

A large, black and white photograph of a diverse group of African children and young adults. They are posing together, some looking directly at the camera, some with their arms around each other. The background is plain white.

A Civil Society Forum for Anglophone West Africa on Promoting and Protecting the Rights of Street Children

21-24 October 2003 - Accra, Ghana



Organised by Consortium for Street Children

In partnership with Street Child Africa (SCA) and Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS)

Working collaboratively with its members, the Consortium for Street Children (CSC) co-ordinates a network for distributing information and sharing expertise around the world. Representing the voice of many, we speak as one for the rights of street children wherever they may be.

Formed in 1993, the Consortium for Street Children (CSC) is a network of non-governmental organisations, which work with street-living children, street working children, and children at risk of taking to life on the streets.

CSC's work is firmly rooted in the standards enshrined in the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Its efforts are focused on building its member agencies' capacity to work with street children and on advocacy in the areas of child rights, poverty alleviation and social exclusion.

Acknowledgements

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Our thanks also go to Taysec Gh. Ltd., Bogoso Goldfields Ltd., Ashanti Goldfields Co Ltd., Barclays Bank Gh Ltd., Ricerca e Cooperazione, Newmont Mining Co Ltd., Scancom Gh Ltd Vanguard Assurance, PHC Motors, all in Ghana, for assistance in the local planning and organisation of the forum.

We extend our appreciation to The Honourable Ministers for Manpower Development & Employment and Women & Children's Affairs and their representatives for taking the time to join us at the opening and closing sessions.

We wish to thank the participants from Anglophone West Africa: The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria for submitting comprehensive country reports; Child Helpline International and Undugu Society of Kenya for their presentations on international good practices on work with street children, all of which formed the basis for our discussions. We would also like to thank Emma Ampofo, forum facilitator, for her hard work in managing the logistic arrangements of this forum and for putting together this report.

Finally, we would like to extend our gratitude to all who joined in making the 4-day programme a success.

Foreword

Akwaaba - Welcome. As a trustee of the Consortium for Street Children, it is my pleasure to introduce this report from the forum held on promoting and protecting the rights of street children in Anglophone West Africa. It was a hugely valuable opportunity for participants from all parts of the region to come together and share experiences, good practices and lessons learned with a view to consolidating progress and planning for the considerable challenges that lie ahead.

Africa is often referred to as 'the continent of children'. Half its population (approx. 400 million) is under the age of 16, and a huge proportion of these children are being caught up in the rapid urbanisation movement that is sweeping the continent. Africa is now closer than ever before to having half its population living in towns or cities - in Zambia, for example, 56% of the population is now urban.

However, with over 80% of the world's poorest nations in Africa, the combined ravages of poverty and HIV/AIDS in particular have forced many children to live and/or work on the streets just to survive. Targeting this population for assistance continues to pose a significant challenge, not only because of the diversity of their needs, but also because of the inconsistency in definitions and estimates relating to street children. Both governments and development agencies tend to either underplay or exaggerate the problem, and this has proven a hindrance to effective planning and advocacy efforts. For example, in the Ghanaian capital, Accra, alone – where this forum took place – there are estimated to be some 20,000 street children. If we multiply that by the 53 countries that make up the African continent we reach a figure of around 1 million, but given the considerable differences in size, development and migration patterns of other African countries, it is likely that the total population of street children across the continent is much higher.

Forums such as this one are therefore important steps in beginning to engage and build alliances with these children. Rather than simply resort to the 'talk-shop' approach that has become lamentably common in the development sphere, this forum opened with participants spending an entire day on the streets themselves, accompanied by field workers from Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS) and Street Girls Aid (SAID). For many this was a startling and eye-opening induction, but an undeniably valuable opportunity to confront the issues faced by the children first-hand. In fact, it was this visit that ultimately acted as the springboard for the Action Plans (included in this report) that each country drew up and then publicly declared it would implement.

The commitment of all the forum participants was immense and it is this unerring determination that inspires great hope in spite of the daunting task. With African politics still predominantly rural in origin and focus, those who work for

development in African countries can no longer afford to ignore the hopes and aspirations of this young urban majority. The children we engage with have become – politically and demographically – the most important group on the continent.

Patrick Shanahan

Executive Director Street Child Africa

Trustee of the Consortium for Street Children

Background

This conference is the fourth in a series of regional forums organised by the Consortium for Street Children (CSC), with the aim of bringing together key NGOs and government representatives from selected countries to exchange experiences and formulate recommendations for the promotion and protection of the rights of street children within the (Anglophone) West Africa sub-region. The first conference, for South Asia was held in December 2001 in Colombo, Sri Lanka; the second, for East and Southern Africa, took place in February 2002 in Nairobi, Kenya, and the third, for East and South East Asia was held in March 2003 in Bangkok, Thailand. Other forums are planned for North Africa/Middle East (Egypt) and Francophone West Africa (Senegal) in 2004.

Objectives

The key objectives of the forums are:

- To review the situation of street children in each region through country reports and situation analyses prepared by delegates;
- To provide opportunities for networking and sharing of experiences among organisations working with street children, and to strengthen dialogue and partnerships between CSOs and governments;
- To identify specific human rights abuses of street children through focused working group sessions on issues affecting the rights of street-living and street-working children that are prevalent in each region, and to exchange examples of good practice in order to address these violations;
- To formulate a joint statement of action-oriented recommendations providing practical strategies to (further) promote and protect the rights of street children in each region, with a focus on accelerated implementation of social development and poverty alleviation programme targeting the specific needs of street children.

Summary

The Forum for Anglophone West Africa was attended by 26 delegates drawn from 5 countries: The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria. In addition there were 37 participants from international organisations and government representatives as well as other key individuals working in the field of street children.

During the forum, delegates from each country presented key points from collaborative country reports highlighting specific issues of national concern to street children. In addition, the forum addressed selected themes affecting street children in the region through group and plenary discussions, namely: street children's access to education, street children's access to health, street children and appropriate skills development and income generation, reintegration issues concerning street children and street children in conflict zones.

The results of these discussions, as summarised within this report, formed the basis of the statement of recommendations for the region. These recommendations will be used for lobbying and advocacy with governments, international organisations and other actors involved with street children. Additional feedback received during and after the forum include further examples of good practice of work with street children which have been summarised for inclusion in this final report.

Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANPPCAN	African Network on the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CAS	Catholic Action for Street Children
CSC	Consortium for Street Children
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
ECOWAS	Economic Community for West African States
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoH	Ministry of Health
NACROG	National Child Rights Observatory Group
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SAID	Street Girls Aid
SCB	Standard Chartered Bank
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
UNICEF	United Nation Children's Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
WSIS	World Summit on the Information Society

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Civil Society Forum for Anglophone West Africa (October 21 – 24, 2003)

Opening Remarks

The official opening of the conference was presided over by the **Minister for Manpower Development and Employment, Hon Yaw Barima**. In a statement read on his behalf by the Minister **HE President John Agyekum Kufuor**, it was observed that the horrendous situation of street children is of major concern to governments of the sub-region, because to neglect children is to neglect potential assets for future development. He remarked that the statistics provided by Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS) on the number of street children in Greater Accra alone painted a grim picture for the entire sub-region. President Kufuor therefore praised the regional dimension of the forum and expressed hope that it would give rise to more effective interventions for street children and to recommendations that governments of the sub-region could make use of when reviewing their child-focused policies.

President Kufuor then pointed out that Ghana had adhered to its international obligations on the rights of children through the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and several other related programmes. Furthermore, the government had shown its commitment to addressing the problem of street children through wealth generation programmes geared at making rural communities more attractive. He called on NGOs to support government programmes by looking at the possibility of shifting their operations to rural areas to provide social support and other services that would limit the rural to urban drift.

President Kufuor finally called on participants to pay particular attention to the issues of reconciliation and reintegration. Turning his attention to NGOs, the President called on them to forge strong links and identify potentially unprofessional organisations in their midst.

In a brief statement, **Cornelius Dzakpasu, Director of International Labour Organisation (ILO) Area Office, Nigeria**, identified various factors contributing to children on the streets in the region, including trafficking, poverty and negative cultural practices. He suggested that such a complex problem required stakeholders from across the spectrum to come together to fight for child rights.

Brother Jos van Dinther, Director of Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS) then gave a brief account in his welcome statement of how CAS came to be established, its methods, programming and experience over the years. He said CAS had learnt that in order to make headway in dealing with the complexity of street children's issues, the children must be made to feel that they are accepted as they

are and their rights respected. Brother Jos then expressed concern about the apparent lack of sensitivity in addressing the issue of reintegration, especially in light of the fact that some 86% of street children are on the street as a result of family breakdown. However, he was hopeful that with collective determination, participants would arrive at concrete suggestions on how best to work with and for street children.

Introductory contributions were also received from Father Patrick Shanahan and Sadia Mahmud-Marshall, Trustee and Director of Consortium for Street Children (CSC) respectively.

SECTION I Country Reports

It has not been possible to reproduce the country reports in full. The following is a brief summary. Full reports are available electronically from info@streetchildren.org.uk or on CSC's website: www.streetchildren.org.uk.

The information contained in the country reports is the joint responsibility of country delegates. Please note that due to the mobility of the children, their exclusion from 'statistic-friendly' infrastructure and the fluidity of definitions of 'street children', statistics referred to in these reports are only estimates.

THE GAMBIA

Based on a paper submitted by Child Protection Alliance, YMCA-The Gambia, Department of Social Welfare, SOS Children's Village – The Gambia, in consultation with UNICEF/UNV



Background: Population estimated at 1.4 million in 2001 and characterised by young age structure. Growth rate 4.2 percent per annum, with population doubling in 17 years. The country is experiencing a rapid rate of urbanisation, concentrating the population in one part of the country. The Gambia has three major ethnic groups namely: Mandinka (40%), Fulas (18%) and Wollofs (7%).

Definitions and statistics: Working children and children with disabilities (also known as Almudos) are commonly seen as street children. There are ethnic, gender and urban-rural variations in the factors that determine the presence of children on the street. Approx. 3% of the street children spend both day and night on the streets. In terms of experiencing abuse on the streets, 45% said they were beaten, with 53% of child labourers having experienced beating, physical abuse and violence.

The common factor among street children in the Gambia is poverty; low income, non-literate families and poor living conditions are common. Families cannot meet most of their basic requirements for food and shelter, and as a consequence, the developmental growth of the children is severely affected. The major factors pushing children onto the streets are therefore primarily poverty and domestic violence.

Achievements: Legislation/Government Policy; Collective NGO/Civil Society action – Child Protection Alliance (CPA), a registered coalition of over 40 international and local organisations, is the first inter-agency collaborative institution dedicated to the promotion and protection of the rights of children.

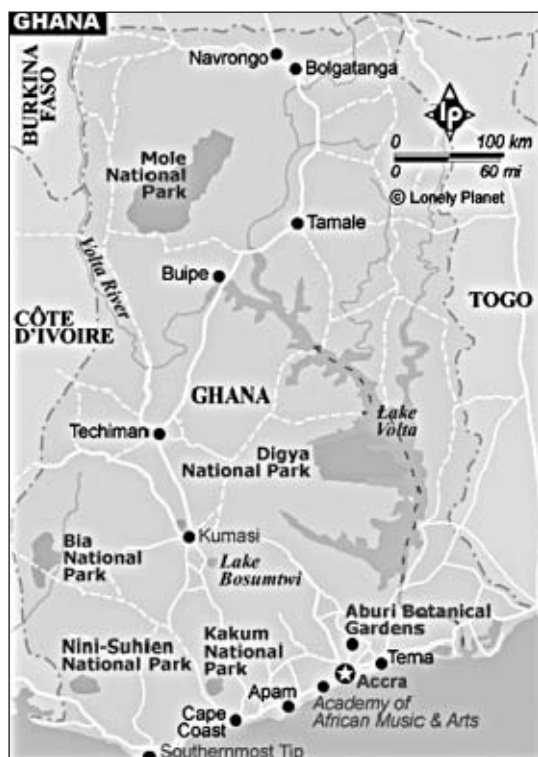
Constraints and challenges: Lack of organisations that specifically address the plight of street children; vulnerability of children to abuse and other vices (drug abuse starts as early as age 13); deep-rooted cultural and religious beliefs, abject poverty.

Lessons learned: Private sector led initiatives (eg: Child Centres funded by the Standard Chartered Bank) help street children realise they too can have a future; a strong political commitment at governmental level will also promote consideration of the rights of street children at legislative level. The failure to critically analyse initiatives in support of street children can leave them worse off than before.

Recommendations: There is an urgent need for: comprehensive and quantitative research to form the basis for future programmes; a national stakeholders' forum to collaborate in mapping out intervention strategies; more effective networking and collaboration; mass awareness raising and sensitisation programme by the media; establishment of safe houses; study tours to and from other countries to share expertise.

GHANA

Based on a paper submitted by Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS)



Background: Population 18.1 million, with 5 main ethnic groups. The World Bank classifies Ghana as a 'low income' developing country. Most people are poor and farming employs 59% of the population. For decades, children have migrated from Ghana's rural regions to the cities in search of education, vocational training and jobs. They usually end up doing menial jobs. Poverty, rural-urban migration, dysfunctional families, increased divorce rates, peer influence, and child abuse are some of the major factors that contribute to the increasing number of street children in Ghana.

Definitions and statistics: According to research conducted in Ghana, the two categories of street children are (1) the 'typical' Ghanaian street child who lives and works on the street, and (2) the urban poor child, who survives daily on the street but still has some family ties. Both groups live in sub-standard shelters, sometimes attend school and go onto the streets principally to engage in economic activities. Accra, the capital, is home to over 20,000 street children. According to CAS findings, 86% of the children who find themselves permanently on the streets are a product of family disintegration and most of them are within the age range of 7 – 15 years.

Constraints and challenges: Girls are less likely than boys to have any form of education, are known to be less aware than boys about sexually transmitted diseases, despite their increasing involvement in commercial sex work. This puts

them at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and of unwanted pregnancy, which helps to explain the large numbers of second-generation babies born on the street to parents who are themselves street children.

Ghana is fortunate to have a number of NGOs currently launching programmes to address this new challenge of working with very young street children (aged 0-6). This may help to prevent the use of drugs by street children in Accra, which, despite limited data, appears to be common.

Achievements: Progress has been made in the last decade in terms of legislation for street children, with provisions in the Children's Act 1998 (Act 5601 for the protection of street children). The Department of Social Welfare has also developed a draft policy on street children but does not have the appropriate resources to cope with the problem. Stakeholders, NGOs, and welfare ministries that aim to produce workable policies in order to find solutions to the phenomenon are currently discussing this document.

A number of organisations and institutions are actively involved in children's issues and improving the situation of children. In 1996 – 2000 the government of Ghana and UNICEF began a social mobilisation programme. It aimed to build the capacity of the media, governmental and NGO bodies to deliver the right messages and ensure changes in attitude and practice among the general public in relation to child survival and development.

NGOs are seen as playing an important part in filling a gap in child welfare and rights activities, particularly with children in especially difficult circumstances (e.g. street children and children subjected to harmful traditional practices). Some NGOs offer refuge, day centres, education and skills training for street children.

Lessons learned: In 1998, together with UNICEF, CAS embarked on a four-month study to discover the factors that are causing more and more children to migrate to Ghana's towns and cities. The results were profoundly disturbing, and underscore the need for a thorough re-think of Ghana's policy on a wide variety of issues including education, youth policy, the banking system and development priorities.

Considering the rate at which the already large population of Ghanaian street children is growing, the activities of street children NGOs can be seen as 'first aid treatment'. Fundamental preventative action must be taken in the small towns and villages from where the majority of these children originate, and a growing number of NGOs are now beginning work in this area. In addition, the government of Ghana is vigorously pursuing policies of rural development and decentralisation, and has begun to provide pipe-borne water, electricity, schools, health centres and other social amenities in the rural areas.

Despite the misery of life on the streets, Ghana's street children are viewed as 'fortunate'. There is no organised campaign to eliminate them of the kind found in Brazil. Street children in Ghana have not yet become caught up in the spiral of violence that exists in all too many cities in the developing world. Glue sniffing is not to our knowledge practised by street children.

To attribute the phenomenon of street children to poverty is not only simplistic, it also provides an easy excuse for government, parents, society and donor agencies to wash their hands of the problem until Ghana reaches the status of a middle-income country in 2020 as envisaged in "Vision 2020".

Recommendations: Some of the recommendations from research conducted on street children require little or no money. Others need significant investments by the Ghanaian government and the donor community. But if we fail to act now, the long-term cost will be even greater. NGOs are providing assistance and training to some of today's street children, but the majority are being left to fend for themselves. While some will find their way, others are likely to spend a formative period of their lives on the margins of society. Some will fall completely outside those margins, and no-one can yet measure the social repercussions of this. What is needed above all is political recognition of the growing street children phenomenon. The majority are on the streets through no fault of their own, but the phenomenon is becoming so acute that NGOs are unable to cope with the sheer numbers. Accra is not the only city that is rapidly becoming overwhelmed by the exodus, and yet more children are coming, lured on by the survival of those already on the streets. Therefore, while Vision 2020 is a laudable goal, it remains meaningless to the street children of today...and tomorrow.

LIBERIA

Based on a paper submitted by Don Bosco Homes Liberia



Background: Liberia has just come out of a civil war that lasted 14 years. The resulting cross-border movement has led to family disintegration and the separation of children from their families. This report focuses on Monrovia, where most children have come to the streets to earn an income to support themselves and their families.

Definitions and statistics: A survey of street children in Monrovia conducted in September 2003 revealed 66% male and 34% female street children out of a total of 1,409 children. Their ages ranged from 4–18 years. As a result of this survey it is estimated that the population of street children is 3,445 (working and living in the street - 1,000; working in the street but sleeping at home - 1,845; delinquents/street wanderers - 500). Factors contributing to their presence on the streets include: socio-economic reasons, peer pressure, rebellion/violence, and lack of awareness.

Achievements: Some achievements have been made through collective NGO/civil society action. In 2002, initial discussions were started by UNICEF with senior managers and policy leaders in government and civil society on the need to establish a broad based observatory group that would monitor violations of children's rights. The meetings resulted in the establishment of the National Child Rights Observatory Group (NACROG). The establishment of NACROG is an encouraging development that needs the support of the international community.

Don Bosco Homes, an NGO based in Monrovia, has been working with street children for the past ten years. The Home has worked with the children in needs assessment,

family tracing and reunification, skills development and empowerment for boys and young men, girls and young women, legal aid and advocacy. Young people who have come into contact with them have found employment in the fields of music, building and construction, design and sewing.

Challenges and constraints: Collapse of the social and economic structures in Liberia has led to a very challenging situation for street children.

There is a growing need for:

- Establishment of a data bank on street children in the cities, beginning with Monrovia.
- Development of a national policy on street children.
- Sustained donor support for the next five to ten years.
- Establishment of a permanent headquarters or secretariat for street children issues.
- Greater public awareness of the plight of street children and the dangers of street life.
- An enhanced juvenile justice administration system.
- Social structures to assist in the rehabilitation and reintegration of street children into their respective communities, where possible.
- Political commitment on the part of politicians to take practical steps to address the issue of street children.

