

**CATHOLIC ACTION FOR  
STREET CHILDREN - CAS**

*Presents*

**THE GHANAIAN STREET CHILD**



April 1993 - April 2003

## Introduction:

Catholic Action for Street children has been in existence since 1993. It started its operations ten years ago. The mandate of activities was to find out who the street children are, where they come from and what could be done for them. In April 2003, we want to complete this first stage of our existence. Therefore, we have published this booklet: "The Ghanaian Street Child".

During the ten years of operation, CAS did a lot of research on the background of street children, on literacy, on health education as well as vocational/technical education and other programs and activities.

The results of this research give us enough information to know with whom and for whom we are organizing activities. The problem of street children is a very complex problem, which cannot be solved overnight.

CAS has now decided on definite plans to support the street children of Ghana.

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## Contents:

### Background information

In this section you will find the background information, how CAS started and why and how the organization developed over the years. Below are the findings we have gathered over the years on street children.

Page 4. A street child.	Page. 13. Origin
Page 5. CAS Board	Page. 15. Regions
Page 6. History	Page 16. Reasons
Page 8. Mission/Objectives	Page 17. Protection/Reunion
Page 9. Goals/Religion	Page 18. Rural /Education
Page 10. Background/Age	Page 19. Facilities/Ethnic
Page 11. Headcount	Page 20. Extended family
Page 12. Activities	Page 21. Conclusion

### Explanation of CAS' activities

A child who lives on the street may meet a fieldworker at the place where he is living. Field workers go out to the street every day, to interact with the children. They invite the child to visit a mini refuge and eventually the Main Refuge. At the house of refuge children can take part in the educational programs and get a taste of various trades and skills. If a child really wants to leave the street he has to follow the preparation stage and will be sponsored when serious. Before going to a school or workshop he will go to Hopeland training center, a department of CAS for further preparation. The sponsorship is normally for three years and then CAS will help to settle the successful child.

## CAS-GHANA

Page 23.	Staff/Structure
Page 24.	Volunteers/Administration
Page 25.	Process and monitoring system
Page 26.	Lobbying and networking
Page 27.	Coalitions
Page 28.	Cooperation/ Baby care program
Page 30.	Activities
Page 31.	Fieldwork department
Page 32.	Mini refuges/ meeting points
Page 34.	Street corner education
Page 36.	Care International
Page 37.	House of refuge department
Page 39.	Education department
Page 46.	Health education
Page 47.	Fanmilk
Page 49.	Demonstration department
Page 51.	Hopeland training centre
Page 52.	Income generating ventures
Page 53.	Sponsorship department
Page 55.	Settlement/ Social Welfare
Page 58.	Vocational/ technical education
Page 60.	Schools/ Sustainability
Page 62.	Success stories

## **FUTURE**

Page 66.	Suggested policies.
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CAS-GHANA

**A STREET CHILD.**

*I DON'T HAVE A MOTHER WHOM I KNOW,  
I DON'T HAVE A PLACE WHICH I CAN CALL MY OWN,  
NOBODY CARES FOR ME WHETHER I LIVE OR DIE,  
A STREET CHILD AM I.*

*YOU SAY THAT I AM DIRTY AND NOT COMBED,  
NOT GOOD TO BE SEEN,  
YOU SAY THAT I AM MEAN AND WILD WITH A VIOLENT  
LOOK.*

*BUT I HAD TO FIGHT TO LIVE I HAVE TO BE STRONG TO  
BE ALIVE.*

*I BECOME WET TO THE SKIN IN THE HEAVY RAINS,  
I SLEEP WHEN I CAN ON THE STREET OR UNDER A  
MARKET TABLE.  
I EAT WHAT THEY THROW AWAY FROM THE SHOP  
STALLS OR I HAVE TO EAT FROM THE TRASH BIN.*

*THE POLICE CHASE ME WITH THEIR BRUTAL FORCE  
AND LANGUAGE, HEAVY PUNCHES OR KICKS  
AT BUS STATIONS OR LORRY STATIONS YOU CAN FIND  
ME.*

*BUT YOU WILL REALLY SEE ME WHEN YOU CARE FOR  
ME.*

*I DON'T HAVE A MOTHER WHOM I KNOW,  
I DON'T HAVE A PLACE WHICH I CAN CALL MY OWN,  
NOBODY CARES FOR ME WHETHER I LIVE OR DIE,  
A STREET CHILD AM I.*

