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# **Streetchildren and Gangs in African Cities:**

**Guidelines for Local Authorities**

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The picture that appears on the cover of this publication was taken with kind permission from UNICEF/UNCHS (Habitat)'s publication entitled, "Children's Rights and Habitat": Report of Experts Seminar, New York, February 1996. The picture is a reproduction of an oil canvas original painting by Nelci Carmelo, a 14-year-old street child from Santos, Brazil. The painting is entitled, "The Child Thinking the City". According to Nelci, the painting is a reflection of the life of children in the streets.

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# Foreword

The problem of street children is a comparatively new phenomenon in Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa is currently the least urbanized region of the developing world, with less than 30 per cent of the population living in cities. It is catching up fast, however, and is currently experiencing the highest urban growth rates in the world.

It is widely believed that urbanization and economic growth are linked and they are regarded as important features of national economic development. However, rapid urbanization also poses enormous challenges for the urban social and physical environment, particularly in terms of the widespread poverty that results from the rapid urbanisation process. According to estimates from the African Development Bank, 42 per cent of the total number of households in Africa are living in poverty. Many of the urban poor live in slum and squatter settlements with overcrowded, unhealthy housing and a lack of basic services. It is here that the majority of a city's youth and children live.

Many children, in a bid to escape from these appalling living conditions, have turned to the streets in search for opportunities. The rapidly-growing number of street children has left many local authorities helpless, a situation which calls for urgent attention and action. So far, most street children programmes are run by NGOs or national institutions. The majority of the programmes are remedial as they only serve the children on an ad-hoc basis, by providing food, clothing and occasionally shelter and health services. These initiatives, which "treat symptoms", have to be complemented by programmes which also address the causes of "streetism".

The guidelines in this publication are an outcome of the Urban Management Programme and UNCHS (Habitat)'s efforts, within the Global Campaign for Good Urban Governance, to bridge the knowledge gap in this important area and to improve the understanding of the urban manager on how local authorities can better deal with the ever rising number of street children and gangs.

This publication is based on more than ten years of practical experience of the first author in dealing with street children in cities of Eastern and Southern Africa, during which she has pioneered a holistic rehabilitation approach for street children and gangs which has found wide replication within many cities of sub-Saharan Africa.

I hope these guidelines will promote further understanding and raise awareness on the issue of street children and be of immediate practical use to local authorities throughout Africa, and in other regions of the world, in their efforts to improve the living conditions of street children and gangs. After all, children of today are the future and city authorities need to devote special attention to the problems of children and youth.

Dinesh Mehta  
Coordinator, Urban Management Programme

# Executive Summary

The problem of street children is well documented in Latin America and South-East Asia. However, in Africa it is a comparative by new phenomenon. Sub-Saharan Africa is currently the least urbanized region of the developing world, with about 30 percent of the population living in cities. Catching up fast, Africa is currently experiencing the highest urban growth rates. Local authorities in Africa are increasingly confronted with a rising number of street children and all too often do not quite know how to deal with this growing problem.

It is thus the objective of this report to provide guidelines for local authorities in Africa on how to deal with street children in their cities. This is done by:

- Providing an overview of the issue of street children in general;
- Providing an overview of the issue of different roles local authorities can play when addressing the issue of street children.

Street children refers to children in urban areas who have completely or partially ruptured family ties and engage in various survival activities on the streets. To the general public, these children are considered a nuisance. Obviously, extreme deprivation and social exclusion create opportunities for crime involvement. However, little evidence exists to suggest that street children actively or deliberately plan criminal activities. They perceive themselves as discriminated against and hated.

There are different categories of street children. The first classification refers to children on the streets. These are children who maintain good family ties and often return home in the evening. The second classification refers to children of the streets. These are children with loose family contacts who spend some nights or days, or part of the day on the streets and occasionally go back home. The third category is closely related to the second category, and refers to children who are completely detached from their families and live in gangs in temporary makeshift shelters. Lately a new category of street children is emerging; children whose parents are also street children/adolescents i.e. children of street families. Street children depend less on their families. Instead they rely more on the meaningful ties they have established within their groups or gangs.

There are two basic roles performed by gangs of street children. These are maintenance and task-oriented functions. The maintenance functions involve mechanisms that foster harmony and discourage conflict members of the groups. Task functions, on the other hand, involve activities that direct the group towards the individual contributions pertaining to various income generating activities they undertake while on the streets. The need for identity is one of their goals. They find security and relief from life's anxieties within their groups.

Street gangs often live and operate in designated territories. Gangs of street children also specialize in given activities. Gangs that are involved in begging, pick pocketing and prostitution operate in certain strategic areas. Normally the differentiation of functions (roles) within a group allows for organized division of effort within the group and enhances group effectiveness.

NGOs have been at the forefront in initiating the most innovative approaches addressing the street children problem. However, most NGO initiatives are only remedial, and provide

short-term solutions. Community-based human settlement improvements in slums and squatter settlements have the greatest potential for preventing potential street children by re-integrating them into their neighborhoods.

Local authorities have a major role to play in improving the living conditions of street children and gangs. The main framework for improving the living conditions for children is set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in four broad areas: survival, development, protection and participation. There are two possible levels of intervention by local authorities; first through working with the affected children directly (addressing the symptoms), and secondly, by providing preventative services and programmes to the community where the children come from (addressing causal factors.)

Both the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as well as the Habitat Agenda provide a mandate for local authorities to promote the rights of children. These can broadly be categorized either as active or passive rights. Active rights relate to provision of goods and services such as housing, schools and health care facilities. The latter include the right not to be imprisoned without trial, and freedom from discrimination based on sex, race, or religion. Local authorities need to secure these rights as part of their responsibilities in securing sustainable future cities.

A strategy and plan for local authorities on how to deal with street children and gangs could focus on the following important issues:

- Interpret national policies, formulate local policies and develop city-wide plans;
- Mobilize resources;
- Conduct research and collect information;
- Create awareness and conduct advocacy;
- Provide services and devise child-centred development programmes;
- Coordinate initiatives and build partnerships;
- Monitor and evaluate progress.

Next to interpreting international and national policies, local authorities also have the opportunity of formulating their own policies that are specifically aimed at improving the living conditions of street children and gangs. Most local governments have policies that outlaw the existence of slum and squatter settlements. These settlements, therefore, do not receive any basic services as part of the official policy. Unless such unequal distribution of resources is stopped, it is conceivable that the number of working and street children will continue to grow. The first step involves re-orientation of the local authority's policies to ensure equitable distribution of resources and a more efficient provision of services and increased finance through investment and revenue. A second step focuses on targeted services provision and resources to street children and gangs and families in especially difficult circumstances.

All suggested activities aimed at improving the living conditions of street children and gangs require resources. Local authorities in developing countries are increasingly finding it difficult to provide services to all their residents, especially the urban poor. However, they have the opportunity of mobilizing both local and international resources, expanding local authority revenue and taxation base and devising alternative ways to provide services e.g. through forming partnerships with NGOs, the private sector and other stakeholders.

Information generated through research is important as it enables local authorities to know more about the situation, characteristics, feelings and problems in the everyday life

of street children and gangs. This will ultimately lead to initiatives aimed at improving the living conditions of children in a more effective manner.

Awareness campaigns are a very important vehicle to help us better understand children on the streets and local authorities to better respond their needs. Awareness can be created through murals, animated cartoon vehicles, t-shirts, community forums and publications. Sectoral departments which do not directly deal with children but whose activities impact on children's lives have to be sensitized to understand the importance of their activities to children's well being.

Three strategies are identified for local authorities in providing services to street children:

- Strengthening and improving sectoral service provision
- Promoting integrated approaches; and
- Devising programmes for street children/gangs and families living in especially difficult circumstances

Most local authorities in Africa tend to provide services along sectoral lines (i.e. committees or departments aim at providing a particular service) rather than adopting an integrated approach. However, as seen before, the perceived needs of communities and children are often integrated, requiring a cross-sectoral approach.

There is a need, therefore, for local authorities to shift from their traditional role of providing services along sectoral lines to a more flexible approach based on the perceived needs of urban communities, including children. This implies that various local government committees and departments should be sensitized to understand the connection between various services they provide and how these affect children. The local government should, therefore, assume the overall managerial role of controlling and directing the activities of others in the whole urban development process. This also requires building partnerships with other actors in the city providing community services e.g. the central government, private sector and NGOs.

Coordination is a process, which involves sharing of information on activities, policies, strategies and even carrying out joint programmes and projects. Although many people see the need to coordinate, it is not always easy to bring together agencies with different organizational policies and programmes to work together.

Monitoring is the periodic collection and analysis of information according to selected indicators. It is the guidance system that keeps resources, activities, strategies and objectives on track. It involves the collection of necessary information on the progress of activities and finding out whether the activities in the action plan are taking place as prescribed. Indicators monitoring street children can be developed at the global level allowing for country and city comparisons and at the local level to respond to the specific situation of a city as expressed by all stake holders.

# CONTENTS

1	Introduction .....	1
1.1	Background and Objectives.....	1
1.2	Urbanization and Street Children in Africa .....	1
1.3	Why Should Local Authorities Deal with Street Children and Gangs? .....	4
1.4	Local Authorities Action for Street Children: A SWOT Analysis.....	6
1.5	Structure and Presentation.....	7
2	Understanding Street Children and Gangs .....	9
2.1	The Image and Life of Street Children .....	9
2.2	Definition of Street Children .....	13
2.2.1	Categories of Street Children and Gangs .....	13
2.2.2	Street Gangs.....	13
2.2.2.1	The Role of Street Gangs .....	13
2.2.2.2	Features of Street Gangs .....	14
2.3	Initiatives to Rehabilitate Street Children and Gangs .....	16
2.3.1	General Overview .....	16
2.3.2	Working with Street Gangs.....	16
3	Understanding Local Authorities in Africa .....	19
3.1	The Structure of Local Authorities in Africa.....	19
3.2	Providing Services for Children’s Well-being.....	20
4	Framework, Strategy and Plan for Local Authority Action .....	23
4.1	International Policies and Initiatives.....	23
4.1.1	Introduction .....	23
4.1.2	The Child-friendly Cities Initiative.....	24
4.2	Considering Child Development Issues .....	25
4.3	A Framework for Local Authority Action .....	26

4.4	A Strategy and Plan for Local Authority Action .....	27
5	Mobilizing Resources .....	31
5.1	Introduction.....	31
5.2	Reviewing and Analyzing Available Resources.....	31
5.3	Strategy for Mobilizing Resources .....	33
6	Policy Formulation.....	36
6.1	Introduction.....	36
6.2	Interpreting International and National Policy .....	36
6.3	Formulating Local Policies.....	37
6.4	Children’s Participation in Policy Formulation.....	37
7	Conducting Research and Collecting Information.....	39
7.1	Introduction.....	39
7.2	Research for Bridging the Knowledge Gap .....	39
7.2.1	Conducting Research with Existing Information.....	40
7.2.2	Conducting Your Own Research .....	41
7.3	Counting Street Children.....	44
7.4	Conducting Action Research .....	46
7.4.1	Using Existing Information .....	46
7.4.2	Doing Your Own Research (Demonstration Projects) .....	46
7.5	Children’s Participation in Research.....	46
8	Creating Awareness .....	49
8.1	Introduction.....	49
8.2	Creating Awareness Within Local Authorities .....	49
8.2.1	Police and Street Children .....	50
8.2.1.1	Police Harassment and Violence .....	50
8.2.1.2	Working with the Police.....	52
8.2.2	Waste Management and Street Children.....	52



	8.2.2.1	Conflict: Formal Versus Informal Waste Management .....	53
	8.2.2.2	Building Partnerships.....	53
8.3		Creating Public Awareness.....	54
9		Providing Services to Street Children .....	56
9.1		Introduction.....	56
9.2		Strengthening and Re-focusing Sectoral Approaches .....	56
	9.2.1	Introduction .....	56
	9.2.2	Health and Nutrition.....	57
	9.2.3	Water, Sanitation and Solid Waste Management.....	58
	9.2.4	Shelter and Land Tenure .....	59
	9.2.5	Education .....	60
	9.2.6	Recreation .....	61
	9.2.7	Income Generating Activities and Skills Training .....	62
	9.2.8	Access to justice .....	65
9.3		Integrated Approaches .....	66
9.4		Development Programmes for Street Children and Families .....	67
9.5		Children's Participation in Projects.....	68
10		Forming Partnerships and Institutional Coordination .....	70
10.1		Introduction.....	70
10.2		Coordination Within Local Government .....	70
10.3		Coordination of Initiatives Within City/Local Authority .....	72
10.4		Establishing Partnerships with Different Actors .....	73
	10.4.1	Central or Regional Government .....	74
	10.4.2	The Private Sector .....	74
	10.4.3	Non-Governmental Organizations .....	76
	10.4.4	Community Based Organizations.....	77

11 Developing Indicators to Monitor Progress..... 79

    11.1 Introduction..... 79

    11.2 Global Level Indicators ..... 80

    11.3 Local Indicators..... 81

        11.3.1 Local Indicators Developed by All Stakeholders in Local Authority 81

        11.3.2 Local Indicators Developed by Children ..... 83

12 References..... 84

13 Annexes..... 87

## BOXES

Box 1: Some Causes for Child ‘Streetism’.....	3
Box 2: Rationale for Local Authority Intervention in Street Children Rehabilitation ....	5
Box 3: Street Children Gangs and Urban Security .....	6
Box 4: The Life of Street Children in Ethiopia .....	11
Box 5: The Life of Street Children in Kenya .....	12
Box 6: The life of Street Children in Accra: the Case of Emmah .....	12
Box 7: Functions of Street Gangs: The case of Kadude ‘Chuom’ from Nairobi .....	14
Box 8: Nature and Organization of Street Gangs - the Case of Benson’s Gang in Nairobi ....	15
Box 9: The Influence of Gang Leaders .....	17
Box 10: Child-centred integrated actions: cases from Nairobi and Alexandria .....	28
Box 11: Who Knows Most About Children ? .....	39
Box 12: Surveys of Children: Views from a Project.....	47
Box 13: Interpreting Drawings.....	48
Box 14: Police Abuses Against Street Children - the Case of Kenya .....	51
Box 15: Preparing the police to deal with street children in Tanzania .....	52
Box 16: Methods of Creating Public Awareness: The Mwanza Experience in Tanzania ..	55
Box 17: Urban Agriculture in Maputo and Madagascar .....	58
Box 18: Informal Schools Run by Local Authority: A Case of Nairobi City.....	61
Box 19: The SKI Courier Service.....	63
Box 20: Municipal Support to Youth Micro-Enterprises: A Case from Senegal .....	64
Box 21: Work Training: Kuleana’s Experience .....	65
Box 22: Legal Assistance for Children and Youth .....	65
Box 23: Integrated Approach: National Programme of Action (NPA) in Nigeria .....	66
Box 24: Youth Groups Activities .....	67
Box 25: The Importance of Children’s Participation.....	69
Box 26: The UMP City Consultation.....	71
Box 27: The Importance of the Informal Sector .....	75
Box 28: The private sector involvement in street children rehabilitation: an account from Nairobi .....	76
Box 29: Selected Types of Community-Based Actions .....	78

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background and Objectives

The problem of street children is well documented in Latin America and South-East Asia. However, in Africa it is a comparatively new phenomenon. Sub-Saharan Africa is currently the least urbanized region of the developing world, with about 30 percent of the population living in cities. Catching up fast, Africa is currently experiencing the highest urban growth rates. Local authorities in Africa are increasingly confronted with a rising number of street children and all too often do not quite know how to deal with this growing problem (Dzikus & Ochola 1996).

It is thus the objective of this report to provide guidelines for local authorities in Africa on how to deal with street children in their cities. This is done by:

- Providing an overview of the issue of street children in general;
- Providing an overview of different roles local authorities can play when addressing the issue of street children.

## 1.2 Urbanization and Street Children in Africa

Africa is one of the continents experiencing high population growth rates. With an estimated annual growth rate of 3.6 per cent, Africa's urban population will double from 174 million in 1985 to 361 million by the year 2000 (UNDP, 1990). Yet, Africa is the least urbanized region in the developing world with only 30 percent of its population presently living in towns and cities. However, it has the highest urbanization rates averaging around 4.6 percent per annum which is twice the growth of rural areas, with an annual growth rate of 2.0 percent. If this trend continues, Africa's urbanization is expected to reach 45 percent by the year 2000 (UNCHS 1996).

The most rapidly urbanizing countries on the continent include Burkina-Faso, with a projected annual urban population growth rate of 10.5 per cent between 1995 and 2000; Mozambique, 8.4 per cent; Niger, 5.4 per cent; Madagascar and Tanzania, 5.7 per cent and Kenya, 5.6 per cent (UNCHS, 1996). None of these countries has an annual urban growth rate of less than 5 per cent per annum. These high urbanization rates paint a challenging picture of Africa's future that depends on the well-being of children.

Within some of the African countries, the capital cities experience high average annual rates of population growth and are among the fastest growing cities in the world. For instance, the annual population growth rate for Maputo (Mozambique) is 6.3 per cent; Nairobi (Kenya) 5.3 per cent; Lagos (Nigeria) 5.6 per cent; Luanda (Angola) 5.1 per cent, and Abidjan (Côte d' Ivoire) 4.7 per cent. This growth is expected to remain at high levels during the next two decades. All other cities are projected to more than double their populations between 1995 and 2000 (UNCHS 1996).

The implications of this rapid population growth are enormous. First, young people in Africa will constitute two thirds of the population on the continent. Their entry into labour markets is expected to be more than double and cause a further strain on the already worsening unemployment situation. In Tanzania, for instance, 25 percent of the youth are unemployed due to the inability of the economy to generate enough jobs. Every year about 790,000 people join the potentially active labour force while the economy generates less than 60,000 jobs annually (Kanji, 1996). Secondly, demographic surge will mainly affect urban centres where the majority of the young people will live in overcrowded slum and squatter settlements under unhygienic conditions and without the necessary infrastructure and services (Ochola, 1995, Ochola 1996).

Population growth is particularly fastest in the peri-urban and slum areas. In Kenya, for example, about 47 percent of the urban population live in low-income neighbourhoods while 70 percent of Dar-es-Salaam's population live in such unplanned settlements (Kanji, 1996). These settlements are generally overcrowded with inadequate housing, lack of clean drinking water, uncollected waste and inadequate sewerage and sanitation facilities and other amenities. The phenomenon of single female-headed households, from whom the majority of street children originate, is also a significant aspect of these settlements. In the sprawling Mathare and Korogocho slum settlements of Nairobi, for instance, single female-headed households constitute between 60 and 80 percent of the population (Munyakho 1992, Dzikus & Ochola 1996).

Social exclusion and a relative lack of support systems further characterize slum neighbourhoods. Most urban authorities consider slum and squatter settlements illegal, hence their residents are ineligible to land tenure. Regulations and licensing rules often restrict their activities and urban planning takes little account of their needs. Often, the relationship between local government and urban poor in these neighbourhoods is conflict-ridden (Kanji, 1996). In Abidjan, Côte d' Ivoire, evidence of social exclusion is manifest in the low levels of education among the slum residents. More than three quarters of household heads have never been to school and few of them have completed primary education. Thus, more than 70 % of them, especially women, work in low-income jobs.

Due to lack of stable sources of income, parents are likely to pull their children from school and expect them to supplement family income. Poor parents often trade-off social investments favouring boys at the cost of girls, an "apartheid of gender" —as UNICEF calls it. Poverty may also result in dysfunctional parenting behaviour, which subjects children to various forms of violence within the family. However, not all children from impoverished families became street children. Suda (1995) notes, for example, that "a hungry child in an environment of love, care and peace can probably endure lack of material support and still find the home basically more secure than the streets". Therefore, the disintegrating nature of the urban family and the breakdown or the weakening of the African kinship systems in the urban setting, could be the main contributing factors to the problem of street children in Africa. The fact that the majority of street children originate from single-female headed households can be attributed to the weakening of the family unit. Such conditions are in many ways responsible for the majority of street children originating from these neighbourhoods. The box below provides a brief overview of some of these causes.

By 1992, the OAU estimated that Africa had about 16 million street children. This figure was expected to double to 32 million by the year 2000. Within the same period, the number of Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (CEDCs) was expected to increase from

### BOX 1: SOME CAUSES FOR CHILD 'STREETISM'

Children may be forced to the streets due to a number of reasons, some of which are mentioned here below:

- Generally the poverty level in urban areas is on the increase and children have no choice but to go out and look for their daily bread to assist their younger siblings. In the case of single female headed households a child may feel the need to go out and assist his/her mother in bringing some income.
- Family crisis: poverty and other associated life events may result in dysfunctional parenting styles. These weaken family bonds and result in an environment where parents become physically and emotionally abusive to their children or towards each other.
- Overcrowding: (Lack of living space, poor house ventilation, etc.) under which children are forced to live in slum areas, without food, and other basic amenities has forced numerous children to the streets of cities.
- Abusive work in homes where domestic workers are forced to run away as a result of being overworked, underpaid or even subjected to other forms of abuse. They end up on the streets trying to earn a living.
- The growing HIV/AIDS scourge in Africa has left many children orphaned or abandoned by their parents. Such children often end as street children.

With one third of Africans now living in towns and cities, coupled with rapid urban population growth rates, the streets have become the workplace and playground for millions of street children.

**80 million to 150 million (OAU-UNICEF, 1992). This increase is apparently due to the rapid growth in the estimated number of working and street children in some African countries. A study conducted for UNICEF between 1991 and 1994 in Zambia, found that the number of street children doubled from 35,000 to 70,000. In Nairobi, Kenya, the figure rose from 4,500 to 30,000 between 1990 and 1994 (Kanji, 1996). A study in 1992 on street children in some selected Ethiopian towns estimated the number of CEDCs to be around 1.1 million, out of which half were reckoned to be street children (Veale & Adefrisew 1992).**

**Table 1. Number of Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (CEDCs) in Africa and worldwide**

No. of CEDCs	Existing in 1992	Likely for 2000 if no action is taken	Likely for 2000 if action is taken
Unprotected (worldwide)	40,000,000	90,000,000	20,000,000
Protected (worldwide)	40,000,000	60,000,000	60,000,000
Total (worldwide)	80,000,000	150,000,000	80,000,000
Unprotected (Africa)	10,000,000	20,000,000	5,000,000
Protected (Africa)	6,000,000	12,000,000	13,000,000
Total (Africa)	16,000,000	32,000,000	18,000,000

*Source: Adapted from OAU/UNICEF 1992, Background Sectoral Papers*

**Protected:** Those who are undergoing some sort of rehabilitation

**Unprotected:** Those who are on their own without any kind of care

Evidently, poverty is a major contributing factor to this rapid growth. In some poverty-stricken countries on the continent, at least one in four boys and girls live under difficult circumstances (OAU/UNICEF, 1992). In Somalia for instance, UNICEF has considered that child victims of armed conflicts could constitute as much as half or more of the child population. In the Great Lakes region, civil conflicts in Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo, formally Zaire, have definitely increased the number of child victims as many continue to die in refugee camps, while others are willingly or forcefully conscripted into the army. In addition, economic impoverishment and food insecurities are expected to continue plaguing the continent and increase the number of CEDCs and street children.