Lessons learned: Street children allegedly face more attacks and abuses from law enforcers than they face from civilians. As such, protection/ advocacy groups must be determined to engage law enforcers in a dialogue to try and establish a working relationship.

- Street children (with strong survival skills) are vulnerable to recruitment by drug dealers and armed forces. Many street children from Liberia were recruited to fight the wars in other countries in the sub-region and sometimes beyond. There is no monitoring mechanism in place to track their movement.
- The plight of street children cannot be addressed in isolation from community problem(s). Previous governments lacked the political commitment to address these issues.
- Networking with other NGOs reinforces and further strengthens the resolve of the organisations working in the field. The networking has, to a large extent, been theoretical.
- There is a need to research and improve methods of working with children wherever they are to be found. Street children need opportunities to develop like any other children. They are children without a childhood. Street children are not problem children; rather they are children with problems.

Recommendations:

West Africa should, as a matter of urgency, establish databanks on her street children. A network of agencies in the field should be established to track street children's movement across borders, taking care not to label them as security threats, but as vulnerable children who could be easily exploited and transported for sex work, forced labour and/or as mercenaries.

Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire should receive attention and funding in West Africa for the immediate future in this tracking network.

ECOWAS and the government of Liberia should ensure the setting up of a functioning child protection unit in the military – the Ministry of Defence (comments from MOD officials).

UNICEF/government of Liberia (in this case UNICEF especially) should facilitate annual conferences in Liberia on street children to mark the Day of the African Child. Alternative (or non-formal) education programmes for street children to provide them relevant practical skills to earn an income. This should reduce the number of street children who turn to crime in order to survive.

NIGERIA

Based on a paper submitted by Human Development Initiatives in consultation with Child Life-Line



Background: Demographic analysis of Nigeria has been hindered by a number of factors, principally the difficulty in conducting accurate censuses and a poor tradition of birth and death registration. The official 1991 census puts the country's population at a controversial figure of 88.9million. Generally more acceptable estimates suggest a figure between 115 and 120 million. There are no known statistics of street children in the country; however according to the 1991 census, 45% of the population is under 15 years old, while only 3.3% is aged 65 years or over. According to the CRC definition (person under 18 years), children represent approximately 48% of the population. The phenomenon of street children in Nigeria results mainly from family breakdown, which in turn is linked to polygamy. In an increasingly individualistic society, such children quickly learn to survive on their own and in the process are exploited through child labour and trafficking. Many take to the streets for refuge.

Definitions and statistics: Two main kinds of street children are found in Nigeria: those who live and work on the street, (children of the street) and those who work on the streets full or part-time but who return to their homes each night (children in the street). Street children are found in large numbers in urban and rural areas. "Almajirai" are found in northern cities where Koranic education encourages Islamic tutors to send their pupils to beg in the street. A few are found in southern cities although in a different form, usually as guides leading physically challenged adults. In the East, children eight or nine years of age are found on the streets early as less premium is placed on education in comparison with trading activities.

Children work as vendors or hawkers, beggars, shoe shiners, car washers and watchers, head-loaders, scavengers and bus conductors. The majority are boys but there are a few girls. Street families, a variant of

street living, are also becoming prominent, with serious implications for the survival of children. Destitute families, including children living under bridges, in public buildings, uncompleted buildings, markets and major streets and alleys, are becoming increasingly common.

Another variant of the phenomenon is street wandering: boys and girls roaming the streets. It is hard to come by accurate national statistics on street children in Nigeria. Available figures are often contested, and many are estimates or extrapolated from other sources as opposed to figures derived from specific studies.

A study conducted by a leading children's rights expert in the country shows that although homeless street children were rare in the mid eighties, there were an "estimated" 8000 of them by the early 1990s. By 1999, children were reported in over a hundred street locations in Lagos. At a recent stakeholders' workshop on the human rights of street children in Lagos, the claim of 8000 children was criticised as being grossly under-representative of the actual number of children on the streets in the state.

Key factors that push children onto the streets include marital problems or instability in the home, poverty, hunger, insecurity, abuse and violence from parents, displacement caused by clashes in the community, insufficient parental care, death of one or both parents, inadequate family income, unemployment of one or both parents, lack of (or limited) opportunities in education, abandonment by parents, housing difficulties, drug use by children, and peer influence.

A current estimate of children who have lost one or both parents to AIDS in Nigeria puts the figure at 700,000. As a consequence many children will be orphaned, and no substantial provision is available to them.

Achievements: Legislation/government policies to remedy gaps arising from lapses and failures of existing legislation have been drawn up. A federal Children's Bill, also known as the draft Children's Law, has just been enacted into federal law.

Collective NGO/Civil society action - A few Lagos based NGOs, such as Child Life-Line and Human Development Initiatives are committed to promoting the welfare of street children. Other new initiatives like the Friends of Working and Street Children in Nigeria are at an embryonic stage. UNICEF and ILO have done a great deal to improve the lot of street children in Nigeria. The African Network on the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse (ANPPCAN), a regional NGO with a local base in Enugu, Nigeria, is also doing some work in this area. The work of the S.O.S. Children's Village in Nigeria (assisted by the Norwegian government) in caring for homeless children deserves commendation and mention.

Constraints and challenges: The following key constraints hinder the promotion of street children's welfare in Nigeria:

A lack of information, research, workshops, programmes and services; family breakdown; poverty and socio-economic inequality; an absence of an adequate legal and social framework for the protection of street children and insufficient law enforcement. The problem of the legal framework is being addressed through the enactment of a comprehensive children's statute. Whether the scope of the statute is broad enough is another question. However, an updated policy framework needs to be developed on children. Other constraints include rapid urbanisation and population growth – this is a major problem which requires a drastic solution. Some commentators have recommended that government pursue an aggressive family planning programme. Whether this will be possible in the face of extreme cultural opposition, only time will tell.

Lessons Learned: Good Practice

Vocation/skills training is of greater value to children who have been traumatised and who most probably have dropped out of formal education; conscientious and consistent monitoring is crucial in re-integration programme for street children; provision of shelter provides practical and ready solutions to problems of street children (although this may be costly); it is useful to work closely with government towards achieving sustainability as this increases the success rate of programmes; always verify claims by children on their bio-data and other references. Street children often lie compulsively and maintain a defensive front.

Practices which have not worked

Funding agencies tend to approach local situations with preconceived strategies and targets. It is more useful to work with local implementation agencies and partners in planning; getting government to re-enrol street children in public (or government) schools can be frustrating while cost of private schools is prohibitive. Other creative solutions need to be considered, such as enrolling them in private academies with government support working with reluctant or uninterested stakeholders. If a stakeholder is not indispensable to a programme, and shows persistent lack of interest, it is unbeneficial and a waste of resources to continue to seek its cooperation. The delay in the release of funds by funding agencies hampers the smooth operation of the work plan and ultimately endangers the success of the programme; Age-based definitions of children can be problematic in developing countries where poor record-keeping of births is the rule rather than the exception; working without the cooperation of the children's family where the children have shown no resentment toward liaison with their families; breaking the support links and networks of children. Child Life-Line emphasises this, and demonstrates how it works in its programme on shelter, where children are allowed external visits with permission. Lack of sensitivity to the children's

own resources is another problem: they dislike being tagged or labelled, and although they can be brash and unkempt in appearance, organisations and other caregivers must show understanding for their background.

Recommendations: One major underpinning factor contributing to the challenge of street children in Nigeria is poverty. Meeting the challenge requires a multi-strategy approach, involving all of the following measures in a long term plan: root out corruption; enforce rule of law; restore decaying infrastructure; stimulate non-oil sectors of Nigeria's economy; resolve debt problem; engage in practical intervention programmes; restructure polity for true federalism; halt rapid population growth, discourage polygamy and encourage family planning; streamline rapid urbanisation; reduce socio-economic inequality; promote religious tolerance through constitutional and other means; create jobs, reduce unemployment and under-employment; improve access to education, health and information; build capacity of governmental institutions.

Words from a street child:

"I ran from home (Ondo State) to Lagos State because my father separated from my mum and remarried. Since his new wife came in, my dad no longer had time for me, although I was then in school. He wouldn't pay my school fees, wouldn't buy my needs or even visit me. To worsen matters, when I found my way home on holiday, my step-mother and father couldn't tolerate my mistakes. Home was no longer home, and so I ran away, and became a bus conductor sleeping at a motor park near stadium in Surulere (Lagos)."

Ayo Vaughan, male street child and bus conductor in Lagos, Nigeria (13 years old in 2001)

SIERRA LEONE

Based on a paper submitted by Goal Sierra Leone, Action for Children in Conflict, YMCA Sierra Leone and World Vision Sierra Leone, in consultation with UNICEF Sierra Leone, Handicap International, Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, National Commission for War Affected Children, Freetown City Council and Street Children



Background: Population estimated in 2001 at 4.6 million. The population is young: those under 18 years constitute 2.3 million while the average annual growth rate of urban population between 1990 and 2001 was 3.2%. There are 16 ethnic groups and Christianity and Islam form the major religious groups in Sierra Leone.

Definitions and statistics: According to research in Sierra Leone, there are two categories of street children. The first category is defined as children who stay with their parents/guardians at home but who go onto the street each morning to socialise or to earn money for themselves and sometimes their parents/guardians, and return home in the evening. The second category is children who have abandoned their homes and are permanently on the streets, living and working on the streets and not under any parental care.

Both categories are equally vulnerable to child abuse and child rights violations. It is impossible to give a definite number of street children in Sierra Leone as there has not been an officially collated record of street children in the country to date. However, research conducted from 1984 to date in various parts of Sierra Leone put the number of children on the streets between 1,625 and 3,000. Reasons contributing to their presence on the streets range from socio-economic factors to familial problems, peer group influence and conflict.

Achievements: *Legislation/ Government Policy:* The government has recently established a National Commission for War Affected Children that has, as part of its mandate, begun addressing the issues relating to street children. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was ratified on June 18 1990 (though not enforced at that time) is now being given attention. *Collective NGO/ Civil Society Action:* there is growing understanding and collaboration amongst child protection agencies in the country. This networking has been helpful in reunifying and reintegrating and providing services such as psychosocial support, medical care, and skills training to ex-combatants and other children in especially difficult circumstances. There are a large number of agencies working with children in general but very few in the country working with street children in particular.

Constraints and challenges: Lack of basic needs (shelter, clothing, medical care and food), lack of access to education, vulnerability to HIV/AIDS/STIs, a negative societal attitude towards street children arising from a misconception that they are responsible for all the ills of the society and a failure to consider their plight; harassment by police and local hoodlums.

Lessons Learned: *Good Practices:* Child to Child approach (community children engaging street children in dialogue to help change their perception about living on the streets); street children participatory approaches geared at enabling them to regain their self esteem and self worth; drop-in centres with services like food delivery, primary health care, non-formal education, psychosocial counselling, family tracing and reunification at specific hours; community-based approach; working with 'Bras' (Male adults who live on the street and who are revered as mentors to male street children), 'Sissies' (Female adults who live on the street and who are revered by female street children) and 'Raray boys' (A seasoned wayward street adult); Reintegration follow-up support strategy.

Bad Practices: Placing street children in institutions that provide the kind of facilities that are beyond the reach of their families when they return home; forced eviction of street children from the street as a strategy to reunify them with their families without first examining the causes of why they were there in the first place.

Recommendations:

To the Government

- As an indication of its commitment to address the problems of street children there is a need for more effective policies that can adequately address the problem of street children.
- The government needs to ratify a bill entitled 'Rights of the Child Act, 1996' as a matter of urgency.

To UNICEF and NGOs

- Carry out a comprehensive national survey to determine the number, problems, needs and the characteristics of street children in the country.

To Government/UN agencies/NGOs

- Establish a forum and clearinghouse for information exchange and sharing of experiences.
- In order to stem the flow of children from homes into the streets, organisations addressing the problems of street children should look at the causal factors and employ preventative strategies rather than relying on curative intervention.

To Consortium for Street Children (CSC)

There is need to establish exchange programmes nationally and also at sub-regional level in order to provide hands-on training for field and programme management staff.

Voices of street children in Sierra Leone

"I was staying with my parents in Kabala town where I separated from them when the town was attacked by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels. I fled with a large convoy of people to Makeni where I am now staying in the street as I cannot get any information about the whereabouts of my parents and other family members."

9-year old street boy (Name withheld)

"Life on the street is synonymous with hell. I have sex with 10-15 men a day in order to get money to buy food. Sometimes the Police will be at your back and will arrest you allegedly for loitering. You have to pay money for your freedom. You have to be strong to survive on the street."

17-year old street girl (Name withheld)

"My parents cannot afford to send me to school and to provide for my needs. I have to go petty trading and do other hard jobs to augment for the running of the house. I am always being reprimanded if I ask for a day's rest. This overburdens me and accounted for my being on the street where I am now free but with many hurdles to cross. I am asking the government and other organisations working with children to come to my aid and stop the abuse of children."

15-year old street boy (Name withheld)

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SECTION II

Key / Thematic Issues in Relation to Street Children

The following notes aim to broadly reflect the presentations and discussions held during the forum. Specific recommendations in relation to each thematic issue are listed in the Ghana Statement at the end of this Report.

Street Children's Access to Education

The objectives of this session were:

- To explore the reasons why some children drop out of school to take to street life
- To identify good practices of work with street children in providing access to basic education, (both formal/non-formal education and life skills)
- To identify obstacles and gaps in projects providing education to street children (by looking at the training of street educators and the methodologies of street education)
- To find ways of involving the educational sector in structuring educational programmes for street children
- To look at current challenges/issues surrounding education policies for street children and suggest recommendations for improved policies and practices (summarised below), providing where possible examples of good practices of work in this area in the West Africa region

CHALLENGES/ ISSUES	RECOMMENDATIONS/ IMPLEMENTING ACTORS
Although well-intentioned, the UNESCO 6334 system (education for all by the year 2015) proves ineffective as it has several loop holes in terms of poor facilities and the personnel needed to sustain effective implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments should strengthen the 6334 system of education by providing adequate equipment and manpower. <p>Implementing Actors Governments and ECOWAS to lobby member states to provide the necessary equipment and manpower.</p>
Lack of political commitment by government and the non-implementation of compulsory and free primary education (an existing policy in the region) are contributory factors to children taking to life on the streets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary education should be truly free and compulsory by eliminating invisible fees (e.g. hidden costs such as text books and school uniforms and charges) <p>Implementing Actors Governments of the sub-region and UNESCO</p>
<i>Education For All</i> is not fully implemented by countries that subscribe to this international standard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West African Governments that have subscribed to <i>Education For All</i> should be lobbied to ensure the active implementation of the policy. <p>Implementing Actors International agencies like UNESCO should be lobbied by organisations such as ECOWAS and CSC to ensure implementation of the policy by respective governments.</p>
Lack of formal infrastructure that would give street children access to education in their own localities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal education should be delivered to street children in their own localities, and funding from governments and donors should be made available to facilitate this. • Donors must be lobbied to recognise that educating street children requires resources (e.g. manpower, etc.) and long-term commitment to ensure the sustainability of these programmes. • Certificates issued by such institutions delivering education to street children should be officially recognised by governments so that street children can further their careers if they choose to. <p>Implementing Actors Governments, NGOs, INGOs and donors.</p>
Cultural factors are used as a tool to deny street children formal education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The West African region should undergo a programme of public sensitisation and advocacy to highlight the importance of education for street associated children. <p>Implementing Actors Governments, NGOs, media, parents, community leaders.</p>

CHALLENGES/ ISSUES	RECOMMENDATIONS/ IMPLEMENTING ACTORS
Inadequate steps have been taken to improve street girl's access to formal education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These steps should be strengthened and sustained to ensure long-term commitment to the education of street girls. <p>Implementing Actors Governments, working in partnership with NGOs and child protection agencies.</p>
Teachers' reluctance to teach in rural areas due to prevailing harsh conditions needs to be addressed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incentives should be provided to encourage teachers to work in rural areas so as to minimise the risk of children (non-schooling children/ school drop-outs) taking to street life in urban areas. <p>Implementing Actors Governments, NGOs, teacher training institutes.</p>
Child rights education is generally weak and needs to be restructured.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There should be more training on child rights issues for teachers, and inclusion of child rights education in the curriculum <p>Implementing Actors Governments, NGOs, training institutes, with support from donors.</p>

Street Children's Access To Health

The objectives of this session were:

- To identify the particular health problems faced by street children, looking particularly at HIV/AIDS (children orphaned and made homeless by AIDS); malnutrition, malaria and other common diseases, drugs and solvent abuse affecting street children in the region
- To list examples of good practices of work with street children in the area of health, obstacles and gaps faced by organisations providing healthcare to street children
- To critically examine how best to involve professionals in the health sector to ensure that street children receive all-round good medical care

The following is a summarised account of the key issues that were discussed and the recommendations made.