## CAS-GHANA

### CAS' BOARD OF ADVISORS

- Fr. Anthony Asare- Financial Office Diocese
- Mrs. Mary Amadu- Director of the Department Social Welfare
- Mr. John Ayivor – Development coordinator
- Dr. Susu Kwawukume – Trust Hospital
- Mrs. Vida Amoako – Director S.AID (Street Girls Aid)
- Sr. Annamma Mathew – Centre of Hope
- Mr. George Agyepong – Ex-Streetchild (now mining engineer)
- Ms. Rosemary Baah – Matron CAS
- Mr. George Afum Ansah – Deputy Director CAS
- Bro. Jos van Dinther – Director CAS

## CAS-GHANA

### **HISTORY OF CAS:**

- In 1990, a French Priest, Fr. John Thebault, asked Professor Nana Apt van Ham of the department of social work at Legon, university, to conduct a survey on street children in Ghana.
- In 1992, the survey had been completed and a committee was formed on street children.
- In 1992, bro. Jos van Dinther conducted a research on vocational and technical education in the south of Ghana.
- Both reports were used to present a proposal to start a street children project in Accra.
- Mr. Ken Amoah and Bro. Jos van Dinther started in the streets of Accra later (October 1992) joined by Fr. Patrick Shanahan.
- CAS started officially on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April 1993. Bro. Jos was appointed to be the first director.
- CAS was Ecclesiastically approved. The constitution was accepted on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 1994
- CAS received a Certificate of Incorporation No. 60,763 on 21<sup>st</sup> of March 1995 and Certificate from Social Welfare No. DSW/666 on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 1995.
- Members of staff during the first years (1993-1994-1995):

Afum Ansah George	Agbeshie Edward	Ammano Joseph
Amoah Ken	Atakora Patience	Azaah Alphonsus
Baah Rosemary	Cheremeh Prince	Dakpo Marcellin
Dinther Jos van	Dzramado Philip	Fosu John
Keijsteren Peter-Paul	Kuuba-Ibong Gifty	Ntummy Theodora
Odartey Catherine	Shanahan Patrick	Sosuh Jemima

- First House of Refuge at Jamestown-Accra 1993-1999
- House of Refuge at Laterbiokoshie-Accra 1999-----

### HISTORY:

In 1993, CAS started its activities for the street children. The street children were a new phenomenon in Ghanaian society at that time. Nobody had ever heard of Ghanaian street children, they only existed in countries like Bolivia and Brazil. Therefore it was very difficult to start a program for them because we first had to find out what kind of children they were and where they came from. Our first newsletter was entitled “Who are they? And where do they come from?”

After ten years working with street children on a daily basis, and collecting a lot of data, we want to describe the street child and explain to you where they come from.

In Ghana the term “child and youth” can have different meaning. We at CAS use the internationally accepted definition; a child is a person below the age of eighteen years of age.

Basically we know various categories of street children.

1. There are children in the streets of Accra who have parents and a “home” to go to. These children are supported. They belong to the category of Urban Poor Children.
2. There are children who live and work in the streets and have nobody to support them. (Street Children).
3. And there are children who were born in the streets of Accra. Their mothers are street mothers (2<sup>ND</sup> generation of street children).

CAS activities are geared towards the second category and to a lesser extend to the third group. We do not have much data or experience with the first group, and therefore will not report on them.

## CAS-GHANA

### **Characteristics of a street child.**

A street child is a child who lives in the streets. (Age group 0-18 yrs). S(he) often does not appear presentable. Keeps an unkempt hair. Is not well mannered and is often shabbily dressed. The child tries to survive and adopts various ways to do so. The street child is not supported by anyone.

### **CAS MISSION:**

1. To interact with street children so that they can be understood and supported.
2. To assist those children who choose to get off the street and into a stable living situation.
3. To create general awareness about the plight of street children 0-18 years old who sleep rough and work in the streets of Accra, Tema and towns in the Catholic Archdiocese of Accra.

### **CAS OBJECTIVES:**

- To know more about the children and their needs and expectations.
- To counsel the children so as to enable them to decide what they want to do with their lives.
  
- To show love and concern to the children and create a safe haven in a house(s) of Refuge and assist those children who wish to be re-united with their families.
- To co-operate with all interested organisations and groups to re-integrate street children.
  
- To assist in health care and health education for the children.
- To promote educational (formal and non-formal) opportunities and job opportunities for the children to improve their skills and to help find jobs for them. We encourage trained street children to take care of their companions.

## CAS-GHANA

### **CAS GOALS.**

To protect and improve the rights and lives of street children. The short-term goal is to help the street children by returning their dignity to develop into respectful citizens of society.

The long-term goal is to educate the children in such a manner that they can find suitable jobs and build up their future lives.

### **RELIGION**

- CAS staff is interdenominational and so are the street children. CAS staff does not encourage preaching but education of moral uprightness.



