

THE STATE OF STREET CHILDREN IN GHANA. May 2009. CAS PERSPECTIVE

Introduction. The phenomenon of street children.

During the past 20 years, Ghana has been experiencing the influx of street children in the main towns and cities of the country. Children from the rural areas travel from the villages to the towns. This movement is vice versa. This does not suggest that there were no street children in the cities before, but they were not present in alarming numbers. There are many different definitions of the term street children. In this report we consider all children below the age of 18 and are on the streets during school hours as street children.

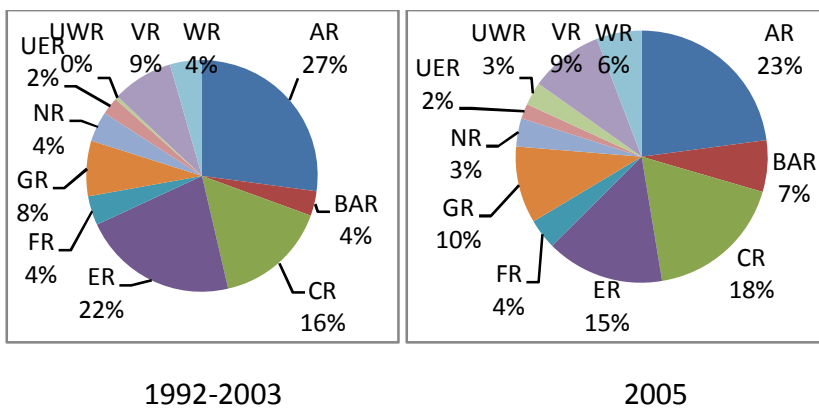
CAS has been working with the street children and conducted a number of researches since October 1992. During the years it has become clear that, the population of street children changes in size and character. A second generation of street children has emerged during the past 9 years.

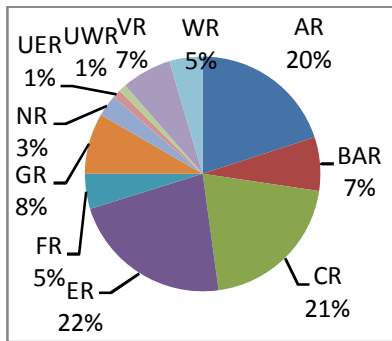
Origin.

Street children are from all regions of Ghana. CAS conducted several researches and kept a continuous database up to date. Approximately, 4500 children have been registered. The figures recorded in Accra show a slight change over the years but most of them come from the Eastern, Central and Ashanti regions.

In Accra, also a significant group of foreign children are in the streets. They come from countries such as Togo, Ivory Coast and Burkina but also from Nigeria, Benin and Mali. Some of these children have family members in Ghana as well.

See graphs:





2008

Reasons.

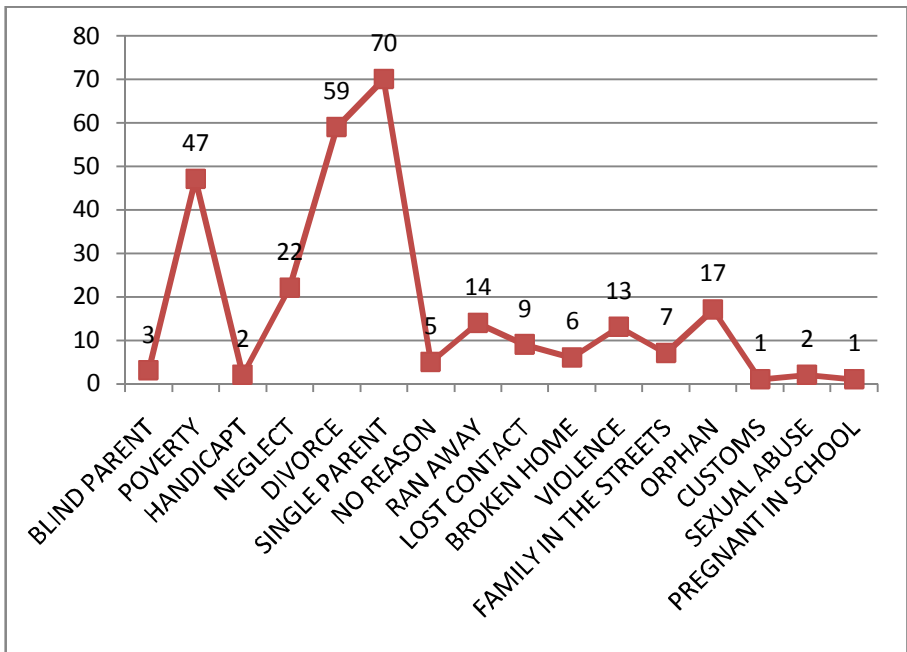
There are many reasons why street children appear in the streets of the towns and cities. Several of these reasons could be related to poverty but then, poverty becomes an umbrella of all. The underlying reasons are related to family breakdown and care. Our researches show that Over 80 % of the reasons are related to family issues. Therefore we conclude that the problem of street children is a social problem and should be treated as such.

