organisations. Many described clear reintegration processes that had met with success. They operate either individually or through a network of partners to assess the possibilities of a child returning home, and then implement an after care service, for example, by helping families access social protection or providing basic support directly. One organisation describes a success rate of 20% of children being reintegrated, and another links a substantial drop in the number of street living children with the success of their reintegration processes. Given challenges of

successful reintegration, this is a real achievement.

Reintegration does not necessarily mean that children will return to live with their parents, as this may not be feasible or appropriate. Options to stay with other members of the family or alternative family-type environments, where these exist, should also be explored. The process of reintegration is very important, and Feeny provides concrete and detailed guidelines[125]. Both the child and the family need to be prepared, and progress followed after the child is placed with a family. It is time consuming, requires specialist skills, and in practice is often not managed well on the ground.

Some organisations establish family homes where children can stay for as long as they need until they are either reunited with their families or can become independent. Aparajeyo-Bangladesh and Padakhkhep in Bangladesh both provide alternative care for children who are unable to reintegrate with their families and who wish to continue with their education.

Not all organisations participating in the interviews, however, are keen proponents of reintegration. A few feel that reintegration is possible for only a small proportion of children who are living on the street. Some children cannot or do not want to return home or be provided with an alternative family-type environment. In these circumstances children, they argue, should be supported to continue to live independently.

7.6.2. Supporting independence

Young people may be supported to live independently through vocational training and job placement, or to live with their families but be able to bring in an independent income. Livelihood development is also important for street working young people who are still living with their families and who need to contribute to the family.

7.7. Conclusions on policies and programmes that respond to child street involvement

Coordination between generalist child focused organisations and specialist street child organisations needs to be maintained to ensure that the issues confronting street-involved children are addressed within broader agendas.

There needs to be further research and the development of models to address the evolving nature of the situation on the streets to encompass the wider range of age groups, the increase in girls, and children from street dwelling families.

Services for street involved children need to adopt an individual case management approach, that takes full account of the views and perspective of the child in order to tailor responses to the specific needs and issues of each child and his or her family.

The objectives of centre based interventions need to be clear in order to avoid the risks of further weakening children's ties with their families, drop in centres sustaining children to stay on the streets through the provision of their daily needs, and the institutionalization of children within residential shelters.

The protection of street involved children needs to be integrated within national child protection and child welfare systems. Urgent attention also needs to be paid to developing juvenile justice systems in which children's rights and best interests are respected and protected, and in developing systems of alternative care for children following UN Guidelines.

112 James-Wilson, D. (2007). Building Bridges to Mainstream Opportunities. Displaced Children and Orphans Funding Guidance on Funding Priorities and Parameters for Street Children Programming. USAID.

113 Ray, P., Carter, S. (2007). Understanding and Working with Children in the Poorest and Most Difficult Situations. Plan.

114 West, A. (2003). At the Margins: Street Children in Asia and the Pacific. Poverty and Social Development Papers. No. 8. Asian Development Bank.

115 Ray, P., Carter, S. (2007). Understanding and Working with Children in the Poorest and Most Difficult Situations. Plan.

116 UN General Assembly. (2010). Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children. Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly.

117 'Manifesto for Change' Safe Families, Safe Children – an International Coalition, 2010.

118 White, S. (2002). Being, Becoming and Relationship. Conceptual Challenges of a Child Rights Approach in Development. University of Bath.

119 Nielsen (2010) Report on Evaluation of Street Children Development Project, The Nielsen Bangladesh for Plan Bangladesh, August 2010.

120 This model is based on a similar one operated by Butterflies in India.

121 Aparajeyo-Bangladesh 2009 Annual Report.

122 Wernham, M. (2004): An Outside Chance. Street Children and Juvenile Justice – an International Perspective. Consortium for Street Children.

123 Feeny, T. (2005). In Best or Vested Interests. An Exploration of the Concept and Practice of Family Reunification for Street Children. The Consortium for Street Children.

124 James-Wilson, D. (2007). Building Bridges to Mainstream Opportunities. Displaced Children and Orphans Funding Guidance on Funding Priorities and Parameters for Street Children Programming. USAID.