Considering that children are the most vulnerable members of any society, the difficult conditions facing these children call for urgent action. Policy and programme concerns need to pay special attention to children at greatest risk. Efforts need to be directed at redressing the underlying causes, rather than reacting to symptoms and emergency needs.

### 1.3 Why Should Local Authorities Deal with Street Children and Gangs?

The primary functions of local governments in Africa are to provide physical infrastructure and urban basic services. These functions can be grouped into two broad categories; **the evolving of policy** and **executive functions**. The evolving of policy refers to *control functions* which revolve around developing policies such as building by-laws, public health, traffic control etc., while *executive functions* relate to provision of services such as water, housing, education, life-saving emergency services, roads, markets, sewerage, health, garbage disposal etc. The provision of these services is necessary in improving the living environment and the lives of citizens, including children. In particular, the provision of services such as basic education, health care, job opportunities and recreation, in urban communities contributes to the children's early growth, development, functioning and progress in society.

However, most local authorities in Africa have not been able to provide these services to all residents in the face of increasing urban populations and dwindling resources available to them. In the absence of a coherent social policy framework to address the urban poor, who include street children, the poverty situation continues to worsen. Moreover, slum and squatter settlements, where the majority of street children originate from, are completely ignored in service provision since they are considered illegal. Instead, local authorities resort to actions such as evictions. The illegality of these neighbourhoods stems from urban planning policies which forbid the development of slum and squatter settlements.

Consequently, such evictions result in destruction of property and homelessness for many children and their families. The evictions also destroy the community support systems, which further complicates the poverty situation and the break-up of families becomes a direct cause for children to go to the streets. Hence, local authorities become part of the street children problem in creating conditions which foster rather than address poverty. The lack of these services and insecurity of tenure result in adverse consequences to the well-being and development of children.

In Africa, the problem of street children has to a great extent been shouldered by NGOs and churches. Whereas NGOs and churches play a leading role in working directly with

street children and their communities, they have been unable to ensure the sustainability of such projects. This is due to the fact that most local NGOs and religious agencies rely to a great extent on funding from donors. When financial support from the donors dwindle many of the street children programmes and projects cease to exist. On the other hand, local authorities possess formal structures which persist over time and these are necessary for sustained street children rehabilitation. In addition, local governments are also the main conduit for national and international initiatives and resources which are directed at human settlements. They also are the ones to mobilize local resources.

Local authorities also act as a political centre which derives its legal responsibility from the central government and its mandated role through the electorate. They therefore, enjoy some measure of political support, which is necessary in creating an enabling environment for NGOs, the private sector, voluntary organizations, CBOs and other stakeholders to act in favour of street children. Local authorities are thus suited to translate macro-level policies developed at the central government to micro-level policies usually undertaken at the community level by NGOs, CBOs, religious agencies etc. The rationale for local authority intervention in street children rehabilitation is further illustrated below.

**Box 2: Rationale for Local Authority Intervention in Street Children Rehabilitation**

Many intervention areas pertaining to street children rehabilitation fall within the realm of local government responsibilities. National governments increasingly recognize the role and importance of municipalities as major actors in the provision of basic services and their direct impact on the populace;

- Municipalities increasingly assume policy making and implementation powers to facilitate more effective local decision making;
- Municipalities are increasingly called upon to implement national social policy, and adapt national directive to local conditions;
- Municipal institutional capacity to manage existing resources and to mobilize additional resources is generally increasing; and
- It is increasingly recognized that civil society initiatives at local level; (by NGOs and CBOs) require local government support in order to have maximum impact.

Adapted from Vanderschueren et. al, 1996

Above all, children are also residents of cities and local authorities have duties and responsibilities towards them. The involvement of local authorities with street children and gangs is thus based on the following:

**Children's Right:** The well-being of children is dependent on securing their rights and is a critical element to a sustainable future development. Both the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as well as the Habitat Agenda seek to promote these rights. These can broadly be categorized either as active or passive rights. Active rights relate to provision of goods and services such as housing, schools and health care facilities. The latter include the right not to be imprisoned without trial, discrimination based on sex, race, or religion. Local authorities need to secure these rights as part of their responsibilities in securing sustainable future cities.



**Economic and Social Development:** Children need to be provided with opportunities for personal growth and development, since neglecting them amounts to wasted future development of cities. Street children and children who live in gangs lack some of the basic needs, such as education and medical attention, which are primary requirements in any development process. Despite being neglected, street children still exhibit unique talents and abilities that can be channeled in meaningful productive activities. The challenge, then, is to draw on the qualities which street children themselves bring; resourcefulness, independence, group loyalty, spontaneity, and a feeling for comradeship in assisting them (See 2.1.3.3).

**Risk for Security:** Urban violence has implications for national security which in turn can affect national economies through negative impacts on tourism, foreign investment and lower productivity of the work-force (Kanji, 1993). Extreme deprivation of basic life necessities which street children find themselves in, can force them to seek survival means which may involve criminal activities such as pick-pocketing and stealing. As children, they may be relatively harmless. However, as they grow into adulthood, they are likely to constitute a major source of crime and insecurity.

#### Box 3: Street Children Gangs and Urban Security

In urban areas across the Eastern and Southern African Region, violence against children and youth, and indeed women, is an increasingly common feature in the lives of the poor. Most research on children in recent years indicate that violence and crime in urban areas are escalating. The roots of such violence may not be clearly understood but declining incomes and work opportunities and consequent frustration, particularly for youth, are important factors. Persistent poverty and disadvantage, especially in the context of relative wealth of the few, tends to provide a breeding ground for crime.

In South Africa, the tensions associated with township life, the stresses they place on families, and the seeming inability of families to protect children from harm have led an increasing number of children to join "substitute families" in the form of bands, criminal gangs, and prostitute rings.

This implies abandoning school, which leads to constant conflict with the law. In 1994, 16,000 children and youth under 20 years were in jail, largely as a result of gang activities. The resulting psycho-social trauma of children living under violence is known to have longtime effects and is likely to compound the problem of urban insecurity and violence.

Source: Kanji, 1996

#### 1.4 Local Authorities Action for Street Children: A SWOT Analysis

To enhance the capacity of local authorities to deal with the problem of street children, they need to apply the SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats) analysis. The assumption is that local authorities can take the necessary steps to deal with their known weaknesses and threats, while building on their known strengths and opportunities.

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local authorities work at the local level.</li> <li>• Community participation and involvement.</li> <li>• Transparency of all stakeholders and local capacity building.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of effective approaches for marginalized groups, especially poor children and families.</li> <li>• Dependency on external donor support for capital and identification of needs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political support from the central government.</li> <li>• Community based institutions.</li> <li>• Consistent follow up and collaboration with other stakeholders.</li> <li>• Decentralization of policy implementation.</li> <li>• Continuous training, facilitating formation of community based institutions.</li> <li>• Networking, prioritizing marginalized communities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negative attitudes towards street children.</li> <li>• Poverty.</li> <li>• Centralized structures.</li> <li>• Corruption.</li> </ul>

## 1.5 Structure and Presentation

This manual presents guidelines for local authorities in Africa on how to deal with street children and gangs. It is suggested that the guidelines will enable local authorities to stimulate action on behalf of marginalized urban children, lay strategies for initiating rehabilitation programmes, and monitor changes that result from the implementation of those activities.

The manual emphasizes the approach rather than giving particular solutions since the distribution of tasks and responsibilities is bound to differ from one local government to another. A range of options for local authorities intervention addressing the problem of street children are outlined. However, this document should not be seen as a blue-print for action.

The introduction provides an overview of the background and objective for this report, followed by a review of the urbanization process in Africa and the related rapid increase of street children. Next a brief outline is provided why local authorities should deal with street children and a SWOT analysis is made.

Chapter 2 provides the reader with material to better understand street children and gangs. At first this chapter addresses the image and life of street children. This is followed by a definition of street children and gangs and current initiatives for rehabilitating them.

Chapter 3 provides information on the structure of local authorities in Africa and their capacity in providing services for children's well being.

Chapter 4 is a key chapter for the guidelines, as it first provides a framework and strategy for local authority action. International policies are reviewed, as well as the related initiative on Child-friendly Cities. The next sub-chapter outlines conditions for child development issues that are followed by a framework for local authority action. Based on the framework for local authority action, a strategy and plan is outlined which suggests actions in key areas that are highlighted in the following chapters of these guidelines.

Chapter 5 focuses on mobilizing resources which are necessary to support local authority action. It discusses how resources can be mobilized at local, national and international levels. Policy formulation is the topic of chapter 6. It outlines local authorities responsibilities to interpret international and national policy and formulate local policies as well as to ensure children's participation in decision making.

Chapter 7 highlights how to conduct research and collect information by using existing information sources or by conducting ones own research and ensuring children's participation in this process.

Awareness creation is an important area touched by chapter 8 which focuses primarily on how awareness can be created within local authorities and how local authorities can conduct awareness campaigns for city residents.

Chapter 9 describes how local authorities can provide services to street children either through strengthening and re-focusing sectoral approaches or promoting integrated approaches. A further sub-chapter highlights how programmes could be developed directly benefiting street children and gangs or families in especially difficult circumstances.

Chapter 10 discusses the role of local authorities forming partnerships and coordinating institutions within cities. Chapter 11 outlines the development of indicators to monitor progress.

## 2 Understanding Street Children and Gangs

This section provides a framework for understanding street children. It first mirrors the image of street children, as it is our attitude that determines our behaviour and action towards them. It further gives some insight into the daily lives of children on the streets. This section attempts to define street children, together with a brief overview of the causes of this phenomenon. Their socio-economic background and the social organization of their gangs is also examined. This information is considered necessary to enable local authorities to develop a better understanding of street children and their groups and gang dynamics so that this can form a basis for mapping a rehabilitation strategy. This chapter also provides a short overview of street children rehabilitation processes.

### 2.1 The Image and Life of Street Children

In their daily lives, street children and the related gangs interact with different groups of people. On the streets they mingle with taxi drivers, motorists, pedestrians, hawkers, city police, shop owners, business people, tourists, school children etc. To the general public, these children are considered a nuisance. Commonly held stereotypes tend to associate them with criminal activities such as pick-pocketing, car thefts, robberies etc. Whereas this happens some of the time, it is wrong to assume that all street children engage in such activities all the time. When such crimes happen, it is often because of opportunity rather than disposition. Obviously, extreme deprivation and social exclusion create opportunities for crime involvement. However, little evidence exists to suggest that street children actively or deliberately plan criminal activities.

Our own attitudes towards street children determine the way we interact with them. Some people fear and shun street children due to their dirty looks and consider them potential trouble-makers. When they come into contact with them, they prefer to give them a few coins to get rid of them, although others may give money on humanitarian grounds. When street children have been caught stealing or pick-pocketing, the public has not been hesitant to subject them to abuses such as mob justice or being lynched in the public. When the police have physically assaulted these children, they receive the public's blessings, as this is presumed to deter criminal tendencies among street children. The box below summarizes some of the prevalent perceptions about street children.

<b>Table 2: Perceptions about Street Children</b>		
<b>About their families:</b>	<b>About their futures:</b>	<b>About the children:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They have been abandoned by their families;</li> <li>• They have been displaced because of ethnic conflicts;</li> <li>• They have been orphaned;</li> <li>• They have run away from home because of sexual abuse;</li> <li>• They are the result of the breakdown of family;</li> <li>• Their families have disintegrated because of poverty;</li> <li>• Their fathers are abusive alcoholics;</li> <li>• They come from mother-headed families;</li> <li>• They have no contact with their families.</li> <li>• they will grow up to be criminals;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• they will not survive to adulthood;</li> <li>• they cannot be rehabilitated;</li> <li>• they turn into terrorists and revolutionaries;</li> <li>• they are starving;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• they are thieves;</li> <li>• they are sick;</li> <li>• they perceive themselves as discriminated, hated;</li> <li>• they have no choice but to be prostitutes;</li> <li>• they are uncontrollably violent;</li> <li>• they have lost all ability to feel emotions such as love;</li> <li>• they do not know how to play;</li> <li>• they have no morals;</li> <li>• they are drug addicts;</li> <li>• they have AIDS.</li> </ul>

Source: Ennew, 1997, pp. 13-14

The lives and circumstances of street children are presented in the cases that follow.

#### **Box 4: The Life of Street Children in Ethiopia**

The creation of street children in Addis Ababa (and to a lesser extent in the other towns of Ethiopia), is integrally tied to the phenomenon of urban poverty. The majority of children are child workers who are on the street in order to contribute economically to the household. Most of them still retain close contact with their families. This means that they return home every night to sleep. Over 80% of these children first became involved in street life in search of work, while another 10% first came to the streets to play or spend time with friends. In a town like Makele, the majority of street children came there due to the effects of war, famine and drought. Many of them then progress to become street workers.

On the streets they get involved in various petty occupations. The majority work as peddlers, others shoe shiners and others as carriers/messengers (35.2%, 19.4% and 19% respectively). Over two thirds of girls work as peddlers, while car washing, taxi-boy, shoe shining and carrying services are dominated by males. Some girls earn their living through prostituting. To cope with harshness of street life many of them use alcohol, glue and other drugs.

Children *on* the streets (66%), attend school compared to 15% of children *of* the streets. So the majority of children *on* the streets in Ethiopia attend school. Street life has not deterred the majority of children *on* the streets to attend school. Their parents only lament that street life only affects the quality of their work at school. However, the majority of children *of* the street are marginalized from educational and health facilities.

The main problem girls experience on the streets is rape and insecurity. About 12 out of the 32 girls interviewed in this study were raped. This could partly be attributed to the prevalent perceptions among street boys, bar-owners and members of the general public that street girls are freely available for sex. The main form of abuse experienced by street boys is physical assault. The study found that the majority of street boys were attacked frequently, largely by robbers (usually older street-boys) and sometimes police. Theft among themselves is common, especially bigger street boys stealing from the younger boys. Violence is also common and is mostly among children who live in gangs. When a member of a given gang is insulted or attacked, this often leads to a much larger dispute involving their gangs.

Although, the problem of delinquent gangs in Ethiopia is not thought to be a serious one, the rapid growth of unemployment, family breakdown and widespread poverty in Addis Ababa are likely to increase the number of children engaged in theft and petty crime and this will worsen the delinquency situation.

**Source: Veale et al 1993**

#### **Box 5: The Life of Street Children in Kenya**

The situation of street children in Kenya closely mirrors that of Ethiopian street children. The majority of children visible on the streets are boys. However, the number of female children is increasingly rapidly. The boys popularly known as “parking boys”, survive from undertaking a range of activities including garbage collection for sale, begging, pick-pocketing and assisting motorists with parking. The girls survival activities are usually limited to begging and prostitution. A study on street girls in Nairobi found that close to 90 per cent of these girls came from households suffering from physical and verbal abuse and alcoholism. More than half of the girls originated from single-parent households in low income settlements (Ochola 1995, Ochola 1996).

Once on the streets, some children stay in makeshift dwelling units popularly known as “chuom”. These are usually located in dark alleys and backstreets. However, the majority of children come on the streets for sometime and return back to their families in the evenings. In the “chuom”, street boys tend to take the responsibility for security of the girls by acting the role of “husbands” to them. They provide their “wife” with protection and make sure that they have sufficient food and medicines. The girls must in return accord the boys emotional and sexual favours. This “marriage” is restricted to the “chuoms”

The cases of victimization by city police are also common. The police arrest street children for cases of vagrancy or other petty crimes. After arrest they are usually brought before the juvenile courts where sentences of being remanded in juvenile homes are usually the norm. However, even after being implicated these children still run back to the streets.

**Source: Dzikus & Ochola 1996.**

#### **Box 6: The life of Street Children in Accra: the Case of Emmah**

Emmah was born in Traboum, about 20 miles north of Kumasi in the Ashanti Region. He is a boy of twelve years of age and the second born in a family of five. His mother had six other children from a previous marriage.

Emmah stopped learning in primary four owing to the inability of his father to pay school fees. Besides, teachers used to harass him for non-payment of fees and he gradually came to dislike school.

He later left for Accra, with an intention to live with his brother who was working as a mechanic. Unfortunately when he arrived in Accra, he was unable to locate his brother. He then ended up living at the railway station in a group of other homeless children and adults. Here they live in crowded conditions, wear tattered cloths and their beddings are just the bare floor.

Emmah started working as a rubbish collector at a fee of fifty cedis for each trip. He has two friends who are doing similar work with him. For their leisure, they play football at the beach, swim or go to watch a video.

Emmah has once experienced trouble on the streets. According to him his friend Macho sent him to fetch a pair of trouser for him. Little did he know that the trousers did not belong to Macho. This led to his arrest, together with Macho. Emmah was later released but his friend Macho was severely beaten and remained in custody. Another problem facing Emmah on the streets is harassment from the bigger boys. They beat him when he declines to run errands for them. Emmah also has a very dirty wound on his leg which is not treated.

As for his future, Emmah aspires to become a soldier, a trader or any other job that can generate him income.

**Source: Ham et al. 1991**

## 2.2 Definition of Street Children

Various attempts have been made to define street children. One of these definitions was drawn up by the Inter-NGO Programme for Street Children and Street Youth in the early 1980s which defined street children as “those for whom the street more than their family has become their home, a situation in which there is no protection, supervision or direction from responsible adults”. Another definition was that by UNICEF which draws two main categories: children *on* the streets and children *of* the streets (Ennew, 1994:15).

The main distinguishing characteristic in the above definitions is that these children generally experience some kind of ruptured family relations. For the purposes of this manual, street children refers to children in the urban areas, who have completely or partially ruptured family ties and engage in various survival activities on the streets. Generally, these fit the UNICEF's classification of children of the streets and children on the streets.

### 2.2.1 Categories of Street Children and Gangs

At least three major types of street children have been identified following UNICEF's proposed definitions. The first category refers to children *on* the streets. These are children who maintain good family ties and often return home in the evening. The second category refers to children *of* the streets. These are children with loose family contacts who spend some nights or days, or part of the day, on the streets, and occasionally go back home. The third category is closely related to the second category, and refers to children who are completely detached from their families and live in gangs in temporary makeshift shelters. Lately, a new category of street children is emerging; children whose parents are also street children/adolescents i.e. children of street families.

### 2.2.2 Street Gangs

Street children as any social entity have a distinct culture with a structure that defines roles and responsibilities of each member. Street children depend less on their families or other people who they consider strangers and cannot share their experiences. Instead, they rely more on the meaningful ties they have established within their groups or gangs.

#### 2.2.2.1 The Role of Street Gangs

There are two basic roles (functions) performed by the gangs of street children. These are maintenance and task-oriented functions. The maintenance functions involve mechanisms which foster harmony and discourage conflict among members of the groups. For instance, sharing whatever they have and a strong sense of comradeship fosters unity among the gang members. Often, members get attracted to such groups in order to achieve goals that cannot readily be achieved independently.

Task functions on the other hand, involve activities that direct the group towards the individual contributions pertaining to various income generating activities they undertake while on the streets. The division of responsibilities which goes along with most of this work also contributes to maintenance functions. The box below elaborates some of these functions.



### Box 7: Functions of Street Gangs: The case of Kadude 'Chuom' from Nairobi

Kadude *chuom*<sup>1</sup> is a big patch-work tent of plastic in one of the shadier alleys of the city of Nairobi. To street children who live there, this *chuom* is an equivalent of a residential estate. The occupants are many youngsters who have fled from problems at home. For many this jungle discipline is preferable to the harshness of the homes they come from. Within the *chuom* there is a great sense of camaraderie. The children share what they have and sleep together in their alternative 'families'. Resenting interference from outsiders, they have become, literally, a law unto themselves. When the police try to arrest them - for loitering, begging, glue-sniffing, stealing - the children drive them away by hurling feces at them, or smearing their bodies with the foul-smelling stuff. It repels the police, but it does not seem to disturb them.

During the day many of these children work in the informal sector to earn a living. Some street boys work in the market repackaging potatoes for stall-holders in return for food, or picking up spilled food, or stealing it and repackaging it for sale. Some work as touts for public transport, or collect fares on the matatus, communal means of transport in Kenyan towns. Many work in food kiosks and small restaurants, washing dishes and peeling potatoes while others engage in semi-illegal occupations. They may sell bhang, operating as a human shield for adult drug dealers.

The majority of them scavenge for waste materials - papers, scrap metal, medicine bottles, clothing materials, batteries - which they sell to dealers. The boys in particular seem to be high on drugs or glue vapour most of the time and many of them suffer infected wounds from broken glass and dirty tins. The street girls on the streets of Nairobi are far less visible than boys. Most of them work as house-girls or prostitutes. Back in the *Chuom*, the girls play a role of 'wives' to street boys who consider themselves 'husbands'.

Source: Adapted from Munyakho (1992), UNICEF

In addition, a variety of unique personal goals are achieved by street children's participation in the group. The *need for identity* is one of these goals. By identifying or belonging to a group, they may gain prestige and a sense of self-importance. The gangs also serve as *family substitute* for those without families or seeking 'new' families to identify with. Street children also suffer from *lack of physical and emotional support*, which the gangs provide. They find *security and relief from life's anxieties* within their groups. These include those who left their original families due to family breakdown, divorce, verbal and physical abuse, etc.

#### 2.2.2.2 Features of Street Gangs

The Oxford English dictionary defines a gang as a band of persons acting or going together especially for criminal purpose or other purposes causing disapproval. However, street children gangs are not necessarily for evil doing. In most cases, they turn to criminal activities as a last resort. In fact, most of them do not even engage in any criminal activities.

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1 Chuom is a name for a makeshift dwelling unit for street children of Nairobi, made of paper or other simple building materials.

The gangs are mainly for enhancing survival chances. It is important to note that the term gang is used throughout this manual to refer to informal street children groups and their activities. Some of the gang features are explained here below:

- Street gangs often live and operate in designated territories. Different gangs usually compete for territorial space and resources. Often they fight over who is supposed to dominate which area and who should have access to which resources. For instance, a gang involved in scavenging for waste materials in a given area would not allow a rival group to engage in a similar activity in their territory. Competition between groups tends to increase cohesiveness within a group i.e., the greater the cooperative effort within a group, the more likely it is to develop competitive friction with other groups pursuing similar objectives. In some cases, however, competitive gangs may coalesce in order to achieve super-ordinate goals that cannot be achieved by each group separately;
- Gangs of street children also specialize in given activities. Gangs that are involved in begging, pick-pocketing and prostitution operate in certain strategic areas e.g., the Central Business District, where they can easily find rich people. Normally, the differentiation of functions (roles) within a group, provides for organized division of effort within the group and enhances group effectiveness.