Many of the street children did not meet a stable family support during their early childhood. For instance, either one or both parents died with the result that the child travels from one family member towards another. These children experience psychology problems.

Reasons mentioned in the exodus report presented by CAS
and UNICEF 1999. Author **Eric Beauchemin**

1. Pull factors: poor educational opportunities, lack of employment possibilities.
2. Urbanization, migration.
3. Parental neglect.
4. Electricity: TV opens the eyes of the children.
5. Relatives in the city.
6. Peer pressure
7. Marriage
8. Ethnic violence
9. Adventure.

See graph of 160 boys and 118 girls.



Children of the second generation are born in the streets. Often the parents are not traditionally married or are a result of sexual practices in the streets. This includes prostitution and rape. The mothers have to take care of their babies without support from the “man”. The mothers are trying to survive themselves with the result that they have very little time available for the upbringing of the child.

Not only children from street mothers receive little attention, also children in many families are not well taken care off.

Father comes home when the children are already in bed, father leaves before the children are up.

The results are predictable. The child does not learn the right behavior and does not learn how to take proper care of him/herself. It takes a considerable effort to re-educate these children. This explains why they cannot be placed into a regular school system. Workshop managers who are willing to teach such a child a trade are doing this with considerable sacrifices.

Moreover, these children are often too young to follow the apprenticeship system. Therefore, children of street mothers should get the opportunity to be educated at a very early age.

Recommendation: The government should assist all street mothers with very young children to educate the children. This eventually will reduce the influx of new street children in the cities.

The source of the problem is in the upbringing of children, the solutions can also be found there. Young parents should be trained to take care of the children.

When the child has learnt the wrong kind of behavior it is very difficult to correct this. Many have learnt wrong behavior because they come in contact with various vices such as prostitution, drug addiction, and crime.

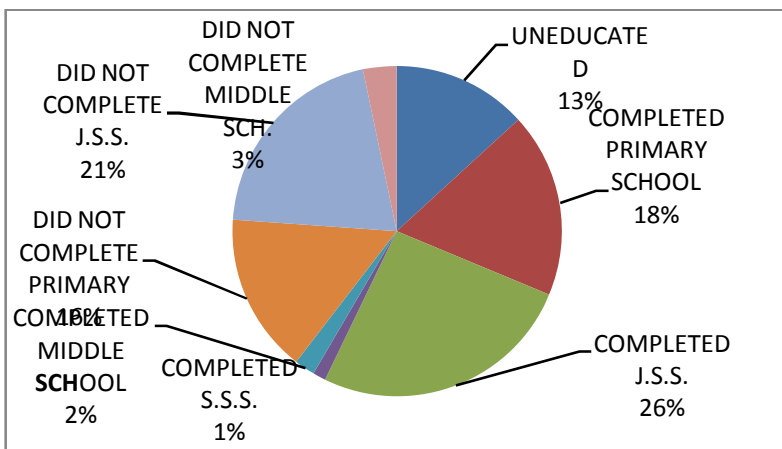
An old story;

The scorpion wanted to cross the water but he could not swim. He asked the frog to take him on his back, but the frog refused saying; “when I take you on my back and you sting me then both of us will drown”. The scorpion promised not to sting him, but when they were half way, he stung the frog. The frog asked; why did you do this to me?” The scorpion said; “I cannot help it is in my nature”.

Education.