CHALLENGES/ ISSUES	RECOMMENDATIONS/ IMPLEMENTING ACTORS
<i>Particular health problems faced by street children</i>	
<p>HIV/AIDS: Street children are at higher risk of contracting HIV/AIDS for various reasons, such as lack of access to (or inability to afford) condoms, negative cultural perceptions and attitudes regarding contraception. The lack of proper shelter and accommodation is also a contributing factor, for example the open-air sleeping conditions of some street children exposes them to gender-based sexual violence and also creates a conducive environment for early unsafe sexual relationships amongst street children. Furthermore poverty-related reasons push unskilled street children to turn to sex trade for income, exposing them to HIV/AIDs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of free contraceptives and sexual reproductive health education for street children (especially in areas where sex-workers are known to operate). <p>Implementing Actors Relevant government departments (such as Ministry of Health - MoH), NGOs, INGOs, drug companies and donors.</p>
<p>Drug and Substance Abuse: Street children are often exposed to, and have easy access to <i>non-prescriptive drugs</i> (such as alcohol, tobacco, sniffing glue/ petrol) and <i>prescriptive drugs</i> (such as cough syrup, cocaine and valium). Methods of acquisition include drug syndicates who make drugs readily (and sometimes freely) available. Older drug-abusing street children offer drugs freely to younger</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure the incidence of drug and substance abuse amongst street children is monitored and kept under control. Provision of free psycho-social counselling and drug-rehabilitation services for street children. <p>Implementing Actors Government (MOH), NGOs, INGOs and donors.</p>

<p>street children. Street children often take drugs to forget about their problems, to experiment, through peer pressure or merely as an energizer to feel good.</p>	
<p>Common diseases: Street children are prone to (often preventable) diseases such as chest and respiratory infections, malaria, typhoid/cholera, skin and water borne diseases. This is largely due to the unsanitary overcrowded living conditions of street children. Lack of personal hygiene and access to clean food and water are common amongst street children who cannot afford to pay to use public cleaning facilities, and during harsh weather (monsoon period) street children are often vulnerable to water borne diseases.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free and accessible health services should be made available for street children to help curb the incidence of common diseases. • Street children should be given free access to cleaning facilities (bathrooms and toilets) to reduce incidence of preventable diseases. <p>Implementing Actors Government (MoH), NGOs, INGOs and donors.</p>
<p>Malnourishment/ Malnutrition is a common poverty-related condition amongst street children who lack access to (or cannot afford) healthy clean food and often lack the time to eat properly. Meals are taken on availability and food invariably comes from unhygienic sources on the street.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing nutrition programmes in existing health care services for street children. • Provision of vocational training and micro-loans for street children to break the cycle of poverty. • Rigorous lobbying of government to implement street children friendly health policies and to commit to allocating budgetary resources. <p>Implementing Actors: NGO and INGO networks in collaboration with government agencies and donors.</p>
<p>Mental health/ psychological health This is largely caused by the sexual, physical and emotional abuse experienced by street children and their feeling of powerlessness and lack of empowerment. Furthermore, negative cultural beliefs and practices amongst adults (in Sierra Leone the use of power/abuse/force during sex is often acceptable and even praised) are seen and replicated by street children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of free and accessible health services, including psychological counselling, rehabilitation (although this is a costly alternative). <p>Implementing Actors Government (MoH), NGOs, INGOs.</p>
<p>Self medication: Lack of access to mainstream health facilities (and street children sometimes choose NOT to use these facilities) leads to a street child's reliance on self-medication. This has the associated risks of exposure to contaminated tools, quacks, etc. Other reasons include the negative attitude of health providers towards street children, turning them away from seeking proper medical attention. For example, pregnant street girls are often asked humiliating interrogative questions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of free health services (including antenatal care) for street children should be made easily available. For example, a mobile clinic is one way of bringing health facilities to where street children operate. There should also be follow-up medical visits and referrals. • Basic health education and information should be made available to street children. • Special training for health workers should be conducted to target the negative attitudes of health providers (for example, street children sensitisation topics to be included in nurses' curriculum) and re-orientation workshops for existing health workers. <p>Implementing Actors Government (MoH), NGOs, INGOs and donors.</p>
<p><i>Obstacles faced by organisations providing healthcare to street children</i></p>	
<p>Lack of cooperation (trust) from street children Even where health care is made freely available to street children, they sometimes choose not to accept health benefits due to their lack of trust of health care workers, e.g., ex-child soldier with bullet wound refusing to be treated or street children choosing not to use condoms despite their availability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term commitment and persistence from NGO fieldworkers and government social workers to establish a relationship and to gain the trust and cooperation of street children in using their health services. <p>Implementing Actors Government (MoH), NGOs, INGOs.</p>

Insufficient financial, human and material resources resulting in poor implementation of existing health policies on street children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rigorous lobbying of governments to commit to allocating and implementing budgetary resources towards street children friendly health policies. <p>Implementing Actors Government, NGOs, INGOs, UN agencies and donors.</p>
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Street Children and Appropriate Skills Development/ Income Generation

The objectives of this session were:

- To identify good practices of work with street children in the area of appropriate skills development and income generation (methodologies of projects that result in income generation, credit and savings schemes, etc)
- To list the key challenges/gaps within this programming area
- To come up with specific recommendations and potential implementing actors (summarised below)

CHALLENGES/ ISSUES	RECOMMENDATIONS/ IMPLEMENTING ACTORS:
Lack of basic literacy, numeracy, and simple business skills prevents street children from fully benefiting from (or understanding) the training they receive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efforts should be made by organisations providing vocational skills to assess the educational levels of street children and provide basic literacy and numeracy skills as an integral part of their programme. <p>Implementing Actors NGOs, Ministry of Education and the non-formal education sector in conjunction with the formal educational sector.</p>
Inadequate training, exposure time and a lack of entrepreneurial culture prevents street children from reaching their maximum capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training provided for street children is generally too short. Programmes should be well planned, taking into consideration the potential of the child and availability of funds; training should also expose the street child to the development of a culture of entrepreneurship. <p>Implementing Actors NGOs, donor agencies, relevant government ministries, business consultancy firms, industry, companies and relevant UN agencies - United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).</p>
Lack of savings/ability to save and security threats hamper street children's efforts to set aside disposable income from their earnings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An effective and reliable savings scheme (such as street children's banks) fully managed by street children themselves should be established to prevent the loss of their income to older family members, authorities and others. <p>Implementing Actors Street children, relevant government departments, financial institutions, and co-operatives.</p>
Lack of working capital and tools frustrate those street children who have successfully undergone training and would like to be self sufficient.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies for job placement, including working capital and tools, should be built into vocational training projects. <p>Implementing Actors NGOs, donors, trainers/trainees, micro finance institutions, relevant government departments and private sector.</p>
Lack of sponsors/funding for long term academic training is a set-back to the personal development of street children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The design of formal educational projects for street children should incorporate strategies for higher education. <p>Implementing Actors NGOs, donors, foundations, foster parents, relevant government departments, alumni, faith-based organisations.</p>
Lack of government policy or no implementation of existing policies on vocational training for street children. This results in street children not having educational qualifications which are publicly recognised and accepted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governments should be lobbied to develop and enforce comprehensive enabling policies for vocational skills training for street children, with the requisite accreditation and certification. <p>Implementing Actors NGOs, street children, relevant government departments, UNICEF, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), parliamentarians and INGOs.</p>
Street children are frequently victims of circumstance, yet society often views them as a nuisance and tends to alienate them. This is in spite of the positive contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The general public should be sensitised about the fundamental human rights of street children - as stipulated in the CRC, and African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children. NGOs should showcase success stories.

that street children would otherwise be able to make.	<p>Implementing Actors All NGOs, Media, faith-based orgs, ECOWAS, UNICEF, street children and opinion leaders.</p>
Lack of relevant marketable skills taught to street children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A realistic market survey should be conducted prior to provision of skills training in order to determine the relevance and profitability of the skills taught to street children. <p>Implementing Actors NGOs, relevant government departments, business community, street children, guardians and parents, trainers and counsellors.</p>
Lack of affordable/free childcare facilities for street mothers, denying them the opportunity to access formal training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of affordable/free crèche and childcare facilities should be made available for street working mothers <p>Implementing Actors NGOs, relevant government departments, FBO, UNICEF, foster parents, donor agencies.</p>
Lack of adequate funding for local NGOs to provide skills training results in low programme quality for street children and potentially dishonest practices by some NGOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGOs should lobby for adequate funding for skills training for street children. NGOs should be encouraged to exhibit transparency and accountability <p>Implementing Actors NGOs, donor agencies, INGOs and government regulatory bodies.</p>
Lack of quality trainers exposes street children to unqualified practitioners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training of Trainers programme should conform to high quality training standards. <p>Implementing Actors Training institutions, NGOs, relevant government departments, donor agencies and faith-based organisations.</p>

Street Children and Reintegration Issues

The objectives of this session were:

- To identify current policies on the reintegration of street children into communities/families in the region undertaken by NGOs, INGOS, Governments and UN agencies
- To give examples of the successes, failures, and gaps relating to these policies on reintegration
- To explore and list alternatives for street children who cannot be reintegrated, providing solutions and recommendations on this issue

CHALLENGES/ ISSUES	RECOMMENDATIONS/ IMPLEMENTING ACTORS
<p>Identifying the street child as an individual is vital – effective reintegration cannot be achieved if the situation of street children is generalised.</p> <p>Constraints Organisational capacity: time and manpower. Donor restrictions on funding core costs that NGOs can use to build their capacity, and on funding long-term projects. Costs associated with adopting an individual approach to street children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide professional, multi-skilled staff through appropriate recruitment practices and training, reasonable pay, good working conditions, and effective human resources management. Lobby donors to recognise that working with street children involves a long-term commitment and can be difficult and unpredictable. Donors should be flexible in their funding to accommodate these circumstances. <p>Implementing Actors NGO, CSC, donors, relevant government departments.</p>
<p>The first point of contact with street children should be on the streets. Participants' experience shows that effective contact on the streets is the first step towards successful reintegration.</p> <p>Constraints Lack of trust by the child in the worker makes it difficult for the worker to form a</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child participation must be ensured - this helps to establish trust as the street child feels he/she has ownership of the assistance he/she is receiving. Adequate preparation by the street worker before visiting the streets to ensure that intervention is appropriate and effective. Realistic offers – the street worker should never promise anything to the street child which they cannot deliver, as this will destroy the bond of trust. A regular and continuous presence on the streets and a patient attitude towards street children on the part of street workers.

<p>bond. The personal views of the child and the worker can cause a biased approach to street. The unstable nature of street life makes it difficult to keep track of children. Peer influence (the child may be encouraged by his/her friends not to interact with the street worker), and Security issues (the worker must ensure their safety).</p>	<p>Implementing Actors Committed street workers, social workers, street children, governments and donors (to ensure that the resources are available to employ such workers and that support is given to these workers), faith-based organisations.</p>
<p>Drop-in/reception centres –participants noted that the effective and correct running of a drop-in or reception centre is a vital step in ensuring effective reintegration of the child.</p> <p>Constraints Lack of multi-skilled staff, lack of adequate facilities at centres. Ensuring proximity of the centre to the streets so that children are able to get there easily.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment of multi-skilled staff through appropriate recruitment practices and training, reasonable pay, good working conditions, and effective human resource management. • Acceptance of any child who approaches the centre for help, no matter what their circumstance. • Adequate facilities at the centre (including recreational facilities). • Confidentiality when working with the child to maintain the bond of trust. Use of a site in close proximity to the street. <p>Implementing Actors NGOs, donors/partner agencies, governments, communities, parents and guardians.</p>
<p>A full case study is needed for each individual child.</p> <p>Constraints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street children often give misinformation until a bond of trust is developed. Age and memory factor (some street children lose track of their age or cannot remember details about their background). • Time and cost of performing case studies. • Lack of professional investigative procedures by staff. Inability of staff to listen properly to the child. Lack of appropriate staff skills. Heavy case loads. • Peer influence by children (encouraging their friends not to be honest with the worker). Language barriers between staff and child. Street culture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified, committed staff to be employed through appropriate recruitment practices and training, reasonable pay, good working conditions, and effective human resources management. • Regular case conferences to be held between staff to ensure good feedback and sharing of information. • Ensure appropriate and effective counselling for the child. Ensure that staff keep proper and relevant documentation for each case study. • Staff should work as a team to strengthen their effectiveness and relieve the burden of heavy case loads. • NGOs should network to facilitate tracing of the child's background. <p>Implementing Actors NGOs, donors, Governments, street children, faith based organisations, parents and guardians.</p>
<p>Placement of the child within a family or community setting.</p> <p>Constraints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity of the family or community to receive and integrate the child. • Lack of resources within the NGO to ensure placement (e.g. not being able to travel long distances, or to employ adequate staff to deal with each child). • Unclear contact between NGOs and the family/community. • Stigmatisation of the child because of their situation, which leads to refusal to accept the child. • Lack of interest in reintegration by either the child or the family/community. Indecision by the child, or dropping out by the child after reintegration has been initiated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families/communities should be sensitised to the street child's situation, background and difficulties. • Capacity of the family/community should be enhanced. Resource mobilisation to build the capacity of NGOs to place the child. • The street child should participate in their own reintegration. • Guidance and counselling for both child and family/community before, during and after reintegration. • Monitoring and long-term follow up are extremely important to prevent the child returning to the streets. <p>Implementing Actors NGOs, donor agencies, governments, parents and guardians, faith based organisations, communities and their leaders, street children.</p>

<p>Networking and collaboration facilitates effective tracing of the street child's background, reintegration, and follow up.</p> <p>Constraints Unhealthy competition between NGOs, lack of adequate information exchange between NGOs, lack of organisational capacity, inadequate human and technical resources, lack of proper protocol and structure within organisations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular sharing of information between NGOs. • Development of adequate databases to store information, and continuous updating and adequate dissemination of that information. • Development of Terms of Reference/Memorandum of Understanding (TOR/MOU) between NGOs. • Mobilisation of adequate resources to ensure information sharing. • Establishment of formal networks. <p>Implementing Actors NGOs, donors, partner agencies, governments.</p>
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Street Children in Conflict Zones

The objectives of this session were:

- To explore the direct links between street children and conflict (recruitment of street children as child soldiers, demobilisation of these children once conflict has stopped, etc.) and the indirect links between street children and conflict (children orphaned by war and left without a family and home, violence endured by street children during war and the displacement of children)
- To look at what happens to existing street children as a result of conflicts and attempt to identify good practices of work with them
- To look at gaps and obstacles facing organisations working in this area
- To examine the capacity of NGOs, working with governments, to disarm and reintegrate these children into mainstream society

Definition of a Conflict Zone

- Countries in a situation of war (Conflict and War zones)
- Countries in a situation of political instability (Inter-ethnic uprising, religious riots, etc.)

DEFINITION 1: COUNTRIES IN SITUATION OF WAR (CONFLICT AND WAR ZONES)

CHALLENGES/ ISSUES	RECOMMENDATIONS/ IMPLEMENTING ACTORS
<p>Street children are vulnerable to conscription, either forcible or voluntary (e.g. Sierra Leone). Faced with few (or no) other appealing alternatives, some street children choose to join the armed forces to gain a feeling of empowerment, pride and access to money, property, power, etc.</p> <p>Street children play varied roles in conflicts; in addition to fighting they can also have roles such as wives, cooks, porters, spies and combatants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The international community should bring pressure to bear on all warring factions that recruit children. • Local agencies, where possible, should deglamourise conscription of street children by publicising the hard realities and negative consequences of becoming a child soldier. Warring factions should also be sensitised on the dangers of recruiting child soldiers. <p>Implementing Actors UN Agencies, NGOs, INGOs and relevant government departments and warring factions</p>
<p>During conflict situations, children are often abandoned/separated/orphaned/lose their family and friends, leading to increased numbers of children taking to life on the street.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of community and government support structures for such children. • Serious attempts should be made to trace parents where possible. <p>Implementing Actors INGOs/ NGOs/ Community leaders and relevant UN agencies such as UNHCR and UNICEF.</p>
<p>Street children are more exposed to sexual abuse (rape, gang-rape and sodomy) during wars and conflict situations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children in conflict zones, including street children, should be protected or where possible removed/transferred out of such areas. <p>Implementing Actors UN agencies, INGOs, government, communities.</p>
<p>Street children are more exposed to substance abuse (hard and soft drugs) during conflict situations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracking of international drug-traffickers. <p>Implementing Actors UN agencies, governments (cross-border co-operation).</p>

Street children not involved in wars, but seen on the streets, are vulnerable to victimisation by law enforcers (police and military).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitisation and lobbying of authorities, particularly the police, to bring them to a practising level of understanding for street children. <p>Implementing Actors NGOs, INGOs and governments.</p>
Street children coming out of combatant activity are faced with health issues and various other related factors including psycho-social trauma/mental instability, physical disability (loss of limbs, hearing, etc.), STDs and HIV/AIDS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of appropriate therapy and counselling for psycho-social trauma, rehabilitation, medical aid (provision of artificial limbs, etc.) for ex-combatant children. <p>Implementing Actors NGOs, specialised agencies dealing with trauma, donor agencies.</p>
Where attempts are made to reintegrate such street children to their families or communities, they are sometimes rejected, as they are viewed as combatants and murderers. This situation leads to an increase in the number of children taking to life on the streets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitisation amongst families, friends and community members and increasing the street children's self-esteem/confidence through skills-development. <p>Implementing Actors NGOs, CBOs, INGOs, government, UN Agencies.</p>
Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration processes (DDRR), are not <i>street child friendly</i> . Promised packages are partly or sometimes not delivered. This "passing the buck effect" (not having one agency/body responsible for delivering the promised package) stigmatises NGOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisations involved in such processes should ensure that DDRR is street child friendly by profiling/detailing what is included in demobilisation packages (e.g. cash, scholarships, etc.) and ensuring that street children receive the same treatment as other demobilised combatants. There should be less bureaucracy and improved communication through information dissemination of DDRR procedures. <p>Implementing Actors NGOs, UN agencies, government, responsible warring factions.</p>
Closure of schools during conflict and war results in children being pushed onto the streets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There should be accelerated learning programmes targeting street children, reflecting the difference in situations where social infrastructure has either been crippled or totally destroyed by war. <p>Implementing Actors NGOs, community and government, UNESCO, UNICEF.</p>
Child-soldiering disposes street children to increased aggressiveness and criminality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rehabilitation programmes should be institutionalised to provide appropriate therapy: psychological counselling, anger management, etc. <p>Implementing Actors Specialised agencies / child psychologists, etc.</p>
Street children are easy targets for recruitment as mercenaries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A database should be introduced to track street children who are being recruited and also used as a means of encouraging fostering, reintegration/reunification. <p>Implementing Actors INGOs / NGOs / Donor agencies (UN and others).</p>
Street children, apart from the risk of being trafficked, are pushed into prostitution especially during chaotic conflict situations and victims of rape are saddled with unwanted pregnancies resulting in low self esteem.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empower and counsel victims of rape/ street girls affected by fighting forces. <p>Implementing Actors Specialised agencies / NGOs (sexual and gender-based violence).</p>

DEFINITION 2: COUNTRIES IN SITUATION OF POLITICAL INSTABILITY (INTER-ETHNIC UPRISING, RELIGIOUS RIOTS, ETC.)

CHALLENGES/ ISSUES	RECOMMENDATIONS/ IMPLEMENTING ACTORS
In times of political, cultural, ethnic and/or religious unrest, street children are manipulated and used as political pawns (through propaganda, false promises and bribery during election rallies), and as thugs (to participate in violence, looting, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Street children must be sensitised, empowered (through skills development) and protected from manipulation. Governments and politicians should be lobbied to stop the use of street children in the advancement of their political agenda. <p>Implementing Actors NGOs, Civil Society, international media.</p>

SECTION III On the streets of Accra

Catholic Action for Street children (CAS) is a Ghanaian NGO helping street children who live on the streets of Accra, Ashaiman, and Tema metropolis. It works closely with Street Girl's Aid (SAID), who run a refuge in the Mamobi district of Accra offering shelter and medical care for pregnant street girls. Together, CAS and SAID have set up seven crèches at various locations in the capital to care for the babies of street mothers who must work during the day.¹

To open the forum, participants undertook a full day's field study and visited CAS's administrative headquarters, their House of Refuge and 4 street areas within the Accra / Tema Metropolis.

CAS on the street



CAS's field activities start with visiting the children on the streets and building a relationship with them to gain their trust. Over time, this approach allows the field workers to get to know the children and their problems at a more personal level. Once the street children show interest they are then invited to a 'mini-refuge', where they can establish closer contact with CAS staff through literacy and other programmes. They may then progress from here to the main House of Refuge if they choose. Meanwhile, CAS continues to take health education, literacy and lifeskills training to the remaining children on the streets as well as to local communities. This is important in order to avoid neglecting the less confident street children.

During their visit, the forum participants were able to see a number of different locations around Accra that were home to street children populations, including:

Abuja (CMB/Railways) Agbogbloshie/Konkomba

This sprawling settlement of shacks is home to around 5000 families. CAS have established various 'Meeting Points' in the area offering informal education in literacy, health and life

skills. One meeting point in front of a cinema hall is particularly popular with street children, and an area where fieldworkers are able to conduct daily visits to interact with the children.



Agbogbloshie

This is an extension of railways with a big market centre. Here, participants saw children aged between 12-15 years old engaged in various activities such as hawking and working as porters for market women or shoppers. CAS operates a mini refuge where children can come to relax and play games whilst they receive health education. Both CAS and SAID also operate heavily subsidised crèches to take care of children whose working mothers would otherwise leave them in the hands of minders under appalling conditions. Mothers who cannot afford payment are allowed to bring their children in free of charge.