Most gangs manifest some kind of social structure, where there is likely to be a leader and other ordinary members. The leader is usually recognized by other members for his authority and ensures security and safety of his gang members, organizes the gang and may assign responsibility to members. However, some gangs are not homogenous and lack any distinct social structure. In such gangs the decision-making process tends to be spontaneous.

#### **BOX 8: Nature and Organization of Street Gangs - the Case of Benson's Gang in Nairobi**

Benson is a sixteen year old boy, and is rather small for somebody of his age. He lives with nine other boys and five girls in a back-street *chuom* near the Exotica Hotel in the city centre. Since the *Chuom* is constructed of carton paper, it is usually removed in the morning as it is in a busy back-street. The members of this gang are of average age, 14 years. They all work during the day and part of the night. The boys specialize in snatching of golden chains, earrings and watches. The girls do some begging during the day while at night they are involved in prostitution with men.

In the gang, each member has a specific role to play. Special talents are utilized appropriately especially when it comes to making money and providing security. It is in the gang that individual children get what they have missed by being away from their families. They help each other during times of need as when one is sick and take him/her to hospital and provide necessary care until s/he recuperates. Concern for the weaker ones and especially girls is remarkable. They are protected and defended against all sorts of dangers including harassment by mobs outside their gang. The five girls in this gang have 'husbands' within the group. However, the girls are free to engage in the prostitution as long as they share what they earn with the boys back at the *chuom*. Benson has absolute authority, though he usually consults the other members of the gang. His decisions are always binding and are followed by all in the gang.

Muiruri M., 1997, Personal Communication, Undugu Society of Kenya

## **2.3 Initiatives to Rehabilitate Street Children and Gangs**

### **2.3.1 General Overview**

Public policy regarding street children all too often does not seem to exist. Whatever exists is based on laws dating back to the colonial period related to the care, custody and control of children and youth. All too often street children are rounded up and handed back to their parents or temporarily locked up in prisons. Ideally, children would be given into the custody of an institution such as an approved school or remand home. However, with more and more children flocking the streets, Government's response appears futile.

Initiatives to rehabilitate street children have been undertaken in various degrees by organizations such as NGOs, religious institutions, voluntary agencies, and to a limited extent agencies of the central or local government and individual persons. In particular, NGOs have been at the forefront in initiating the most innovative approaches addressing the street children problem.

However, most NGO initiatives are only remedial, and provide services such as food, clothing and medical care, which is only a short-term solution. Some initiatives to rehabilitate street children have "become fashionable and a tool for increasing institutional publicity, which make it easy to solicit funds" (Dzikus & Ochola 1996).

Community participation and involvement have a major role to play in a holistic approach in rehabilitating street children. Street work is the first entry point to rehabilitation, where street workers develop contact and rapport with the children. The next step is to promote community-based rescue centres, where street children are provided with food, clothing, informal education, medical treatment and counselling. These centres function as filters for further referral of children to specialized programmes of NGOs. The programmes could range from education sponsorship, vocational training to programmes for the disabled and HIV-affected. The education sponsorship programme of one NGO in Nairobi has enabled more than 10 former street children to acquire university degrees.

Community-based human settlement improvements in slums and squatter settlements have the greatest potential for preventing potential street children and re-integrating them into their neighbourhoods. So far, the role of shelter has not received much attention in street child rehabilitation (Dzikus & Ochola, 1996).

### **2.3.2 Working with Street Gangs**

There is a need for efforts to direct juvenile gangs into socially acceptable avenues of behaviour. However, most rehabilitation initiatives have not targeted re-directing gang energies or potential into socially desirable activities. The group dynamics in street children gangs are a rich resource in the rehabilitation process, if their participation can be taken seriously. This means that juvenile gangs should be facilitated to identify and diagnose their own problems, and seek appropriate solutions. The group leadership structure, for instance, can be maintained and used to channel gang efforts into desirable activities (See Box 9). Nevertheless, children who have broken contact with their gangs or who do not belong in any gang should be assisted individually.

#### BOX 9: The Influence of Gang Leaders

Older children in a gang have a strong influence over younger ones. When Undugu opened a reception centre for street boys we were amazed at the rate the small boys were running back to town. We thought that this was due to the staff who were not trained. It took us a few months to realize that the small children were being sent by the big boys to get a blanket and some clothes. We then invited the three "leaders" to stay at the reception centre. After that, the small boys did not run away, although we had to cope with three of them who became quite a liability

Source: Dallape, 1993

The main assumption here is that gang members are not totally without the desire to live within socially approved patterns. But they are often suspicious and afraid of the public and turn to the gang as their only source of security and approval. Without being subjected to manipulation, it is assumed that if the whole gang moves successfully to more socially acceptable direction, then individual gang members will definitely be willing to move with it. However, strong gang solidarity at certain times might hamper individual children from being assisted. In such a case it may be necessary to employ separation tactics to assist individual children within the gang. Where the group unity is strong, one can use the gang as members might not benefit from any assistance given outside the gang.

Working through gangs would be easier if gang leaders and the sensitive issues that members of that particular gang would not want to address are identified. The gang leaders as seen from the box above exert a lot of influence on other children and it seems easier to use them to redirect many gangs into socially acceptable activities.

Generally, programmes for prevention of delinquent gangs should aim at ***integrating the children into organized group activities***. This can be carried out through social work agencies such as YMCA, YWCA, Girl guides, Boy Scouts, as well as independent boy's and girl's clubs and community centres. These can be used alongside the local government recreation activities.

Local governments can ***train professional group workers to supervise group activities***. This can develop children's creative abilities, enable them to realize their full potentials, and help to build a positive image about themselves.

#### ***"Big Brother/Sister" Activities***

**Goal:** To provide the child with a missing control factor in the form of a volunteer adult who can give friendship and counsel.

The "Big Brother/Sister" are not trained social workers but interested citizens. The adult tries to build a friendship with the child he/she is sponsoring by showing interest in the child's problems and providing the necessary guidance. Hence, the adult provides a model for the child by instilling positive social values and giving affection and attention. Local governments can establish such a programme by linking the interested members of the public with the affected children.

### ***Establishing Counselling Centres***

- Goals: (i) To make a thorough psychiatric study and diagnosis of the individual child's personality problems
- (ii) To prescribe and provide psychiatric treatment

Local governments can establish free counselling centres within the existing medical facilities where combined efforts of professional social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists can assist children with personality problems and those addicted to drugs.

### ***Community Involvement***

Goal: To combat failure of control by creating cohesive neighbourhood groups interested in the welfare of children.

Use natural leaders of the neighbourhoods e.g. merchants, taxi drivers, housewives.

## 3 Understanding Local Authorities in Africa

### 3.1 The Structure of Local Authorities in Africa

The form taken by local governments in Africa differs from one country to another as does its relationship with higher levels of government and specialized agencies, and the division of resources and responsibilities among them. Basically, administrative structures of most municipalities in Africa closely mirror those of the former colonizers.

Two case studies here illustrate the administrative structures of local government system in Africa, drawn from two cities; Abidjan and Nairobi, which are from Francophone and Anglophone Africa respectively.

#### *Francophone Africa*

In Abidjan, the Mayor of the City is elected through secret ballot by other mayors who represent various communes. The elected councilors regulate the affairs of the communes through deliberations at regular council meetings which are passed on to the municipal authority to take necessary action. The municipality consists of an executive (the mayor and his assistants) and various departments which implement the resolutions of the council.

The executive Mayor represents the state, and as such is responsible for the implementation of the laws and policies of the central government. Equally, s/he chairs the meetings of the council, implements police regulations in the city, directs the municipal administration, organizes the city budget, and supervises the accounts of the city in conformity with legal requirements. At the national level, the Mayor is equated to a senior minister of the cabinet.

However, the central government has greater control over important decisions including the setting and collection of land taxes, traffic management, the management of the infrastructure, police and fire protection services, and economic and industrial development. The government also maintains tight controls over financial and administrative systems. The Ministry of the Interior (through the Department of Local Government) issues guidelines, approves annual budgets, and provides guidance over day-to-day activities of communes (Stren, 1991:9-21).

The provision of water, electricity, public transport, funerals, refuse removal and sewerage are rendered by private firms. Of these, only the funeral and refuse removal firms have contracts with the City; the rest deal directly with the central government. The City also oversees the activities of the concessionaire companies, dealing with construction permits and planning certificates, maintains roads, public buildings, sports facilities and parks, and manages slaughterhouses. The communes are responsible for building and management of markets, construction of primary schools and clinics, and the collection of taxes on businesses, markets and small-scale commerce.

## **Anglophone Africa**

Like in Abidjan, the administration of Nairobi City is largely the responsibility of local government although this responsibility may include the Ministry of Local Government and to a limited extent the Ministries of Health, and Lands and Settlement.

In Kenya, local governments are considered statutory, semi-autonomous bodies which act as agents of the central government in providing services at the local level. Through the Local Government Act, the Minister for Local Government is empowered to establish a local authority.

Local authorities are classified into three major categories: municipalities, county councils and urban councils. The municipalities are established in large urban areas such as Nairobi and provide primary education, health-care services, road construction and maintenance, water supply, sewerage, housing, solid waste management, drainage, markets and other social services. County councils are rural based and operate within the geographical boundaries of administrative districts providing fewer services compared to municipalities. The urban councils are established in emerging urban centres and come under the jurisdiction of county councils.

Like other local authorities in Kenya, Nairobi Municipality has two arms - the legislative arm (or council) concerned with policy formulation; and the executive arm concerned with implementation of the policies and composed of the administrative and professional staff (see Structure of Local Authorities in Kenya in Annex II). The council has both elected and nominated councilors. The Minister of Local Government can nominate up to one third of the councilors, one of whom shall be a public officer. This ensures that government interests are represented.

The city carries out its legislative functions through the council. To ensure efficiency, the council is divided into committees and sub-committees to address specific issues. The number of committees depends on its needs. Like the rest of local authorities in Kenya, Nairobi has a Finance Committee. It is proposed here that local authorities could establish similar committee to deal specifically with issues related to children.

The function of the executive (the staff employed by the council) is to implement the policies of the council. The chief officer of the executive is the Town Clerk in the municipality. To ensure mutual functioning of the council, the chief officers sit in the council committees as advisors. This relationship is important because it helps to guide the policy formulation process (Bubba & Lamba, 1991:37-59).

### **3.2 Providing Services for Children's Well-being**

An analysis of local authority structure clearly shows the important role they have to play, particularly in providing infrastructure and services necessary to the well-being of children. For instance, the Kitwe City Council in Zambia, just like Nairobi and Abidjan, is in charge of providing adequate housing to its residents, public health, water, sewerage and sanitation (See Structure of Kitwe City Council in Annex 111). The Councils' Department of Housing and Social Services, among other things, aims at providing nursery and pre-school education to all children within its jurisdiction.

The Council also provides and encourages the establishment of recreational and sports activities for youths within its municipality. The Council has put up Buchi Hall with sporting

facilities for different games. In addition, there are two stadiums, also for sporting and recreational activities. Youth participation in these activities is particularly emphasized.

In recognizing the need for skilled manpower in the city, Kitwe City Council started a vocational skills training programme to train youth in auto-mechanics, agriculture, carpentry, electrical, panel-beating, spraying, tailoring and design.

In addition, the Council provides health services to city residents. A number of health programmes aim at improving mental and physical health of children in Kitwe. The Under-Five-Clinic-Immunization Programme is one such health service. This also includes running outreach health care programmes within the city.

In view of the above services, local authorities should ensure the availability of basic services in low-income urban neighbourhoods, particularly those that have a bearing on the lives of street children. However, the structure of local authorities in most African countries lack direct involvement in issues regarding street children and gangs (Ochola 1996). In this regard, local authorities need to re-define their structures to make provision for children and in particular street children and gangs. This is because the local government is the level of government best equipped to assess and understand local needs and mobilize local resources to address such needs.

Local government focuses on the administration of local problems and serves as a means of bringing the government to the people. As the agents of the central government, local authorities operate within the framework provided by the central government through the relevant ministry dealing with local government or the department of local government or through an act of parliament. For instance, in Kitwe, Zambia, the Kitwe City Council is responsible for the development of the city and is mandated by an act of parliament, which provides that the council has the role “to interpret and implement national development policies as they affect the totality of Kitwe”<sup>2</sup>. Hence, the council is responsible for the provision of urban basic services such as housing, education and health services to its residents. These services ameliorate urban poverty and are essential for the creation of an environment conducive to children’s welfare in the city.

Accordingly, local authorities have a major role to play in improving the living conditions of children in general and in particular children from marginalized urban areas, who include street children and gangs. The main framework for improving the living conditions of children is set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has set out four broad areas: survival, development, protection and participation. Being ‘states parties’ to the Convention, member countries are required to produce country reports to furnish the monitoring Committee on the progress of children’s rights.

Subsequently, most countries have formulated National Plans of Action for Children, or what is also referred to as *Situational Analysis of Women and Children*. This report provides a framework of programmes and actions that can be undertaken by the government and other actors in upholding the basic rights of all children, including CEDCs of which street children constitute a significant part. The National Plans of Action identify maternal health and child care, basic education, food security and nutrition, water and sanitation, and family welfare as some of the key areas that can be addressed. Since local authorities are

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2 Nyirenda 1997, Personal Communication, Mayor, Kitwe City Council



the ones entrusted with the responsibility of urban development, the National Plan of Action for Children provides a crucial entry point for them to address the problem of street children and gangs.

In view of this, there are two possible levels of intervention by local authorities; first, through working with the affected children directly, and secondly, by providing preventive services and programmes through working with the community where the children come from. Primarily, the latter involves the provision of urban basic services and infrastructure such as water, sanitation, waste management, housing programmes, employment generation, provision of day care centres, schools, health care facilities, supply of land and guaranteeing its tenure and arbitration of disputes concerning ownership rights and landlord-tenant relations. This means a departure from policies and programmes which outlaw slum and squatter settlements as illegal, to those which regularize and provide the necessary infrastructure and services, rather than evictions. All these are significant steps in alleviating urban poverty, and by extension the situation of street children and gangs.

Although central governments control the power and resources available to local governments, the current global trend of decentralization is shifting the roles and responsibilities for social development and implementation to local governments. Regarding children, the Habitat Agenda stresses the importance of this role, where governments, including local authorities, are required to integrate youth concerns into all relevant national, sub-national and local policies. Currently local governments are gaining a more strategic position in urban development issues. Some of these are:

- Local governments are strategically placed to coordinate and integrate actions of NGOs, CBOs, the private sector, religious and voluntary institutions who are involved in providing welfare services within their municipalities. Often, these actions are carried out in isolation, thus failing to maximum impact.
- Local governments institutional capacity to mobilize and manage resources is also increasing in light of their changing roles. They can use this capacity to develop funding sources for grass-root organizations, provide staff training and develop training materials for street children rehabilitation. They can also draw from abundant services of volunteers such as school leavers, university students, religious organizations, professional associations (e.g. doctors, nurses, teachers associations etc.) and members of the public and direct their services to benefit street children. The volunteers may offer their time and resources in assisting programmes rehabilitating street children and gangs.
- It is also increasingly recognized that civil-society initiatives at the local level by NGOs and CBOs require local government support in order to have maximum impact. For instance, local authorities naturally have many resources such as health centres, schools, social halls and other recreational facilities. The rehabilitation process of street children and gangs requires these resources, which NGOs and other grass-root lack.

## 4 Framework, Strategy and Plan for Local Authority Action

### 4.1 International Policies and Initiatives

#### 4.1.1 Introduction

International policies on children are mainly based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as well as the Habitat Agenda and Agenda 21. These three international instruments recognize the need to satisfy the active as well as passive rights of children. Active rights relate to access to justice, non-discrimination based on race, sex or religion. Such rights do not need to be created, just protected. Therefore, they should not require (extra) resources, only the will. Passive rights relate to access to goods and services e.g. housing, education and health (Werna et. al 1999).

Active as well as passive rights are contained in article 27 of the CRC, which states that: *States parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development...* Similarly, Habitat Agenda chapter 13 states that: *The needs of children and youth, particularly with regard to their living environment have to be taken fully into account. Special attention needs to be paid... to secure the living conditions of children and youth and to make use of their insight, creativity and thoughts on the environment.* The responsibility to assume this role is stated in Habitat Agenda chapter 120, where, *...Governments at the appropriate levels, including local authorities, in partnership with the private sector, non-governmental youth organizations and other NGOs as well as CBOs should: (a) Integrate youth concerns into all relevant national, sub-national and local policies, strategies, programmes and projects.* In addition, chapter 6.27 of Agenda 21 states that: *National governments, in cooperation with local and NGOs, should initiate or enhance programmes in the following areas:(a) ... (iii) Promote the creation, amendment and enforcement of a legal framework protecting children from sexual and workplace exploitation... (b) Youth: (i) Strengthen services for youth in health, education and social sectors... including drug abuse...*

The Convention and the National Programmes of Action (NPAs) of the World Summit for Children, the Habitat Agenda and Agenda 21 provide Mayors with the conceptual and ethical framework for promoting children's basic rights. The Convention has been ratified by nearly all countries of the world, thereby committing themselves to goals of child survival, development and protection. Other areas where international policy on children can be found are the International Labour Office (ILO), (concerning working children), UNESCO (concerning educational needs of children), Defense for Children International (DCI), Childwatch International and the Human Rights Watch Children's Rights Project (children's rights issues), and World Health Organization (child health issues).

These, together with the national legislation concerning children, can provide a broad framework within which policies on children can be developed.

#### **4.1.2 The Child-friendly Cities Initiative**

The *Child-Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI)* is a network of local governance institutions, local authorities, civil society, international agencies and stakeholders (children, adolescents, women etc.) which seeks to defend the rights of children at the local level. The primary goal of the *CFCI* is to assist municipalities to implement child centred programmes through Local Plans of Action based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

*CFCI* is an outcome of various international events focusing on the well-being of children. The International Meeting of Mayors as Defenders of Children Initiative in Dakar (1992), is a case in point. In this meeting Mayors pledged to make children's basic needs a priority. A similar initiative was the International Meeting of Mayors, Urban Planners and Policy Makers, held in Florence, Italy in October 1992. Later in 1996, UNICEF in collaboration with UNCHS (Habitat), organized an Expert Seminar on "children's rights and habitat" and an International Workshop on Children's Rights after Habitat II: A Forward-Looking Workshop for the Creation of Child-Friendly Cities, held in New York in February 1996 and in Istanbul in June 1996 respectively.

Based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Expert Seminar developed conditions and principles of governance necessary for achieving children's housing rights. These are the family; the home and its surroundings; the community; and structures of governance. Based on the findings of the Expert Seminar and a review of the Habitat Agenda, the International Workshop in Istanbul prepared a report entitled "working towards child-friendly cities". The first part of the report identified obstacles and constraints within the family, community and system of governance which impede the creation of child-friendly cities. The second part provides strategies, mechanisms and processes which could address the obstacles, under four categories: the underlying values and attitudes of society; the production and dissemination of information for the participatory planning; the required resources and services; and structures and models for creating a framework of activity.

The issue of children's rights to shelter and related services is now reflected in the declaration of the World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities in Istanbul and the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements. These events form the basis of the *Child-Friendly Cities Initiative*.

The International Workshop on Africa's Urban Poor Child - Towards African Child-Friendly Cities which was launched by UNICEF and the Accra Metropolitan Assembly in cooperation with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) in March 1997. It is an example of a *CFCI*, where international agencies have helped to build capacity in local authorities in Africa, to enable them adequately respond to the needs of children.

A series of other *CFCI* have emerged from this effort. For instance, in Mauritania, the Mayor of Nouakchott formed a Municipal Council for Children, to monitor efforts in favour of children within the capital city. In Senegal, a national meeting of mayors was organized to develop indicators to monitor compliance with the CRC at the local level and to create a charter at the Mayors level for children. Another initiative, the 1st International Forum, "Towards Child-Friendly Cities - Experiences in Italy and Abroad", held in Naples, Italy,

19 to 21 September 1997, offered opportunities for city managers and other stakeholders to share experiences towards creating child-friendly cities. Such initiatives provide the best opportunities for sharing experiences, learning from each other and developing child-friendly cities.

#### **4.2 Considering Child Development Issues**

When dealing with children's issues local authorities should consider the following development aspects: the survival of the children, their functioning in society, their progress, and the sustainability of a proper situation. The following is based on Werna et. al 1999.

##### ***Survival***

This is the most elementary condition of all four. The survival of a child is firstly related to ante-natal circumstances. Adequate pregnancy depends not only on proper health care and orientation, but also on broad environmental conditions which secure the well-being of the women. However, the existence of high rates of stillbirths and babies born with health problems show that ante-natal care needs to be improved.

The survival of a child is also greatly dependent upon the environment into which s/he is born and the protection and care s/he is afforded. The occurrence of high rates of infant and child mortality throughout the developing world reveals that proper conditions for newborn and young children and their mothers also have to be secured.

Although the first stage of life may be the most critical for the survival of the child, the subsequent stages are not short of risks. Many children are exposed to life-threatening situations during their process of growth (e.g. housing-related fatal accidents and diseases). Certain groups of children are particularly exposed to high-risk situations - for example, street children, and those involved in armed conflicts. Therefore, proper conditions for survival in later stages of the childhood are also fundamental.

##### ***Functioning***

The well-being of a child depends not only on security of survival, but also on her/his sound insertion into society. Such an insertion, in its turn, depends on her/him having adequate conditions for education, play and social activities. Such conditions are often non-existent throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America (e.g. in the case of children who do not have access to proper nutrition and rest, who work long hours in detriment of study and play, who do not have access to schooling, who are discriminated, etc.). In short, children also need conditions to guarantee their proper insertion into society. The relationship between adults and children is fundamental to the development of the latter. Therefore, it is also important to ensure the proper conditions which enable parents to relate soundly with the children.

##### ***Progress***

The insertion of a child into society is a dynamic process, and her/his roles are constantly changing. Therefore, in addition to the former set of conditions, which guarantees the social insertion of the child at each stage of development, it is also vital to enable the child to move safely through the different stages of insertion, and to change her/his roles

accordingly. One example regards the passage between the different stages of learning. Similarly to the previous items, it is fundamental to support both children and parents.

### **Sustainability**

The plight of children in need has not gone unnoticed. A myriad of programmes and projects from international agencies, national and local governments, NGOs and other stakeholders have already been implemented. However, such initiatives have often focused on sectorally aligned remedial measures with little or no effort at preventing the recurrence of the conditions or protecting the environments against further decay. Also, the lack of a continuous monitoring mechanism failed to alert the concerned of conditions reverting back to pre-project situations. Therefore, the need for the sustainability of proper conditions also has to be taken into account.