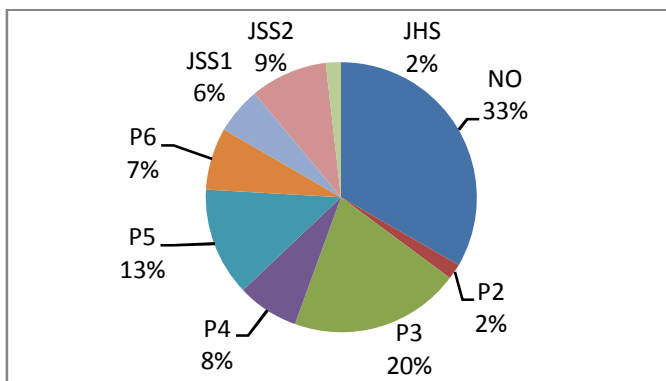
Although the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) exists, the education background of many of the street children is very poor. Most of them never enjoyed education or dropped out of primary school at an early stage.

The result is that they have become too old to return or start with primary education. Moreover, they are not able to show their past records.



2003-first generation street children.

Graph from second generation street children.



During the many years of operating, CAS has been able with the financial assistance of donors to place a very small group of children in school. All these were from the first generation of street children. The majority followed the apprenticeship training.

Solutions have to be found of each child individually.

Rural development:

Many organizations, NGOs and churches are operating in the rural areas and are educating the young children. However, they are not able to prevent urbanization and migration. The reasons why street children leave the rural areas are mentioned above. All efforts to educate the children in the rural areas should be strengthened but in addition, parents who are not able to educate their children because of one or other reason should be assisted.

Recommendation: The social support system should be strengthened.

Organizations mentioned in the Exodus report are:

- Government initiatives.
- Churches of various denominations.
- Private initiatives.
- Netherlands Development Organisation SNV
- UNICEF
- World Vision International
- Italian NGO Ricerca

- environmental group NCRC
- Peace Corps
- European Union
- Ghanaian-Danish Community Programme (GDCCP)
- Ghanaian-Canada programme
- Action Aid
- Plan Ghana
- Community Action for Development (CAD)
- Youth Development Fund (YDF)
- Centre for the Dissemination of Appropriate Technology (CEDAT)¹
- Rural Youth Development Association
- CARE
- Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG)
- Estrak Foundation
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Fieldwork activities:

During the period 1992-2009, CAS has carried out daily fieldwork activities. Fieldworkers visit the children in the places where they work and rest. The main aim was to gather information of street children, to learn about their background, the reasons they are there and the problems they face. The fieldworkers tried to give advice and also tried to educate them mainly on life skill practices.

This period has now come to an end. CAS has gathered a lot of information over the years to know who the street children are, where they come from and what their problems are. Now it is time to have another approach.

The numbers of street children are so great that it is not feasible to assist each child individually. Moreover, social-workers cannot replace parents. Therefore the aim is to control and advice the many street children who are in the streets.

Mass education could be an answer. This education should include; life skills, health, English and Arithmetic. The mass education approach would be carried out in collaboration with other NGOs and Gov. Agencies that operates on specialized problems.

The individual approach can longer be maintained because of rise in numbers of street children and of the dwindling donor support.
Bro. Jos van Dinther (Director CAS)

Appendices:

HISTORY OF SOME STREET CHILLDREN PROJECTS IN ACCRA.

In 1990, a French priest, Fr. John Thebault, asked the department of social work at Legon, to conduct a survey on street children in Accra. Fr. John worked in Ghana from 1982 till 1994 with the handicapped in the Hope

for Life organization. Through his work he met many street children and became concerned for them.

Fr. John applied to Save the Children Fund for assistance to finance this research, which was approved. As such, four parties were involved in this research:

- The Department of Social Welfare- Ministry.
- The Department of Social Work at Legon
- Fr. John of Hope for Life
- Save the Children Fund.

The training of interviewers and supervisors started on the 9th of May 1991.

The research was carried out successfully and the first report on street children in Ghana (Accra) was prepared.

YEAR	MONTH	TITLE OF REPORT.	PUBLISHED BY:
			N. Apt, E.Q Blavo,
1991	May	Street Children in Accra	S.K. Opoku

In a colloquium on street children, which was held at Legon, this report was presented to the public and press. May 1992. At this time, the number of street children was estimated to be 4000.

The activities did not end here. A concerned group of people continued the discussions to see what concrete action could be taken for this group of children.