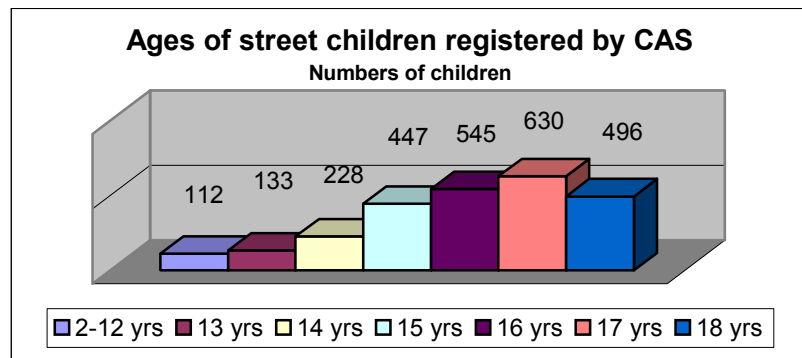
**BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON STREET CHILDREN.**

CAS gathered information from children on the streets, but also from children at CAS' House of Refuge at Lartebiokorshie. All street children who visit CAS are registered. This basic information includes: Name, age, hometown, abode, date of first visit.

**Age of children.**

The average age of children who have visited the Refuge is 15 ½ years. (See Chart 1.)

Chart 1. Records from CAS registration.



On the streets, the boy-girl ratio is about equal. (See Headcount). Of those who have visited the House of Refuge the ratio is 3:1. 3487 street children have visited the Refuge, 2638 were boys and 845 were girls. The reasons can be explained as follows:

Street boys live and work alone or with a friend in the streets of Accra. Street girls live and work in groups. This is because of the nature of the jobs they do and for protection.

Street girls do not have the time to visit the House of Refuge. Only those who are prepared to leave the streets do.

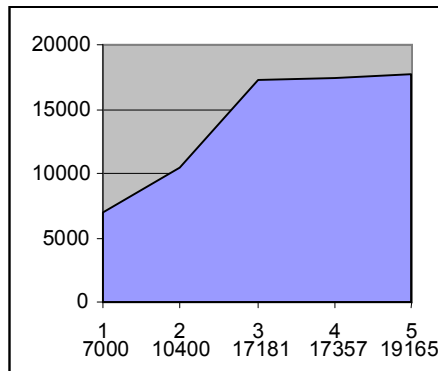
## CAS-GHANA

- a) They have a feeling of insecurity when they leave their boy-friends in town.
- b) Others influence them in the group.
- c) They are comfortable in their place of abode.

### **The Headcount of street children:**

This Headcount shows that there is a constant increase in street children living and working in the streets of Accra. We have not conducted any headcount in other major towns, but this headcount proves already that there is a major problem in Ghana. The headcount of 1996 was conducted together with workers of S.AID. In total 30 workers were assigned to particular areas in town for a period of 3 weeks. This method proved to be very accurate. In July 1999, we started the continuous headcount. Field workers who meet “new” children present a small invitation card to the child. These cards are only given to street children and not to “urban poor” children. In January 2000, 17181 were given out. The successive years show an increase of 200-300 children a year.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
YEAR	1992	1996	2000	2001	2002
NUMBER	7000	10400	17181	17357	19165



## CAS-GHANA

### ACTIVITIES IN THE STREET:

The majority of girls either sell food or ice water and many are porters. Street boys have a variety of jobs. Many boys sweep and clean gutters and markets, a large group carries goods in the market, shoe-shining is also one of the major sources of income. From the CAS registration records- April 1993-April 2002

OCCUPATION	BOYS	GIRLS
AID TO DISABLED	71	5
APPRENTICE	24	6
BARBER	13	
BEGGER	1	1
CAR WASHER	4	1
CHOP BAR ASSISTANT	8	24
CLEANER	15	2
DRIVER MATE	87	1
ERRAND BOY/GIRL	33	19
HAIR DRESSER		5
HAWKER	235	148
KAYA BOLA	579	79
MAID SERVANT		1
PREACHER of Gospel	3	
PUPIL	7	2
SELLER	165	271
SEAMAN	1	
SHOESHINE	456	
SIGN WRITER	3	1
TRUCK PUSHER	42	2
UNEMPLOYED	148	167
WINDSCREEN WASHER	2	