Konkomba

This vast slum area, estimated to be around one kilometre square, is home to approximately 28,000 people. CAS field workers visit the area daily to get to know the children, how they spend their time, and the particular problems they face. The children can then be referred to more appropriate contacts for support, while CAS continues to operate casual street corner education programmes as discussed above.

Kwame Nkrumah Circle ("Circle")

Street children are naturally drawn to this area, both because of the volume of passengers using the bus terminals in the vicinity, and also because of the commercial enterprises that sometimes offer them jobs, however menial. Participants observed fieldworkers of CAS and SAID at work here, educating the children on health issues (ante/post natal care, child-care, personal hygiene, etc.) as well as the need to acquire education and vocational skills for their future survival.



Tema Station

This is another bus terminal similar to Circle, where street children survive through services rendered to passengers and commercial enterprises. SAID field workers provide counselling and referrals for medical treatment. Pregnant girls receive ante-natal advice/treatment. Field workers interact with the children in this area and engage them in discussions on health issues (STIs, HIV/AIDS), career counselling, etc.

The CAS House of Refuge



The CAS House of Refuge is a day care centre based in Lartebiokorshie, Accra. It offers free activities and programmes specially designed for the 80 or so registered street children who choose to visit the centre every day. Some come to use the recreational facilities for playing games and watching videos, while others sleep, bathe or wash their clothes. The children also have the opportunity to receive free basic medical care through the Refuge clinic, established in collaboration with The Salvation Army. Finally, the Refuge has a number of trained staff and social workers on hand to talk to the children, advise them on their future and counsel them if necessary on problems they may be having.

The overarching aim of the Refuge is to prepare street children for reintegration back into society. To this end, the

Refuge offers non-formal education through literacy and numeracy classes at 3 levels: illiterates, semi-literates and school dropouts. Children are particularly encouraged to improve their English by reading books from the small library and/or using one of the computers available. Finally, drama activities, sports, music and vocational training classes are also offered.

CAS firmly believes that the initiative to leave the streets has to come from the children rather than the field workers, yet it can be a long and difficult decision to make, especially for children who have spent many years on the streets with their peers. However, those children that do demonstrate a readiness for and commitment to leaving the streets are transferred from the Refuge to the CAS residential facility, *The Hopeland Training Farm*, where they are helped through a series of training courses to prepare them for responsible and independent lives. These courses include poultry, duck, pig and rabbit farming as well as candle and ceramic making. They also receive intensive literacy and health classes. At present, the farm houses 20 girls and 20 boys.

Feedback from field study - participants upon completing the field study were asked to provide feedback and comments, below are some of the main points drawn from field study evaluations)

Positive observations from the field visit

- The children have the freedom of choice in determining their future;
- The children have set up “Susu” schemes (an alternative form of banking enabling them to save with adult agents on the street);
- Boys in some areas form associations for the resolution of minor conflicts; more serious problems are referred to older people on the streets;
- The children have a strict code of ethics, which attract penalties if flouted;
- Street children are taught to be independent through outreach programmes and street corner education programmes;
- Networking helps to make street interventions more effective, as was evidenced from CAS and SAID’s collaboration with other agencies in the field;
- Working with street children is a long-term commitment that requires systematic programming;
- The level of professionalism, dedication and enthusiasm exhibited by the field workers, combined with their obvious concern for the children and local knowledge, was admirable and very inspiring;
- Interaction with the children shows that contrary to general public perception of them as criminals, they are intelligent and determined individuals who have refused to succumb to poverty. They demonstrate a strong vision and aim to survive and in many cases to also support their families and siblings – all they lacked was the opportunities needed to help fulfil this.

¹ For more information, see www.streetchildafrica.org.uk

- The general consensus was that the field workers from CAS and SAID were excellent examples of the qualities necessary for successful work with street children.

Issues of concern from the field visit²:

- Children as young as 6 months were found on the street, and the number of young children left on their own while their mothers went out to look for food was alarming.
- The children live in highly impoverished, densely populated unhygienic slum dwellings with poor drainage and refuse disposal. They have to pay for water, bath or toilet facilities; they have little or no access to health services, and they are frequently exposed to disease and ill health.
- Children have to engage in hawking, truck pushing or work as porters and other menial jobs for their survival. Some were seen begging. *CAS response: Children's survival, even if by doing menial jobs, is better than sliding into criminality. Relevant authorities should be cautioned about the effects of harassing the street children, thereby indirectly forcing them to take on more menacing jobs (or going "underground") just to survive.*
- Children engage in gambling, drugs and substance abuse and/or prostitution.
- Due to the shortage of shelter, some children sleep in the open; child mothers and their babies sometimes sleep in market stalls, others in makeshift tents on shop fronts. Not all children who call at the CAS house of refuge are provided with meals, and many must sleep in overcrowded conditions; *CAS response: Statistics indicate that there are over 20,000 children on the street. The House of Refuge sees about 100 of these children on a weekly basis. Obviously to suggest that some children should be fed and accommodated at the expense of others is not realistic*
- Girls and boys share accommodation, which exposes street girls to possible harassment/rape/STDs
- Children form friendships based on ethnic and tribal lines. For instance, a group of Ashanti children from the same area in Kumasi found it natural to stick together as they speak the same language and come from a common tribe, village or town. This makes it easier for them to build trust, share information and look after one another. *CAS response: Although perhaps not the best possible situation, under current circumstances, field workers are better able to keep tabs on children whose groupings are ethnic based. Children are also found to be better able to protect themselves.*
- Gang-leaders control and/ or look after younger children and help them out of trouble for a fee; there was no sense of violence – *CAS response: There is still a lot to be learnt about street gangs and their influence on the streets and this is an area CAS is working on.*
- In trying to provide alternatives (video shows; games; literacy classes) CAS might be creating a dependency

syndrome that could hinder the ultimate objective of reintegration. *CAS response: The CAS Refuge is a day centre or Drop-in-centre and the approach is to give the street child education*

Participants from other areas and regions within Ghana as well as their counterparts from other West African countries stated that CAS and SAID deserved commendation for their good work. It is however important to note that there is room for improvement among all NGOs working with street children.

These areas for improvement include:

1. Strengthening the relationship of street families with the Labour Department
2. Taking advocacy on street children's issues to a national level
3. Intensification of networking and information sharing
4. Exploring the issue of reintegration further
5. Collaboration with district assemblies to minimise the migration of children to the big cities
6. Moving agency activities to a grassroots level
7. Developing and implementing a drug abuse programme - the apparent lack of drug use should not lull any NGO into a false sense of security
8. Enhancing the "susu" (savings scheme) to further assist children in achieving their objective of saving part of their earnings.

Participants further observed other negative factors that contribute to children taking to the streets including:

- Trafficking/kidnapping
- Abuses of authority. For instance, in some Islamic states children are sent to Islamic Scholars "Mallabou" for educational purposes. However, some scholars have reportedly sent the children out to work or beg for them on the streets. Those that return empty-handed are punished, and to avoid maltreatment some of these children resort to stealing to satisfy their tutors. Attempts to help these children are frustrated by the scholars, who regard them as a source of income
- Forced marriages

... and suggested measures to improve the situation of street children:

- Transformation of small businesses into professional enterprises to sustain families
- Improvement of conditions in slum areas
- Politicians must be held to promises made in their manifestos
- Encouraging the participation of children in issues that affect their lives
- Introduction of a children's helpline

Regional exchange of experiences: *During this session, participants were able to compare the work they had seen on the streets of Ghana with that of other interventions in the region, including their own work.*

Gambia: An example of good practice in the Gambia is the establishment of a child centre, with the support of Standard Chartered Bank, to help give the children better opportunities. Some lessons from CAS could be taken back for possible adoption in the operation of the centre, including: the introduction of a juvenile justice wing for the rehabilitation of inmates; life-skills training; and closer relations between field workers and children.

Sierra Leone: Participants from Sierra Leone noted that whereas children in Ghana seem to group along ethnic lines, Sierra Leone's street children have no ethnic divide. Sierra Leone also makes greater use of community structures, whereas Ghana's children are brought up to be independent adults. In terms of good practice, their child-to-child approach has a positive influence when it comes to reintegration, which should be positively linked to skills-training and education in order to support a

child with trade. A child welfare committee also seeks the interest of children on a sustainable level and foster parents cater for orphans. The field study has taught them above all that working with street children is a long-term commitment that requires systematic programming.

Nigeria: Good practices in Nigeria include: forming linkages with parents and forming partnerships with businesses (employers) and artisans; the provision of residential shelters and at least one meal a day at subsidised rates; bringing information, education and skills development to the communities where these children live; establishing counselling and vocational training centres; and giving the children a voice through empowerment and participation.

Liberia: Liberia's good practices include: a system developed to monitor the movement of street children, and increased collaboration and sharing of resources between NGOs to yield better results. Like CAS, there is a phase-by-phase approach to help street children throughout which the child's voice is paramount. They also saw it as important to identify the causes of separation before undertaking reunification. Work was necessary to help paramilitary groups understand the risks they pose to children on the ground, while at a higher level specific legislation is needed to support street children's issues. To this end, advocacy and legal assistance are essential.

With regards to child soldiers and trafficking, it was suggested that the best approach lies in networking with other groups in the sub-region to help guard against child trafficking and recruitment into armed conflicts within and outside the country's borders. Establishing the actual age of the child is critical to ensure they are treated appropriately. Finally, if adequate preparations are not made for assisted reintegration, it is likely that many child soldiers will slide into criminality.

² Where possible, CAS provided responses, from their perspective, to the participants' queries from the field study.

SECTION IV Good practices of work with street children – An international perspective

Walk The Walk – The Search For New African Street Work Trainers

Patrick Shanahan, Street Child Africa



Walk The Walk – The Search For New African Street Work Trainers is a unique and innovative approach to developing effective and relevant ways of working with street children. A key component in this training strategy is to build the capacity of African street workers to source and train their own street workers. In short, it is about spreading a network of street work and the training of African street workers by Africans, for Africans.

Another central component of the programme is the regional co-operation of street workers. The programme uses a model of cascade training, and is designed to allow a gradual withdrawal on the part of the overseas trainers. The strategy operates on the understanding that European trainers will remain involved in any extension of the programme to other African countries in the early stages, and that support will continue to be available should it be required. This should ideally result in full ownership of the programme by African street workers and the agencies with whom they work.

Walk The Walk was conducted in Lusaka and Ndola (October and November 2002). The overall objective was to train 20 African workers in street work techniques over 4 days, and select from this group, potential trainees to undertake a further 2 day *Training for Trainers programme*. 2 courses conducted in Lusaka and Ndola resulted in 40 participants trained in street work and 10 trainees completed the *Training for Trainers course*.

The initial 4 day programme used a model of 'stages' of street work. This provided a clear structure for participants to follow - one that could later be adapted to suit their own specific street work role and local circumstances. The programme incorporated three main elements – practical exercises, discussion and feedback, and formal theoretical input by the trainer. The training takes a qualitative approach highlighting that street work is rarely about isolated factors, with (for example) strong linkages between personal values and professional values, the feelings of a street child and a street worker, etc.

Guiding Principles of Walk the Walk

Street Child Africa and its partners have developed a new approach to working with street children called street work. It derives from the discovery over many years that the situation of a street child is unique and must be treated as such to ensure relevant and effective intervention for these excluded children and young people. Street workers work with and for **street children** specifically. This means that both the 'street' and 'child' are major players in our organisation and programme.

The street, despite its apparent undesirability, is the defining factor in the lives of street children. Most street children who go to the streets do so for good reason and see it as the best choice they have available to them. Even those who are not there by choice (for instance, double orphans or second generation street babies) very quickly internalise the ways of the street. It becomes their home. It is where they eat, sleep, socialise, work, and form sexual relationships. *It must be validated as such before we can hope to communicate in any meaningful way with these young people.* To ignore or deny this, is to risk ill-informed meddling in a culture which street children have created for themselves to enable their survival outside of the conventional family unit or home. It must be remembered that street children are highly vulnerable to unscrupulous adults and therefore do not trust adults easily. It must also be remembered that life on the streets is transient in its nature and that many street children depend on working or begging for hours every day to survive and are usually exhausted. Therefore, a model of assistance through fixed institutions such as schools and refuges cannot in isolation cater effectively for the street child.

The street worker's role is vital to the success of intervention work with street children precisely because of its capacity for movement and flexibility. The street worker forms alliances with street children on the street. He/she gains access to the world of the street child and provides the child with an option to gain a friend, a counsellor, and a safe adult. If the child moves, the street worker is able to follow, wherever the child may go, because street workers do not depend on buildings or offices to allow them to do their job. When other institutions and their staff are closing up and going home, the street worker is just beginning his/her work on the streets at night, because this is where and when they will find the children. The street child will therefore discover that the street worker is there for them, and will continue

to be there for them. The street child is then in a position to explore options and services, to make choices and decisions, to express their real needs, hopes, fears and everyday difficulties within a relationship of mutual trust and honesty³. It is against this premise that Walk The Walk – The Search For New African Street Work Trainers has been conceived and developed.

The Training course consists of 2 main components, an **Introduction to Street work (4 days)** and **Training for Trainers (2 days)**

Course programme:

Day 1	The rationale for doing Street work Thinking about doing Street work
Day 2	Street mapping, with practical exercises in the field
Day 3	Deciding to do Street work
Day 4	Doing Street work Follow up
Day 5	Introduction to the training process Public speaking The learning cycle
Day 6	Using a training needs analysis Preparation of course material Delivery of course material Training methods and tools Putting the learning into practice

The training material is based on sound and proven principles of good childcare practice. It incorporates principles about how people learn best. On the whole, a traditional teaching approach is avoided and the emphasis is on the active participation of everyone. Personal development is a central theme throughout the programme, as is a focus on use of self and one's value base.

Walk The Walk is an exciting, challenging, and innovative programme. It does not claim to be the definitive answer to the question "how do I become a street worker or trainer?" Neither does it claim to be the definitive solution to the growing numbers of children who live on Africa's streets. On its own, a training programme cannot achieve this. It is however a vital and recommended component of being an effective street worker, and of implementing an effective holistic approach to working with street children. It is our belief that the seeds will grow, and that the course and learning materials will provide a canvas to which workers of all disciplines to whom street children matter can add and shape future practice according to local circumstances.

³ Street Child Africa (SCA) would like to clarify that SCA in no way denounce or reject the excellent work done by many refuges, shelters, community schools, medical centres and the like in assisting street children. Indeed, all of our partners operate such services, and make every effort at family reintegration for children wherever possible. But it is SCA's experience that without street workers, all other assistance becomes less effective, because without constant contact with the streets we cannot continue to understand the rapidly changing world of the street child - and therefore cannot provide effective and relevant help for them.



Child Helpline International (CHI)
Jeroo Billimoria,
Executive Director

A child helpline is an emergency phone service offering a combination of short and long-term assistance to children in need of care and protection. Immediate assistance is provided to children in danger, while others are put into contact with programmes offering long-term rehabilitation. Children are encouraged to talk about their problems without fear of judgement or risk of making their situation worse. Telephone outreach services can provide solutions at the end of a phone and where necessary back up the voices of young people with direct interventions and advocacy.

Child Helpline International (CHI) works actively at the international level with funding agencies, child-centred networks, child protection agencies, corporate federations and telecommunication organisations to support national helplines as a means for child protection.

CHI facilitates the sharing of information, experience and resources amongst child helplines. The guiding principle of CHI is to ensure that regional expertise is utilised and that each country develops its own unique helpline model.

Jeroo Billimoria explained the 9 crucial steps to setting up and operating a successful child helpline:

1. Convene national meeting of all stakeholders and implementers to agree and draw up processes involved.
2. Meet at NGO level to discuss the need for a helpline and to develop a core group of organisations that will coordinate the processes.
3. Organise workshops with children to determine the need for a 24-hour phone intervention based/counselling service.
4. Compile needs assessment study to identify areas of need and invite suggestions from all relevant parties.
5. Acquire toll-free number/non-metered number through meetings with relevant government ministries and telecom authority using, if necessary, recommendations of UN Committee on the Rights of Children regarding helplines as well as the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).
6. Meet with donor organisations to request funding support for secretariat and related areas. Submit proposal to relevant government department or ministry to support core costs.
7. Meet with corporate bodies to support helpline in related areas of activity, i.e. funding (banks/financial institutions), advertising agencies, medical (clinic/hospital), etc.
8. Bring on board key individuals from allied partners: police, healthcare services, youth justice, child protection agencies, etc. to determine areas of collaboration.

9. Develop regional level consultation to consolidate advantages of establishing a helpline across borders/within the region.

Child protection is at the core of all telephone helplines for children and young people – wherever they are, whatever their circumstance. Global networking and support are vital in order to address the main aims of all telephone outreach services. Helplines for children across the world have demonstrated their effectiveness by providing direct assistance to children.

For more information, see:
www.childhelplineinternational.org



**UNDUGU SOCIETY OF
KENYA (USK)**
Aloys Opiyo, Executive Director

Undugu Society of Kenya (USK), an NGO with some 30 years of experience in street children's issues, has served as a 'laboratory for learning' for several organisations in the East African region. Mr Aloys Opiyo, who has been with USK since its early days, attended the forum to share USK's experiences with participants. He presented a working paper on practices and experiences of NGOs and religious organisations in Kenya, to support participants' discussions on how best to work with street children.

Tracing their experiences over the years, Mr Opiyo said that street children organisations in Kenya had spearheaded some of the most innovative approaches in addressing street children's problems through: provision of rehabilitation services; development of alternative forms of education and training in responsive needs to vulnerable groups; implementation of community development programmes as key preventative measures; development of health programmes including HIV/AIDS programmes; resource mobilisation for social development; lobbying and advocacy on street children's issues at all levels. He said the four most important developments, which continue to have an impact on street children programmes in Kenya include:

- Enactment of new legislation for children
- Implementation of free primary education
- Rehabilitation of street children and families
- Development of best practice

USK experiences which are shared by others in the field across the country and region, have shown that a successful street children's programme must of necessity encompass:

- Personalised treatment and services
- Established links with family and community
- Integrated education/technical and life skills training
- Reintegration through well-developed organisational and programme structures and systems, professional, competent and dedicated staff

USK endeavours to accomplish these stages in 2 – 3 years. These steps require well developed organisational and programme structures and systems, professional, competent and dedicated staff and financial viability.

Major obstacles to efforts towards effective rehabilitation of street children in Kenya include:

1. Limited opportunities for formal education;
2. Lack of or inadequate budgetary allocation to address child poverty;
3. Inadequate resources at the disposal of agencies working in the sector;
4. Apparent apathy among members of the public;
5. Lack of or inadequate policy to govern the sector and leadership by the government;
6. Competition as opposed to collaboration among players;
7. Poverty at household level;
8. HIV/AIDS pandemic – AIDS Orphans.

Lessons Learnt - The USK Experience

Rehabilitation of street children is central to the work of USK. For over 20 years USK practised curative and institutional based care as opposed to family/community-centred rehabilitation. At the end of 2002 USK had in place 5 rehabilitation centres to act as transit facilities and institutions for long term rehabilitation. Several street children have passed through these facilities successfully to become responsible and self-sufficient members of their communities.