125 Feeny, T. (2005). In Best or Vested Interests. An Exploration of the Concept and Practice of Family Reunification for Street Children. The Consortium for Street Children.

8. MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. Inform programmes through in-depth understanding of street involvement and an evidence base for programme effectiveness

Children's involvement with the street is a complex phenomenon that is not always easily understood, the response to which requires a multi-level and multi-disciplinary approach. Programmes in many settings tend to focus on the most visible groups, usually homeless street living boys in their early and mid-teens. However, in most contexts the majority of children using the streets live at home, the age range has widened to include young children and older youth, and the numbers of girls and street dwelling families has increased. Girls and boys of different ages and children with disabilities have very different experiences of being on the streets, as do children engaged in particular activities, such as forced begging or commercial sex work.

It is now clear that participatory research and planning processes with children, their families and communities, should be used as a standard of good practice to gain understanding of children's experiences, and to design and tailor interventions to assist them. It is particularly important that opportunities are given for girls and boys and children of different ages to express themselves separately, and for hard to reach groups to participate.

Many organisations have difficulties in capturing the short and long-term outcomes of their programmes with children, including possible unintended negative outcomes. There is therefore a lack of evidence both about the effectiveness of different interventions, and on which the development of minimum standards and best practices can be based.

It seems that most practitioners use development research to inform their work. However, the wealth of available academic research, particularly concerning children's experiences of street involvement in different contexts, is used to a very limited extent. Identified gaps in academic research include the use of longitudinal studies to understand how children's relationships to the streets

Mother and child sleeping on Dhaka street. Photo from the Bangladesh street children project 'Through our own Eyes' (Plan/Sujon).

evolve and to inform strategies for prevention and response, and a lack of policy research and engagement with policy makers to improve policy-making related to street involved children[126].

Recommendations

- Programmes need to be based on a clear understanding, gained from participatory research, of the experiences of different subgroups of street-involved children, the environments in which they live and the people with whom they interact.
- Improved methods for researching, monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of programme interventions on children, including unintended negative outcomes, need to be developed.
- A body of policy research needs to be developed to inform engagement with policy makers on policy development related to street children.
- There needs to be greater collaboration among and between development practitioners and academic researchers to coordinate research efforts and ensure that they are used to inform practice.

8.2. Improve the use of a flexible individual case management approach

The factors that lead to street involvement are complex and highly personal, and each child has a different and unique life experience. A flexible individual case management approach to working with street involved children is therefore necessary.

Staff need to work with individual children to understand their life experiences, and to reach a clear agreement and plan on what they are trying to achieve together in terms of future options. This will help to ensure that interventions have clear developmental objectives, rather than simply supporting children to continue their lives on the street through providing welfare.

It has also been found that an individual approach is often necessary to provide support to poor and marginalised families whose children are at specific risk of street involvement and separation from their families. Intensive work with individual families over a period of time may be necessary to enable them to provide adequate care and protection to their children, to find alternatives to street living and working, and to establish their links with community-based sources of support.

The prevention and response of children's recourse to the streets may involve the need to find appropriate alternative care options for children without parental care. The UN Guidelines on Alternative Care of Children provide importance guidance on how to achieve this, and reinforce the need for approaches tailored to the situation of the individual child.

Organisations need to be equipped with the methods, skills and support to staff and volunteers that are necessary to apply an individual case management approach, including the establishment of monitoring and evaluation systems that track the progress of individual children. Work at the individual and family levels needs to be integrated with generating wider support for street involved children and their families on the part of community groups and

organisations. Strategies may include involving community volunteers to work with street involved children and their families.

Recommendations

- Services for street involved children need to be responsive to the situation of each child through an individual case management approach, particularly when supporting rehabilitation, reintegration and alternative care for children. Alternative care options must be in line with the UN Guidelines on Alternative Care.
- The prevention of family separation and street involvement by children at specific risk may require intensive support to individual families.
- Monitoring and evaluation systems need to be developed to track outcomes in relation to individual children.