### **4.3 A Framework for Local Authority Action**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) provides a broad framework for analyzing children's needs which can be summarized as follows:

**Survival Rights:** (CRC Article 24: 1; Article 6:1,2); These are the basic needs that children must have to ensure good health for adequate growth. Some of these are medical care, nutrition, shelter and clothing. Street children lack most of this needs.

**Development Rights:** (CRC Article 6: Article 26: Article 28); These relate to the opportunities and means made available for children to have access to education, skills, training, recreation and rest, information, parental care and social security;

**Protection Rights:** (CRC Article 2: Article 19: 1,2: Article 32: 1; Article 33: Article 34: Article 36: Article 37); The legal and social provisions made by each nation to protect children from exploitation, drug abuse, sexual abuse, cruelty, separation from family, discrimination and protection from all forms of man-made or natural disasters; and

**Participation Rights:** (CRC Article 12: Article 13: Article 14: Article 17); The opportunities and means given to children to express an opinion in matters affecting their lives such as freedom of worship, access to information about oneself, and freedom to give evidence where applicable.

Local authorities are equipped to address the needs of children, especially street children through two functions:

- legislative/control functions (interpreting national policies and evolving local policies)
- executive functions (providing services)

The challenge is how local authorities can respond to the needs of street children and gangs through their existing functions and structures. The following table provides a framework for local authorities on how to deal with street children and gangs.

**Table 3: The Role of Local Governments in Responding to Children's Needs**

Functions of local authority Children's Needs	Legislative/control (policy)	Executive functions (service provision)
Survival Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of adequate and affordable health facilities;</li> <li>• Health education;</li> <li>• Food security measures;</li> <li>• Provision of housing or creating enabling legislation for the private sector;</li> <li>• Access to safe clean water, sanitation;</li> <li>• Child immunization programmes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical care;</li> <li>• Nutrition;</li> <li>• Housing;</li> <li>• Clothing;</li> </ul>
Development Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avail educational facilities &amp; opportunities for job training;</li> <li>• Avail playgrounds &amp; facilities;</li> <li>• Provide information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education;</li> <li>• Recreation;</li> <li>• Information;</li> <li>• Job opportunities;</li> <li>• Parental care;</li> <li>• Social security.</li> </ul>
Protection Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitize police &amp; the judicial system on children's rights;</li> <li>• Enact legislation to protect children from exploitation;</li> <li>• Protect handicapped;</li> <li>• Advocacy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to justice;</li> <li>• Non-discrimination;</li> <li>• Protection from natural disasters.</li> </ul>
Participation Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve children in decision-making in matters affecting them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children's participation in decision-making;</li> <li>• Freedom of worship;</li> <li>• Access to information.</li> </ul>

#### 4.4 A Strategy and Plan for Local Authority Action

Local authorities, when dealing with street children and gangs should focus on two goals:

- Improving the living conditions of street children and gangs (addressing the symptoms); and
- Improving the living conditions of potential street children, those children living in slums and squatter settlements who are on the verge of becoming street children (addressing the causes).

Local authorities routinely execute their functions, all of which directly or indirectly address the needs of children. When dealing with street children and gangs, local authorities should focus on the following:

- Strengthen and if necessary improve sectoral service provision;
- Promote integrated approaches

- Devise programmes for street children and gangs and families living in especially difficult circumstances (adapted from Werna et al 1999)

### **Strengthening and improving sectoral service provision**

Local authorities traditionally formulate and interpret policies, allocate resources and implement programmes along sectoral lines. Intuitively these sectoral approaches are believed to mostly indirectly benefit street children. For instance, if local authorities provides safe and adequate water to all residents, then it is believed this will also benefit street children, as they will have easier access to clean water through public taps. There is thus a need to strengthen the capacity of local authorities to better provide services and if necessary to improve these to better serve residents, especially the most vulnerable.

### **Promoting integrated approaches**

Whereas it might be convenient for local authorities to allocate resources and operate along sectoral lines, the perceived needs of communities and street children are often integrated. In a bid to avoid duplication of efforts and resources and better respond to community needs there is a need to develop holistic integrated approaches.

There is, therefore a need for integrated approaches which are:

- inter-sectoral (cutting across sector boundaries) and including different actors; and
- building partnerships (rather than acting individually and in parallel)

The first integrated approach would be integrated programmes which benefit the city as a whole, and thus street children only indirectly. The second approach would start with the definition of a focal issue, e.g. child welfare, around which partnerships would be built. (see Box 8.)

#### **BOX 10: Child-centred integrated actions: cases from Nairobi and Alexandria**

In 1988 special urban child task forces were created by the Government of Kenya to look into issues related to child welfare. They were composed of government officials, which included representatives from Children's Departments, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Department of Social Services and Housing, the Prisons Department as well as NGOs. The objective of the task forces has been to assess the situation of children, define the main problems and establish long-term goals and immediate priorities.

A most inspiring initiative involving the cooperation of various organizations is the Working Children Project in Alexandria, Egypt. This initiative involves the community, children's employers, business associations, institutes of public health and social work, NGOs, UNICEF and the working children themselves. It seeks to improve the children's working conditions, increase literacy and vocational training, and raise the quality of life for children and their families.

Source: Dzikus & Ochola, 1996, Ochola 1997.

## Devising programmes for street children/gangs and families living in especially difficult circumstances

Above initiatives only indirectly benefit street children and gangs and can only be influenced and redirected to a limited extent. There is thus a need for local authorities to develop specific programmes which address:

- the needs of street children and gangs (addressing the symptoms); and
- the needs of families in difficult circumstances (addressing the causes).

(Above adopted from Werna et. al 1999)

Keeping in mind the two main functions of local authorities, the following strategy is suggested for local authorities action on how to deal with street children and gangs:

- Interpret national policies, formulate local policies and develop city-wide plan;
- Mobilize resources;
- Conduct research and collect information;
- Create awareness and conduct advocacy;
- Provide services and devise child-centred development programmes;
- Coordinate initiatives and build partnerships;
- Monitor and evaluate progress.

The following table provides a matrix for a strategy of how local authorities can deal with street children and gangs within their mandate and functions.

Issues	Legislative/control functions (policy)	Executive functions (service provision)
Interpret national policies, formulate local policies and develop city-wide plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan, formulate &amp; interpret child friendly policies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a city-wide plan.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobilize Resources</li> <li>• Strategise &amp; mobilize resources;</li> <li>• Make budgetary allocations to street children programmes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Re)-Distribute Resources to needy organizations, communities &amp; children;</li> <li>• Monitor the use of funds.</li> </ul>
Conduct research & collect information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision-making based on sound &amp; up-to-date information on children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disseminate information.</li> </ul>
Create awareness & conduct advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create awareness among policy makers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create awareness within local authority or within city.</li> </ul>
Provide services & devise child-centred development programmes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide services e.g. education, health care, recreation, skills training.</li> </ul>
Coordinate initiatives and promote partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a network for information exchange.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate activities within city and local authority.</li> </ul>
Monitor and Evaluate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a monitoring criteria;</li> <li>• Set the desired results.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure progress.</li> </ul>



Before embarking on developing a programme addressing street children and gangs, it is recommended that local authorities develop a plan of action based on the aforementioned strategy. Each city action plan should identify their own priorities vis-à-vis street children and gangs. The action plans should be developed based on participatory planning principles, which includes the involvement of all stakeholders through so called “city stakeholder consultations”. When developing action plans local authorities should distinguish between “strategic planning” and “tactical planning” tools. Tactical planning is a process of thinking and acting to accomplish immediate and intermediate practical needs of children, like access to shelter, education etc. Strategic planning is more long-term and focuses on children’s strategic needs related to equity and empowerment as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of Child like their rights to housing.

Both tactical and strategic planning can be supported by applying the now common logical framework approach. The “logframe” has been widely documented and comprises the following steps:

- Stakeholder analysis
- Problem analysis (casual tree)
- Objective oriented interventions (solutions to identified problems)
- Project planning matrix

The following provides an example of a logical framework project planning matrix.

Intervention Logic	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Assumptions
Overall goals	Indicators measuring goal achievement	Assumptions relating to achievement of goal(s)
Programme Purpose	Indicators measuring achievement of programme purpose	Assumptions relating to achievement of programme purpose
Results	Indicators measuring achievement of results	Assumptions relating to achievement of results
Activities	Inputs required for activities	Pre-conditions to start activities

## 5 Mobilizing Resources

### 5.1 Introduction

All suggested activities aimed at improving the living conditions of street children and gangs require resources. However, local authorities in developing countries are increasingly finding it difficult in providing services to all their residents especially the urban poor. This is due to the fact that they are facing serious financial problems. Three financial problems can be outlined:

- Local governments do not have enough money to carry out the functions assigned to them;
- Some local governments have a lot more money than others;
- Matters are getting worse rather than better because local revenues are not adequately responsive to changing needs (UNCHS, 1996:174).

One of the main reasons for the deterioration of local authorities is the unwillingness of central governments to pay the political costs of decentralization, which means granting more financial and decision-making powers to local authorities. Stren highlights the following reasons for this deterioration:

1. the tendency, on the part of central governments, to reduce or limit the functions of local authorities, usually justified on the basis of financial mismanagement by elected local authorities;
2. the refusal by central governments to grant local authorities wider taxing powers, or to share with local authorities the proceeds of national taxation;
3. the frequent refusal by central governments to permit local authorities to increase rates and service charges, even where these are clearly justified by galloping inflation (Stren, 1989, In Mutizwa-Mangiza 1994:176).

Other weaknesses of local authorities are internal. These include lack of proper mechanisms to generate adequate resources, ineffective management and corruption.

### 5.2 Reviewing and Analyzing Available Resources

The means for providing the primary resources for children's survival, healthy development and well-being such as housing, water, sanitation, health facilities, schools etc., are to some extent owned and controlled by local governments in urban areas. Local governments also possess or may possess regulatory mechanisms over the private sector, NGOs, religious

and voluntary institutions involved in providing welfare services within their municipalities. These resources and capacities are fundamental in the street children rehabilitation process. Therefore, local authorities should:

- Determine its own resource base necessary for rehabilitating street children;
- Analyze previous rehabilitation programmes by NGOs and other actors and assess their impact in rehabilitating street children/gangs within their boundaries;
- Identify other resources for street children rehabilitation e.g., schools, health facilities and the children themselves;
- Determine the possibility for subsequent technical, material and financial assistance from other sources including the central government, private sector and external donor agencies.
- Build an inventory of both local and international donor organizations that support children programmes and disseminate this information to NGOs and community-based organizations.

### **Material and Human Resources**

Local authorities possess resources such as health centres, schools, social halls, vehicles, recreational facilities (playgrounds) and are also charged with the responsibility of providing basic infrastructure as indicated earlier. These services are not only important to the well-being of children in general, but also can be utilized in the rehabilitation process of street children and gangs. Local governments can analyze the scale and nature of the problem and take appropriate action, making the best possible use of local resources including the children and local community in which these children live.

### ***Local Authority Staff***

Most local authorities have relevant community development departments with trained community workers. Training and equipment of such manpower and improvement of terms of service can greatly boost their efficiency at work. These community workers can serve as part of the personnel team in the rehabilitation process e.g. social workers/welfare officers, doctors, nurses, artisans, teachers, city / metropolitan police etc. They also have the policy making machinery to provide a regulatory framework which can be used to articulate the needs of children.

### ***Use of Volunteers***

Local authorities can also draw from the abundant services of volunteers who could include school leavers, university students, religious organizations, professional associations (e.g. doctors, nurses, teachers associations etc.) and members of the public within their municipality. The volunteers may offer their time and resources in assisting programmes aimed at rehabilitation of street children and gangs.

### ***Charitable Organizations***

These could include scouts, girl guides, youth organizations such as YMCA and YWCA, and social associations such as the Rotary and Lions Clubs. The youth organizations could use their organizational skills to build self-esteem and confidence among street children. Other charitable organizations could provide job training, food, clothes, books and other resources. Such assistance is good if it is channelled in the proper manner as giving out of handouts may encourage dependency rather than self-sufficiency among the recipients. Local authorities need to organize and coordinate such initiatives, to avoid such dangers associated with giving handouts.

### ***Religious Institutions***

Religious organizations have also played a very instrumental role in assisting street children. Most religions have an obligation of caring for less fortunate members of society. The catholic and salvation army churches, for instance, have been in the fore-front of initiating social welfare programmes. These have been involved in street children rehabilitation projects undertaking activities such as education programmes, skills training and health care. They can provide funds as well as their facilities such as churches, temples, mosques and food to organizations assisting children.

### ***Financial Resources***

If the projects under local authorities are to be implemented adequately, they must also be incorporated in their approved budgets. Their budgetary allocations should include the needs of street children/gangs. The main objective here should be to put all the needs of street children and gangs under the local government comprehensive development plan and to provide for periodic reviews and disclosures of their budgetary status. Since the local government budget mobilizes resources from various sectors of the urban economy, they must integrate various development activities targeted at those that have been left out of society's mainstream life. The budgetary allocation should take the following into consideration;

- The ability and willingness of family/communities to contribute towards the rehabilitation process through financial contributions, direct labour (voluntary work) and material assistance.
- Determine assistance from donor agencies and other private organizations.

### **5.3 Strategy for Mobilizing Resources**

This consists of mobilizing both local and international resources, expanding local authority revenue and taxation base and devising alternative ways to provide services e.g. through forming partnerships with NGOs, the private sector and other stakeholders.

#### ***Mobilizing Local Resources***

Taxes are the most important sources of income to local authorities. More resources can be mobilized by increasing the revenue through expanding the tax base of local authorities. For instance, it is argued that countries which were influenced by British traditions most

heavily rely on taxes on real property and least heavily on income taxes. Since no country seems able to raise more than 10 % of total taxes from property taxes, the local authority revenue base can only expand if they get access to sales or income taxes (UNCHS, 1996). Another alternative is to introduce user charges on certain services or use of certain commodities especially luxurious items. Other resources at the local authority level are also generated from fees, rates and levies. Improving the collection system of these charges can greatly increase income from these sources.

### ***Targeting Local Resources***

Next to mobilizing additional resources it is also important for local authorities to manage existing resources more effectively. An important aspect is to target resources for the vulnerable and urban poor, especially street children. Local governments in South Africa are using cross-subsidies as an instrument for a more equitable distribution of service provision.

### ***Forming Partnerships***

Whereas the development of urban areas is the responsibility of local governments and to a certain extent the central government, the private sector also plays a significant role in urban development. Often, local authorities do not have enough resources for development. A great percentage of the resources are in the hands of the private sector. By forming partnerships with this sector, local authorities can harness the additional resources.

### ***Fighting Corruption***

Corruption is a problem which retards development and is not always easy to fight. However, it can be reduced. Usually corruption is more a problem of policy and management than one of ethics or better laws. Fighting corruption could have a number of benefits to local authorities:

- Raise the city's revenue;
- Improve service delivery;
- Increase public confidence and participation. This can also increase the confidence of the government in local authority and provide more resources and responsibilities to them. Prevention of corruption can also have the capacity to attract donor agencies to assist local authorities.

### ***Decentralization and Devolution***

Decentralization is the transfer of many central government functions to local levels especially those that have traditionally been under the intervention of the state in urban areas e.g. education, health, housing and other infrastructure. Devolution goes further to include not only the transfer of functions and resources, but also the decision-making powers. The capacity of local authorities to raise their own revenue, e.g. by giving them access to resources from non-traditional sources such as income tax and business tax, can enable them to administer the services and provide the necessary facilities to urban residents. The main advantage with devolution is that local authorities are close to the

people and are therefore in the best position to identify local needs and respond to the them adequately.

### ***Increased National Resources***

Although decentralization and devolution is a favourable option, it is not always feasible. In these cases it would be important for local authorities to get a larger share of national resources. On average, local authorities only account for 23 percent of national spending. This should be increased considerably.

### ***Community Participation***

Community participation is recognized as the key to successful development programmes. By involving the community in the decision-making process and allowing them to determine how resources are utilized, community identification with the development project increases and helps to reduce the risk of failure. This is also the most effective way to bring into use the ingenuity and resourcefulness which communities have in providing solution to their problems.

### ***International Resources***

There are various international organizations which specifically provide support to organizations that assist street children. Many of these organizations are working within the boundaries of local authorities without the knowledge of “city hall”. As mentioned earlier, local governments need to find which organizations within their municipalities provide such assistance, build an inventory of such organizations and make the inventory available to local NGOs and CBOs dealing with street children and gangs, as a capacity building measure.

Local governments are the main conduit for international and national level initiatives and resources. They should use this chance to undertake fundraising from national and international sources and channel these funds and technical assistance to local organizations supporting children. However, before seeking assistance from international organizations, it is important to first make use of the local resources and only turn to foreign assistance as a last resort so as to avoid future dependence. Unnecessary government debts from loans should be avoided.

## 6 Policy Formulation

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on assessing existing policies (both local and international) on children and formulating necessary policies to create child-friendly cities. Policy formulation should be conducted in equal partnership with children.

### 6.2 *Interpreting International and National Policy*

Local authorities have a very important role which allows them to interpret international and national policies and translate them into local actions. Chapter 4.1.1. provided a brief overview of international policies relevant to street children and gangs which are:

- Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Agenda 21;
- Habitat Agenda.

Each of these international policy documents call for the development of local plans of action to translate into action international agreements on children, environment and human settlements.

Next to international policies there are a number of national policies which can guide local authorities in striving to improve the living conditions of street children and gangs. Some of these policies cover:

- Labour policies especially related to employment for the urban poor;
- Fiscal policies especially related to redistribution of incomes;
- Housing policies including access to land, shelter and related services; and
- Social policies including education, health, nutrition etc.

A good review of the national policy related to urban poor children in Nigeria is provided by Osemwegie (1998). Unfortunately national policies focus on Federal National Government and State Government to address the needs of street children leaving the role of local governments to that "... of facilitating and promoting effective programme implementation at grass roots levels" (Osemwegie 1998). This manual argues that local authorities have a much more active role to play in improving the living conditions of street children, by formulation of their own policies on street children and gangs.

### **6.3 Formulating Local Policies**

Next to interpreting international and national policies, local authorities also have the opportunity of formulating their own policies, which are specifically aimed at improving the living conditions of street children and gangs.

Most local governments have policies which outlaw the existence of slum and squatter settlements. These settlements, therefore, do not receive any basic services as part of the official policy. Unless such unequal distribution of resources is stopped, it is conceivable that the number of working and street children will continue to grow. The first step involves re-orientation of local authority's policies to ensure equitable distribution of resources and a more efficient provision of services and increased finance through investment and revenue. A second step focuses on targeted service provision and resources to street children and gangs and families in especially difficult circumstances.

Based on local economic, political and cultural circumstances, local authorities should use the broad framework of existing national and international policies to shape local policies regarding children. The formulation of local policies can be done with the assistance of the government, local NGOs working with children, and with children themselves.

Sections 6.4. and 6.5. on Strategies and Frameworks dealing with street children and gangs provide an indication for areas which require policy formulation at local level.

Dowbor 1997 recommends as a first step the creation of a permanent Child Policy Coordination team which is in charge of issues related to the welfare of children. He identifies a major obstacle for progress in the area of children's rights and needs in the fact that children are everybody's business, and nobody is exclusively responsible for them. Children are viewed as a "cross-cutting issue" for all sectoral activities. Thus it is important for a team directly linked to the policy formulating body of the local authority to pursue the formulation of policies related to street children and their later implementation by the executing arm of the local authority. He secondly suggests the creation of a Municipal Council for Children which permits the participation of all important institutions in charge of sectoral policies for children, such as health, education etc. The council should ensure the participation of all stakeholders dealing with street children and gangs operating within the boundaries of a local authority. Dowbor points out the Child Policy Coordination Team should remain relatively small and also be action oriented. The Municipal Council for Children should include all stakeholders of a local authority and influence and harmonize their policies towards street children and gangs.

### **6.4 Children's Participation in Policy Formulation**

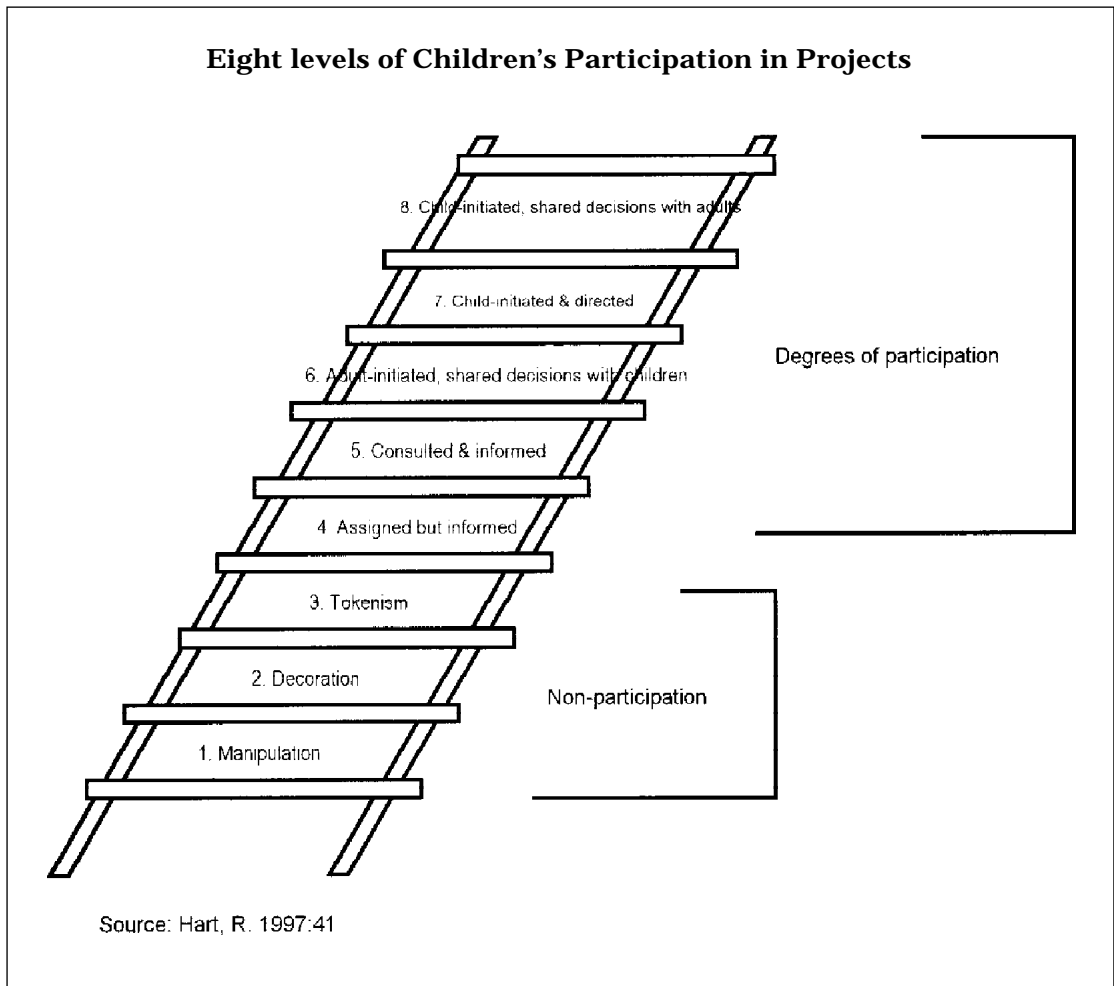
Children are knowledgeable about their situation and can provide innovative solutions to their problems if consulted. In particular, street children have already learned to make many important decisions regarding their daily life on the streets without the assistance of adults.