Although much had been achieved over a period of more than 20 years, USK recognises that there are limitations to its programme. Consequently, USK has made efforts to turn this situation around by reorganising its strategies to reach out to more children and communities in the rehabilitation process. The new programme shift incorporates a rights-based as opposed to needs-based approach, while at the same time putting more emphasis on family-centred rehabilitation as opposed to institutionalisation. USK believes that whilst acts of benevolence and charity are commendable and to be encouraged, these are insufficient from the human rights perspective, and children's centres should thus only be brought in as a last resort. On the other hand, experience also teaches that while reintegration is desirable, these same families and communities can be the undoing of some of the children.

USK has come to the conclusion that the right approach to street children's rehabilitation is in the kind of programme that strengthens connections with families, schools and the wider community and makes the voices of street children heard by influencing changes in policies and laws that affect their lives. This is where the development of best practice comes into play. Operating under 21 principles and a 12-step road map, best practice guidelines ensure professionalism in the operations of the sector. Some major principles include motivation, vision/mission, objectives, and strategies, whilst 3 critical stages of the road map focus on street work, challenges of street work, institutional care and reintegration.

Good practices of work with street children

– A regional perspective

THE GAMBIA

SOS Children's Villages – The Gambia

The purpose of SOS Kinderdorf International, the parent body of SOS Children's Villages, is to help **orphaned, abandoned and destitute children** regardless of their ethnic background, sex or religion, by giving them a family, a permanent home and a sound basis for an independent life.

The four principles of SOS Children's Villages are:

- **The mother: Each child has a caring parent**
The most important person for the children's personal development on the road to self-reliance is their SOS mother. She builds an emotional bond with each child entrusted to her care and provides the security they need. She is a child care professional and recognises and respects each child's family background, cultural roots and religion.
- **Brothers and sisters: Family ties are built**
Girls and boys of different ages live together as brothers and sisters. Siblings are not separated when they arrive at the village and live together in the same SOS family. These children, together with their SOS mother, build emotional ties that last a lifetime.
- **The House: Each family creates its own home**
The house is the family's home with its own routine. Under its roof, children enjoy a real sense of security and belonging. Children grow and learn together, sharing responsibilities and the joys and sorrows of daily life.
- **The Village: The SOS family is part of the community**
The SOS Children's Village is an integral part of the community in its location and design. SOS families are grouped together, enabling them to share experiences and offer one another a helping hand. Within this supportive environment, children learn to trust and believe in others and themselves.

The first SOS Children's Village in the Gambia was founded in Bakoteh in 1982. Over the years, operations in the Gambia have expanded to include supporting facilities of an educational, vocational and medical nature. Associated projects have been established including the SOS Kindergarten, training and production Centre, Hermann Gmeiner technical senior secondary school, youth village, mother and child clinic and a regional adults training centre.

SOS Training and Production Centre, Gambia

The centre, considered to be one of the best in the Gambia, was set up in 1984 to cater for the vocational

needs of SOS Youths as well as those from the local community. It comprises carpentry, metalwork and auto mechanic workshops. The three year intensive course includes theory and practical lessons and a certificate is awarded to students on successful completion of the training programme.

SOS Youth Home, Bakoteh

The SOS youth facility at Bakoteh offers a home for adolescent boys in which they learn to become independent. They manage their own household finances, shopping, cooking, cleaning and laundry. Youths carry out their daily duties under the supervision of a youth educator who assists them in decision-making on matters affecting them. They remain in the youth facility until they are ready to lead an independent life. Older SOS girls stay in the SOS Children's Village.

See www.sosgambia.org for more details

Child Protection Alliance (CPA)

Child Protection Alliance (CPA) is the first inter-agency collaborative institution on Child Rights Promotion and Protection in the Gambia. Established in June 2001, the Alliance has a membership of over 40 different agencies including government departments, UN Agencies, local and international NGOs, community-based organisations and youth and children's organisations.

CPA is also the official representative of ECPAT International (www.ecpat.net) in the Gambia and works with the Gambia Tourism Authority on the implementation of the Code of Conduct on the protection of children against the commercial and sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) in travel and tourism, with the support from Defence for Children International (DCI)/ECPAT Netherlands, ECPAT UK and ECPAT International.

CPA has been assigned responsibility for managing a recently completed child centre funded by Standard Chartered Bank, The Gambia. The centre is a modern facility built to help children in difficult circumstances including street children, to give them a decent start in life and hope for a better future. In its initial first two years, the centre already has in place health facilities, a computer laboratory, library and resource room and dining facilities. The centre also provides free food for the children in the programme. As an initial pilot project, CPA hopes that this will be replicated in other parts of the country so as to reach out to more children in need. See www.cpagambia.gm for more details

YMCA – The Gambia

Since its inception in 1979, the Gambia YMCA has over the years implemented programmes ranging from advocacy, sensitisation, counselling and providing vocational training for young people.

The Gambia YMCA currently runs a four-year youth enterprise and income generation project that targets marginalised young people, rural women and children in custody. To date, a Juvenile Justice Rehabilitation (JJR) project has been established, which provides relevant skills training for children in custody. For security reasons, the juvenile justice wing inmates are not allowed to leave the wing but the JJR project has worked out a strategy that moves trainers and training sessions to the wing. The inmates, who are mostly street children, are trained in a variety of skills as a prerequisite to equip them for smooth and effective reintegration into their families. In the first six months of the project, thirty-two inmates are benefiting from the project. This 4-year project is funded by Comic Relief through Y-Care International.

More information is available on: www.ymca.gm

GHANA

Street Girls' Aid (SAID)

SAID was created to cater for the needs of street girls in Accra who have typically been drawn to the city from their villages, often many kilometres away, in order to seek better futures. They may be trying to escape poverty in the rural areas or fleeing from unhappy family circumstances.

SAID runs a Refuge in Mamobi, Accra for pregnant street girls up to 18 years old. In most instances, three months before and after delivery, street girls stay at the Refuge where they receive medical care as well as advice on how to take care of themselves and their baby. SAID's Refuge also offers educational and demonstration classes (like sewing) to provide the street girls employable skills.

SAID established seven crèches at various locations in Accra, providing a *Baby Care Programme* where child minders take care of about 900 children, with the ages ranging from six months to five years. Breakfast and lunch are provided to the children. Street corner literacy classes are also organised for mothers and their toddlers. Additionally, in response to the dangerous unsanitary conditions where street children live (largely linked with widespread sickness, malnutrition, and skin diseases), SAID with the help of the Salvation Army has started an extensive health care project. Every day a nurse visits the crèches to look after the health of the children and mothers. These crèches offer the mothers a safer and healthier place to leave their children during the day, preventing these

children from taking to life on the streets. The A.M.A. (town authorities) have asked SAID to help find solutions for the many street mothers and their babies. For more information see www.streetchildafrica.org.uk

Mercy Foundation International (MFI)

MFI, an NGO based in Takoradi, Ghana, was established in 1996 to assist street children in the areas of education, reintegration and empowerment through training, advocacy, rehabilitation and capacity building in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis. MFI also provides parents and guardians with guidance services and soft loans for needy parents to start small businesses.

Findings from a research conducted in the Sekondi/ Takoradi area in 1998 prompted MFI to pilot three programmes for two target communities, including:

1. *Initial Education for Street Children*

MFI designed a programme to enrol this targeted group of children (which includes children of unemployed teen mothers, children left in the care of guardians without proper care and supervision, children of unemployed/low-income single parents, children who are exposed to possible moral and physical dangers in the home and traumatised children) in pre-schools for 2 or more years, before they are enrolled in a formal education. A unique educational programme has been developed to upgrade the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills of these street children to meet the requirements for entering into the official Ghana Education System. A crucial point is to instil in these street children a feeling of self worth, dignity, and the hope of the future.

2. *Skills Training for Teenage Commercial Sex Workers* During counselling sessions with some youth sex workers, MFI found that most were illiterate school dropouts. Accordingly, MFI provided these children skills training to become self-sufficient and to be reintegrated into society.

3. *Community Association of Parents (CAP)*

This Association brings together the guardians and parents of street children by providing a platform for its members to learn life skills that empower the families to be more responsible for the upbringing of the street child.

MFI's achievements include the establishment of two free pre-schools in poor communities of Sekondi/Takoradi, Ghana's third largest city, for 195 pupils. These children are either orphans or from single parent/poor families. Children from these schools are enrolled in continuing state schools to pursue formal education programmes. MFI intends to establish similar schools in five targeted communities.

Neglect Foundation, Kumasi

Founded in 1998 and operating in the Kumasi Metropolis, **Neglect Foundation** (formerly *Kumasi Youth Porters Association*) seeks to promote and protect the rights of

children who live and/or work on the streets, with a particular focus on street child porters. Its activities include systematic programmes in skills training; provision of formal/non formal education for street children who choose to go back to school; free medical care and health education on hygiene and sexual reproductive health issues (HIV/AIDS and STDs); addressing issues relating to care of infants of street youths - especially porters (kayayoos); training parents/guardians of street children in various income generating ventures, etc.

Since its inception, Neglect Foundation has contributed immensely to the street children/youth problems in Kumasi and its surrounding areas.

Achievements:

Several street children have been successfully reunited with their families and/or given formal education and employment opportunities. In 1999, more than 18,000 street children were registered with photo IDs. These street working children include female porters, truck pushers, shoe-shine boys, iced water and ice-lolly vendors. Currently, there are about 23,000 kayayoos in the Kumasi Metropolis. A Resource centre has also been built at the Racecourse for 20 street children with no family links. Neglect has earned a good reputation through its programmes in Kumasi, and as a result, individuals and organisations have begun to approach the NGO offering to provide street children with free vocational training. Neglect foundation is also trying to coordinate activities of street children NGOs in the Kumasi Metropolis area.

Youth Alive (YA)

An initiative of ActionAid Ghana, YA is a local NGO based in Northern Ghana that assists street children/youth under the age of 22. Upon conducting thorough background investigations, these street children are either sponsored to learn a trade or to attend school.

Intervention strategies adopted by YA:

Drop-in-centre: Street children interact with each other and staff without fear or coercion, confident that their views and opinions are heard and respected. The centre has classrooms where children of school-going age are provided with literacy and numeracy classes for one year to prepare them for placement in the formal sector. Lunch is provided on weekdays. The centre also has a clinic, library, computer laboratory, training room, kitchen and other recreational facilities.

Formal Education: A child is placed according to ability and age. The choice of school depends on its track record and proximity to the child's house. The cost is shared between YA and the child's family. Parents usually provide basic school requirements, monitor their child's attendance, and provide pocket money, whilst YA provides for fees, furniture, textbooks and development levies, as well as monitoring the child's attendance and performance.

Vocational/ Skills Training: Youths from 15 years and above are placed under apprenticeship (free of charge) to

local master craftsmen/women and artisans. This training represents the community's contribution to the rehabilitation of the street children who are provided a daily stipend to cover their living costs whilst attending training. Upon graduation, graduates are assisted to establish their own businesses in their home towns, who in turn take in and train other street and vulnerable children.

Health: The clinic is manned by a nurse attaché from the Ministry of Health. Serious cases are referred to the government hospital at the expense of YA. The clinic runs health education programmes on: reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, personal hygiene, drug abuse and environmental hygiene for street children and their families.

Advocacy: YA looks at some of the cultural practices, perceptions and attitudes that lead to children taking to life on the streets. It also seeks to bring on board local authority structures in finding solutions to this problem. This has been achieved as District Chief Executives now serve on the YA Executive Council. District Assemblies are also contributing in kind or cash to YA activities. At the national level, YA is working with the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment towards the formulation of a national policy on street children.

Self-help loans: Recognising that to a large extent "streetism" in Northern Ghana is due to poverty, YA provides credit facilities and training to parents to undertake income generating activities. This has enabled many parents to financially support their children's attendance to school.

Achievements: Restoration of self esteem in children and parents; minimised migration of youth to Southern Ghana; 74 street children who have undergone apprenticeship now run their own businesses and train other street youth; 315 children/youth are currently attending school with 120 youths under apprenticeship.

Lessons learnt: A development approach to rehabilitating street children is possible; Contrary to general perception of street children as criminals, they are actually the intelligent ones who refuse to succumb to poverty and are out on the streets as a means to survive; Rehabilitating street children can be capital intensive and if one is not confident of reliable funding sources, it is best not to commence on a project. *A street child's life is not an experiment* – it is a complex issue which requires a multi-faceted approach and commitment. The dedication of service providers is key to the success of any intervention.

Youth Alive (Tamale Street Children's Project)

One of the successful activities of this project is a Drop-in centre, known as the "Tizayinga" (Our Home). The project, which the children have fondly named the Tizaa, consists of spacious circular buildings equipped with indoor games and other recreational activities. In addition, the Tizaa provides lunch, cleaning and laundry facilities. The Tizaa facilitates children's education both

in and outside the classroom and children have the opportunity to acquire income-generating skills. Thanks to the Tizaa programme, there is an increased awareness in society that street children are not necessarily criminals and miscreants but children who lack opportunities to make something of their lives.

A Tizaa success story is Agbon Kweku, a 24 year old young man whose parents died leaving him to care for three other brothers and a sister. *“We all had to drop out of school because we had no-one.”* He sent his sister home to get married whilst he and his brothers picked grain in the market for a living. One day he decided to make enquiries about the Tizaa which he had heard so much about. Kweku was enrolled at the Tizaa and apprenticed with an electrician. **The distance between home and the shop was far, but the Tizaa provided him an allowance for food and transport.** He was also provided with a bar of soap a month, from which his brothers also benefited. On graduation, he was given tools and a kiosk to start his business on soft payment terms. **Today Agbon Kweku is the proud owner of a big workshop and “because of my good work I have a lot of clients.” His brothers are back in school because he can afford to pay their fees.** Agbon Kweku says if he had joined the programme earlier he would not have sent his sister off to get married so soon.

African Centre for Human Development (ACHD)

ACHD actively engages in the prevention of all forms of child abuse. A DANIDA commissioned study conducted by ACHD revealed that a significant contribution to the growing numbers of street children is largely linked with child trafficking. Several of these children (enslaved at a very tender age) have escaped from their “Masters”, “Mistresses” and “Madams” due to maltreatment, and end up on the streets in search of freedom end up on the streets. Many young children are trafficked from Northern Ghana to Accra by people who themselves live on the streets and these children end up living with them on the streets.

ACHD conducted a preparatory skills-training workshop for 150 street children at Agbobbloshie market (Accra) to enable them choose the skills which they wanted to apprentice in. 62 were sponsored for training in Opportunities Industrialisation Centre (OIC) in carpentry, masonry, plumbing, electrics, etc. Follow-up (during and after training) took place to ensure that they do not return to the streets. Most of these street children are now well established and integrated into society.

RRR Project: ACHD has established a rehabilitation home as part of this project, where the home has a supervisor, mother and two social workers, a coordinator and a clinical psychologist. Children on the streets are contacted and informed of the centre, and if willing are taken to the home (Demand Driven Approach). Awareness raising campaigns are also targeted at “Madams”, “Mistresses” and “Masters”. The following

process is followed:

- Intake interview by social workers
- Creation of rapport through interaction
- Counselling and detailed collection of background information
- Health referrals to psychologist (traumatic cases/cases indicating psychological problems) or clinics/hospitals and treatment of those with ailments
- Needs assessment of the child (what he/she wants to do – school/skills learning)
- Identification of related organisations/NGOs for collaboration and contact person
- Sensitisation and raising awareness amongst parents, guardians and opinion leaders, meeting teachers with parents
- Integration of the street child with parents/guardians, into school, for apprenticeship and into the community. The street child is involved in the whole process
- Signing of social contract forms by parents/guardians
- Formation of anti-child trafficking committees with the Chief as a Chairman
- Needs assessment of mothers/female guardians for financial support and skills development training
- Supply of school supplies for 1 year
- Regular follow up to ensure sustained integration and reports are submitted fortnightly to ACHD
- District Assemblies are involved and informed of infrastructure needs lacking in the communities
- Those whose parents cannot be traced are offered fostering options

Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services (AGREDS)

AGREDS is a church-based NGO undertaking integrated rural development in Ghana. It focuses mainly on health services, emergency relief services, community development, vocational skills training, and poverty reduction programmes.

AGREDS established the *Integrated Vocational Skills for Street Children (IVSSC) Project* in 1998 to train and reintegrate about 150 street children (mostly migrant teenage girls from Northern Ghana in Accra) through the provision of employable skills training by 2005. In addition to addressing the situation of those already on the streets, AGREDS is also involved in *prevention work by allowing admission to children vulnerable to street life*. The main objectives of the IVSSC Project are to provide:

- Literacy classes for all trainees and to assist outstanding street children access scholarships, allowing them to continue senior secondary school
- Occupational training every 6 months in dressmaking, hair dressing, domestic catering, batik tie and dye, and soap, pomade, and powder making and provide ‘master’ tradesman in the girls’ home regions for a period of up to 3 months
- Healthcare education (HIV/AIDS and STD awareness and prevention, appropriate basic treatment, hygiene, and

sanitation)

- Workshops for 20 months prior to the participant's reintegration, training the girls to be peer educators, agents for change and resources of knowledge for potentially street bound children in their home communities
- Adequate protection of the street children while they undergo skills training
- Equipment and materials support through micro-credit for 100 beneficiaries each year
- To liaise with district assemblies and the Department of Social Welfare to follow-up on graduated trainees to ensure that they practise their acquired vocation

In 2002, AGREDS's Lifeline Project launched the Elim Centre in Agbogbloshie – a shelter that provides 60 street girls training in selected vocations (hairdressing, batik tie and dye, pomade, etc.) and reintegration opportunities. Research showed reintegration to be vital in preventing return of street children to the streets, and AGREDS aims to develop such key elements of the programme by:

- Informing girls during admission screening of their possible return to their homes upon completion of training, documenting information collected about her parents and community, and contacting their parents to inform them of their daughter's location
- Visiting the villages to interact with the parents and community leaders
- Meeting with Lifeline Project Group, Opinion Leaders, Assembly Members, Traditional Rulers and the local community to provide a forum of open discussion and information exchange on collaborative solutions
- Visiting participants periodically in their homes and work places after programme completion
- Providing an open-door policy where the girls can share their problems and are offered counselling and guidance
- Providing start-up capital for their chosen vocation
- Monitoring passed trainees on a quarterly basis
- Allowing 24 hours access of Elim Centre by passed participants
- Networking with Christian Children's Fund of Canada, Youth Alive, Women's Development Agency, the Department of Social Welfare, and the District Assembly to assist in the on-going monitoring and counselling of the girls

Some challenges encountered in this programme include:

Difficulty finding the homes of some participants; Negative cultural practices like forced marriages or fosterage; Unknown relocation of participant's parents due to internal conflicts; No access to village roads because of natural disasters; Uncertainty if parents are still alive; Parents taking away daughter's earned monies, preventing continuation and causing the daughter's business to fail, etc. Despite these difficult circumstances, Lifeline believes that a multi-pronged approach is required to ensure the success of the programme.