8.3. Place street involved children more firmly on international and national development agendas

There is growing recognition that development efforts need to be more clearly focused on, and inclusive of, the poorest and most marginalised groups. In particular, one of the main barriers to the achievement of the MDGs is felt to be their lack of focus on marginalised groups, and their lack of attention to the care and protection of children. There is therefore the need to lobby for greater attention to marginalised children in efforts to achieve the MDGs through pro-poor poverty reduction, social protection, health and education policies, and a post MDG agenda that more fully recognizes children's rights to care and protection.

Street involved children are protected by the provisions of the CRC, and the Committee on the CRC questions States Parties on the situation and response to street involved children. However, their issues are not specifically addressed by the CRC, by other international human rights treaties, or by Regional human rights treaties. It is therefore recommended that the Committee on the CRC should be called upon to develop a General Comment on "Non-discrimination and Street Children" in order to provide more detailed guidance to States Parties. Regional human rights bodies and sub-regional entities such as ECOWAS should develop regional frameworks to ensure the legal protection for children from other countries, and collaboration to improve the safety of children who migrate across borders.

Organisations need to work together to review government legislation and policies that impact on street involved children, and identify: the points at which these are not in accordance with children's rights under the CRC, the advocacy efforts that are already being conducted, and the issues on which organisations can contribute.

At national level, governments should be called upon to implement sustainable, pro-poor poverty reduction and child sensitive social protection programmes, with a focus on marginalized groups and urban renewal programmes that recognize the right of street dwellers to shelter.

The situation of street involved children should be monitored to support the development and implementation of national strategies and plans of action for the realisation of their rights. Information on the situation of street involved children must be included in reports to the Committee on the CRC and other treaty bodies.

Promoting the use of children's budgets and cost analysis will serve as a means of advocating for increased budget allocation by governments to child protection and care.

Recommendations

- Lobby for greater attention to socially excluded and marginalised groups of children in efforts to achieve the MDGs, and for full recognition of the importance of child care and protection in the post MDG agenda.
- Call upon the Committee on the CRC to develop a General Comment on "Non-discrimination and Street Children".
- Lobby for regional human rights bodies and sub-regional entities such as ECOWAS to develop regional frameworks to ensure the legal protection for children from other countries, and improve the safety of children who migrate across borders.
- Review government legislation and policies that impact on street involved children and identify priorities for advocacy, including whether the government is effectively monitoring and reporting the situation of street involved children, and has planned, implemented and adequately funded national action plans for the realisation of their rights.

8.4. Build the capacity of different actors concerned with the prevention and response to street involvement

Children should be the primary actors in matters that affect them. The resilience of children to cope positively with their situation and protect themselves can be strengthened through children's groups, training in peer support, lifeskills, counselling, recreational activities, and access (not necessary physical) to adult decision-making forums at all levels with appropriate accountability mechanisms. Collaboration and joint activities between children who are street involved and those from their communities who are not can have positive impacts on the social inclusion of street involved children.

Family capacity to care for and protect their children, and to help them access educational and livelihood alternatives to life on the streets, can be strengthened through early childhood development, parenting classes, literacy and livelihood opportunities, and by promoting access to government subsidies and social protection programmes. The capacity building of families with children at particular risk of street involvement, and those whose children return after living on the streets, may require intensive individual support.

Increasing community sense of responsibility and capacity to support and protect socially excluded children, including street involved children and their families, is necessary to create an environment in which the rights of all children are respected. This can be done through promoting the rights of all children, and training adults (including parents, community leaders, teachers, police, health staff and employers) to listen to, and work appropriately with, street involved children.

National and local civil society has a crucial role to play in working with, and promoting, the rights of street involved children. It can support children, families and communities to research and develop models of intervention that are effective and appropriate for different groups of street involved children, and to advocate local and national government for the rights of marginalized groups

and the adoption and scale up of effective models.

As the agenda of larger child focused organisations shifts to broader concepts and programme frameworks, there is a risk that street children's issues get lost, and specialist organisations may find it difficult to maintain their level of activity. The development of resource mobilisation strategies through which government and private sources are tapped is necessary to sustain organisational support to children.