In November 1992, a Committee on street children was formed. Members of that committee were:

Fr. Andrew Campbell, Fr. John Thebault, Fr. Patrick Shanahan, Ms. Rosemary Baah, Mrs. Johanna Greenstreet, Sr. Norma Capangpangan, Mr. Ken Amoah, Dr. Antwi. Prof. Nana Apt and Bro. Jos van Dinther.

Two members of this group visited the street daily, Mr. Ken Amoah and Bro. Jos were later joined by Fr. Patrick who had completed his job at the Urban Aid Clinic.

Ken, Jos and Patrick decided that it was time for action, and Catholic Action for street children (CAS) came into existence. CAS started officially on the 24th of April 1993. Bro. Jos was appointed as the first director. Certificate of Incorporation No 60,763 –21st. of March 1995. Certificate Social Welfare No. DSW/666-5th May 1995.

Members of the board were:

- Fr. John Thebault - Fr. Patrick Shanahan
- Mr. Ken Amoah -Sr. Kate DMJ
- Sr. Norma FMM -Bro. Jos van Dinther

During the same period the group decided that an umbrella was needed for future street children projects. And so RESPONSE was born. RESPONSE was officially launched on the 21st of June 1993.

Members of the board were:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| - Prof. Nana Apt | -Fr. Patrick Shanahan |
| - Fr. John Thebault | -Mr. F. Ashun |
| - Mr. E.Q. Blavo | -Mrs. Laura Gbedemah |
| - Mr. E.A. Amo-Akomeah | -Dr. P. Antwi |
| - Dr. S. Kwawukume | -Dr. G.B. Pupilampu |

- Mrs. S. Mahama

-Bro. Jos van Dinther.

While CAS was in operation, members of staff learnt a lot from the street children. The staff also realized that the problems of street girls could not be handled effectively together with the problems of street boys. CAS therefore asked RESPONSE to study this problem in greater depth. RESPONSE decided to start a separate organization for street girls in 1994. It started in a building, which was rented by URBAN AID clinic.

Two members of RESPONSE board, Fr Patrick and Bro Jos were asked to run the refuge until a permanent director could be employed. Mrs. Vida Aso maning was the first director and Street Girls AID became an independent NGO in 1995.

A group of older boys formed the McCarthy Foster Welfare and Development group. They received a certificate of Incorporation No. 52,721 in December 1993. This group comprises male porters and had an official office at the AMA head quarters.

The NGOs became member of the coalition called GAPVOD, Ghana Association of Private Organisations in Development.

In November 1995, the GNCC initiated a project that seeks to improve the status of the child through law reform.

The Ghana National Commission on Children publishes every year the State of the Ghanaian Child report. At times street children are mentioned. In 1994 and 1995 some studies were done on street children:

YEAR	MONTH	TITLE OF REPORT	PUBLISHED BY:
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		S. Agarwal, M, Attah, N. Apt, M. Grieco, E. Kwakye, J. Turner.
1994 Jan.	Bearing the weight. The Kayayoo, Ghana's working girl child.	
1994 Oct.	Empowerment of At-risk youth through self-employment opportunities and community reintegration.	Depart. of Community Development, Accra, Ghana
1994 May	The missing gender	V.Asomaning, S.Agarwal, N.Apt, M.Grieco, J. Turner
1995 Nov.	A project review mission report of the street children project in Ghana	Muelanzambi Bakwa
1995 Nov.	Listening to girls on the streets.	N.Apt, M. Grieco N. Apt, M. Grieco,
1995 Nov.	Jobs for the boys, loads for the girls. The social organization of portering in Accra.	Felix Donko-Badu, J. Turner.

Another organization started in February 1995, The Pan African Street Child Liberation Foundation (PASCLTF).

This organization obtained a 10-acre plot to set up a centre for street children in Bortianor, Ga district. They run a Raffle lottery, The Stake Vision 2000 Raffle Lotto. The organization has stopped its activities since.

Two other NGOs started:

Charity Resources Management projects (CRMP) and Foundation for Future Leaders (FFL).

The Sport and Cultural Academy for Children (SCASC) was already in operation since 1985. Also CACIPO (Creative child workshop) started in 1992. The two organisations work together with CENCOSAD, which is based in Ga Mashie. However, they are taking care of Urban Poor Children of the Ga Mashie district and are as such not working for street children.

The Salvation Army Church were asked by CAS in 1996 to run the Health projects for street children. The Salvation Army took over the running of the clinic at the House of Refuge as well as a clinic at the Baby Care program, which CAS had started at the Konkomba market. This Baby care project was handed over to S.AID in 1997.