Next to consulting children for policy formulation the creation of a Junior Council with a Junior Mayor would be a step further. The Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council has developed some initiatives in this area. Junior Councils could be created which are comprised of representatives of children from all walks of life and different age groups and should include street children. These children councils could meet at regular intervals and express their needs and desires.



A further way of involving children in policy formulation would be to involve street children and gangs through participatory research methods. This is further described in the chapter on 7.5.

However, Hart 1997 has pointed out that there are different levels of children's participation. His ladder of children's participation shows the different levels of children's participation. This ranges from pure tokenism pretending to involve children to adult driven consultation with children and sharing of decision making. The highest level on the ladder is child-initiated decision making with adults.



# 7 Conducting Research and Collecting Information

## 7.1 Introduction

Many local authorities will question if it is at all necessary to conduct research. They believe it is costly, and very cumbersome. The fact is, research on children need not be prolonged nor expensive, if two rules are considered:

- It should concentrate on questions one really needs to know in order to effectively address children's needs and monitor the effect of interventions.
- One should not collect more information than absolutely necessary to answer posed research questions.

We should keep in mind that in many African countries the number of street children is not well known as they are not covered by national census, educational and health data and the methods of counting them vary. Therefore, information generated through research is important for two reasons:

- It helps bridge the knowledge gap on the situation of children in our cities and helps us better understand street children.
- Being better informed and more aware of the plight of street children, local authorities can better respond to the needs as expressed by the street children themselves.

When conducting research we should always be aware to conduct research for and with children and not on children.

### BOX 11: Who Knows Most About Children ?

... the children themselves are the experts, they know what their concerns are and how they see their own future.

Connally 1990, in Ennew 1994

## 7.2 Research for Bridging the Knowledge Gap

The main reason for conducting research is to know more about the situation, characteristics, feelings and problems in the every-day life of street children and gangs. This will ultimately lead to initiatives aimed at improving the living conditions of children.

Before commencing research, it is important to identify the questions to be answered by the research. The following provide some key questions:

- What is the situation of street children and gangs?
- What problems do they experience on the streets and their homes?
- What is the rate of school drop-out for both boys and girls?
- What are the feelings and attitudes about street children and gangs?
- What official policies exist regarding street children?
- What are the physical, social and psychological effects of street life on children?

Information to answer some of the above questions can be obtained from two sources:

- Existing sources of information; and
- Carrying out your own research.

### ***7.2.1 Conducting Research with Existing Information***

Existing information on children can be obtained from the following areas:

- The central and local government;
- The local community of NGOs;
- International organizations;
- Local research institutions and universities.

#### ***Central and Local Government Sources***

Official information can be obtained from various ministries and departments which have information on child related issues. The population and census departments as well as the Ministry of Health can provide information on figures of child deaths and illnesses. The Ministry of Health can also provide information on hospital admissions, medical histories and treatment of STDs. The Ministry of Education has information on school enrolment, attendance and dropout figures. This information can show the differences by gender, region, ethnic group and variations between different school shifts, which may also indicate factors such as child work that could interfere with schooling.

In addition, information can be obtained from existing police records related to children, justice departments, juvenile justice records, prosecutions for vagrancy, probation and detention statistics, information on child prostitution, drug and alcohol abuse etc.

#### ***NGOs and other Aid Agencies***

NGOs are a very important sources of information on street children. Usually they have first hand information on street children, especially on rehabilitation methodologies and logistical information, and have experience in finding the needed financial resources as well as skills in data collection, data analysis and presentation. This should be given first priority. Donor agencies are also another important resource. They have information on various agencies working with street children whom they support.

### ***Community Registers***

These can provide information on the number of street children in a given area, age, gender, health status and their socio-economic status. The registers will provide information on family backgrounds, parents' occupation etc.

### ***International Sources***

These include reports, manuals and information from UNCHS (Habitat), UNICEF, WHO, UNESCO, ILO, Defense for Children International (DCI) and Child Watch International and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In addition, look at the OAU Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child.

### ***Local Research Institutions & Universities***

Local researchers in universities and institutes of higher education usually have departments which have information related to children. These include departments of public health psychology, sociology and anthropology, schools of medicine, education and social work. Student dissertations and thesis and other grey literature might provide additional information.

#### ***7.2.2 Conducting Your Own Research***

Research into existing information will provide background data for discovering gaps and formulation of new research questions. Primary data will also provide a baseline for the planning, implementation and evaluation of street children and gang projects. It is important to gain insight into local people's perspectives of the problems of street children and their perceived options. There is need to obtain first hand data on the group or groups of children targeted. This means that the research should also involve the affected children so as to discover their own concerns and interests. This would make the children identify with interventions launched on their behalf.

In conducting research, especially with the street children themselves, there is need to observe the following ethical principles postulated by Spradley (1980):

- (i) Safeguard the informants rights, interests and sensitivity;
- (ii) Communicate research objectives;
- (iii) Avoid exploitation of informants;
- (iv) Make reports available to informants.

All the above ethical considerations also apply to researching on street children from whom the researcher requires informed consent. They too, are entitled to their privacy and anonymity as well as respect of their opinions. It is usually upon the researchers to prevent suspicions which may hinder their accessibility to respondents in different social situations. This implies that the researcher should maintain some degree of unobtrusiveness (reduced visibility) in some research settings which are likely to raise anxieties and suspicion. The validity and reliability of the data collected depends on the researchers level of success in establishing a rapport between him/herself and the respondents who include street children themselves and others who interact with them.

Osemwegie (1998) provides an example for conducting research on street children in Lagos State (Nigeria).

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

### ***Observation***

Observation entails the use of general questions to look at a social situation and record as much as possible. A descriptive question-observation is very useful when the researcher has very little knowledge of a social situation. Observation is designed to provide a guide in research especially when the researcher is most ignorant of the culture under consideration.

There are two types of observation: ***participant and direct non-participant or structured observation.***

### ***Participant observation***

This method involves unstructured observations made in company of children. The information gathered through this method must be recorded soon afterwards to avoid forgetting certain important details. Three approaches have proved useful when applying these method to street children.

The first approach requires the researcher to go where the children are. Due to the nomadic nature of street children's life, it is difficult to observe them as they are constantly on the move. Therefore, a study on them must ensure that the territory where they operate is mapped, indicating places where they are to be located at different times of the day, rather than following them around. The second approach involves provision of a service which can attract the children to come to the investigator. The third aspect is observing the wider context where street children operate, taking note of all activities taking place within their environment.

### ***Structured Observation***

The structured type of observation usually takes an interest in a particular activity e.g., how street children spend their leisure time and investigates its occurrence, frequency and duration.

### ***Focus Group Discussion (FGD)***

A focus group gathers people from similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss a specific research topic. Focus groups rely on the guidance of a moderator or a group facilitator. This technique can be used to elicit data from street children who share common characteristics, especially age, gender and those who live in gangs. FGDs can also be used to get information from the community where street children come from or live, as well as street workers. The advantage of FGDs is that a lot of information can be obtained far more quickly and at lesser cost than individual interviews. This is also an excellent method of obtaining information from illiterate or semi-literate people, such as street children.

FGDs are used to explore relatively simple issues and can easily be managed by people not

trained in qualitative research methods. Due to the flexibility in questioning, attitudes and opinions that might not be revealed in survey questionnaire easily surface. Similarly, FGDs can easily be accepted by street children as they make use of the group discussion which is a form of communication naturally used among street children.

Focus group discussions are very useful in obtaining information from street children, since they can be conducted in a free and comfortable environment which can allow children to express themselves openly. Different sessions can be conducted for boys and girls separately and this can later on be combined. The advantage with the focus group discussion is that children can freely relate every aspect of their lives; home environment, street lifestyle, beliefs, feelings and their aspirations for the future. Through focus group discussions, in-depth interviews can also be used.

### ***Interviews***

The interview method can be used in focus group discussion to clarify certain issues. The interview data should provide information on socio-demographic characteristics of street children, reasons for leaving home, conditions at home, their perception of life in the streets, the merits and de-merits of such living conditions and factors influencing choice of location (e.g. market instead of a movie hall); and attitudes of law enforcers towards them, their views/hopes about the future etc.

**In-depth interviews** with key informants can be conducted as a follow-up to certain important issues that would have arisen from the focus group discussion. This should include different categories of street children; Children *on* the streets, children *of* the streets and separate interviews with male and female street children.

### ***Analyzing and Interpreting Data***

The information gathering process is the first step in analyzing the problems of street children their needs and potentials. Children should be involved and assisted to summarize data they collect. Illiterate children can report their findings verbally, which can then be recorded. This can be compared with the information collected from the adults who are facilitating the research. Focus Group Discussions can also be used to clarify any differences in data. Proper data interpretation and thorough analysis is important, so as to develop strategic interventions.

Since the methods used to collect data on street children are entirely qualitative, the data should be subjected to qualitative analysis which may include domain, taxonomic and theme componential analysis. Simple descriptive statistics and charts may be used for and with children. Data can also be interpreted from drawings done by children from specific research topics.

- First assess the validity of the material collected, looking especially for contradictions between data sets from different sources which may be due to differences of definitions, perspectives between adults and children or the different data collection methods;
- Focus on underlining assumptions about families, children, working children and street children and identify particular groups of children, particular situations that seem to give rise to anxiety;

- Finally, decide with the children which groups of children are most at risk and from what. Make a list of all the plans, projects and developments that already exist to help street children, either directly or indirectly.

### 7.3 Counting Street Children

It is popular to want to count street children but this is always difficult. Often, figures are inflated to try and give credibility to the seriousness of the problem. The reasons for differences in the numbers of street children arise from the following:

- The first difficulty arises from lack of a common understanding in defining street children.
- Secondly, street children constantly move from place to another and it may be difficult to carry out a census.
- Thirdly, some cities may be too large for mapping out a survey on them.

Usually NGOs working for street children would give conflicting figures within any one city. Although the figures for street children in any one municipality may vary, they at least provide a general picture of street children population trends. It is therefore important to consult the existing sources of information to get the general picture about the population of street children, before carrying out your own census on them.

It is important to supplement this by carrying out your own census on street children, to determine their population in your municipality. When conducting such a census, Judith Ennew (1994) recommends that the following factors be taken into account:

- Determine the percentage of total child population in each age group;
- Determine the number of working children;
- Determine the school enrolment ratio, the percentage of school drop-outs and the rate of absenteeism.

The following methods and techniques are proposed for counting street children and gangs.

Proposed Methods and Techniques:

- (a) Counting street children/gangs in their reference locations or focal points in the streets.

Counting the number of street children in certain representative focal points involves the following steps; Mapping the entire urban area under study, sub dividing it into manageable units, categorizing areas with similar characteristics, counting the focal points in the selected areas etc.

- (b) Control method for technique(a)

Counting the street children gangs which are visible at first glance in some of the focal points previously visited. Conduct an in-depth survey to establish the number of those actually present, including those who are not visible at first glance. The techniques (a) and its control are useful for counts undertaken in large and very diverse urban areas. They presuppose the availability of maps indicating socio-economic areas, zones with specific functions, population density by zone etc.

- (c) Counting and subsequently extrapolating the cases reported of children/youth who left their homes in a number of neighbourhoods, communities, or places of origin which are considered representative. This presupposes that the percentage of street children be established according to groups of places of origin (i.e. slum or low-income urban areas, peri-urban areas, other neighbourhoods, towns etc.). A survey in one or several representative locations can help to establish the number of street children who left their families and presumably became street children.
- (d) Use of censuses and survey: This method can be applied to establish the number of street children located in various parts of the city. It also consists of using home surveys or consensus at national, zonal and other levels to include questions on street children who left the homes covered by the census. In addition, census conducted by the community itself maybe used where this exist.
- (e) Obtaining complementary data for the counts made in the streets through technique (a), by counting the number of street children in various institutions of rehabilitation e.g. in prison or borstal (institutions), police cells, or children's homes.
- (f) Interviews with key informants: Obtain information from key informants who could include social workers, street educators, social researchers, competent staff from NGOs, police, taxi and bus drivers, merchants working in the informal sector on the streets. These can provide information on the number of street children they think are in certain respective locations or neighbourhoods.
- (g) Complementary or control technique for cities having less than one million inhabitants: Ask all street children, who can be contacted, which street children they know (by name, nickname, surname etc. as long as individualization is possible). On the basis of these, a list of street children can be produced gradually.
- (h) Use of already existing qualitative data (from institutions, research findings etc.) as long as the methods used to obtain the data are known or can be determined.

It is suggested that a combination of several methods/techniques may be necessary to achieve more valid results. This is because some of the proposed methods and techniques may not necessarily produce sufficiently consolidated results either because they merely cover a partial segment, or because their relative validity is weak. Moreover, some of the methods may not be applicable in every place and must be selected according to the size and other characteristics of the place.

Some of the proposed methods are also technical, expensive and may therefore require specialized personnel. Here local authorities could seek the assistance of specialized institutions such as universities, NGOs and other research based institutions.

In addition, there are two important considerations which must be taken into account when applying these methods:

- (i) The time of the year, day or events (e.g. Christmas celebrations) may cause street children to temporarily move to other places on or off the streets, or to migrate to other cities etc. For instance, some street children attend school the whole day and start begging/work in the evening or during weekends when they are not attending school.



- (ii) The features which differentiate cities or urban areas (national capital, provincial or departmental capital), economic role (border town, industrial based town, tourism) etc., may cause variations in counting children in similar locations.

#### **7.4 Conducting Action Research**

Next to conducting research on the needs of street children and gangs, it is important to conduct research on what is being done to meet the children's needs, which means conducting research on what are the initiatives to improve the living conditions of street children. Some research questions could be formulated as follows:

- Which groups of children are at high risk?
- Who are the main actors dealing with street children?
- Which rehabilitation approaches are being applied?
- What the main obstacles and constraints?

##### **7.4.1 Using Existing Information**

This will involve conducting research on various institutions such as the central government, NGOs and other aid agencies, community registers, universities and local research institutions ( see, 7.2.1), to establish what methods of research they use to meet information needs on street children. This will provide a general picture about the most common research methods (whether participatory or non-participatory) being used. This can help to make comparisons about the outcomes of different research methods on a given research topic.

##### **7.4.2 Doing Your Own Research (Demonstration Projects)**

This will involve conducting research on how best to improve the living conditions of street children and gangs. The research will focus on developing locally appropriate methods and approaches for rehabilitating street children and gangs. The important aspect of this research is that it aims at initiating action. A very important way of doing this is by conducting pilot projects or demonstration projects which demonstrate the usefulness of a rehabilitation approach. Based on the findings of a demonstration, a specific rehabilitation approach can be scaled-up and used for replication within the entire city.

#### **7.5 Children's Participation in Research**

Contrary to popular belief, children can participate in action-research and make valuable contributions towards improving their living conditions. Roger Hart (1997), in his book "Children's Participation", has identified several steps through which children's participation in action-research can be considered. This is a continuous process which involves problem identification, analysis, planning, implementation, evaluation. After evaluation one either comes to the successful end of the project or starts the problem identification again. The research methods below also show how children can be involved in action research.

As indicated earlier, street children must be fully involved in the research, as they are the richest source of information about themselves. They must be involved in planning issues to be researched on and in setting the research objectives based on their identified needs. Such information can be the basis of exploring issues of concern among street children

themselves and adults supporting them in the research process. Fabio Dallape (1988) shows the need to involve street children in the research as seen in the Box below.

**BOX 12: Surveys of Children: Views from a Project**

Some people start their contact with street children through a survey. Making a survey in order to assess the number of children, their background, the areas where they come from, the difficulties they experience, etc. Usually they employ people from universities who are in a position to prepare good questionnaires and approach donor agencies for funds...

The children don't believe in those surveys, because they have been approached by so many students and people and police who have questioned them about their street life. We don't believe in such external surveys either, since we already know the answers to most of the questions we put in the questionnaire...

The children, fortunately don't take a survey seriously and so don't have false expectations. Children don't care to answer survey questions correctly. In fact they rarely give correct answers to your questions whether you are foreigner or a local... They enjoy elaborating on the hardship of their life and how they must survive. They want to impress you, they act actors in a theatre..

Make a survey with them about themselves and their areas of origin... The survey must be prepared beforehand with them: they must all know the type of information you need. They should even be aware of the reasons for such a survey... Organize a seminar to discuss the findings with them

**Dallape 1988, In Ennew 1994:51**

## **Drawings**

Drawing is a very popular undertaking for children and most of them enjoy it enormously. Although children draw for fun, this has proved a very powerful means through which children communicate their inner feelings, which may not be expressed verbally. This is now being used creatively to elicit information on children, particularly those who are shy, illiterate or inarticulate. Drawings are therefore a very important research tool, especially on street children. For instance, Kuleana in her annual report of 1994, used various drawings by street children to illustrate children's knowledge of aspects such as education, recreation, health, nutrition and sexual experiences among others. Similarly, in Ethiopia, Askale Makonnen (1997) has used children's drawings to illustrate their perceptions about certain infrastructural facilities in Addis Ababa. Some of the drawings show children playing on the streets, expressing the lack of recreational facilities in their neighbourhoods.

It is particularly very important to be careful when interpreting drawings. This is because children of different ages draw differently and interpretations may also vary depending on different cultures or situations. This is well illustrated by Jill Swart in the Box below.

### **BOX 13: Interpreting Drawings**

The importance of supplementary explanation is clear when we consider that Sipho (14) and Meshak (15) both had an obsession with drawing graves, but that they drew them for different reasons.

Sipho's preoccupation derived from having lost both his parents; his mother died first, then his father. He had been estranged from his brothers and sisters by a fight at his mother's graveside and graves seemed to have become a symbol of his unhappiness.

In contrast, when Meshak was asked why he drew graves so compulsively, even on his school books, he replied, 'Graves is good. I think of my Granny. She loved me.' Alongside one of the graves he drew a table set with candles and flowers. He used to do this for his grandmother. For Meshak, unlike Sipho, the grave symbolizes joy and peace and he appears to draw strength and inspiration from its image.

**Jill Swart, 1990:26; In Ennew, 1994:67**

## 8 Creating Awareness

### 8.1 Introduction

It is our attitude and opinion based on information or lack of its access which determines to a large extent our behaviour towards street children and gangs. Awareness campaigns are thus a very important vehicle to help us better understand children on streets and local authorities to better respond to their needs.

Local authorities should focus on two areas for awareness campaigns:

1. Conducting awareness campaigns for all persons associated to local authorities. These could focus on:
  - All sectoral departments of local authorities which directly or indirectly influence the lives of street children. Increased awareness of the plight of street children within these sectoral departments would provide the opportunity of redirecting some of these initiatives to include addressing the needs of street children;
  - Those departments within local authorities which have the potential of developing integrated approaches aimed at addressing the living conditions of street children;
  - Those departments within local authorities which directly influence the daily lives of street children.
2. Conducting awareness campaigns for the public at large.

### 8.2 Creating Awareness Within Local Authorities

A general awareness campaign should sensitize local authority staff about the plight of street children and what can be done to help them. This information can be spread through newsletters, presentations and trips around town. All staff should be actively involved in the child-friendly city initiative a local authority has subscribed to. Increased awareness will enable them to realize how their work and daily action influence the lives of street children and let them realize what they can do.

Most local authorities have relevant community development departments with trained community workers. Training and equipment of such human resources and improvement of terms of service can greatly boost their efficiency at work. These community workers can serve as part of the personnel team in the rehabilitation process if they are equipped with relevant social skills e.g. social workers/welfare officers, doctors, nurses, artisans, teachers, city / metropolitan police etc. For instance, nurses and doctors can be provided with social skills to enable them run mobile medical clinics, where street children can be given free medical care in the streets or their hideouts. These must specifically be targeted

for awareness creation to enable them interact with children in a manner which fosters their self-esteem and dignity.

Sectoral departments which do not directly deal with children but whose activities impact on children's lives have to be sensitized to understand the importance of their activities to children's welfare.

### **8.2.1 Police and Street Children**

Police are an important element of the local authority administration system. As agents of law enforcement, they are responsible for stamping out illegal street trading, unlicensed businesses, drug abuse and maintaining law and order. For instance in Nairobi, Kenya the city police (known as city *askaris*) who are under the administration of the city council, enforce city by-laws. The council *askaris* sometimes work with administration police in slum clearance operations, and carry out arrests of street hawkers and vendors, including street children in the pretext of keeping the city 'clean'. Since the income generating activities street children undertake are not always licensed and often hinge on criminal elements, they are always suspected criminals.

#### 8.2.1.1 Police Harassment and Violence

The police behaviour towards street children is treated separately here as they have been a constant source of worry and tribulation to most street children. Evidence in many African countries suggests that police often subject street children to various forms of physical abuse and violence. A Human Rights Watch Report on juvenile injustice in Kenya observes that street children "... are often harassed and beaten by police, and have to pay bribes to police in order to avoid arrest." Often,<sup>3</sup> the only reason for their arrest is because they are suspected petty criminals, or vagrants<sup>3</sup>. In addition, the police subject street girls to sexual abuse in order to avoid arrest or to secure release from custody.

In Ethiopia, a study on street children in four selected towns revealed that street children were beaten by police and in some cases, this included torture. Two cases of torture involved: electric shocks to the soles of the feet and being repeatedly ducked in a bath of water. In both of the cases, this was done to extract information concerning criminals the police felt the boys knew (Veale et al., 1993). In South Africa, minors (under 16) have been arrested for lack of identity papers and have sometimes emerged from police stations with cigarette burns. The Streetwise project for street children in Johannesburg, points out that the police have arrested some street boys who have never been seen ever since (Summing Up 1990, In Ennew, 1997:146).

While in custody, these children are sometimes mixed up with adult and hard-core criminals, who subject them to all sorts of abuse. Further accounts of police abuses against street children are highlighted from the Human Rights Watch Report on Juvenile Injustice; Police Abuse and Detention of Street Children in Kenya in the following cases.