Recommendations

- Develop children as the main actors in realising the rights of street involved children through their active participation and building their resilience and capacity to protect themselves.
- Build the sense of responsibility and capacity of families and communities to care and protect all children, including those that are street involved.
- Develop resource mobilisation strategies by civil society organisations to sustain their support to street involved children.

8.5. Integrate the response to street involved children within national child protection systems

The UN Study on Violence Against Children stimulated activity by developing country governments to establish comprehensive national child protection and child welfare systems that address the right of all children to protection, including the development of alternative systems of care for children without parental care.

These systems are becoming the main vehicle through which governments work with street involved children. It is therefore critical that there are adequate mechanisms for the issues of street involved children to be addressed within these child protection systems, and for coordination and collaboration between specialist street children organisations and child protection committees.

Street involved children experience a high level of violence, often as a precipitating factor for recourse to the streets, while on the streets, from the judicial system and in child-care institutions. Staff who work with street involved children need to be trained in non-violent methods of working.

In many resource poor countries, national child protection systems are unable to reach the community level. Civil society organisations can support community responses to child protection and develop the skills and capacity of children to participate in their own protection. These efforts need to be linked to formal child protection systems.

Child protection systems also need to be able to respond to children's protection rights in emergencies, and in the face of long term stresses such as the HIV pandemic.

Recommendations

- National child protection and child welfare systems that are sensitive to the rights of street children to care and protection are needed, and should be adequately funded to operate effectively.
- All actors within these systems (police, judiciary, health staff and social workers) need to be trained on the rights of street involved children and how to treat them in non-violent ways.
- Civil society organisations need to support community respons-

es to child protection and children's participation, and facilitate their linkage with national child protection systems.
- Child protection and care must be integrated into humanitarian work in the context of conflict and natural disasters, and in the prevention and response to HIV and AIDS.

8.6. Improve coordination and collaboration

Child street involvement occurs as a result of a wide range of factors. Street involved children experience multiple deprivations and rights violations before, during and after their involvement in the streets. Addressing street involvement therefore necessitates the coordination and collaboration of a wide range of actors. No one organisation is able to provide the range of services needed by different groups of street involved girls and boys. Coordination and collaboration among specialist street children organisations is necessary to expand the range of services available to children. Coordination between organisations working in urban and rural areas is necessary to facilitate reintegration of children with their families and communities. Organisations also need to collaborate to develop quality standards and best practices.

Coordination and collaboration is also necessary to strengthen advocacy efforts, and present a united and stronger voice to government. As mentioned in the preceding section, collaboration between street children organisations and child protection committees is critical to maintaining the interests of street children on the child protection agenda.

Specialist street children organisations have an important role to play in ensuring that the issues confronting street-involved children are addressed within the broader agendas with which the child focused organisations are now engaged.

Recommendations

- The phenomenon of street involvement in each context requires significantly improved coordination and collaboration within the NGO sector, and between NGOs and government, in order to ensure that the widest possible range of services is available to address the needs of different groups of street involved children.
- Government and civil society organisations should collaborate on the establishment of standards and good practices for government and non-government agencies that work with street involved children.
- Advocacy efforts should be strengthened by coordination and collaboration between civil society organisations.
- Organisations working in rural areas on issues of childhood migration need to link with those working in urban areas on childhood safety, to reduce the levels of vulnerability that arise with mobility.
- Specialist agencies working with a particular focus on street involved children, or children without parental care, need to collaborate with generalist child focused organisations to ensure that their issues are included in broader agendas.

126 Thomas de Benitez, S. (2011: forthcoming) State of the World's Street Children: Research. London: Consortium for Street Children.

ANNEX I: LIST OF ORGANISATIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE RESEARCH

Members of Youth Builders of Knowledge group in Brazil (Plan/Leo Drummond).