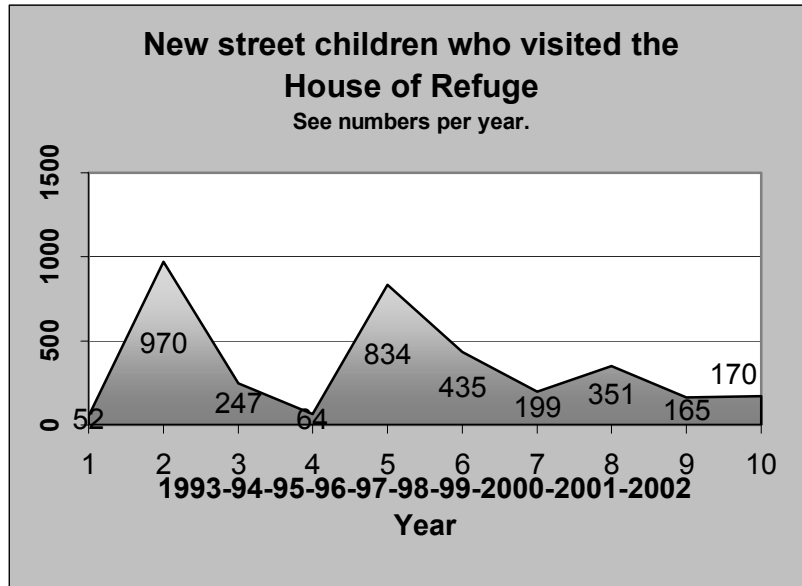
Many street girls (but also some street boys) are involved in prostitution. CAS has made attempts to do a survey on child prostitution but had to abandon it. Exact figures of children involved can therefore not be given.

CAS-GHANA

**Places of origin.**

All children who visit the House of Refuge are registered. The database of ten years of 3487 street children gives us sufficient information to know their background. (See Chart 2)

Chart 2. CAS Registration.



## CAS-GHANA

CAS statistics show an increase in the number of children who visited the House of Refuge in 1994 and 1997. In 1994 many street children became curious about the activities of CAS. 1997 was another peak year. It is more difficult to explain why the number of visitors increased during this particular year. Many activities of CAS started in 1995; the baby-care program, Hopeland training centre and the sponsorship program.

Another explanation could be due to the establishment of meeting points and Mini Refuges in town. Field work is the main activity of CAS and has received equal attention during the years.

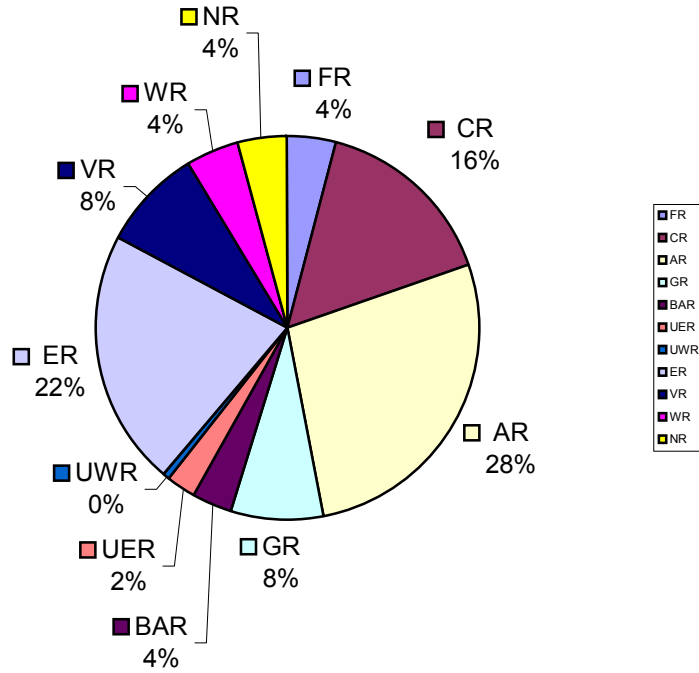
Street children are from all regions of Ghana (CAS Registration). CAS verified the records on street children in 1999. A journalist and two social workers from CAS visited five selected regions of Ghana and interviewed many people. (Northern, Upper East, Ashanti, Eastern, and Western Region).

We published the EXODUS report, which explains why many children leave their hometowns to go to the cities to try to work and support themselves. Chart 3.