Fan Milk Limited (FML)

Fan Milk Limited (FML), a producer of dairy products, has been operating in Ghana since 1960. With 8 depots and a total of 5,000 vendors nationwide, FML recruits its vendors mainly through referrals, introductions, and recommendations from existing (known) vendors. When vendors are hired they are given equipment like bicycles, pushcarts and carrier boxes popularly called "video boxes". Most of these vendors come from the rural areas and usually do not have good educational and social backgrounds.

As part of its corporate social responsibility, FML recruits young people to sell for a 20% profit margin. In view of these youths' lack of financial management skills, FML encourages them to put aside an amount from their daily sales for savings. These savings are grouped into two categories – Mandatory Savings and Special Savings. The mandatory savings are invested and are then paid back to vendors with interest when they leave their jobs, while the special savings are kept to enable vendors who have unexpected needs to access them without having to use their mandatory savings. FML also provides these young vendors basic management skills training twice a week in all FML depots.

The FML vendor has many benefits including: an insurance policy for all registered vendors which includes cover for accidents, admission to hospital and so on; yearly promotions where cash awards and other items such as freezers, televisions, sewing machines, ghetto blasters, etc. are given to them as prizes; a scheme called "Save and Buy" which allows them to save and purchase other personal effects of their choice such as televisions, freezers, gas cookers, and mattresses, with the intention of helping them plan for their future.

At the end of every year all registered vendors are given Christmas parcels including a bag of rice, a bottle of cooking oil, and canned tuna flakes. The vendors also benefit from company souvenirs such as caps, wristwatches, T-shirts and sports bags through donations and other promotional schemes.

This vending job has been the main source of income for most young men who migrate to the cities where FML operates its business and this is where a good number of street children have found a niche. Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS) organises literacy programmes for these vendors to improve their reading and writing skills. The programme syllabus covers English language, mathematics and general knowledge. Trained literacy facilitators are assigned to specific depots to teach the vendors. For those with sufficient educational levels, basic information about small-scale businesses is included in the syllabus.

LIBERIA

Don Bosco Homes (DBH)

Founded in 1993 by the Salesians of Don Bosco, DBH Liberia aims to respond to the needs of street children in Monrovia, Kakata, and Buchanan in Liberia. They work in the areas of family tracing/reunification/reintegration, providing shelter, psycho-social counselling, medical care, legal aid/advocacy, skills training and setting up micro income-generating enterprises for target groups. Follow up work is also done with reunified/reintegrated children to provide them further psychosocial support where necessary.

Other activities include:

- Working with schools through peer group counselling and community recreation/play therapy
- Establishment of a mini clinic to bring the health services directly to street children and night shelters for street children to sleep under DBH protection
- Radio programme on the Catholic radio station Veritas, "Inside Don Bosco Homes", which informs the public on issues affecting street children and responses to these issues
- Working with child soldiers through the establishment of Interim Care Centres
- Working with street children in conflict (or perceived to be) with the law, DBH visits police depots regularly to support street children or to enquire about sexual abuse cases.
- Providing training to military and para-military on the CRC
- Organising HIV/AIDS awareness workshops for street children
- DBH helps produce *Youth Voice*, a youth advocacy, development, empowerment, and peace and reconciliation newsletter published by youths of the West Africa CAFOD Connect Program of Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, and Burkina Faso. *Youth Voice* is a medium for youths of these countries to express themselves, improve their writing skills, and exchange thoughts and ideas with youths of other West African states through personal stories, poetry, and essays. For more information, see www.salesians.org.uk

NIGERIA

Child Life-Line (CLL)

Child Life-Line, founded in 1994, is a voluntary non-profit organisation devoted to promoting and defending the rights of children, particularly those living on the margins and fringes of society in Nigeria. It works to provide psychosocial and pedagogic rehabilitation for these children (including street children) in Lagos State. Child Life-Line runs a residential rehabilitation centre for street boys, which currently houses 24 boys, where they can be cared for, receive counselling and a basic education. In addition, these street boys go through skills training or learn a trade that will enable them to be self-supporting and law-abiding citizens. Whenever possible, Child Life-Line strives to re-unite street children with their families. The overall plan for the residential rehabilitation centre at Ibese, Ikorodu, is for it to have its own workshops and classrooms, so that educationally deprived children from neighbouring villages can also benefit from the educational and vocational courses provided. One noteworthy achievement is in 1999 when Child Life-Line, partnered with UNESCO and compiled *Street Wise, Street*

Weary - a collection of interviews with 12 of Child Life-Line Centre's boys revealing the origins of the street children phenomena in Nigeria, as well as vividly portraying the experiences and lives of these unfortunate street children and the life to which they are exposed. Future plans, in collaboration with other NGOs, include exploring all means to set up drop-in centres in Lagos wherever the street children cluster.

Human Development Initiatives (HDI)

HDI collaborates with local artisans and master craftsmen who accept street children for vocational training in lieu of government institutions which provide the same service. The apprenticeships cover many skills, for example cobbling, carpentry/woodwork, fashion designing, hairdressing, car mechanics, etc. HDI finds it necessary to collaborate with several artisans as each artisan can only train a few children at any one time due to limited capacity. Incentives (no matter how small) have to be provided for the selected artisans, since normal conditions for child placements such as fees cannot be met. Incentives include giving some IEC materials and token fees, which are not as high as the usual fee. Some artisans agree to train children within the shortest possible time while others require that a child "graduates" only upon taking accredited external examinations. Children enter programmes with no set date for completion; some masters are prepared to allow them to complete training rapidly but others might delay the process. This was identified as a key disadvantage of non-structured vocational training.

HDI's bus-conductor programme

The "vocation" of bus conducting, found in several urban locations in Nigeria often employs street children (usually school drop-outs and socially labelled delinquents) also commonly referred to in local parlance as "area boys". Commercial road transport employers find it convenient and appealing to hire these children who are often willing to accept lower wages than adult employees. Hazardous work conditions such as excessive heat exposure in the summer, inhalation of vehicle exhaust, and constant exposure to communicable diseases, in addition to the stresses and dangers associated with traffic congestion and disorderly passengers make bus conduction particularly dangerous for these street children. HDI, in partnership with ILO/IPEC, thus undertook an action programme to withdraw child bus conductors from within a local government area in Lagos.

HDI's broad strategy was three-pronged:

1. To increase awareness and sensitise the public on the ills of the exploitative engagement of children as bus conductors through workshops for stakeholders, reports by the local media, and through the development and wide dissemination of appropriate IEC materials.
2. To integrate child bus conductors in to vocational trades training or in formal schooling, depending on each child's aptitude as assessed under the programme.
3. To provide training in Life Skills and Cottage Industry to 30 mothers whose children were part of the programme in order to help stabilize the families economically by introducing them to new skills and providing them micro-credit.

Additional HDI efforts include:

- **Medical Provision** ranging in treatment of ailments from the more common malaria and typhoid fevers, to minor surgeries and neuro-psychiatric disorders including drug dependence.
- **Savings Accounts** to instil in the children a savings culture, to motivate them to remain in the programme. HDI plans to hand the accounts to the children, to cover their educational or vocational needs.
- **Voluntary Participation in Youth & Teenage Camp (2002)** to positively impact their lives and behaviour.

SIERRA LEONE

Action for Children in Conflict (AfC): Street Kids Programme in Makeni

AfC operates a programme for street children in the Northern Province of Makeni in Sierra Leone. **The Interim Care Centre** (open since July 2003) has a capacity for 20 street children and includes classrooms, accommodation for the children and staff, cooking and washing facilities, and a play area.

The Programme: AfC trained field staff track children over time to assess and sensitise them before eventually taking them into the centre. Local social welfare and police support units are always aware of AfC's activities. Once in the centre, a programme (lasting up to 6 weeks) which works towards reunification with their family or foster care is administered. Upon arrival, children are given orientation and a welcome pack of clothes and toiletries. From then on, they undertake daily activities of literacy and numeracy classes, drama, sports, counselling and civic and health education. During this time the child is counselled and interviewed to develop a case history on the possible whereabouts of their family (if alive). Field staff then work with the FTR partner (Caritas) and undertake their own investigations to identify and mediate with the families.

In addition there are a number of 'Kids Clubs'. The idea of these is to build links with the community in order to start re-integration of the street children and help identify possible foster families, if necessary. Members of the Kids Club come from the local community and engage in regular activities with the street children in the centre. These include drama sketches with a message and sporting activities in partnership with Right to Play staff.

Staffing: There is an overall programme manager and a centre administrator. Two care givers are permanent residents in the centre, two cooks prepare three meals a day and there are two literacy facilitators. There is currently a team of six trained volunteer social workers who track children, investigate, identify and mediate with families for reunification. They then follow up and monitor those children who have left the centre.

Partners: AfC has partnered with other agencies to assist in the running of the centre. World Food Programme (WFP) has been a major contributor towards the centre's food costs. Right to Play, an arm of UNICEF, aims to promote sports in developing countries. With AfC, they have trained the centre's staff in a number of sports and also facilitated local

games and events that help bring the community together.

Achievements: Since July 2003 the centre has reunified 38 children with their families and 4 with foster families. Weekly monitoring of these cases shows that all reunifications and fostering cases have been successful and children are now settling into the normal family life they deserve. Additionally the profile and local awareness of the centre and issues relating to street children has improved significantly, this largely owing to the Kids Clubs, local radio, drama shows and community football games to help build these links.

GOAL Sierra Leone

GOAL has been involved in humanitarian and street children projects in Sierra Leone since the late 1980's. Some of GOAL's major projects include the "**Community Based Development Initiatives for Disadvantaged Children and Youths in Urban and Rural communities of Sierra Leone**" which aims to address the needs of disadvantaged children and youth in rural and urban areas of Sierra Leone, particularly street children of East and Central areas of Freetown who have been forced to take to life on the streets as a result of the political and socio-economic problems associated with the civil war. More specifically, these disadvantaged children and youth, ages 0-21 years, include children of sex workers, orphans, abandoned children, children engaged in commercial sex trade, children vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation, rape victims, children vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, youths addicted to drugs and unemployed youths from very low socio-economic group. The main problems faced by these street children include lack of food and shelter, low level of education, lack of access to basic services and facilities, lack of opportunities for employment, and exploitation by law enforcement bodies/agencies due to lack of adequate law, policies, systems.

Activities of the Disadvantaged Children and Youths' Programme (DCYP) include:

- Conducting participatory workshops and planning with target beneficiaries, their surrounding communities and other stakeholders
- Conducting needs assessment survey to assess the needs of the target beneficiaries with the ministries
- Providing basic centre based services (**GOAL has 7 shelters in East and Central areas of Freetown which will be handed over to the communities by mid 05**) and outreach for street children, child sex workers and their children, as well as to other disadvantaged children and youths
- Organising regular dialogues with line ministries and service providers
- Building institutional and staff capacity of GOAL Sierra Leone for better programme implementation
- Formation of groups in the communities
- Entering into partnerships with networks who work with disadvantaged children and youths
- Establishing partnerships with existing Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in East and Central Freetown (Western Area of Sierra Leone) and local/national organisations in Kenema (Eastern area of Sierra Leone) to address the needs of disadvantaged children in target areas
- Advocacy and lobbying for the rights of the target population (including street children) with different networks

SECTION V Follow-up action plans

The following are plans and programmes outlined by delegates to be pursued at individual country level, within a specific timeframe, to work towards achieving the objectives of the forum.

ACTION PLANS	IMPLEMENTING AGENCY	SUPPORTING AGENCY	TIME FRAME
THE GAMBIA			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening advocacy and lobbying and awareness raising at a national level through media campaigns, lobbying government, lobbying NAMS, inter-NGO consultation 	Delegates	CPA, Media; donor organisations; CSC	Jan 2004
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct quantitative research to establish the prevalence, extent and issues concerning street children in The Gambia. 	Delegates	Consultants, Donors and CSC	June 2004
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building the capacity of street workers through training and resource mobilisation, to provide better and more professional services for street children 	Delegates	CSC/SCA, Donors and CPA	2004
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the possibility of establishing a Child Helpline. 	Delegates	Child Helpline International (CHI), Government, Telecom Authority, Voice-CPA Media	March 2004
GHANA			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Networking and establishment of Database system; forming a national network of NGOs working with street children. 	CAS, Mercy Foundation, Neglect, Youth Alive, SAID	Government, NGOs, CSC, SCA, INGOs	February – December 2004
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To start up a child helpline – this includes feasibility studies, and meetings with the respective bodies - <i>National Commission for Children; Telecommunications industry (to explore the possibility of a toll-free number) and; CHI and possible donors to take this forward</i> 	CAS, SAID, Youth Alive	Government, PLAN, CHI	December 2003
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased advocacy for government to support street children projects and forum recommendations 	National Network	INGOs, SCA and CAS	September 2004
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess and train street workers 	National Network	INGOs, CAS, SCA and PLAN	June 2004
LIBERIA			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To organise refresher/training workshops for 50 staff from DBH, YMCA, Children Assistant Programme (CAP) and Centre of Justice and Peace Studies (CJPS) in Monrovia; to establish a local collaboration network amongst the 4 listed NGOs. 	DBH	UNICEF	Beginning November 2003
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To hold inter NGO meetings for briefing on CSC Ghana Forum and follow up by organising workshops, soliciting donor funding from UNESCO, compiling and circulating workshop report. 	DBH	UNESCO	Beginning November 2003
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To explore the possibility of setting up a child helpline in Monrovia to provide access to communication for street children to DBH 	DBH CHI	UNESCO, UNICEF, and	By November 2004

and to hold meetings with Governments, link CHI to DBH UK offices and government, organise training programme in Liberia in collaboration with CHI, identify sites for telephone facilities, mobilise funds)			
NIGERIA			
• Research/needs assessment for the establishment of a child helpline	Human Development Initiatives (HDI)	CHI, CSC, UNICEF	1st quarter 2004
• Training of street workers on Walk-the-Walk model	HDI and AHIP	CSC, SCA	1STquarter 2004
• Establishment/expansion of shelters and drop in centres for street children	Childlifeline	UNICEF and other agencies	By end 2004
• Establishment of mobile street academies to meet street children in their locations	Childlifeline	UNESCO, UNICEF and other agencies	By end 2004
• Awareness and advocacy programme on street children	HDI, Child Lifeline, AHIP	CSC, UNICEF and SCA	1st and 2nd quarters 2004
SIERRA LEONE			
• To carry out a <i>comprehensive national survey</i> to determine the population, composition and characteristics of street children.	Delegates	UNICEF, World Vision, Goal Ireland, Y-Care Int., CSC	April 2004
• <i>Training of staff</i> working with street children	Delegates	SCA, GOAL, World Vision	September 2004
• Explore the possibility of establishing a child helpline	Delegates	CHI, government, CSC, UNICEF, Telecom Authority	April 2004
• Expand and strengthen street children's taskforce to serve as a national coordinating and regulatory body	Delegates	UNICEF; NGOs working with street children; CSC	March 2004
• Increase sensitisation/awareness raising on the rights of street children	Delegates	CSC, UNICEF	On-going

Resolutions and Conclusions of Delegates to a Civil Society Forum for Anglophone West Africa on Promoting and Protecting the Rights of Street Children

Preamble:

The delegates of five West African Anglophone countries (Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone) present at the Civil Society Forum on Promoting and Protecting the Rights of Street Children held in Accra, Ghana from October 21-24, 2003, recognising that –

- Street children have the right to be in the streets and be protected.
- Nearly half of Africa lives in towns and cities.
- Half of Africa is under age of 16 years.
- The problems of Street Children are many and very complex.
- The Street Children problem is a social problem and not only an economic problem.
- The problem of people living in the streets has arisen as a result of the disintegration of our once enviable extended family system.
- In West Africa many Street Children are on the streets and cannot be re-integrated because of family breakdown; several are born in the streets.
- The majority live in absolute poverty due to declining economic fortunes and political instability.
- Urbanisation and rural urban migration continue at a rapid rate as a desperate survival strategy measure for the poor.
- Our children of today are our assets for the future.

and having undertaken comprehensive field studies of the situation of street children in Accra, Ghana as an epitome of our local situation and having observed some models of good practices and intervention mechanisms to assist street children and having deliberated and shared experiences on our local situations and peculiar needs, have identified the commonalities in our socio-economic, cultural and political situations especially as they impact on the promotion and protection of the rights of street children.

Theme: Education

ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION	MADE TO	WHEN TO ACT
We recognise that the 6-3-3-4 system, which is applicable across the sub-region is not properly implemented and this is a contributory factor to an increasing number of children taking to life on the streets.	We urge Governments to strengthen this policy, through the provision of quality teachers and equipment specifically targeting vulnerable children	Governments of the sub region ECOWAS (to lobby governments), UNESCO, UNICEF	Immediate

In particular, we acknowledge that the rights of street children could be better protected under the prevailing circumstances because our countries are signatories to the major international initiatives directed towards improving the rights of children namely –

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC);
- The Millennium Development Goals and other international initiatives such as the optional protocols to the CRC, which positively impact on the development of children.
- The Accra Declaration of April 2000 on children affected by war

Furthermore, we acknowledge that our countries have or are in the process of domesticating the CRC and the ACRWC while there are other local legislations and or policies, which are directed at promoting and protecting the rights of children generally and the rights of street children in particular.

Recognising however that international instruments and local laws are not fully implemented due to a myriad of reasons such as lack of political will and or weak implementation mechanisms and structures, this forum focussed on five critical themes affecting street children namely:

- Street children's access to education;
- Street children's access to health;
- Street children and appropriate skills development/income generation;
- Reintegration of street children; and
- Street children in conflict zones.

After exhaustive deliberations, the delegates resolve and recommend the following:

We note that street children do not have the formal infrastructure to give them access to education in their localities	Education for street children should be free, accessible, appropriate and of high quality. Remove all obstacles (such as invisible fees & cultural beliefs and practices) that deny street children access to education.	Relevant Government Ministries (MOEs, MOF, etc), UNESCO, UNICEF	Immediate
The absence of quality teachers and infrastructure is a push factor for rural/urban migration.	Governments should allocate adequate resources to schools in rural areas. Teachers should be paid incentives to entice them to accept postings to rural areas	Govt (MOEs)	Short-term

Conclusion: The delegates to the forum request that:

1. Relevant government ministries should accommodate street children in their educational programmes.
2. International bodies such as ECOWAS, UNESCO, UNICEF should lobby governments and provide materials and financial support.

Theme: Health

ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION	MADE TO	WHEN TO ACT
Living on the streets exposes street children to STDs/STIs, HIV/AIDS, malaria and skin diseases amongst other health problems.	Systems and structures be put in place to ensure that street children have access to free/affordable health services.	Governments (MOH), NGOs, INGOs, ECOWAS through its West African Health Organisation	Immediate
Poor implementation of existing health policies.	Lobby Governments and other stakeholders for street-children-friendly application of health policies.	WHO, INGOs, NGOs, Donors	Short-term
Drug and substance abuse	Psycho-social counselling and rehabilitation	Government (MOH), NGOs, INGOs, WHO, UNDCP	Immediate
Self medication: Street Children sleep and work in the streets. They are exposed to sicknesses. They can be sexually abused and are often malnourished.	NGOs should protect the children and assist them. Health personnel should be trained to deal with street children.	NGOs Governments (MOH), WHO, INGO.	Immediate

Conclusion: The delegates to the Forum request that:

1. NGOs working with and for street children should ensure health lessons for street children. These lessons should be very informative.
2. International bodies should lobby for requisite support to be extended to NGOs and Government agencies in running health programmes.
3. Relevant Government ministries should ensure health care for street children. The services should be accessible and free.