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3 Under Article 2 of the Vagrancy Act of Kenya, vagrant is defined among other things, as a person having neither lawful means of subsistence such as to provide him regularly with the necessities for his maintenance; or a person having no fixed abode and not giving a satisfactory account of himself; or a person wandering abroad, or placing himself in a public place, to beg or gather alms (Cited in Human Rights Watch Report on Juvenile Injustice in Kenya (1997),p. 36)

The report carries numerous incidents of physical abuse and harassment by police on the street. The presence of police alone was enough to cause children to flee as testified by a fourteen-year-old John about life on the streets in Nairobi, "We usually run away when we see the police because we know what will follow." Sixteen-year-old Peter, who had formerly lived on the streets in Nairobi, confirms this when he says, "...., even if you're just walking around doing nothing, the police might come and just pick you up and take you to the station."

NGO street workers interviewed by the Human Rights Watch lamented about physical abuse by police, which was thought to be worse at night, when fewer people were on the streets and the risk of public censure was likely to be less. Roundups of street children usually happened at night, during the course of which children were often manhandled and beaten. Once detained, children were often further beaten at police stations, during interrogations and in lockups. Although the illustration of police brutality towards street children in the box below is drawn from Kenya, it closely mirrors the situation in other countries in Africa.

#### **BOX 14: Police Abuses Against Street Children - the Case of Kenya**

Life on the streets is dangerous enough for street children without their having to be guard against police, the very people who are supposed to protect them. While we recognize that some police work to help street children and to reunite them with their families, many others do just the opposite...

The Human Rights Watch Report gave disturbing cases of police brutality and high levels of violence against street children of Nairobi. On August 11, 1994, a fifteen-year-old street boy named Simon Kamande Kampaniu was allegedly shot several times at close range and killed by police reservist Arvinderjit Singh Chadha in the Ngara area of Nairobi. The same reservist had been involved in the shooting and killing of five other street boys less than two months earlier on June 22, 1994. The reservist was eventually charged with the murder of Simon Kamande Kampaniu but was acquitted after the High Court Judge, Justice Samuel Bosire found that there was insufficient evidence to prove that the reservist had committed murder, or even the lesser charge of manslaughter.

Street girls reported cases of rape by police on the streets. Eighteen-year-old Pamela, from Nyeri district in Central Province recounted how she had been raped by a police man:

"The police are always calling us names, threatening us saying we're whores, trash, homeless, and beating us. Sexual abuse happens too. It happened to me once, here in Jeevanje Gardens ( a public park). Four policemen came and arrested me near City Market. They started taking me to the Central Police Station, and brought me here to the park. One of them hit me and I fell down, and he came down on top of me. Another held me down while the policeman raped me. After he raped me, they walked me over to Central Police Station, and just let me go."

Establishing police accountability is hampered by the fact that children must lodge complains against police abuse to the same police force. Although an individual can lodge a complaint with any police station, the police are not bound by law to act, which means that in cases where they are being criticized, it is most unlikely that any decisive action can be taken. Furthermore, a threat of repercussions by police is a serious deterrent to any child coming forward to testify or make complaints against the police. In fact several children reported to Human Rights Watch that for them to even go near a police station would be risking jail term for them.

**Source: Human Rights Watch (1997), Human Rights Watch Children's Rights Project, pp. 21 33**

### 8.2.1.2 Working with the Police

The police, therefore, constitute a major part of the street children problem and must be involved in providing security solutions for them. There is a need to sensitize them to respect the rights of children and made to be custodians of these rights. As a first step, local authorities should establish a special force within the police to specifically deal with cases of juvenile justice and street children. Such a force should be trained to this effect. The training should include elements of child psychology and legal aspects of child protection. Awareness creation campaigns as illustrated in the box below can help to sensitize police towards children's basic rights.

#### **BOX 15: Preparing the police to deal with street children in Tanzania**

Bearing in mind that pervasive police/*sungusungu* violence was the children's greatest source of fear, the elimination of this practice through sensitizing the police on children's rights, represents one of Kuleana's (An NGO dealing with street children in Mwanza, Tanzania) most important achievement. Some members of the police now cooperate with Kuleana's staff in assisting children who are in legal trouble. Street children themselves have also been resource people. They are encouraged to explore, through various expressions, their own sense of fairness and justice. These ideas and perceptions are then translated into posters for community sensitization.

In addition, lobbying and high level advocacy has assisted to increase respect of children's rights. This has involved concerted, mutually reinforcing activities, including hundreds of individual conversations with officers, facilitating small group discussions, lobbying high level officials, holding workshops, researching legal provisions, and raising community awareness. In particular, this has helped the police to recognize and respect legal provisions requiring children in custody to be treated without violence.

*Source: Kuleana Centre for Children's Rights , (1994), Annual Report, pp. 18 19*

The city police, for instance, must be sensitized on how deal with street children in a humane way. It should be the responsibility of local government to ensure that city police are prohibited from manhandling street children and prosecute any policeman/woman found guilty of any such abuse. Prompt investigations of complaints of police abuse against street children should be conducted, their findings made public, and appropriate disciplinary action taken promptly. Magistrates under the local authority courts could also be trained and sensitized to enable them uphold children's rights expressed in the national and international laws.

### **8.2.2 Waste Management and Street Children**

Many local governments face a serious problem related to waste disposal generated in their municipalities. The waste problem continues to be serious as a result of the increasing population which outstrips the capacity of local governments to provide the necessary services. This is also due to inefficiency and corruption of local governments themselves.

Due to this local government weakness, many street children have found survival niches in waste picking. Many street children earn their living through scavenging waste (e.g. plastics, paper, glass, metal) from dump sites and dustbins in the city. However, this important service by street children rarely receives official recognition and support.

#### 8.2.2.1 Conflict: Formal Versus Informal Waste Management

Formal waste management may include collection of waste by the local governments themselves and their sub-contracted private firms. On the other hand, informal waste pickers include street children and women whose collection activity lack any official recognition. The scavengers usually collect waste from households or dumpsites. Often, they do not tidy up after sorting. They are thus regarded as a nuisance by both communities and local government. This attitude tends to dominate the thinking at local authorities rather than the fact that street children provide a useful service: first by contributing to the use of waste and environmental sanitation, and secondly by creating employment opportunities for themselves.

#### 8.2.2.2 Building Partnerships

A first important step that will benefit both local authorities and scavengers is a partnership between formal and informal waste collectors. The following are suggested for local authorities to deal with children who work as waste pickers:

- Establishing viable partnerships and sensitizing all members of the public who deal with street children can greatly improve the situation of these children.
- Recognizing the work of scavengers and helping them to get organized into official waste picking associations. These associations can then be provided with training in waste handling, credit and equipment for waste management to enhance their efficiency. The support of local governments to scavengers and other private organizations involved in waste management is absolutely necessary. Financial support is particularly necessary in the initial phase. The waste pickers association can also be enabled to establish their own recycling plants instead of relying on middle men who tend to exploit them. Angela Veale (1993:109) has also suggested that, *“in cooperation with the city council, children could be grouped into a city cleaners’ brigade and assist in the sanitation of their surroundings.”*
- Securing waste disposal contracts for scavengers. Local governments can facilitate and negotiate specific contracts for waste disposal with waste pickers associations.
- To ensure effectiveness, experts could train street children and the waste picking responsibility could be entrusted to them officially. This training should entail health safety measures for scavengers, and techniques for handling toxic industrial and hospital waste, from domestic waste. The municipality can also facilitate scavengers’ access to such selected waste (e.g., cardboard, paper, glass, and various types of plastic). In the due process, the basic needs of children (education, shelter, and food) should not be violated.
- Ensure that working children are not abused in terms of being over-worked or poorly remunerated. Usually, the working conditions of these children are more hazardous,



the employment legislation gives them little protection and in most cases they are paid poorly because they are easy to manipulate.

- Regulate the establishment of micro-enterprises involving hawking activities. These activities should be recognized and streamlined, instead of harassing hawkers. They need to provide a safe working environment and ensure that working children as well as their parents are protected by the employment legislation. This should also involve re-orientation of the local government by-laws, decrees and the institutional framework to address the needs of the urban poor.

### **8.3 Creating Public Awareness**

Awareness creation is an important aspect of changing the negative attitudes many people hold on street children. It is also a process of creating public consciousness and generating consensus on the situation of children. It is the key to effective community mobilization and sensitization towards the plight of street children. The following aspects should be considered when creating awareness on street children and gangs:

- Usually awareness creation does not show quick and direct results. It is a long-term and time-consuming exercise which tends to be neglected, yet it is important for the sustainability of any successful programme.
- In the short run awareness creation may prove costly to local authorities, but in the long run it pays dividends. When awareness creation improves the behaviour and attitudes of parents, communities, the government and members of the public towards street children, some of the root causes which push children on the streets get addressed. This becomes the most effective way of dealing with the problem of street children.
- Awareness creation must focus on building a positive image of street children by giving prominence to their strengths such as creativity and innovativeness in providing solutions to their problems rather than their weaknesses.
- Effective awareness creation must also involve the children themselves. In Tanzania, Kuleana (an NGO promoting children's rights) has successfully involved children in creating public awareness. For instance, Kuleana encouraged children to explore, through various expressions, their own sense of fairness and justice, as well as what was most important to them (Kuleana, 1994). These ideas and perceptions are later developed into posters for community presentation. The awareness creation gives great importance to changing negative community perceptions about street children with an emphasis on building respect and understanding of street children's situations and a critical awareness of their rights. All Kuleana staff and selected, well trained peer educators are involved in raising community awareness.

#### ***Objectives***

The main objective of creating awareness should be to inform and educate public opinion about street children, create awareness of their rights, and to initiate action and influence policy in favour of street children.

Specific target groups for awareness creation could include policy-makers, members of the public including motorists, tourists, shop-owners, merchants, restaurants and others who influence the lives of street children in various ways. Some strategies for creating public awareness are in the Box below:

**BOX 16: Methods of Creating Public Awareness: The Mwanza Experience in Tanzania**

**Murals**

This was done through painting large murals on building walls along some of the most prominent roads in Mwanza, Tanzania. Each of the murals focus on one aspect of children's rights. The murals have been seen by a wide audience and have generated an enthusiastic and sometimes contentious public response. People have been seen debating these murals, some have written opinionated letters, while others have visited Kuleana's offices to comment on them. Others have been featured in several newspaper articles. A mural challenging the beating of girl children by parents or teachers has been particularly effective in generating debate and questioning norms.

**Animated cartoon vehicle**

The *Kuleana* vehicle was also painted with animated cartoons drawings of children playing, emblazoned with the phrase "Children have a right to play!" in English and Swahili. This raised a lot of attention and aroused the first serious community wide discussion about the importance of play. Children themselves enjoy the drawings enormously. They often gather around the car and make up stories about the drawing characters.

**T-shirts**

Six different T-shirts designs focusing on children's rights were printed. These have been very popular in publicizing children's rights. Some are given out free during selected interventions, but most are sold at a modest fee.

**The Day of the African Child**

*Kuleana* staff and children have used the day of the African Child, usually celebrated on June 16 to create public awareness on children's rights. The event includes processions carrying child rights banners and theater and other animated presentations made in front of a large audience. Usually prominent persons are invited to grace such occasions. Journalists also participate and this helps to give the event wide media coverage in radio and newspapers.

**Other Community Forums**

These include active participation in meetings, workshops, conferences, holiday celebrations, sports events and street demonstrations. Highlights include leading roles in World AIDS Day celebrations, organized in collaboration with government leaders and other NGOs. Children and *Kuleana* staff led processions through town carrying colorful banners, which culminate in theatrical/musical presentations. In such meetings *Kuleana* staff make a strong case for children's rights, a different way of being with children, and share ideas about innovative programming.

**Publications**

Formal and informal publications can be widely used in promoting awareness. For instance, the *Situational Analysis of Street Children in Mwanza*, containing children's drawings and photographs, was widely distributed, giving great prominence to children's issues. Various posters on child rights, children's life histories and health issues were made by the children and used in community fora. *Kuleana* has also made a video, focusing children's resiliency and innovative activities.

Source: *Kuleana*, 1994

## 9 Providing Services to Street Children

### 9.1 Introduction

In chapter 4, three strategies were identified for local authorities in providing services to street children:

- Strengthening and improving sectoral service provision
- Promoting integrated approaches; and
- Devising programmes for street children/gangs and families living in especially difficult circumstances

Since most street children live on their own without the support of adults, taking a responsibility for themselves, and probably also for others, they definitely have an idea as to what constitutes a solution to their problems (Ennew, 1994). Their opinions must be consulted in developing rehabilitation options, as they constitute an important resource (see box 15). It is of paramount importance to utilize the group dynamics among street gangs as explained earlier (see, 2.3.2). The provision of rehabilitative options to street children must be guided by one basic principle: ***that of providing requisite interventions which provide more alternatives to street life and can enable the children to make their own choices***, rather than placing an emphasis on removing them from the streets.

### 9.2 Strengthening and Re-focusing Sectoral Approaches

#### 9.2.1 Introduction

As opposed to integrated approaches, sectoral approaches provide services along sectoral lines, e.g. the provision of infrastructure such as water, drainage and housing. The analysis of local authorities in Africa indicates that most services are still implemented in parallel. Whereas integrated approaches are desirable in addressing the problems of communities and children, in most cases this is not possible. This is because most local authorities in Africa still lack the vast amounts of resources required for implementing such projects. Sectoral approaches are also necessary in situations where there are very many stakeholders or departments involved.

In such cases it will be necessary to promote the provision of services along sectoral lines. Although sectoral policies and projects may be general in nature, they are said to benefit children indirectly. For instance, the provision of good quality housing has great potential to improve the health condition of its occupants including children. Some of the sectoral issues are explained below:

### 9.2.2 Health and Nutrition

Street children continue to suffer a number of health hazards because of their lifestyle. The most common health risks associated with street children are skin diseases, coughs and cold, stomach ulcers, diarrhoea, brain damage mainly due to drug abuse and sexually transmitted diseases. Garbage dumps in particular attract many street scavengers. These pose a major health hazard, particularly waste from hospitals. Most street children also suffer from malnutrition due to inadequate diet.

Street children's access to medical services are quite limited. Although they may know where medical help exists, most of them are ignorant of the existence of such services or cannot afford them. Sometimes the main reason for lack of medical care is because health personnel in public hospitals hold negative attitudes towards street children and treat them with contempt. This makes street children keep away from medical facilities.

#### *Health Care Options*

There two options that local authorities can take in addressing health issues affecting children as a whole, as well as street children: First is to focus on preventive health care services and secondly, to provide curative health care services.

**Preventive health services** have great potential to improve the situation of children. These include immunization programmes, oral rehydration therapy (ORT), iodization of salt, Vitamin A, breast-feeding, family planning programmes and other related services. The responsibility to provide these services within municipalities falls squarely on local governments. They own and run dispensaries and hospitals where these services are provided. What is needed is to strengthen the provision of these services and re-focus them to cater for the needs of vulnerable children and families.

For street children, primary health care education programmes can very be effective in improving their personal health and hygiene. This can be very effective if it specifically targets providing the necessary training to street gang leaders, who can be used to spread health messages among other children.

The second step is to **provide curative services**. This include providing health care services to street children and the poor in general. Considering that street children do not have the money to pay for medical services local authorities should exempt them from such a requirement. It is also important that the medical staff are sensitized to develop positives attitudes when dealing with street children. This would encourage them to present themselves for treatment whenever they are sick. Medical care must also be accompanied by adequate counselling services, especially in drug-abuse and sexually transmitted diseases.

Primary health care should be integrated with the provision of the other infrastructure such as water, sanitation, solid waste disposal, drainage and roads. Of particular importance to nutrition is urban agriculture. Although land may be generally scarce in urban areas many poor people increasingly rely on urban agriculture for their survival. Farmers in urban areas cultivate marginal land such as road sides, spaces left between residential buildings and others. Basically, most of these farmers do not have tenure of land. Other farmers, due to scarcity of land, practice agriculture which does not require large tracks of land e.g. poultry keeping. If local authorities can promote the development this type of

agriculture it can not only be a source of income to families but also a good source of proteins and other nutrients children need for proper growth and development (See Box).

**BOX 17: Urban Agriculture in Maputo and Madagascar**

The UNICEF-supported “green zones” in peri-urban areas of Maputo is an example of a successful initiative which improved fresh food and fruit supply to the city as well as supporting the livelihoods of low-income groups in the area, particularly women. There is also a successful UNICEF-supported “container” farming project in Madagascar

Source: Kanji, N. 1996:33

It is also essential to collaborate with NGOs and other stakeholders working with children directly, in providing these services.

### **9.2.3 Water, Sanitation and Solid Waste Management**

Water, sanitation and solid waste management are essential to improved health conditions within the living environment. These are particularly vital to the development needs of children. However, formal water supplies, sanitation and solid waste management facilities are often inadequate in low-income neighbourhoods. The majority of people rely on water supplied by vendors. The problem with water from such sources is lack of guarantee of its quality. Another problem is that water vendors supply this water at higher cost. The poor in low-income communities end up paying more than their counter-parts in rich areas.

Deficiencies in water supply are usually accompanied by failure to provide adequate sanitation and sewerage facilities. Lack of adequate sanitation drives people to use open spaces, ditches and road-side to dispose human waste. This exposes them to serious health risks, particularly the vulnerable children. Inadequate water supply may also result in children, particularly the girl-child having to walk great distances in search of water. This often happens at the expense of schooling.

Another major service-related problem regards the lack of or inadequate solid waste collection. Most waste remains uncollected or is deposited in close proximity to residential areas. This includes open spaces where children from low-income neighbourhoods often play. Besides, many street children work as scavengers, collecting such waste, which they later sale to recycling firms. This poses a serious health hazard for children who play in garbage sites and those who work as scavengers since they do not wear any protection.

#### **Options**

Water supply, sanitation and waste management still remain major responsibilities of local governments across Africa. Considering the impact of these services to children’s health, particularly in low-income neighbourhoods, providing these services represents a major step towards improving the health and general well-being of children.

In providing these services local authorities must first target segments of the urban poor populations who are usually neglected in service provision. It is crucial to involve these communities in identifying and prioritizing the problems. Children's concerns regarding these services also need to be addressed (e.g. availability of water & sanitation facilities at school and home).

Children in crowded low-income neighbourhoods should be provided with safe spaces and enough facilities for play. Local authorities should also encourage community based disposal and recycling, and train communities and children in effective low-cost waste management technologies.

#### **9.2.4 Shelter and Land Tenure**

The majority of street children originate from slum and squatter settlements. These settlements are generally characterized of lack of basic infrastructure such water and sanitation, drainage, means of waste management and roads. As indicated earlier (see, 1.0) the urbanization trends indicated that the majority of children live in such settlements.

Housing in urban areas is unaffordable to many poor families. This drives them to construct on marginal land, much of which may be valleys, quarries, swampy places or other places that are considered unsuitable for human settlement. Their children therefore get exposed to a multiplicity of dangers e.g. falling into steep valleys, drowning in a pool of water and the like.

In addition, local authorities forbid such settlements as they are considered illegal. Often, residents constantly face the danger of eviction with the accompanying social and economic costs to themselves and their children. The problem of housing is closely tied to ownership of land. Land in urban areas is expensive and only the rich can afford it. Unaffordability of land is where the problem of squatting begins.

#### **Options**

- As first step, local authorities should recognize the existence of slum and squatter settlements, provide the residents with security of land tenure and provide basic infrastructure such as water, sanitation, roads, housing etc. Guaranteeing security of land tenure itself can give residents the confidence to provide better for themselves.
- Secondly, local authorities can undertake shelter up-grading projects in low-income settlements where the local communities are assisted to improve their existing shelter using locally available materials and resources.
- Thirdly, lack of housing finance is a big impediment to ownership of quality housing for the poor. Encouraging the development of income generating activities and providing a conducive environment for the informal sector activities to thrive is the first step to provide income for housing. This should be accompanied with the creation of relevant institutions to provide affordable housing that meets the needs of the poor.

### **9.2.5 Education**

Education plays a crucial role in the social and economic integration of children in any society. It is also a mechanism of integrating street children into responsible and self-reliant persons in the society. The main assumption here is that if children are given education and kept in school, few of them would find their way into the streets.

Many street children express the desire to learn. However, the reality is that many of them find it difficult to participate regularly in the normal classroom. Being accustomed to a care-free life on the streets, adjusting to mandatory school discipline proves quite difficult. Most of them tend to perform poorly in class and have a very short concentration span.

#### ***Educational Options for Street Children***

Two existing educational options that have proved useful for street children are: Informal Schools and the education sponsorship programmes.

- Local government is also in a strong position to set and achieve goals related to universal primary education. This can be achieved through providing well trained teachers, necessary equipment and creating a conducive learning environment. Providing additional incentives such as school uniforms and learning material can encourage children from poor families to go to school.
- Schools also bring children together every day and can be a powerful channel for other types of activities. For instance, malnutrition problem can be addressed through the school feeding programme. However, a long-term solution lies in creating an enabling environment where parents of street children and other CEDCs are economically empowered to become self-reliant to care for their children's needs.
- Education sponsorship programmes should be established to cater for children from poor families in formal schools to enable them continue with their education.

#### ***Informal schools***

- These are favourable for street children since they are flexible and provide practical solutions to their immediate environment. Since the majority of street children originate from low-income urban neighbourhoods, informal schools could be established in these neighbourhoods. Box 18 below illustrates what local governments can do in this regard.
- For many delinquent gangs, education should include literacy and training in various income generating activities or vocational training.

### **BOX 18: Informal Schools Run by Local Authority: A Case of Nairobi City**

Informal schools are the brain-child of Nairobi's city education authorities who now realize that the population of school-age children can no longer be absorbed by the normal schools.

A crucial characteristic of informal schools is that they have done away with many of the requirements that make formal schooling so expensive for slum-dwellers. There is no school uniform, for instance, and it is possible to pay the small school fees in monthly instalments, which is a considerable help to people who are unable to amass the termly lump-sum demanded by an ordinary school.

Another important aspect of the informal school is that it has no age limit for admission into Standard One - the first grade. Formal schools do not admit children over the age of seven, which means that many children miss the education boat altogether if their lives are disrupted at a crucial time by illness, migration or some other kind of family crisis. Formal schools also insist on a birth certificate as a criterion for admission, which is often a problem for children from unstable home backgrounds. Informal schools are much more flexible. In this sense informal schools operate as a safety-net for formal school drop-outs, and are therefore an important way of stemming the rising flood of young children onto streets. The City of Nairobi has four informal schools to its credit. But the idea has snowballed and there are now a further 26 similar schools, catering for 6,000 children altogether, run by NGOs and slum community groups. The Nairobi Task Force for children 'in especially difficult circumstances' has been active in promoting the informal schools network.

Kangemi Informal School is one of the four informal schools run by the City Education Department of Nairobi. The school started in 1977 as a Youth Centre in the community hall. With time the school outgrew the hall and was moved to some buildings erected by the local community on a plot originally set aside for the expansion of a health centre. The community later formed a management committee which took over the running of the school from the Education Department in 1980.