Organisations participating in the survey

Agence Française de Développement
Amazing Children Uganda
Amos Trust/Street Child World Cup
Aviva plc
Child Welfare Scheme (CWS)
Dhaka Ahsania Mission
Don Bosco Mission
ECPAT International
Enda Jeunesse Action
International HIV/AIDS Alliance
Jubilee action
Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

Oak Foundation
Plan International
Railway Children
SOS Kinderdorf
Stepping Stones Nigeria
Street Action
StreetInvest
Students Supporting Street Kids
Toybox
Trust in Children (TiC)
University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)
University of Dundee

Contributors to interviews

Emily Delap, Global Policy Adviser for Everychild
Andres Gomez de la Torre, Director of Programmes, Everychild
Louise Meincke, Advocacy Manager, Consortium for Street Children
Leo Borg, Fundraising and Partnerships Manager, Consortium for Street Children
Felix Holman, Director of Programmes, StreetInvest
Savina Geerinckx, Director of Overseas Programmes, Street Child Africa
Bill Bell, Head of Child Protection, Save the Children UK
Jonathan Blagborough, Exploited Children Adviser, Save the Children UK
Terina Keene, CEO, Railway Children
Alison Lane, Director, JUCONI, Mexico

ANNEX II: RESEARCH RECOMMENDED BY ORGANISATIONS WORKING WITH STREET INVOLVED CHILDREN

Research publications which have been most useful to organisations: **Research publications organisations would recommend to others:**

Academic research

Title	Author	Title	Author
The moral economy of the peasant, rebellion and subsistence in South East Asia	James C. Scott	Working with Street Children: Exploring Ways for ADB Assistance.	Judith Ennew (ADB, 2003)
At the Margins: Street Children in Asia and the Pacific	Andrew West (ADB, 2003)	Youth, Violence, and Public Policies	UNHABITAT
Recent work by Comic Relief and street children own experiences	Rachel Burr	Vulnurabilidad y Grupos Vulnerables	Jorge Rodríguez Vignoli
Enfants mendiants dans la région de Dakar	UNICEF	Fortaleciendo vínculos de la comunidad educativa	JUCONI
Early work	Judith Ennew	'Street Children: promising practices and Approaches' WB working paper	Elena Volpi

Development literature

Title	Author	Title	Author
Research by AFESIP and Friends International		Situation of young people in India (not title)	Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
Protect for the Future	EveryChild		
A chance for every child: How a focus on children can help DFID achieve equitable progress on the Millennium Development Goals	Child Rights Working Group		
Missing: Children without parental care in international development policy	EveryChild		
Policy Brief: Family strengthening and support	Save the Children		
Butterflies Programme of Street and Working Children Delhi Street and Working Children's Participation in Programming for their Rights	Claire O'Kane		
Off the Radar	Railway Children		
Strengthening connections in the educational community	JUCONI		
Les strategie de prises en charges et de travail avec les enfants défavorises			
Joint Learning Initiative on children and HIV and AIDS	Sudhanshu Handa, Stephen Devereux, Douglas Webb		
UN Study on Violence against Children and studies prepared for the World Congress III	Prof. Hartwig Weber (University Heidelberg)		
Child Friendly Schools	UNICEF		

Boys selling goods on Dhaka street. Photo from the Bangladesh street children project 'Through our own Eyes' (Plan/Sujon).

ANNEX III: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SURVEY

Your name

Name of your organisation (where relevant)

Location: Country

Location: Town/City

Type of organisation you work with
1.Local or national NGO
2.International NGO
3.Donor
4.UN/Interagency body
5.Research body/university
6.Other

Briefly, what are your organisations aims and objectives related to street involved children?

How does your organisation define street involved children?

How does your organisation define the street?

In which countries do you implement programmes/funding for street involved children?

With which groups of street involved children do you work?
1.children newly arrived on the street
2.railway children
3.talibe
4.children who beg on the street
5.children living with street families
6.children with disabilities living and/or working on the street
7.street girls
8.street boys
9.Other

Who are your partners in your programmes with street involved children?
1.NGOs
2.Government
3.UN/interagency bodies
4.Research/academic institutions
5.Judiciary
6.Other

Briefly describe what your organisation does on the following:

1.   Preventing children from becoming street involved

2.   Protecting and supporting children who are already street involved

3.   Rehabilitating street involved children (interventions which enable them to recover from the experience of being street involved)

4.   Reintegrating street involved children (interventions which enable them to return to families, family type environments or integrate independently in communities)

What is the balance between the above interventions? Express these in the percentage of budget allocated to the interventions

Prevention _____

Protection _____

Reintegration _____

Rehabilitation _____

In what ways do you use the following main rights based strategies in your programmes?