Theme: Appropriate Skills Development and Income Generation

ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION	WHO TO	WHEN TO ACT
Inadequate basic literacy, numeracy and simple business skills	Basic literacy & numeracy skills should be made an integral part of skills-training programmes	Govt (MOEs) NGOs	Short-term
Lack of information on marketable skills and economically viable income generating activities	A thorough market survey should be conducted to identify appropriate skills suitable for the economy	NGOs, Industry, Govt, Media	Short-term
Lack of micro capital for street children	Govt should introduce policies which encourage both private sector and NGOs to operate street child friendly micro-credit schemes on completion of their training	Govt, NGOs, INGOs, Private Sector	Immediate
Lack of adequate policies.	Workable and feasible policies should be put in place.	Government	Short-term

Conclusion: The delegates to the forum request that:

1. NGOs working with and for street children should look at appropriate skills for street children in more holistic way and should be innovative in the implementation. They should also ensure that trades are marketable.
2. Private bodies or industries should be encouraged to develop more interest in street children issues.
3. Relevant Government ministries should provide appropriate technology needed for successful implementation of skills training and encourage industry to work with and assist street children with jobs.

Theme: Reintegration of Street Children

ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION	WHO	WHEN TO ACT
Many organisations want to work with street children without going onto the streets. The street is the laboratory of learning: the first point of contact with street children should be on the street.	Adequate preparation of the street worker is crucial to building a relationship with street children. Regular and continuous presence of the organization's staff on the street helps build trust and confidence	Government (Department of Social Welfare) NGOs	Short-term
Weakness amongst organisations and government departments working with street children in complementing and supporting each other in reintegration of street children	There should be collaboration and partnering amongst all service providers working with street children	Government (Department of Social Welfare) NGOs, INGOs	Short-term
Misconception by the general public that all street children can be easily re-integrated in their family.	Education on these issues should be in print and electronic media. Re-integration into families should be encouraged where necessary but should not be over-stretched.	Government, NGOs, INGOs	Long-term

Conclusion: The delegates to the forum request that:

1. NGOs working with and for street children should ensure that programmes are well planned for sustainable future.
2. International bodies should lobby for support in helping NGOs to achieve results.

Theme: Street Children in Conflict Zones

ISSUES	RECOMMENDATIONS	WHEN TO ACT	WHEN TO ACT
Street children are particularly vulnerable to conscription, forced and voluntary	Pressure must be brought to bear against all warring factions that recruit street children. Furthermore the rewards of child soldiering should be deglamourised so as not to deceive or entice children	UN special rapporteur on Children Affected by Armed Conflict (CAC) ECOWAS, UN Agencies, NGOs, INGOs, Govt departments, Warring Factions, International Media	Short-term
Children are abandoned, separated and orphaned, a push factor for children being on the streets	Establishment of support structures for children separated from family friends and community by war	NGO, INGOs, ECOWAS, UNHCR, UNICEF, Red Cross etc	Short-term
Child soldiering disposes street children to increased aggressiveness, criminality and recruitment as mercenaries	More rehabilitation programmes psycho social counselling, anger-management, and a data base to track ex child soldiers who are on the street	Govt, Specialised Agencies, INGOs NGOs and UN Agencies	Short-term
Spontaneous disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation and reintegration (DDRR) process is not street child friendly where promised packages are not delivered	Improved communication management on DDRR packages, and existing programmes should be modified to become more street child friendly.	Govt, UN Agencies, NGOs and INGOs	Immediate

Conclusion: The delegates to the forum request that:

1. International bodies should lobby against child conscription and be more supportive to the victims.
2. Relevant Government ministries should be seen to play the leading role in programmes designed to rehabilitate children in conflict zones.

In addition to these specific recommendations, the Forum also recognises that there are other cross-cutting issues in the region such as: stigmatisation and rejection, HIV AIDS, trafficking of street children across the sub-region and beyond, psycho-social and physical impairment of street children due to their perpetual exposure to hostile environments.

Besides these recommendations, the forum also recognises that:

- Each street child is an individual with rights. The best place for the child to grow up is within the family environment or his or her own community therefore intervention programmes should be addressed towards reintegration or reunification if it is in the best interest of the street child and very appropriate.
- Far too often street children are treated with suspicion and hatred. This misconception should be discouraged.
- Street children must be empowered and given every opportunity to participate in their own development.

Organisations working with street children in the sub-region are urged to employ committed professionals with appropriate remuneration; Organisations should be honest and transparent in their work;

They should not use street children as a channel for obtaining donor funding for personal gain;

Government and NGOs are encouraged to work collaboratively to enforce monitoring and accountability mechanisms in the work of NGOs.

The delegates affirm and accept that promoting and protecting the rights of street children is not a task that can be performed by any single national organisation but by close collaboration of all stakeholders namely: families, communities, street children, government, NGOs, INGOs and UN agencies.

Closing Statements

From country delegates:

Gambia: Coming from a country that has not yet experienced the scale of street children seen elsewhere, participants acknowledged that the forum had taught them valuable lessons regarding prevention activities that need to be implemented with the combined cooperation of Government and other local and international agencies. The field study in particular had given them insight into how to apply preventive strategies to help forestall an explosion of street children in their country.

Sierra Leone: Participants noted that no single agency is a reservoir of knowledge, and they found that sharing their experiences with those of other agencies in the region at the forum had taught them a great deal. The field trip had been especially important in revealing the appalling conditions to which street children are exposed. Participants would return home prepared and rejuvenated to deal with street children's issues.

Liberia: The country delegate said the CAS approach had reinforced his commitment to his own work. Street children everywhere undergo similar experiences, and facilitating regional NGOs to share information and experiences during the forum ensured that street children's issues are treated with more concern. Particular interest was expressed in the programmes for child helplines, which would be extremely useful in dealing with the disarmament, demobilisation and rehabilitation of street children.

Nigeria: Participants concluded that there are similarities in problems faced by street children, and that the forum had provided some good practices on how to deal with these. New ideas to assist children would be exported and translated in action, along with new skills for field and social workers to allow for the expansion of services to deliver skills to street children in their vicinities, public awareness programmes and the strengthening of family relations.

From Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS)

In his closing comments, ECOWAS Special Adviser on Child Protection, Ibrahima Diouf, indicated that whereas ECOWAS's initial focus was on child soldiers in West African countries, the opportunity to take part in the Forum had convinced him of the need to expand the ECOWAS agenda regarding street children. Mr Diouf said he had learnt a lot from the field trip and in listening to and observing the group discussions. He described the Forum Recommendations as "very concrete and implementable",

and pledged ECOWAS's support for NGOs committed to working with street-children. He called on the NGOs to take up the challenges in their proposed Action Plans, and said that ECOWAS in turn would follow up and disseminate the final report of the Forum to Governments of the sub region. Mr Diouf also asked the CSC to help set up a network for different street children's NGOs to enable them to continue coordinating their work effectively. Finally, Mr Diouf pledged his organisation's ongoing commitment to work with CSC, SCA, CHI and other NGOs on street children's issues in the region.

SECTION VI Lessons Learnt

CSC is committed to learning from the experience of organising this series of forums. This process of reflection is imperative for our learning as an organisation and, taking into account that needs and experiences vary from region to region and from country to country, will necessarily contribute towards our future planning of further forums. The following comments are based on evaluation forms feedback received from the forum delegates⁴.

Delivering on the forum's objectives

- *Networking and sharing of experiences*
- *Identifying good practices of work with street children in the region*
- *Formulate regional policy recommendations*
- *Formulate country level follow-up action plans*

Evaluation feedback: All the above key objectives of the forum were perceived as 'completely' or 'mostly met' by the participants. Several commented on the fact that the forum provided a unique and valuable opportunity for networking, sharing of experiences and liaising with other NGOs in the region working with street children. The participants also gave positive feedback on the forum's discussion of good practices with street children and noted in particular their appreciation of the presentations made by Undugu Society of Kenya and Child Helpline International. Several mentioned that the time spent on discussing good practices in the region, in other parts of Africa and internationally, was very valuable, providing an insight into organisations who work directly with street children. The majority of the participants also noted that it was useful to have time set aside at the forum to formulate country-level action plans for follow-up to the regional forum.

Field Trip

Evaluation feedback: The majority of participants expressed that their expectations from the field trip were 'completely met'. They perceived that the time spent on the streets and slums of Accra was well organised and managed by CAS, the field partner, and provided them with an opportunity to directly meet and speak with children who live and work on the streets (particularly young street mothers). Several participants noted that *incorporating a field visit in the forum's agenda was important and necessary as 'working with street children starts with the street'*. A number also commented on the dedication and commitment of the street workers they met during the field study and the usefulness of spending time with them on the streets. However, some participants noted that more time should have been allocated for the field trip.

Plenary, thematic and working sessions

Evaluation feedback: Overall, the participants noted that the plenary sessions and working groups were 'well' managed, interesting, participatory and democratic. Several participants expressed their particular interest and usefulness of the working group session on the 'reintegration of street children', noting the relevance and importance of this as a policy issue in their own countries.

Venue, accommodation and logistics

While peripheral to the main event, logistics (overnight accommodation and daytime conference venue) were perceived as good and contributed towards the participants' positive experiences of the forum. Almost all participants noted that both the logistics and venue were 'excellent'. Some of the participants from Accra, in the host country Ghana, experienced lengthy commute times to attend the forum everyday and recommended that an allowance should be made for them to stay at the hotel. A couple of participants also commented on not liking the fact that they had to share rooms.

General comments from participants:

Some participants felt that the forum was too short and not enough time was given for the working groups in particular. Several also commented on not having received the country reports prior to the forum. Furthermore, some participants suggested that the opening session be made shorter in future forums, so as to make more time for the group discussions. Feedback from the evaluation forms affirmed overall that the forum went a step further than being just a 'talk shop'. The most frequently cited comments made by the participants were in reference to the positive lessons learnt from the field study in Accra and the examples of good practices of work with street children, which provided practical and real solutions to working with street children.

⁴ Please see next section for sample evaluation form, please note that 21 evaluation forms were returned.

Sample Evaluation Form

Please note that participants were able to use additional paper when their detailed comments required it.

1. Please indicate, with a tick, to what extent the objectives of the Forum have been met.

OBJECTIVE	COMPLETELY MET	MOSTLY MET	PARTLY MET	NOT MET AT ALL
To facilitate the networking and sharing of experiences amongst key stakeholders working with street children in the region				
To identify good practices of work with street children in the region				
To formulate regional policy recommendations to further promote the rights of street children				
To formulate country level follow-up action plans				

2. Please give three objectives/ expectations you came with and indicate to what extent they have been met.

OBJECTIVE	COMPLETELY MET	MOSTLY MET	PARTLY MET	NOT MET AT ALL

Comments:

.....

.....

2. FIELD STUDY

VISIT	COMMENTS/ SUGGESTIONS
Railways, CMB, Abuja, Agboglobhie, Konkomba	
Circle- KTS, Circle Station, Tiptoe, Storybuilding, Neoplan station areas	
Kaneshie and Tema Station, Places like the Frytol, Coldstore, Nzema House, First Light, Labour operation area	

2a. In general, how well did you feel that these field visits were managed?

- Very Well Well Adequately Poorly

Other Comments/ Suggestions:

3. How well did you feel that the plenary (full group) sessions were managed?

3a. Feedback from field study (Wednesday 22 Oct)

Very Well Well Adequately Poorly

Comments/ Suggestions for:.....

3b. Perspectives of good practices of work with street children from the West Africa region (Wednesday 22 Oct)

Very Well Well Adequately Poorly

Comments/ Suggestions for:.....

3c. International good practices (Undugu Society, Kenya and Childhelpline International)

Very Well Well Adequately Poorly

Comments/ Suggestions for:.....

4a. Which _____ session did you participate in? (Please tick the appropriate box)

- Street Children's Access to Education
- Street Children's Access to Health
- Street Children and Appropriate Skills Development/ Income Generation

4b. In the session which you participated, how well did you feel the small group/ thematic sessions were managed?

Very Well Well Adequately Poorly

4c. Did you feel that you had sufficient opportunities to participate during discussions?

Very Well Well Adequately Poorly

Comments/ Suggestions for:.....

5a. Which _____ session did you participate in? (Please tick the appropriate box)

- Reintegration issues concerning street children
- Street Children in Conflict Zones

5b. In the session which you participated, how well did you feel the small group/ thematic sessions were managed?

Very Well Well Adequately Poorly

5c. Did you feel that you had sufficient opportunities to participate during discussions?

Very Well Well Adequately Poorly

Comments/ Suggestions for:.....

6. Which sessions *in general* were most effective for you? Please say why.

7. Which sessions *in general* were least effective for you? Please say why.

8. Was anything omitted that you think should have been included in this form? Please explain what and why.

9. How would you rate the overnight accommodation?

Very Well Well Adequately Poorly

Comments/ Suggestions for:.....

10. How would you rate the daytime venue?

Very Well Well Adequately Poorly

Comments/ Suggestions for:.....

11. How would you rate the logistic arrangements?

Very Well Well Adequately Poorly

Comments/ Suggestions for:.....

12. This Forum is part of a series, what recommendations would you make to the Consortium in support of future planning?

.....

13. State three ideas that you will be taking back from this Forum to improve the quality of your organisation's work.

1.
2.
3.

Compiled data from evaluation forms

	Completely	Mostly	Partly	Not	Total	Mean	Mode
Networking & exchange	3	2	1	0	19	2.2	Mostly
Good practice	5	13	1	1	19	2.2	Mostly
Policy	6	9	3		18	2.2	Mostly
Follow-up	6	6	5		17	2.1	Comp/Most
Field Study - 2a	9	7	3		19	2.3	Comp
Plenary	V. Well	Well	Adequate	Poorly			
Field Study - 3a	10	7	2		19	2.4	V Well
Regional good practice - 3b	8	11			19	2.4	Well
Int good practice - 3c	14	5			19	2.7	V Well
Education b	4	2	1		7	2.4	V Well
Education c	6		1		7	2.7	V much
Health b		2	1		3	1.7	Well
Health c	1		2		3	1.7	Somewhat
Skills & Income b	9				9	3.0	V Well
Skills & Income c	6		3		9	2.3	V much
Reintegration b	9	2			11	2.8	V well
Reintegration c	8		3		11	2.5	V much
Conflict zone b	1	7			8	2.1	Well
Conflict zone c	4		4		8	2.0	Vmuch/somewhat
Overnight accomodation	12	1			13	2.9	V Well
Daytime venue	14	5			19	2.7	V Well
Logistic arrangements	8	7	1	3	19	2.1	V Well
Specific objectives							
Networking	4	6	2	1	13	2.0	Mostly
Share experience	1	10		1	12	1.9	Mostly
Best practice	5	5	1		11	2.4	Comp/Mostly
Practical solutions in the field	3	3			6	2.5	Comp/Mostly
Learn new things about subject	3	2			5	2.6	Mostly
Regional recommendations, common or emerging issues, action planning	1	2			3	2.3	Completely
Action plan		2			2	2.0	Mostly
Advocacy	1				1	3.0	Completely
Street mothers/families	1				1	3.0	Completely
Poverty	1				1	3.0	Completely
Field experience	1				1	3.0	Mostly
Reintegration	1				1	3.0	Mostly
Gov & int agency interface		1			1	2.0	Mostly
CSC		1			1	2.0	Mostly

APPENDIX - List of Participants: Contact Details

THE GAMBIA

1. **Lamin Camara** Senior Programme Officer - **Child Protection Alliance (CPA)**, TANGO Building Fajara M Section, Bakau, P.O. Box 2914, Serrekunda, The Gambia. Tel/Fax: 220 378694. Email: cpagambia@yahoo.com, www.cpagambia.gm
Lamin Camara started work with the CPA in Jan 2003 and prior to this he was a National Coordinator of a youth NGO - Lend a Hand Society. Lamin is an Alumna of the Commonwealth Youth Forum 2001 and a partner of the International Youth Parliament of the Community Aid Abroad. He will be in charge of a new CPA project which will set up a centre for street children in Gambia under the age of 17.
2. **John C Njie** Village Director - **SOS Children's Village Bakoteh**, P.M.B. 17 Banjul, The Gambia, Hermann Gmeiner Drive, The Gambia. Tel: 220 461914, Fax: 220 464361, Email: john.njie@sosgambia.org, www.sosgambia.org
The SOS Children's Village works with orphaned, destitute and abandoned children in the Gambia and the organisation works in the areas of health care and education provision.
3. **Falu Sowe** Social Welfare Officer - **Department of Social Welfare**, Fax: 220 223559, Email: fsowe9@hotmail.com
Mr Falu Sowe has over six years experience with the Department of Social Welfare in the Gambia, working in the area of children in difficult circumstances. He has worked on juvenile justice and child protection issues.
4. **Joseph Taiwo Peacock** - **YMCA Gambia**, Kanifing South Opp. M.D.I., P.O. Box 421 Banjul, The Gambia. Tel: 220 392647, (220) 390625 / Tel: 220 292647, Fax: 220 390793
Email: taipeagam@yahoo.com / taiwopeacock@hotmail.com
Mr Peacock is a youth and child advocate and is the Project Coordinator of the Youth Enterprise and Income Generation project. He has taken a lead role in the YMCA Gambia's work for 'Almudoos' (street children) over the last four years. He has extensive experience of working with street children both as a youth worker and in advocacy work at national and global levels. He sits on several committees on child rights, youth and street children

GHANA

1. **George Appiagyei Oppong**, Deputy Executive Director, **Youth Development Foundation**, PO Box 4941, Kumasi, Ghana, Tel: 233 51 29187/ 233 24 741755, Email: rapoo2002@yahoo.com
George has seven years NGO experience with children and youth. He has also facilitated various forums at home and abroad including one on policy framework on street children in 1997.
2. **George Baffour Owusu Afriyie**, Executive Director, **Neglect Foundation**, PO Box KJ 700, Kumasi, Ghana, Tel: 233 20 811 4697, Email: neglectfund@yahoo.com
In 1998, George Owusu Afriyie, a street children's advocate, founded the Kumasi Youth Porters Association, now The Neglect Foundation of which he is Executive Director. Neglect seeks to mobilise street children who engage in various petty trades to improve their general wellbeing through education, health care, reintegration, vocational training, skills development and advocacy.
3. **Fr Michael Karikunnel**, Director **Don Bosco Centre**, P O Box 293, Ashaiman, Tema Tel: 233 22 304430/301807, Fax: 233 20 304421, Email: sdbtema@ghana.com
Reverend Fr Michael Karikunnel arrived in Ghana in October 1992 to start the Salesian project in Sunyani. From 1994 – 97 he was the Principal of the Don Bosco Centre. Fr Michael took over in February 1997 as Director of the Don Bosco Vocational Training Centre in Ashaiman. The Centre trains poor young people in Ashaiman, Tema and surrounding areas in income generating skills and also provides a refuge for street children.
4. **Rev. Oliver Osei-Gerning**, Director, **Mercy Foundation International**, P O Box MC2677, Takoradi – Ghana, Tel: 233 21 27326 / 20 811 1389, Email: mercyfoundation@hotmail.com