**Source: Munyaiho 1992**

### **9.2.6 Recreation**

**Play and recreation are very essential elements in the growth and development of children. Play helps to stimulate motor and communication skills and is central in the learning process and social behaviour. Play is a very effective rehabilitation tool when dealing with street children. It also plays a crucial role in the lives of other children with special needs such as the mentally handicapped and physically impaired. Street children love games such as football, boxing, karate etc.**

**Recreation should not only include sport but also camping trips, visits and excursions, drama and art. These bring a lot of enjoyment to children as well as having a great therapeutic effect and educational value.**



### ***Recreational Options***

Local governments own and manage recreational facilities such as sports grounds and social halls within their municipalities. Making these available for children's free use can be very helpful.

Local governments can encourage the participation of street children and other youth in sports activities through facilitating the formation of youth tournaments in various sports. Local authorities can also donate trophies for competition and avail sports equipment and uniforms. Some of these equipment can be solicited from sports shops and other sports associations. This will definitely give children an opportunity to socialize with others, strengthen their discipline and help them to overcome social and cultural barriers. Those with particular talents need to be identified and given necessary support.

Other recreational activities such as drama have proved very popular with street children. Local governments acting in collaboration with NGOs and other stakeholders can organize special events where street children as well as other CEDCs can have an opportunity to act drama, dance, sing and where possible exhibit works of art produced by them. These can be sold and profits given to the children.

#### ***9.2.7 Income Generating Activities and Skills Training***

Many street children engage in some income generating activity for their own survival or for the families where they originate.

It is not desirable to promote child labour, but children will engage in informal economic activities as a survival strategy. It would be desirable to devise programmes supporting the education of street children. But in many cases street children are too old for these programmes or simply do not want to attend schools for various reasons. In a bid to avoid street children engaging in illegal income generating activities such as prostitution or petty theft, income generating activities and skills training are vital.

Some street children work as scavengers, collecting waste material such as waste paper, glass, metal and plastic and selling it to recycling firms. Others work near market places providing porter services while others work in hotels and kiosks mostly cleaning and performing other manual duties. Others clean cars, help motorists with parking, provide security for the cars, while others sell newspaper. The majority of potential street girls work as domestic child workers or may be hidden away in brothels working as prostitutes. Primarily, the majority of street children engage in informal sector activities of a diverse nature which cover a wide range of survival strategies.

However, most of these activities are not organized and lack any official recognition, thus most are regarded illegal. As a result, many of these children are ignorant of any advancement opportunities for securing credit schemes and are ill organized to receive any financial assistance from recognized micro-enterprise financial institutions.

Local authorities could promote street children micro-enterprises by:

- Disseminating the necessary information on credit and market facilities for street children and gangs. Collaboration with formal sector enterprises, NGOs, and other potential support groups should be the basis of information exchange. This process could involve hosting meetings with appropriate sectors (waste recycling firms,

informal transport, employers of domestic child-workers, street hawkers etc.) to organize exhibitions and events and disseminate information. The box below is an illustration of how street children have assisted in the informal transport sector in Khartoum, Sudan.

**BOX 19: The SKI Courier Service**

The SKI (Street Kids Incorporated) bicycle courier service as business scheme for street children. The project was established in Khartoum at a time when businesses and NGOs found it difficult to communicate with each other within the capital because of poor postal and telephone services. Children were trained in identifying street names, riding bicycles and road safety and given a bicycle and uniform. SKI promised reliable, same day delivery. Children were given a salary, with bonuses for long distances and deductions for poor performance. If a bicycle went missing the boy had to pay.

On the surface this is a very attractive instant solution and this kind of scheme is attractive to donors. It aims to develop dignity and self-reliance.

Source: Ennew 1997

- **Securing Waste Evacuation Contracts** with the concerned sectors on behalf of street children's micro-enterprises. In particular, local authorities may facilitate the formation and recognition of scavengers' associations as partners and negotiate specific contracts for waste evacuation with them. This should also entail health safety measures for scavengers to separate toxic industrial and hospital waste from domestic waste. The municipality can also facilitate scavengers' access to such selected waste (e.g., cardboard, paper, glass, and various types of plastic);
- **Establishing Social Security Systems** for street children within their social groups by negotiating agreements for access to medical services with private clinics, pharmacies and doctors;
- **Zoning the Location of Micro-Enterprises** to facilitate easy market interaction, and develop economies of scale, including the efficient location of support institutions such as a small scale credit organization; (above based on Vanderschueren, et. Al 1996).
- **Establishing a Flexible Savings Banking System** with a guarantee fund on the strength of which the local authority itself may borrow elsewhere, support initiatives of NGOs or private institutions who work with and for street children and coordinate financial support from credit institutions (Vanderschueren, et al. 1996:33-44). In addition, municipalities can facilitate savings schemes where street children deposit some of the money they earn. It is important to note that street children may not meet requirements for opening a savings account in formal banking institutions.

The box below provides further illustration of what local authorities can do to promote the micro-enterprises for street children in their social work groups.

## **BOX 20: Municipal Support to Youth Micro-Enterprises: A Case from Senegal**

In the Senegalese economic context, micro-enterprises need to be given access to capital to finance their operations and the upgrading of their equipment. In order to address these needs, the municipality of Dakar established the Cellule d'Appui à l'Emploi et à la Promotion de l'Entreprise (Unit for support and promotion of employment and enterprise-CAEPE) in 1994.

One of the main objectives of CAEPE is to assist the integration of young Senegalese in the national economic fabric through support to small-scale enterprises. Implementation of CAEPE's activities currently involve;

- providing potential entrepreneurs with documentation on economic activities they may target;
- performing feasibility studies for proposed projects.
- Assisting potential entrepreneurs in developing economically sound projects and to help them to find local financial support;
- intermediate to ensure that the neediest may obtain some minimal starting capital for setting up their micro-enterprises;
- providing basic training on enterprise management;
- assisting entrepreneurs in their day-to-day operations and monitor their performance.

CAEPE interventions cover all types of projects within municipal limits in the following sectors: agriculture, fishing, commerce and the private sector.

**Source: Vanderschueren, et. al. 1996:35**

**Clearly some of these children work to supplement their families income. Redressing their problems requires solutions which address the economic conditions of their families. Income generating activities should particularly be promoted. It is necessary to provide credit to female headed households in low income areas, who tend to be disproportionately poor and from whom the majority of street children originate. Local governments need to initiate integrated community development programmes targeting these neighbourhoods and channel development assistance from national and international sources to vulnerable families and children.**

### ***Skills Training***

**Skills training is a very important element of street children rehabilitation. It is the most important step in assisting working children. Training can either be in existing businesses or services currently in demand or for a new service which is in demand and is not yet not available.**

**Training is usually in the informal sector activities which street children already involved in. These could be trades such as mechanics, carpentry, tailoring, electronics, Hairdressing, weaving, upholstery, leatherwork, watch repair, metalwork among others.**

#### **BOX 21: Work Training: Kuleana's Experience**

The work training/apprenticeship activity has had moderate success. Eight children have received long term training as apprentices in cooking, hairdressing and as security personnel. Many more children were facilitated to apprentice informally with local vendors, crafts people, builders and fishermen. The teaching of general work skills is in an on-going part of Kuleana's non-formal education activities.

Source: Kuleana, 1994

#### **9.2.8 Access to justice**

The problems related to lack of justice which street experience are illustrated in chapter 8.0.

Therefore, programmes to improve the access of street children to justice could include programmes to reduce crime/violence and abuse of women and children within families in low-income urban settlements (see, Box 22).

#### **BOX 22: Legal Assistance for Children and Youth**

The Legal Resource Centre (LRC) in South Africa and Zimbabwe provide free legal aid and deal with a wide range of issues covering land, housing, fair labour practices and abuse of power by public officials. A similar institution also exists in Namibia

Source: Kanji, 1996:34

Most street and working children are paid very poorly compared to adults undertaking similar jobs. Their working conditions are more hazardous and they are less likely to be protected by the employment legislation. Since local authorities regulate the establishment of micro-enterprises involving hawking activities, they should recognize the hawking activity, instead of resorting to harassment of hawkers. They should endeavour to provide a safe working environment and ensure that working children are well protected by employment legislation. This should also involve re-orientation of the local government by-laws, decrees and the institutional framework to address the needs of the urban poor and vulnerable children.

#### **Ombudswork**

It is recommended that local authorities establish an ombudswork<sup>4</sup> to specifically deal with the issue of street children. The concept of ombudsperson is based on the understanding

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4. Ombudsperson is a Scandinavian term which is defined as an independent statutory body established to promote the rights and interests of children

that children are a uniquely vulnerable group and require independent mechanisms to protect and promote their rights. The main work of the ombudsperson should be to monitor the actions of various stakeholders dealing with children, including local authorities themselves and the government, to ensure that public administration is held accountable for its actions related to children.

### 9.3 Integrated Approaches

The need for integrated approaches in rehabilitating street children is based on the fact that the needs of children as well as community needs are interrelated. For instance, there is a strong correlation between health issues and the development of child's education. Poor health conditions result in poor performance in school. In addition, it has been indicated earlier in this document that the majority of street children originate from slum and squatter settlements and mostly from female headed households. It can be argued here that since the majority of women are disproportionately poor, their children stand a high chance of becoming street children, as poverty is one of the main causes of street children phenomenon. The fact they also live slum and squatter settlements in itself is an indicator of poverty.

Therefore integrated actions for street children could be those actions which cut across the traditional boundaries and include different stakeholders, and those which are based on partnerships. Box 10 illustrates this kind of action. Chapter 10.2 provides further information on integrated approaches.

The national programme of Action (NPA) is an ideal example for an integrated approach aiming at assisting Children in especially difficult circumstances (CEDC) (Osemwegie 1998).

#### BOX 23: Integrated Approach: National Programme of Action (NPA) in Nigeria

The NPA is a blueprint of Nigeria's multi-sectoral initiatives to improve the situation of the Nigerian child and was developed in fulfillment of Nigeria's commitment towards the World Summit Goals of 1990. The NPA being multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary is comprehensive and presents significant strategies for poverty alleviation and reduction in Nigeria. Being multi-sectoral, it focuses on four broad programme areas, namely:

- Health and Nutrition
- Education
- Water and Sanitation
- Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (CEDC)

It also has two other programme support areas:

- Social Mobilization and Advocacy and
- Monitoring and Evaluation

Source: Osemwegie, 1998

#### 9.4 Development Programmes for Street Children and Families

Traditionally, local authorities have not been very strong in developing programmes for street children and gangs. These have mostly been provided by NGOs. However, local authorities are uniquely placed to develop or give support to programmes specifically targeting street and gangs. The majority of street children come from slum and squatter settlements. Targeting support to women and slum communities can benefit many street children including potential street children and families who live in difficult circumstances.

As indicated previously, local authorities should focus on target groups when initiating development programmes:

- for street children and gangs (treat symptoms); and
- for families living in difficult circumstances (treating the causes)

Local authorities need to review and design specific policies to protect vulnerable families and children in difficult circumstances. This could include giving priority to families living in slum and squatter settlements through the provision of basic infrastructure such as housing, roads, sanitation, waste disposal, water and sewerage.

##### *Development Programmes for Street Children and Gangs*

Many youths in slum areas engage in anti-social behaviour due to idleness. This is due to the high rate of unemployment and lack of school opportunities. Often such children resort to the streets. Street life itself is quite harsh and many children find themselves using drugs to deal with the realities of street life. Efforts to re-direct their energies and potentials to socially acceptable activities need programmes which address their specific vulnerabilities. Encouraging youth activities through sports and recreation can help to re-direct the energies of these children.

##### **Box 24: Youth Groups Activities**

Undugu (an NGO dealing with street children in Nairobi, Kenya) has struggled to promote youth activities, mainly in the areas of sports and recreation. In Mathare slum village, there are established youth groups in boxing, football, tae kwon do and table tennis, while another group of young women are taught skills in embroidery.

Source: Udugu Society, 1993

Other development programmes could include skills training in income generating activities to enable them become self-reliant in life (see chapter 9.2.7 and Box 19). This could also include assisting them to secure employment or credit to start an income generating activity. Other programmes that can benefit street children include education sponsorship programme or establishing rescue centres in communities where these children come from.

##### *Development Programmes for Families In Difficult Circumstances*

The presence of children on the streets or working children is a symptom of an underlying social and economic problems in the society. Programmes for street children alone cannot

help to deal with the causes that bring children on the street in the first place. Slum and squatter settlements which are home to the majority of street children lack basic infrastructure and services. An attempt to get to the root causes responsible for the phenomenon of street children need actions based within the community. Therefore, community participation and involvement has the greatest potential to address the root causes of this problem. This involves community-based rescue centres where children can be provided with basic needs such as informal education, medical care and counselling.

Experience has shown that uplifting the community at large has the greatest potential for preventing children running off to the streets. In this respect, programmes aiming at uplifting the economic situation of women are absolutely necessary. This can be done through providing them with skills in income generating activities, business management skills, and entrepreneurship development as a capacity building measure. It is also important to deal with community attitudes which encourage reliance and outside assistance and encourage them to utilize their own ingenuity. This could also include community development programmes which increase the poor's access, to land, housing and other infrastructure.

This also means doing away with discriminative policies that encourage evictions. Such policies should be revised to guarantee security of land tenure to residents to encourage them to improve their living conditions. This should be accompanied by establishment of an emergency fund which can be used to implement specific programmes to benefit marginalized families.

#### **9.5 Children's Participation in Projects**

All projects for children must involve them. These children have demonstrated a lot of potential for making important decisions on their own and should actually be involved at all stages of project planning, starting from problem identification, programme implementation, monitoring, through to evaluation.

Although children should be involved in decision-making, they still lack the experience and skill necessary in this process. They need to be guided, to analyze their problems in a systematic way, and to assess the available options and to be facilitated in making choices (see Box 21). This process can be achieved 'through transferring the skills of analysis, actions, design and planning' to children (Dallape & Gilbert, 1993, In Ennew, 1994).

Children's participation is therefore a process which involves learning new ways of interacting with each other where adults learn to involve children in decision-making.

### **BOX 25: The Importance of Children's Participation**

In the context of projects, 'participation' means that children are encouraged and facilitated to analyze their situation, decide what the priority problems are and suggest solutions. They will also be actively involved in the day-to-day running of the project, 'participation' does not mean children being involved in public activities of the project...

....Real participation, in which children initiate project options and share decisions with adults is not easy. It does not happen over night and children cannot make choices without knowing what the choices are, their possible outcomes and how to manage the decisions democratically. Although they already have much knowledge and many skills, they still need more information and further social skills in order to be able to participate. The adult role is to facilitate their participation, giving them the tools to do the job and supporting their efforts.

The most important resource in project design is not money, buildings, or adult skills, but the children themselves. They are not 'objects of concern' but people. They are vulnerable but not incapable. They need respect not pity. True child participation should be the goal of every project and a constant consideration of project management and work alike

**Source: Ennew, 1997**



# 10 Forming Partnerships and Institutional Coordination

## 10.1 Introduction

Coordination is a process which involves sharing of information on activities, policies and strategies and even carrying out joint programmes and projects. Although many people see the need to coordinate, it is not always easy to bring together agencies with different organizational policies and programmes. Even where agencies share similar programmes, their conceptual perspectives may differ greatly. Suspicions, jealousy and competition for donor support can become obstacles for many NGOs to engage in networking. There are two main advantages which accrue from networking. These are:

First, in many local authorities, there are a variety of actors who provide services to street children, but often, their services are uncoordinated and do not always benefit street children. Duplication of effort and wastage of resources which accompanies such uncoordinated actions can greatly be minimized through acting in an integrated manner, building on partnerships.

Secondly, local authorities do not have sufficient resources to provide services to street children. Forming partnerships is the most ideal way to find additional resources to assist street children.

The UNCHS (Habitat) Urban Management Programme has developed a framework for city consultations that greatly enhance the formation of partnerships and institutional coordination.

## 10.2 Coordination Within Local Government

Most local authorities in Africa tend to provide services along sectoral lines (i.e. committees or departments aim at providing a particular service) rather than adopting an integrated approach. However, as seen before, the perceived needs of communities and children are often integrated, requiring a cross-sectoral approach.

For instance, applying the sectoral approach in urban development limits local authorities to the provision of infrastructure. This creates a vacuum in the provision of other important community services. The spaces created in service provision are usually filled by NGOs, (e.g. in addressing the problem of street children), but NGOs often lack the capacity to undertake long-term development initiatives which can help to address the problem of street children. The end result is that the number of street children continues to increase in the same proportion with the number of NGOs that come up to address this problem.

### **BOX 26: The UMP City Consultation**

The UMP City Consultation is intended to improve city policy, management and administration in the UMP thematic areas of poverty, environment and governance. The underlying premise of a UMP City Consultation is that poor city administration in these and other areas is often the result of weak rapport with the urban public, particularly where bureaucratic and unresponsive modes of administration are the norm. The UMP City Consultation approach has been designed to bridge this gap and enable a process of dialogue between city administration and key stakeholders in the community to address a particular problem. The outcome of this dialogue is an action plan that has citywide support.

The UMP City Consultation takes place over three to six months, and moves through the following stages:

**Stage 1. Selection of a City:** This is a demand-driven process. However, the commitment of key city officials, a strong civil society, commitment of local partners, the existence of networks and the likelihood of follow-up financing for the implementation of action plans are all considerations when a city is selected.

**Stage 2. Planning:** This stage focuses on problem identification, organisation structure and allocation of responsibilities to administer the UMP City Consultation, role and selection of city government, civil society actors and donors, selection of the Consultation approach, publicity, and other planning elements.

**Stage 3. City Profile:** The city profile provides a thorough analysis of the city's situation in relation to the relevant thematic focus areas, with a concentration on the problem identified during stage 2. The output of this stage is a City Profile Report, to be used in Stage 4.

**Stage 4. Consultation Process:** A series of meetings or events, formal and informal, with all stakeholders. These meetings can take various different forms but should all lead to agreement on the problem to be addressed, objectives to be achieved, and adoption of a draft action plan.

**Stage 5. Follow-up:** the draft action plan is given more detailed technical substance and converted into a detailed action plan.

**Stage 6. Final Plan of Action:** the detailed action plan is approved by city authorities so that implementation can commence. Publicity for the Final Plan of Action is required at this stage to generate further popular support.

**Stage 7: Implementation:** The city and stakeholders implement the Final Plan of Action. The UMP Local Support Team continues to give advice and support during implementation.

**Stage 8: Replication by other cities:** One of the success criteria of the UMP City Consultation approach is that it is adopted by other host cities for continued replication in new topic areas.

**This results in many uncoordinated street children initiatives run by NGOs. This is not meant to discredit the work of NGOs, but rather to stress the need for integrated action which builds on partnerships.**

**There is a need, therefore, for local authorities to shift from their traditional role of providing services along sectoral lines to a more flexible approach based on the perceived needs of urban communities, including children. This implies that various local government**

committees and departments should be sensitized to understand the connection between various services they provide and how these affect children. The local government should, therefore, assume the overall managerial role of controlling and directing the activities of others in the whole urban development process. This also requires building of partnerships with other actors in the city providing community services e.g. the central government, private sector and NGOs.

The Stren and White (1989) have recommended the following principles for local authorities to act in an integrated manner in the urban development process:

- urban management should be integrated rather than sectoral;
- urban management should be adaptive and regularize or formalize the informal sector;
- decentralization of urban administration should be effective;
- use and ownership of urban land should be modernized.

In addition to this, Rambanapasi (1994) has suggested two more principles for creating comprehensive and synthetic departments and committees at the local government level, which provide services based on an intersectoral approach. These are:

1. First, local government council or committees should not mimic the sectoral structure of national ministries, but instead should adopt a cross-sectoral approach which encompasses the entire urban territory; and
2. Secondly, local government committees should integrate and represent the local level functions.

This whole process requires a re-definition of local authority institutional responsibilities, where local authorities renegotiate with central governments on deconcentration and devolution of power and resources to lower levels.

This also entails human resources development at the local authority level. This requires capacity-building in terms of training local authority staff and giving them the necessary tools of service to enable them execute their new responsibilities efficiently.

### **10.3 Coordination of Initiatives Within City/Local Authority**

The coordination of initiatives for street children within the city can be of two types: those of a *broad nature* and those that are *child-centred*. Broad based integrated actions are general development actions which also benefit children although indirectly. This could include the provision of services and basic infrastructure such as foot-paths, roads, drainage and water in low-income settlements. Local authorities could support the implementation of such action NGOs and other stakeholders within their municipalities.

Local authorities could also encourage the formation of child-centred initiatives which use the child as a focal point of action. Box 10 illustrates this type of actions. The Child-Friendly Cities Initiative provides another best example of how child-centred initiatives can undertaken. This can provide opportunities for different actors to share their experiences, share resources and initiative joint programmes for street children. For instance, local authorities can undertake to provide free land to interested NGO(s) to specifically establish programmes for street children.

#### 10.4 Establishing Partnerships with Different Actors

A partnership is a sort of formal association or contract in which each partner has obligations, rights and responsibilities. It is a mechanism through which different actors mutually take advantage of their comparative strengths, while minimizing their weaknesses. The magnitude of the street children problem in many African cities definitely requires such concerted action, bringing together local authorities, NGOs, religious institutions and other stakeholders.

Given the scarcity of funds available to local (and often central) governments, and the increasing problem of street children and related gangs in most African cities, the capacity of these institutions to deal with this problem is limited. The most promising and cost-effective approach for local government action is to forge an alliance with NGOs, CBOs religious agencies, the private sector and international and multi-lateral agencies. NGOs can help local authorities with needed research e.g. providing data and appropriate technical advice. This is particularly the case as when they already have the experience both in research (through working with street children in identifying their needs) and in action (through implementation of rehabilitation projects for street children).

Warah (1997), has outlined the following as advantages of the partnership approach:

- The approach provides a mechanism for resolving the “needs/demand gap” in provision of basic services;
- It enables different sectors to gain access to each others’ skills and resources;
- It provides a mechanism for sharing risks and maximizing returns on investment; and
- It ensures that all stakeholders have a say in the development of their communities.

In the partnership process, local governments should create an enabling environment which facilitates action by other stakeholders. These could include creating legal, fiscal and regulatory frameworks that can be used in mobilizing the energies and resources of all stakeholders. Less expensive measures can be adopted to speed up the process. For example, existing CBO projects could be provided with technical advice and support from local authority level. An atmosphere of good will in itself could encourage the foundation of new projects. Their initial expenses can sometimes be reduced by a grant of land, or by guaranteeing a bank loan for building or expansion. This will cut down on the costs. The rationale for local authorities to initiate partnerships is illustrated in Box 2.