Service delivery

Capacity building

Advocacy for policy and systems change

Research and learning

At what levels does the programme mainly operate?

1.Community and district level

2.National

3.Regional

4.International

How far have you incorporated a rights-based approach into your programmes with street involved children?

1.Fully

2.To a large extent

3.To a reasonable extent

4.Not at all

Briefly describe any challenges you have experienced in incorporating a rights-based approach into the programmes

Please indicate how far street involved children are involved in programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation?

	Fully	To a certain degree	Not at all
Programme design			
Implementation			
Monitoring and evaluation			

What have been the three key outcomes and/or impact for street involved children?

Have there been any unintended negative impacts of the programme?

What have been the main challenges that you have encountered in your work with street involved children?

What significant changes have you seen in legislation, policy, programming and practice at a national or an international level for street involved children in the last five years?

How did this major change come about?

What is the focus of your funding portfolio with regard to programmes working with children?

1.Geographic

2.Thematic

3.Type of grantee (e.g. local NGO, INGO etc.)

4.Other

Please describe your portfolio for programmes working with children

In the last five years, how much have you contributed to programmes which have a direct or indirect impact on street involved children?

What significant changes have you seen in legislation, policy, programming and practice at a national or an international level for street involved children in the last five years?

How did this major change come about?

What have been the three key outcomes and/or impact for street involved children as a result of your funding?

Have there been any unintended negative impacts of the programmes you have funded?

What have been the main challenges that you have encountered in your work with street involved children?

What has been the primary focus of research you have undertaken on street involved children?

What was the outcome of the research you undertook?

What were the key learnings from the work?

Does your organisation use research in your work?
1.Yes
2.No

Which kinds of research does your organisation use in its work?
1.Academic research (research associated with a University)
2.Governmental research (research published by government or intergovernmental agencies)
3.Studies by NGOs
4.Research from your own organisation
5.Other

Which academic author, book or study is most useful to your work today?

Where did you access this research?

1.Academic journal subscription
2.Bookshop
3.At a Conference
4.Through networking
5.Other

Which, if any, other academic studies would you recommend to an organisation like yours?

Which governmental publication is most useful to your work today?

Where did you access this publication?
1.Government or intergovernmental office
2.Website or other internet source
3.At a Conference
4.Through networking
5.Other

Which, if any, other governmental studies would you recommend to an organisation like yours?

Which piece of NGO research is most useful to your work today?

Where did you access this research?
1.Visit to the NGO
2.NGO website or other internet source
3.At a Conference
4.Through networking
5.Other

Which, if any, other NGO studies would you recommend to an organisation like yours?

Does your organisation use its own research principally to inform
1.Your services or programmes
2.Your advocacy
3.Your networking
4.Other

How does your organisation disseminate its research?
1.Printed publications
2.Electronic publications
3.Website, blog or other electronic media
4.Other

Which kinds of organisation would benefit from access to your research?
1.Local or national NGOs
2.International NGOs
3.Donors
4.Governments
5.Universities
6.Interagency bodies
7.Other
Which other piece of research is most useful to your work today?

Where did you access this research?
1.Journal
2.Bookshop
3.Website or other internet source
4.At a Conference
5.Through networking
6.Other

Which, if any, other studies of this kind would you recommend to an organisation like yours?

What will be the main focus of your programming/funding/research on street involved children over the next five years?

What do you consider will be the biggest factors over the next five years which will put children at risk of becoming street involved?

Which groups of children do you consider will be at the greatest risk of becoming street involved in the next five years?

Geographically, where do you see the greatest need for programming and funding on this issue in the next five years?

What do you see as the three key challenges in the next five years affecting programming on, and funding, street involved children?

What key issues related to street involved children do you think should be discussed at the Human Rights Council session in March 2011?