Ken Amoah, who was working with CAS, went for further studies. He stopped his work with CAS officially on the 9th of September 1996. Ken and his wife Tina wanted another approach and started with a house for street children. They formed the NGO called Children in Need Ghana at the beginning of 1997.

It was in March 1997 that UNICEF with its urban partners organized an International Workshop on Africa's Urban Poor Children.

This workshop brought together mayors of African Main cities to discuss how the cities could become more child friendly.

So the coalition for Child Friendly Cities was formed. Members are: CENCOSAD, CAS, S.AID, Salvation Army, GNCC, UNICEF, AMA.

In 1996 and 1997 other studies and reports were published:

YEAR	MONTH	TITLE OF REPORT.	PUBLISHED BY:
1996	March	Some Mothers and Babies of Konkomba market Shanty.	CAS Ghana Red Cross Society and ActionAid Ghana.
1996	June	Youth and Aids peer education project	
1996	June	HIV AIDS in Ghana	
1996	Oct.	Survey on the Situation of street children and STD/AIDS in Ghana.	Dr. Arnerfi - CAS
1996	October	Embedded evaluation programme for street children.	CAS, SAID
1997	March	International workshop of Africa's urban poor child towards child-friendly cities.	UNICEF, UNESCO Ministry of Employment and Social Work.
1997	March	Street Children in Ghana, policy framework.	
1997	Sept.	Ga Mashie urban community development progress report	UNICEF
1997	July	Infant feeding patterns adopted by female porters, Accra	Anastasia Atiogbe
In 1996		CAS and SAID conducted a headcount of street children.	

In May 1997 a group called ASMAG Assist Mankind Ghana, led by then Miss Ghana conducted some fundraising activities on behalf of street children. They claimed to be working with CAS. CAS however had never met this group and conducted an investigation. It appeared to be a group of students who are concerned about street children.

Several other groups were fundraising for street children, using the existing NGOs as a cover. Major Hotels and the police were informed about this development.

In 1997 and 1998, The Ministry for Employment and Social Welfare discussed the problems of street children and a draft policy was produced. The Technical Committee on Poverty (TCOP) and the National Development Planning Committee was formed.

Other studies were conducted:

YEAR	MONTH	TITLE OF REPORT.	PUBLISHED BY:
1998	Nov.	Technical Committee on Poverty Street Children in Ghana.	Aba Amisshah Quainoo
1998	Nov.	Interventions to address the street children phenomenon in Ghana.	Elijah Yaw Danso, PAB Consult
1998	Nov.	The Informal sector survey on street youth aged below 20 years in the Accra metropolis.	The Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare.
1998	May	RESPONSE evaluation report	UNICEF

SPA status report on poverty in
SSA. Gender, Growth and Poverty
1998 June Reduction in Sub-Saharan Africa. Paris

After several years of existing, some of the NGOs organised an evaluation to determine whether the set-up and structure were functioning well.

SAID and CAS followed an embedded evaluation in October 1996 and February 1999. While RESPONSE was evaluated in May 1998.

Father Patrick Shanahan who repatriated to England and established a Fundraising NGO called Street Child Africa in 1998 - Charity No. 1074832 in the UK.

The Salvation Army Church opened their House of Refuge for street girls, Anidaso Fie on the 30th of April 1999.

With the financial assistance of UNICEF, CAS conducted a research on the background of street children in 1999 and the report 'The EXODUS' was presented to the public and press.

YEAR	MONTH	TITLE OF REPORT.	PUBLISHED BY:
1999	March	The EXODUS, the growing migration of children from Ghana's rural areas to the urban centers.	CAS/UNICEF/ Eric Beauchemin
		Assisted by Charles Baffoe and Paul	

Avevor (researchers)

1999 Feb. Embedded evaluation programme for CAS, SAID street children.

The Department of Social Welfare formed the coalition for the European network. Members are: Philip Foundation, Child to Child, Muslim Relief Association, Youth Association, Compassion Delivery, Children in Need, Need Care International, Vision of the Youth, S.AID, CAS

2000

Results of the reasons why street children come to the streets:

Single parents	25%	Divorce	21%	Poverty	17%
Neglect	8%	Orphan	6%	Ran away	5%
Violence	5%	Family in the street			3%
Broken Home	2%	No reasons			2%
1%	Handicapped parent	1%	Handicapped themselves		
1%	Pregnant in school	1%	Sexual abuse		
1%	customary rites				

YEAR	TITLE	PUBLISHED
2000	Combating Trafficking in Children W.A.	ILO

2001

CARE International wanted to introduce savings schemes for deprived groups. Although the start was encouraging they did not succeed in sustaining it.