Partnerships can be enhanced through:

- Institutional capacity-building through training and developing manuals for local level initiatives by NGOs, CBOs and others on how to deal with street children and gangs;
- Developing a holistic approach designed to reach all urban children and their families, involving NGOs, the police, law courts, the public, children and others. Mayors also need to provide necessary support to those who work with street children, including street workers, social workers/welfare officers;
- Developing mechanisms for coordination in order to share resources and experiences, exchange substantive information with other partners, disseminate analyses of city indicators of and avoid overlapping or duplication of effort e.g. the Child-Friendly Cities Initiative. For instance, most local authorities have medical clinics which can

provide free medical services to street children, while NGOs can provide rehabilitative services focusing on counselling, education and training;

- Establishing a council for child development at the city level to initiate a consultative process comprising of policy-makers, NGO representatives, grassroots organizations and heads of all municipal departments, relevant government ministries, researchers and the private sector. Its functions should be to coordinate, plan and monitor all programmes for children.
- Local authorities should encourage more participatory methods which involve urban communities, NGOs and the private sector in decision-making. The roles of other partners e.g. the government, NGOs, CBOs and the private sector are explained below:

#### **10.4.1 Central or Regional Government**

The central government is a strategic partner for local authorities as they provide a regulatory framework for them to operate. Political power and funds needed at the local authority originate from the central government. Local authorities therefore need the strong support of the central government to adequately accomplish their role in urban development. They should thus forge solid working relations with the central government. This includes lobbying the central government for more administrative power and financial assistance. Central governments should be more willing to create an enabling policy framework for local authorities.

Central governments could also monitor the activities of local authorities, and provide them with technical assistance, supplementary and emergency funding and assist in gathering and disseminating information.

#### **10.4.2 The Private Sector**

The private sector provides goods and services through market forces of demand and supply. This sector survives on its ability to respond flexibly and efficiently to local needs. This results in a state of competition, which encourages innovation and creativity. The sector is now widely acknowledged as an efficient way of meeting consumer needs on a competitive basis. The box below elaborates further on the importance of the informal sector to marginalized families and communities. The sector can contribute to the rehabilitation of street children and gangs in a number of ways:

- By offering direct employment or income generation opportunities to members of vulnerable families and in particular to street children and gangs. They can also be supportive of such children who work in their premises by contributing to combat discrimination against them through establishing a non-discriminatory working environment.
- The private sector usually includes a large number of small-scale, informal businesses. Such businesses have strategic significance for working and street children because; (i) they often provide many items for low-income families and at a lower price than formal businesses; and (ii) They constitute a great source of employment and income-generation opportunities for poor/vulnerable families - and also for children who need to work in order to survive (Werna et. al, 1999).

### **BOX 27: The Importance of the Informal Sector**

The vast literature on the advantages of the informal sector which has built up since the early 1970s notes characteristics such as high flexibility of production (leading to greater responsiveness to demand and greater ability to fill in niches in the market), low prices of the products (leading to expansion of demand), resilience (thus surviving in adverse economic and political conditions), among many others. Although the informal sector does include firms with elementary processes of production, it is by no means restricted to them. As the burgeoning literature on flexible specialization shows, during the past few decades industrialization has developed in such a way that now many types of informal/small-scale producers are central to advanced processes of production. The share of the labour force engaged in informal production in developing countries ranges from 20% to 70% according to the country, the average being above 50%.

In addition to its role in the economy in general, the informal sector has also been active in relation to poverty alleviation in particular. From the production/income side, the sector brings advantages to the poor and less skilled producers, for instance: easy of entry, less or no need for paper work (regarding employees as well as the firm as a whole), less or no need for formal training, less or no need for initial capital, among others. From the consumption side, many goods supplied by informal producers would otherwise not be accessible to the poor (due to the lack of interest of formal/large-scale producers to cater for this part of society or higher prices of their products)

**Source: UNCHS (1997)**

**Since local authorities are increasingly privatizing some of their services, they should explore possible partnerships with the private sector to enhance the provision of goods and services that benefit children. They should particularly encourage the sector to devise alternative ways of providing the goods and services even when direct payment from such vulnerable groups is not possible (e.g., study long-term systems of credit for low-income families).**

**Local authorities should encourage the private sector to help equip street children with the necessary skills in the informal sector by being attached to local artisans where they can learn skills in carpentry, tailoring, electronics, motor vehicle mechanics and other trades. The Undugu Society of Kenya relied for a long time on such artisans in providing on-job-training to many street children who went through its informal sector training programme.**

**Last but not least, local authorities can encourage the sector to make contributions towards a social security system for vulnerable groups and street children in particular. The box below is a practical illustration on what the sector can do in rehabilitating street children.**

**BOX 28: The private sector involvement in street children rehabilitation: an account from Nairobi**

There are innovative ways through which the private sector can be involved in assisting children in need. In Nairobi, an initiative of Undugu Society and the City Council in 1993 managed to mobilize the population in general, towards the plight of street children through an effective public awareness campaign. Some of the institutions that offered to give assistance included the print media, banks, hotels, and medical institutions. The media provided free publicity, banks provided financial assistance, hotels were responsible for food, and the medical institutions offered medicine and free medical care to the children. Such experiences reveal the important role that the private sector can play through collaborative initiatives to alleviate the plight of street children and gangs.

Source: Ochola, 1996

### 10.4.3 Non-Governmental Organizations

NGOs have increasingly gained international recognition as active partners in providing development solutions, which cater for basic needs of marginalized families and street children and in the overall development process. Local authorities need to take advantage of NGOs capacity to forge viable partnerships in catering for children's basic needs. They should facilitate NGOs to undertake grass-root rehabilitative initiatives for delinquent gangs. NGOs are particularly very effective in creating awareness at the grass-root level on child-sensitive issues. Thus, they should be used in mobilizing community action and raising local concerns. They too can undertake advocacy work to influence policies and programmes, in addition to providing technical inputs and assistance. Unlike the private sector, NGOs are also not driven by forces of demand and supply for profits. Hence, they fill in the action-spaces which are created by the private sector.

NGOs also have substantial technical knowledge, which, coupled with closeness with local communities, makes them have an edge over other actors. Local authorities should use them to convey innovative ideas to communities and street children as well as passing critical information about the communities to other social actors. This can help to strengthen partnerships between the communities and such actors. In particular, NGOs can forge links with elected councillors of the local government who represent local community interests at the municipal level, to ensure that community needs are well served. Working alongside local authorities, NGOs should help in mapping a street children rehabilitation strategy and should also assist with the information gathering process, including needs and impact assessment. The table below provides basic guidelines for NGO role orientations in street children rehabilitation at the community level.

## NGO Role Orientations in Street Children Rehabilitation

### Assistance

Addresses the immediate problem  
Provides direct assistance in the form of grants and subsidies, including credit.  
Implements projects directly for the benefit of target population

### Organization

Facilitates a long term capacity to solve the problem  
Builds up sustainable local organizational strength and capacity.

### Negotiation

Addresses the larger context of the problem  
Advocates changes in laws and in formal systems. Brokers agreements and linkages among Government, local authorities, larger institutions, NGO, and community organization

### Information

Provides options on how to address the problem  
Offers technical input and assistance; conducts research; develops new designs and innovations; provides technical training

**Source:** Adopted from Plan International (1996), Case Lessons from Plan International & Other NGOs, pp., 11

International NGOs usually undertake capacity building in terms of providing the needed financial assistance, training manuals (e.g. Save the Children Fund produced a manual for NGOs to rehabilitate street children).

#### 10.4.4 Community Based Organizations

Action in favour of street children and street youth cannot be dissociated from general community problems. The approach of involving the community in the rehabilitation process of their children is based on the philosophy that the group or the environment in which a child lives has a significant influence on his/her behaviour. Street children are particularly socialized and get influenced by the groups or gangs in which they live. By rehabilitating them individually we risk giving them values which might alienate them from their own peers and the society at large. By rehabilitating them as a group or gang and whenever possible in their society, we may be able to build on their own values.

The local community has a vital role to play in terms of socializing the children even if they lack the material goods and services to provide for them. Such a role relates to the children's day-to-day education, care and social environment. Usually, the communities' main asset consists of their strong knowledge of the local needs, associated with their capacity to detect problems early as well as to ultimately assess the impact of actions. Such knowledge and capacity is an asset that can be used to ensure a healthy socio-cultural environment for children can also keep local authorities informed about the community's problems and priorities for action. A target for immediate action could be the promotion of innovative educational experiences in a street setting by highlighting and organizing street based activities (e.g., public theaters, games, street workshops, etc.) Some of the actions



that can be undertaken by the community are elaborated in the box below on selected types of community-based actions

Local authorities should facilitate communities to establish a community-based emergency system to cater for all vulnerable families and children (such a system should not rely solely on financial resources, and therefore explore all other types of resources found in the community e.g. mutual self-help and rotational schemes to take care of children, etc.)

Local authorities can also establish a community-based system of assistance to families and children on the verge of poverty (Use Grameen model of banking to assist communities and working children).

#### **BOX 29: Selected Types of Community-Based Actions**

Actions to be undertaken by the community could include: (i) parent-child programmes, (ii) child-to-child programmes and (iii) communitarian programmes. Parent-child programmes include, for instance, groups of mothers learning the role of pre-teachers to stimulate and educate children at home. As time goes by, such groups of mothers often become active in other aspects of their children's development such as physical health, nutrition and social development.

Child-to-child programmes are specifically focused on interaction between children themselves, where the older ones need to learn how to take ownership of a problem in a similar way parents do. Such programmes also serve as a starting point for other activities. For instance, the identification of health problems in the environment and finding solutions to them. These could include lack of safe drinking water, toilets and safe place for children to play. Such activities help children to develop problem-solving skills without waiting for the adults. They could be designed to specifically address lack of adequate shelter and its related amenities, therefore involving children themselves in seeking solutions to their housing problems.

Communitarian programmes could, for instance, include the views and needs of the children in the mutual self-help housing construction/upgrading schemes. In such community-based programmes the importance of collective action becomes particularly pronounced. Community members identify their own local needs and thereby provide locally driven-solutions.

Community groups should coordinate their activities and ensure that issues related to the living environment such as supply of safe water, sanitation and housing are integrated to meet the needs of children. They should be able to know what they can do on their own and where they need the assistance of local authorities or other agencies

Community participation has a major part to play in improving the situation of children in difficult circumstances. It may begin with a specific group of disadvantaged children as the point of entry - for instance, rehabilitating street children. Street work is the first entry point to rehabilitation. Community volunteers or households (from where such children come from) develop contact and rapport with the children. The next step is to promote community-based rescue centres where street children are provided with food, clothing, informal education, medical treatment and counselling. These centres could function as filter points for further referral of children to specialised rehabilitation programmes of NGOs. The programmes could range from education sponsorship, vocational training to projects for disabled and HIV affected.

**Source: Werna et al., 1999**

# 11 Developing Indicators to Monitor Progress

## 11.1 Introduction

Monitoring is the periodic collection and analysis of information according to selected indicators. It is the guidance system that keeps resources, activities, strategies and objectives on track. It involves the collection of necessary information on the progress of activities and finding out whether the activities in the action plan are taking place as prescribed. This is one of the most important roles local authorities have to play in overall street children rehabilitation.

"There is no greater indicator of the health of a society than the well-being of all children."

From Habitat Agenda 1996

It has become very popular to develop indicators for many aspects of human settlements. Before embarking on developing indicators one should be very clear on the purpose of the exercise. It is important to clarify what an indicator is. An indicator is an indication of a given situation or a reflection of that situation. An indicator can be defined as a variable which helps to measure change. It is a means of assessing performance trends and a framework for competitive rating. It enables to confirm performance:

- over time (retrospective or prospective), or
- over spaces within cities (intra-urban differentials), among cities in a country or between cities in different countries).

An indicator can also analyse and identify possible causal factors, for instance the causes for the growth of street children members and also inspire and guide appropriate action.

An indicator should be:

- valid (i.e. actually measure what it is supposed to measure)
- objective (i.e. the answer should be the same when measured by different people in similar circumstances)
- sensitive (i.e. it should be sensitive to changes in the situation)
- specific (i.e. reflect changes only in the situation concerned)

Indicators should be focused at different target groups (target group indicators):

- Policy makers (assist them to monitor their progress in formulating policies aimed at improving the living conditions of street children and gangs);
- Managers in local authorities (assist them to monitor their activities and the impact of the activities on the living conditions of street children and gangs);

- Other actors dealing with street children, such as NGOs, universities etc. (assist them to monitor their activities and the impact of the activities on the living conditions of street children and gangs);
- Citizens and communities (assist them to be aware of street children plight and monitor the performance of local authority in dealing with street children and the attitude of the public towards street children);
- Children (assist them to better monitor their own living conditions).

Indicators can be developed for different levels:

- Global level (which will allow the comparison between cities in different countries); and
- Local level (which will allow the comparison among cities in a country and within a city (intra-urban differentials)).

### 11.2 Global Level Indicators

Global indicators are a set of indicators which are universally applicable to safeguard comparability. Unfortunately these indicators are not generated in a participatory manner but generated by a team of experts in a “top down approach”. These indicators do not necessarily fully reflect the situation in every city of the world. However, global indicators should have the following characteristics:

- Limited in number;
- Readily available;
- Use multiple sources of information;
- Available from secondary sources (existing reliable data);
- Easy to update;
- Transparent weighting;
- Meaningful to target group.

Dowbor (1997) has suggested the following as reference indicators for child-friendly cities:

**Infant mortality rate:** annual number of deaths of infants under one year of age per 1,000 live births

**Immunization:** the average vaccination coverage of children under one year of age for the antigens used in the Universal Child Immunization (UCI) programme

**Underweight** (moderate and severe child malnutrition): the percentage of children under the age of five, below minus two standard deviations from the median weight-for-age of the reference population.

**Maternal mortality rate:** the annual number of deaths of women from pregnancy related causes per 100, 000 live births;

**Enrollment ratio:** number of students enrolled in a level of education belonging to the relevant age group, as a percentage of the population in that age group;

**Primary school completion rate:** proportion of the children entering the first grade of primary school who successfully complete that level in due course;

**Female years of schooling:** male figures are indexed to equal 100, and figures for females are expressed in relation to males;

**Safe water access:** the percentage of the population with reasonable access to safe water supply, including treated surface waters, or untreated but uncontaminated water such as that from springs, sanitary wells and protected boreholes;

**Sanitation access:** the percentage of the population with reasonable access to sanitary means of excreta and waste disposal, including outdoor latrines and composting;

**Dangerous dwellings:** percentage of children living in low-income housing built in polluted areas, such as around solid waste dumps, besides open drains and sewers or near industrial districts with high levels of pollution.

However, the scope of international globally applicable indicators is limited. There is increasingly evidence of the benefits of using local indicators. Therefore, this report recommends that greater attention should be given to such type of indicators.

### 11.3 Local Indicators

Local indicators are developed in a participatory manner and will thus vary from city to city or even from community to community. It makes it thus more difficult to compare these indicators amongst cities in a country or even within a city (intra-urban differences). Indicators can be developed by different stakeholders:

- a group of stakeholders from local authority administration and within local authority;
- children themselves.

#### 11.3.1 Local Indicators Developed by All Stakeholders in Local Authority

Local indicators have a number of advantages over general ones (e.g. Werna and Harpham, 1995), for instance: (i) large and heterogeneous regions such as Africa, Asia and Latin America or even settlements include great variations that many times cannot be captured by general indicators; (ii) monitoring should also take into account what the local people perceive as 'progress', which is due to vary; and (iii) the involvement of the local stakeholders in the process of construction of the indicators has political externalities (e.g. bringing hidden conflicts to the surface, building alliances, etc.). Also, while general indicators have scope for local children to participate in the process of evaluation; local indicators allow these children to participate both in the construction of indicators and in evaluation.

International agencies can participate in the process of constructing indicators locally, by organising basic material on concepts of indicators and monitoring. Local authorities can promote and support local groups to produce the indicators.

In the context of street children and gangs different types of indicators (theme indicators) can be identified:

- (a) Cause indicators: (indicators which measure the environmental causes related to the phenomenon of street children);
- (b) Problem and status indicators: (indicators which measure the status of street children in cities objectively or subjectively and which address the problems of street children and their related causes);

- (c) **Process indicators:** (indicators which measure activity productivity and interventions aimed at improving the living conditions of street children);
- (d) **Outputs indicators** (these indicators would measure the achievements and direct results of initiatives aimed at improving the living conditions of street children);
- (e) **Outcome indicators:** (these indicators would measure the indirect, long-term results of interventions made at improving the living conditions of street children).

Based on the above it is possible to develop a matrix for locally generated indicators.

Theme Indicators Target Group Indicators	Cause Indicators	Problem/ Status Indicators	Process Indicators	Output Indicators	Outcome Indicators
Policy makers	•••	•••	•••	•••	••
Managers of LA	•••	•••	•••	•••	••
Other actors (NGOs etc.)	••	••	•••	•••	••
Citizens & community	••	••	•	•	••
Children	•	•••	•	•	•••
••• very important, •• important, • partly important					

There exist different methods and guidelines for the development of local indicators. Akerman (1996), for instance, developed a guideline for city-wide actions that can be adapted to the specific realm of children-related actions. This guideline is based on four stages for the construction of the indicators:

- (i) **Choosing the construction team:** The starting point for construction should be the formation of a group consisting of several municipal departments and other relevant urban sectors. It is worth mentioning that this group should not be very large and it would be desirable that the participants could take part together in the whole process of construction. Ways to include children should be discussed.
- (ii) **Conceptual process:** At this stage, concepts are unified among the participants of the construction team. Technical texts, newspapers, and even poems and songs, directly or indirectly related to the chosen concepts, can be used. This material seeks to encourage the dynamic engagement of all participants. This strategy is designed to make participants sensitive to the next stages and to prepare them to create new concepts. The main goal is to make sure that the participants have unified concepts to enhance understanding of the task to be developed. It is necessary to create conditions to establish a common language in the communication process among the participants of the group. In other words, after this stage, the group should be able to clearly identify the extension and delimitation of the problem and the steps taken towards its solution.
- (iii) **Operational process:** This will vary greatly, according to local circumstances and the type of data available (for example, whether it is primary or secondary data). Although it would be extremely useful to include primary data, it is important to note that its collection would increase the duration of the process, increase costs and, in

large cities, where one would like to detect life conditions in smaller geographic areas, the task would be harder.

- (iv) **Construction:** This stage aims at the elaboration of indicators. A task group should be gathered for this activity, since it is not necessary that all members take part. This task group becomes the coordinating nucleus of the process and works full-time. During this period the group gathers data, makes it compatible with local reality, plans spread sheets, tables and maps, and analyses quality of data. The task group should meet regularly with the team as a whole in order to ask questions and to account for the work developed. Visibility for the process of construction as well as for the use of indicators is a desirable condition.

### ***11.3.2 Local Indicators Developed by Children***

A unique way of monitoring progress is by children themselves. This means allowing children to develop their own indicators. These would not be so called “objective indicators” but “subjective indicators” developed by children themselves which express their feelings of well-being. These indicators, developed by children, could be expressed in many different ways, for instance through drawings, poems, songs, plays, testimonies etc.

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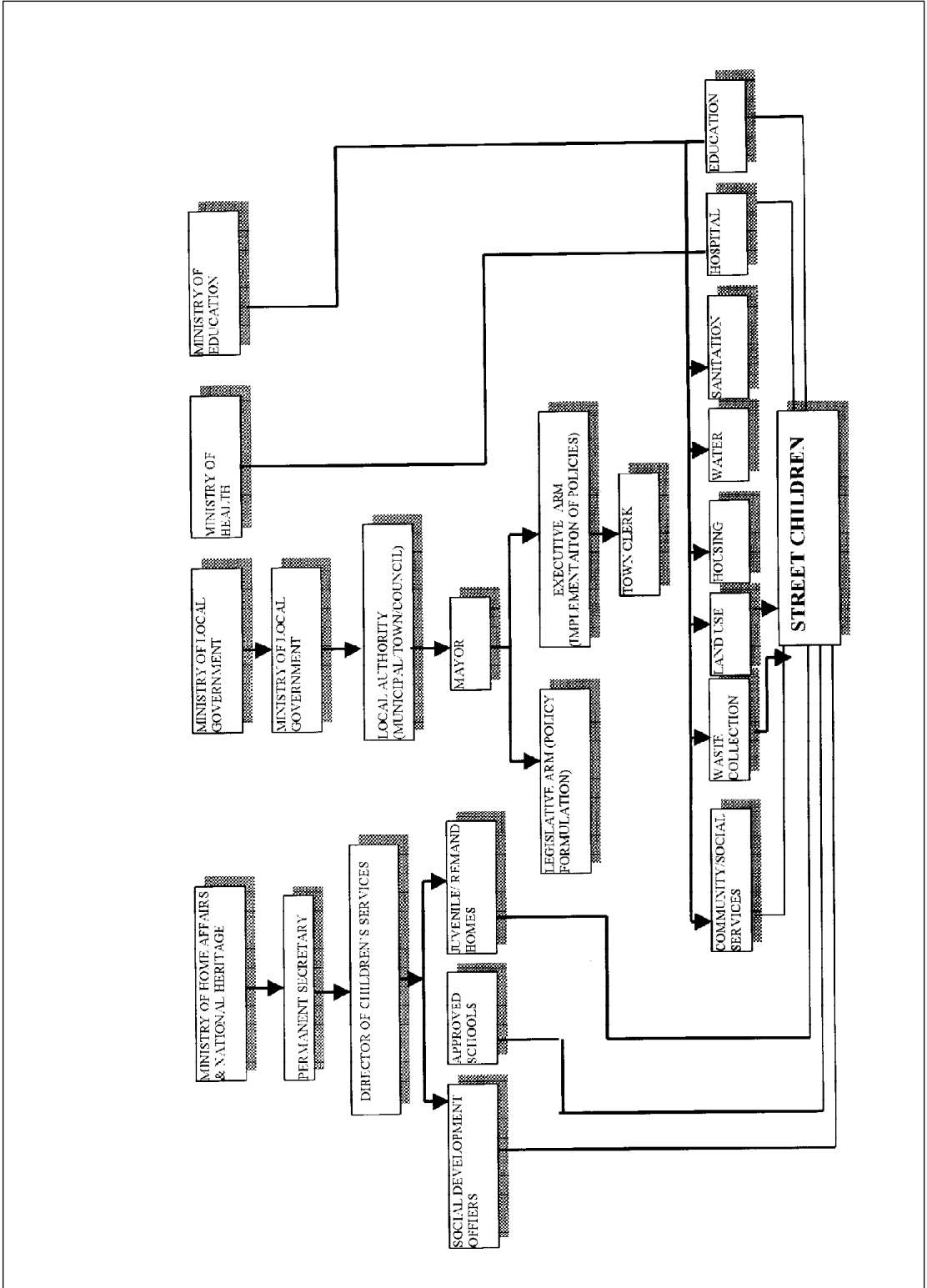
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