- Oliver is Executive Director of Mercy Foundation Int. (MFI), an NGO for street children incorporated in the Sekondi/Takoradi Metropolis in 1996. Besides overall administrative responsibilities he is also actively involved in the activities of the Field Officers. Oliver supervises the activities of the staff and monitors progress of both the street children and the Master Craftsmen. Currently, the Foundation is participating in the Community Based Poverty Reduction Project (CPRP) street children component in Sekondi/Takoradi where it provides vocational and skills training and education to over one hundred street children.*
5. **Agnes Talata Chiravira**, Programme Manager, **Youth Alive**, P O Box TL1708, Tamale - Ghana Tel: 233 71 25253 / 22282 or 233 24 295842, Fax: 233 21 22282, Email: achiravira@yahoo.com
Agnes is a professional Social Worker, trained at the University of Ghana, Legon. She has been in development work for the past 19 years. Agnes took up employment with the then Tamale Street Children's Project (TSCP), an initiative of Action Aid Ghana in December 1995 as the first Project Coordinator. In January 2003 the project registered as an autonomous local NGO under the name Youth Alive. The Project covers the whole of Northern Ghana.
 6. **Mrs Vida Asomaning-Amoako**, Director, **Street Girls Aid**, P O Box CT 5508, Cantonments, Tel: 233 21 233132 / 226089 / 233 24 611703, Fax: 233 21 226089, Email: streetgirls@ighmail.com
Vida Asomaning-Amoako has worked with Street Girls Aid for the past 8 years. Her interest is in working with disadvantaged girls especially those who live and work on the streets. She has been involved in research work on street children.
 7. **Samuel Boamah**, Literacy Coordinator, **Street Girls Aid, (As above)**
Samuel Boamah supervises and coordinates the literacy activities of S.Aid. With seven years experience as a social worker, he is one of the initiators of "Street corner literacy" programme.
 8. **Fred Agbenorto**, Babycare Coordinator, **Street Girls Aid, (As above)**
Frederick Agbenorto is a social worker with Street Girl's Aid and has been working for the past five years. His duties include supervision of the four crèches on the streets of Accra.
 9. **Paul Aveyor**, Refuge Coordinator, **Catholic Action for Street Children**, P O Box 709, Madina, Tel: 233 21 313266, Fax: 233 21 507001, Email: ficcas@ighmail.com
Paul, a professionally trained social worker, has been with CAS since 1997. His schedule cuts across all departments. Paul also has supervisory responsibility for students from various universities worldwide as well as volunteers on placement at CAS. Paul has taken part in research work aimed at finding out why children take to the street.
 10. **Charles Baffoe**, Programme Coordinator, **Catholic Action for Street Children, (As Above)**, Email: charles@gpo.africaonline.com.gh
A trained Social Worker, Charles has been with CAS since 1996. Charles was a member of the Technical Committee on Poverty of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy, street children component, from 1997 – 1999 and currently a member of the board of the Street Children project of the Ghana Red Cross Society.
 11. **Vera Kuupiel**, P/R and Outreach Officer, **Women's Development Agency (WDA)**, 213A Soula Loop, P.O. Box 2858, Labone, Accra, Ghana, Tel: 233 21 762538, Fax: 233 21 762539
WDA seeks to address the poverty level among women and children by supporting women's livelihood systems, raise awareness against policies and practices that discriminate against women and children. Vera has been working with W. D. A since March 2002 specifically with street girls popularly called Kayayei (Head porters), sensitising kayayei on healthy working practices and living conditions, where forums, educational talks and seminars on hygiene, HIV/AIDS, civic rights are organised for them.
 12. **Susanna A. Mahama**, Assistant Programme Officer, **LifeLine Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services**, P.O. Box CT482, Cantonments, Accra, Tel: 233 20 671195/ 8183006, Email: laadisue@hotmail.com
Susanna works on a street girls project known as Life Line, where the girls are provided shelter at the refuge centre and are re-integrated with their communities after a year.

13. **Danikuu Alexis Dery, LifeLine Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services. (As above)**

LIBERIA

1. **Allen Lincoln**, Executive Director, **Don Bosco Homes**, P.O. Box 2751, 8th Street, Monrovia, Liberia, Tel: 6531 830, Email: afal60@yahoo.com
An ex-teacher, Allen Lincoln is a founding member of DBH Liberia who works with DBH to help street children in Monrovia, providing night shelters, psychosocial counselling and medical services, family reunification efforts, legal advocacy, and opportunities for both formal and non-formal education.

NIGERIA

1. **Professor Bolaji Owasanoye**, Executive Director, **Human Development Initiatives**, 4B, Little Road, Sabo Yaba, Lagos, P.O. Box 1642, Sabo, Lagos, Nigeria, Tel/Fax: 234-1-3425172; 234-1-4706643, Email: bowa@infoweb.abs.net / hdi@infoweb.abs.net
Prof. Bolaji is a professor of law and is currently Director of Research at the Nigerian Institute of Advanced legal Studies and the Executive Director of the Human Development Initiative in Lagos. He coordinated the first comprehensive research on the rights of the Nigerian child between 1992-96 after Nigeria signed the UN CRC and has undertaken projects on child rights with UNICEF, ILO-IPEC, Ford Foundation etc. He has been working on a project on child bus conductors, linking such street working children with formal schools and vocational training.
2. **Bahijjatu Bello Garko, Adolescent Health Information Project (AHIP)**, AHIP Centre, 270/271 Maiduguri Road, P.O. Box 12846, Kano-Nigeria, Daurawa/Tarauni, Kano, Nigeria, Tel/Fax: 234-64-667286; 234-64-663193, Email: ahipng@yahoo.com, <http://www.iwhc.org>
Ms Bahijjatu has been actively involved with the National Youth Service with AHIP in Kano State, Nigeria, as a team leader developing curriculum for youths on sexual reproductive health and life planning skills. She has participated extensively in global conferences and training workshops such as International Youth Development Exchange.
3. **Mr Samual Onyibe**, Project Officer, **Child Life-Line**, 25, Majaro Street Children Onike, Yaba, Lagos, Nigeria, Tel: 243-1-862207
Mr Onyibe was initially educated in India and worked on poverty alleviation programmes. He is currently running the Child Life-Line's rehabilitation centre for street boys in Lagos. He is actively involved in the mentoring and counselling of street children that Child Lifeline cares for and is resident at the centre
4. **Sister Perpetua Essien, Daughters of Charity**, St. Louises Provincial House, P.O.Box 123, Nchia Eleme. Rivers State, Nigeria, Tel: 234 848 30001, Email: pessen2001@yahoo.com
Sister Perpetua is a qualified physiotherapist and in charge of a centre for people with disabilities in Lagos. She will be part of a team that will start a project for street children in Kumasi, Ghana, which has been co-funded by Miserior. The centre will be run with the help of the Archdiocese of Kumasi.

SIERRA LEONE

1. **Mr Peter Koroma**, Coordinator, Street Children's Project Makeni, **Action for Children in Conflict**, 11 Conteh Street Children Makeni, Sierra Leone, Tel: 232 76 625583, Email: mattjbanks@yahoo.com
Peter Koroma has worked in development for most of his career and has extensive experience in working with child soldiers and street children in Sierra Leone. He works for an international NGO, Action for Children in Conflict and manages their centre for street children, which takes care of some 20 children who have no links with their families. During the war in Sierra Leone he was one of the few people who stayed in Makeni when it was attacked by rebels in 197 and worked for a group of some 500 former child soldiers, helping them reintegrate into society. Peter has qualifications in psycho-social counselling, social work and child psychology.
2. **Abass Kamara, Goal Sierra Leone**, 19 Mendes Street Children Freetown, Sierra Leone, Tel: 22 222745/228707, Fax: 22 220496, Email: goalchildrensprog@sierratel.sl

Abass has worked for Goal since 2001 and has a background in social work. His work has involved promoting the CRC, child protection and projects for vulnerable girls.

3. **Foday Sawi Lahai**, Manager, Child Protection Programme, **World Vision Sierra Leone**, 39 Freetown Road, Lumley, Freetown, Sierra Leone, Tel: 232 22 234 205, Fax: 232 22 230 156, Email: foday_sawi@wvi.org
Foday has been involved in World Vision SL's programme on reintegration of street children back to families and communities. He has also been involved in a project on children working in the mines who have no contact with families and live on the streets. World Vision is planning to start a nationwide programme for street children, which may be funded by USAID in the near future.
4. **Claudius O. H. Taylor**, Regional Secretary, **YMCA Western Region Sierra Leone**, 32 Fort Street Children, P.O. Box 243, Freetown, Sierra Leone
Claudius has been conducting research on the needs of street children in the Western part of Freetown and has been involved in the implementation of an education project for children in conflict.

INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES

1. **Jeroo Billimoria**, Executive Director, **Child Helpline International**, Stichting Child Helpline International, Prinsengracht 468-3, 1017 KG Amsterdam, The Netherlands, Tel: 31 651 9792 52, Fax: 31 847 1655 32, Email: jeroo@childhelplineinternational.org, www.childhelplineinternational.org
2. **Aloys Opiyo, Undugu Society of Kenya**, P.O. box 40417, Nairobi, Kenya, Tel: 254 2 55 22 54, Fax: 254 2 545888 / 00 254 2803333, Email: undugu@insightkenya.com, <http://home.pi.net/~heinies/html/index.htm>
3. **Clare Collins**, Grants Support Officer, **Plan Ghana**, P.M.B. Osu Main Post Office, Accra, Ghana, Tel: 233 21 778 039, Fax: 233 21 776 102, Email: clare.collins@plan-international.org
4. **Dr. Derek Aryee**, Programme Support Manager, **Plan Ghana, (As above)**, Email: derek.aryee@plan-international.org
5. **Ibrahima Diouf**, Special Adviser, Child Protection, **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)**, 60 Yakubu Gowon Crescent, Asokoro District, PMB 401 –Abuja, Nigeria, Tel: 234 9 314 7647 Fax: 234 9 314 7646, Email: vieuxgane@yahoo.com
6. **Stella Nkrumah-Ababio**, Child Rights Manager, **World Vision Ghana**, P.M.B. Accra-North Post Office, Tel: 233 21 226643/227216/ 20 8161568, Email: stella_nkrumah-ababio@wvi.org
7. **Lawrence Amesu**, Country Programme Officer, **Canadian University Services Overseas (CUSO)**, Africa Regional Office, PO Box 9070, Airport – Accra, Tel: 233 21 776087/ 233 27 7412584, Fax: 233 21 772948, Email: Lawrence.amesu@cuso.org.gh, Web: www.cuso.org
8. **Susana Guardado**, Country Programme Officer, **Canadian University Services Overseas (CUSO) (As above)**, Email: stguard@hotmail.com
9. **Farida Shaikh**, Second Secretary, Environment and Human Rights, **Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)**, British High Commission, Osu Link, off Gamel Abdul Nasser Avenue, PO Box 296, Accra - Ghana Tel: 233 21 7010650/221665, Fax: 233 21 7010655, Email: farida.shaikh@fco.gov.uk
10. **Cornelius Dzakpasu**, Director, **International Labour Organisation**, ILO Area Office, 188 Awolowo Road, Ikoyi, P.O. Box 2331, Lagos, Nigeria
11. **Major Wendy Leavy**, Medical & Social Secretary, **Salvation Army**, Territorial Headquarters, P O Box CT452, Accra, Tel: 233 21 230918 / 246764/ 233 24 229764, Email: majwendy@hotmail.com
12. **Captain Richmond Obeng-Appau**, Administrator, **Salvation Army Urban Aid Clinic & Anidaso Fie (As above)**
13. **Charlotte Caesar**, **Salvation Army Outreach Clinic, (As above)**

14. **Captain Elizabeth Garland**, Health Administrator, **Salvation Army Outreach Clinic**, (As above)
15. **Lisa Quarshie**, **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**, 25 Sir Arku Korsah Street, Roman Ridge Area, UNHCR, PMB, KIA, Accra, Ghana, Tel: 233 21 772638/ 772635, Fax: 233 21 773158
16. **Needa Jehu-Hoyah**, Public Information Officer, **UNHCR**, (As above), Email: jehuhu@unhcr.ch
17. **Gianna Da Re**, Country Representative, **Ricerca e Cooperazione**, No. 16 Church Crescent, Labone, Accra, P.O. Box LG348, Legon Accra, Tel: 233 21 782090 / 738969, Fax: 233 21 761369, Email: reghana@ghana.com
18. **Filippo Lange**, **Ricerca e Cooperazione**, (As above), Email: filippo.lange@libero.it
19. **Ecoma Alaga**, WAPI Coordinator, **West Africa Network for Peace-Building (WANEP)** P.O. Box CT 4434, Accra, Tel: 233 21 221318 / 221388, Fax: 233 21 221735, Email: ecoma2876@yahoo.com/ wanep@wanep.org
20. **Nathaniel Ofori**, Finance and Grants Manager, **Charities Aid Foundation**, P.O. Box OS2956, Accra, Ghana
21. **J Harold Atisu**, Ag Secretary-General, **Red Cross Society**, P O Box 835 KIA, Accra, Ghana
22. **Mr Emmanuel Annan**, National Director, **AFS Intercultural Exchange Programme**, PMB, GPO, Accra, Ghana

GOVERNMENTAL DEPARTMENTS, TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY AND EMBASSIES

1. **Hon Yaw Barima**, **Minister of Manpower Development and Employment**, Accra
2. **Hon. Kofi Adusei**, **Deputy Minister, Ministry of Women & Children's Affairs & M.P. /Bekwai**, P.O. Box MBO 186/ Ex (104), Tel: 233 21 688184/ Ex (104), Email: kopaadusei@yahoo.com
3. **Mrs Sophia Torpey**, Deputy Supt. of Police, Women and Juvenile Unit, **Ghana Police Service**, P.O. Box 681, Accra, Tel: 233 27 7402931/ 233 21 687755
4. **Member of Parliament: Hon Comfort Owusu**, MP - Mfantseman-East, C/o Public Affairs Department, Office of Parliament, Parliament House, Accra
5. **Traditional Authority: Nii Adote Obuor**, Sempe Mantse, **National House of Chiefs**, Accra, Tel: 233 21 669 693/ (021) 676343
6. **Mathilde Van der Wic**, **Royal Netherlands Embassy**, P.O. Box CT 1647, Accra Ghana, Tel: 233 21 25 31 75/ 76/ 77, Fax: 233 21 24 49 43, Email: ACC@minbuza.nl
7. **Jer Van der Gaag**, **Royal Netherlands Embassy**, (As above)
8. **Mrs Maureen Wurala Labiran**, Senior Counsellor, **Nigeria High Commission**, 5 Josef Broz Tito Avenue, Cantonments, P.O. Box 1548, Accra, Ghana, Tel: 233 21 776158/9, Fax: 233 21 774395
9. **Ms Patience Salu**, Ag Research Coordinator (Greater Accra), **Ghana National Commission on Children (GNCC)**, P.O. Box M273, Accra, Tel: 233 21 223425
10. **Martin Peterson**, Assistant Administrative Officer, **GNCC**, (As above), Email: pieterson@talk21.com
11. **Dr Danaa**, Chieftaincy Secretariat, Accra
12. **Mr Ewa**, Chieftaincy Secretariat, Accra

PARTICIPATING OBSERVERS AND OTHERS

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2. **Daniel Darfoor**, Accountant, **Morrison and Associates (CAS Auditors)**, Chartered Accountants P.O. Box C2890, Cantonments, Email: Morrison@africaonline.com
3. **James Akwatia – Foli**, Senior Sales Officer, **Fan Milk Limited**, P.O. Box 646, Accra-North Tel: 233 21 224152/024 651054
4. **Gretchen Karlebach**, Volunteer, **Ghana NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child**, c/o Save the Children, P.O. Box CT 976, Accra
5. **Ms Josephine Agbo**, Executive Director, **Centre for Community Studies, Action and Development (CENCOSAD)**, P.O. Box JT22, Jamestown – Accra, Email: jossyagbo@yahoo.com
6. **Fr Anthony Asare/CAS Board**, Financial Office Diocese, **Catholic Archdiocese of Accra**
7. **Dr Susu Kwawukume/CAS Board**, Trust Hospital, Accra
8. **Prof J K Anarfi** (Chair – Thematic session on Health), Director, Institute of Social, Statistical and Economic Research, **University of Ghana, Legon**
9. **John Eluerkeh** (Chair – Session on Skills Development and Income Generation), **GRATIS Foundation**, P.O. Box CO151, Tema – Ghana, Tel: 233 22 204243/ 207610, Fax: 233 22 204374, Email: egvaelu@gratisghana.com, www.gratisghana.com

CONFERENCE FACILITATORS

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3. **Father Patrick Shanahan**, Executive Director, **Street Child Africa**, The Priory, 58 High Street Thames Ditton, Surrey KT7 0TT, UK, Tel: 44 208 972 9820, Fax: 44 208 972 9821, Email: info@streetchildafrica.org.uk, www.streetchildafrica.org.uk
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5. **Brother Jos van Dinther**, Director, **Catholic Action for Street Children**, P.O. Box 709, Madina Tel: 233 21 313266, Fax: 233 21 507001, Email: ficcas@ighmail.com
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Street Children at The CAS House of Refuge in Lartebiokorshie, Accra, Ghana

An Ode to Street Children in Africa

*Look and see so many children
left on the streets by parents
who lack the means to care for them
Look and see so many children
abused and exploited
Just look and see so many many children
denied the right to school
denied the right to play
denied the right to parental
care and affection.*

*Has the world any help to offer
Then let's rise up to the challenge
These children are the future
We owe it to ourselves
to give them a place in our hearts
a place in our hearts
We owe it to ourselves
to give them a place in our hearts*

*Today and always children,
children will come first
In whatever we do
and in whatever we will do
For they are all we have
and all we will ever have*

By Jesse Joe, CHILD TO CHILD (GH)

Child To Child is a local Ghanaian NGO that has been part of the Danida NGO network for Street Children in Ghana. Their work focuses on children who are at great risk of taking to street life (especially girls and children with HIV/AIDS). As Director, Jesse is himself a song writer and musician and much of their work with vulnerable children is based around creative arts and drama.

PICTURES INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT WERE TAKEN WITH THE CHILDREN'S PERMISSION

Member Agencies

Action for Children in Conflict
Action International Ministries UK
Amnesty International
Anti-Slavery International
Casa Alianza UK
Calcutta Hope
Child Hope
Children at Risk Foundation (UK)
Children of the Andes
Child-to-Child Trust
Child Welfare Scheme
ECPAT UK
Everychild
GOAL
Hope for Children
ICDP
International Childcare Trust
International Children's Trust
International HIV/AIDs Alliance
International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)
Jubilee Action
Let the Children Live!
PLAN UK
Questscope
Railway Children
Rocket Trust
Save the Children UK
SKCV Children's Trust
Street Child Africa
Themba Facilitate
Toybox Charity
UNICEF UK Committee
World Vision UK
YCare International

Consortium for Street Children (CSC)

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