CAS conducted the following researches. The results have been published in the book “The Ghanaian Street Child” (2003).

- Research in Health education – health education
- Street corner education – literacy
- Follow-up – children who completed their training.
- Research in vocational training – what should we offer to the children who follow apprenticeship training.

2002

YEAR	TITLE OF THE BOOK	
2003	THE GHANAIAN STREET CHILD CAS	published by

CAS also started issuing invitation cards to all street children in Accra to assist in the Headcount.

2003

Civil Society Forum on the Rights and Protection of Street Children took place in Accra between the 21/24 of October 2003. Participants were invited from other West African countries namely the Gambia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Liberia and Cameroon; unfortunately, Cameroon failed to turn up.

On the local scene, organisations such as street Academy, Neglect Foundation – Kumasi, Youth Development Foundation – Kumasi; Mercy Foundation – Takoradi; Youth Alive Tamale and Don Bosco - Ashaiman. Others were Street Girls Aid, Maamobi – Accra and CAS, which hosted the organisation.

There were also other personalities who were also invited as a resource person. They included Alois of Udugu Society from Kenya, Jeroo Bilimoria of child Help International – Netherlands, Professor Nana Araba Apt Van Ham of the Centre for social policy studies (C.S.P.S) University of Ghana – Legon, Professor J.K Arnarfi, Director Institute for Social, statistical and Economic Research (ISSER) also at Legon. Alexis Derry of the Assemblies of God Street children Project (AGREDS) Accra, Mrs Kutuatsi, the Deputy Director of Department of Social Welfare Ghana Mr.S.N Walier. The Greater Accra Director, Department of social Welfare Ghana among others.

Observers were from G.NC.C; WAJU, Red Cross Society of Ghana, Plan international Ghana, Coalition on the Right of the child – Netherlands

Embassy, Accra, The rest were “Ricerca e coopreazion” of Italy, Fan Milk Ghana and Women Development Agency – Accra.

Some important personalities were present both at the opening and closing ceremonies:

Rev Fr. Anthony Asare, Chairman of CAS Board. Dr. Susu Kwawukume of the Trust Hospital and members of CAS Board. Mr. Daniel Darfour, an Accountant of Morrison and Associates official Auditors of CAS and Mr. Dzakpasu, the country Director of the international Labour Organisation.

The President of the Republic of Ghana nominated the Hon. Minister of manpower and development Yaw Barimah to represent him and the Minister for Women and children’s Affair Mrs. Gladys Asmah and her Deputy Mr. Kofi Adusei were also present. The forum officially opened by Fr. Patrick Shanahan, the executive Director of Street child Africa and also a trustee of the Consortium for Street Child Africa followed by an introductory speech by the Director of CAS.

YEAR	TITLE	PUBLISHED
2003	A Civil Society Forum in Street Children W.A.	Consortium for SC. UK.

2004

2005

CAS exists 12½ years

SAID moves into a new House of Refuge at Achimota.

YEAR	TITLE	PUBLISHED
2005	Indentification Of Street Children	By FAFO -Norway

2006 CAS undertook a street mapping exercise of Accra City.

YEAR	TITLE	Not Published
2006	Street Mapping report	CAS

2007 Research in street children who are in need of more attention.

YEAR	TITLE	PUBLISHED
2007	Report Research SAP	Margaretha Ubels

3rd Evaluation of CAS October 2007

The purpose was to examine the current approach of CAS' work with a view to its appropriateness within the context of street work and CAS objectives as a charity. Report by Mette Jacobsgaard.

2008

- Ricerca and Department of Social Welfare.

An Italian NGO Ricerca Cooperazione (RC) and the Department of Social Welfare together with some NGO's; CAS and S.AID are preparing to set up a new data base on children in the street.

1. A "Headcount" will be conducted to count all children below the age of 18 and are not in school during school hours. These include all categories of children.
2. A census will be conducted to obtain an overall picture of the state of street children.
3. An individual approach could follow.