### **EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF STREET CHILDREN**

UNEDUCATED	32
DID NOT COMPLETE PRIMARY	38
DID NOT COMPLETE J.S.S.	50
DID NOT COMPLETE MIDDLE SCH.	8
COMPLETED PRIMARY SCHOOL	44
COMPLETED J.S.S.	63
COMPLETED S.S.S.	3
COMPLETED MIDDLE SCHOOL	5

### STREET CHILDREN PER REGION



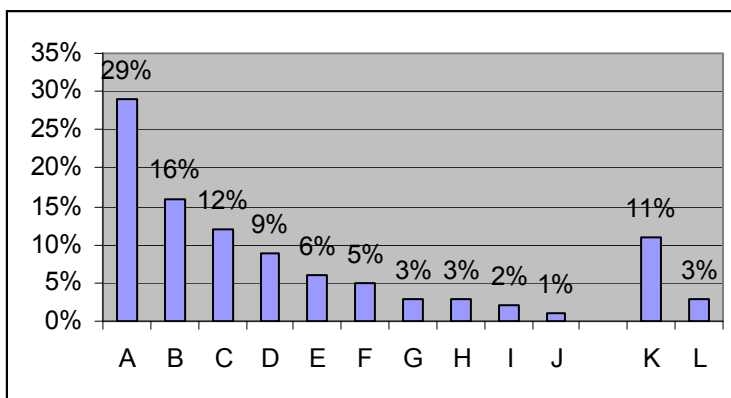
FR	FOREIGNERS	AR	ASHANTI
CR	CENTRAL	GR	GREATER ACCRA
BAR	BRONG AHAFO	UER	UPPER EAST
UWR	UPPER WEST	ER	EASTERN
VR	VOLTA	WR	WESTERN
NR	NORTERN		

REGIONS OF GHANA

Some reasons for street children being on the streets:

Street children move from villages to main towns and cities and back, from main towns to cities and vice versa. There is constant movement. Street children are not stationary. Even in the city they change sleeping/working places quite often.

This graph Cart 4, shows these reasons.



**Explanation see below:**

**REASONS WHY STREET CHILDREN LEFT THEIR HOMES.**

Reason	Problem	Percentage
A NEGLECT	(Social)	29%
B SINGLE PARENT	(Social)	16%
C TRUANCY	(Social)	12%
D VIOLENCE AT HOME	(Social)	9%
E TOO MANY CHILDREN AT HOME	(Social)	6%
F ORPHANS	(Social)	5%
G SICKNESS OF SINGLE PARENT	(Social)	3%
H PEER GROUP PRESSURE	(Social)	3%
I SEXUAL VIOLENCE AT HOME	(Social)	2%
J BORN IN THE STREETS	(Social)	1%
K POVERTY	(Economic)	11%
L LEFT BEHIND BY PARENTS- IMMIGRATION	(Economic)	3%

## CAS-GHANA

86% of the reasons for leaving home known by CAS are related to family problems. Thus the problem of street children is mainly a social one. Only when the child reveals the real reason why (s)he is in the street, the child can be assisted to deal with that problem. Time is needed for the children to have sufficient trust in the workers to reveal these problems. Preparation of children for the sponsorship program is therefore often a very slow process.

### **PROTECTION**

- CAS staff accept the street children as they are; each child is unique. Street children cannot be placed under one hat.
- CAS staff acknowledge and respect that street children have their own culture and form a hierarchy in the streets, which has its own rules and customs.
- CAS staff acknowledge that street children have grown up very fast and should be treated as such.
- CAS staff do not treat street children as “delinquents” but as “normal children”.
- CAS staff do not exhibit street children as objects. Staff at all times protect the children from the “Zoo syndrome” (exposing street children).
- In collaboration with other NGOs, CAS will provide health services and health education for street children.

### **REUNION WITH THEIR FAMILIES.**

As mentioned above, CAS accepts the street child as s(he) is and accepts that the street children have formed their own culture. However, reunion with their families is the best possible solution to the street child’s problems. 86% of them are on the streets because they have a problem with or within the family. Therefore we have to be realistic, the problem at home should be solved before the child can return to his/her family.

## CAS-GHANA

Suggestions are being made that other NGO's or organizations working in the rural areas should take over "the case" and contact the family. In some cases, this can be done, but in general this will be very difficult because the social worker should know all the details of the "client" before the family can be contacted. The social worker should know the street child and his/her problems well. We think this is practically a very cumbersome approach. Therefore let us "equip" the child first and prepare him or her for this reunion later. Further findings are:

### **Rural Underdevelopment**

- Low educational standard
- Poor facilities- health & infrastructure, lack of electricity, lack of good drinking water, bad roads.
- Poor agric methods.

### **Education**

- Many of the villages visited during the research did not have secondary and vocational schools.
- Poor educational infrastructure/logistics. Some of the schools visited did not have textbooks, tables and teachers. For instance one school only had only three (3) teachers to handle the whole school.
- No workshops or no tools in the workshops.
- Poor statistics- e.g. poor enrolment figures. In one of the districts in the Northern region the figures were 54% boys and a scant 23% of girls who attend basic school. 23% does not go to any school. That works as a district average of 38%.
- Interpretation of the term "Free Education" on the part of parents is also a problem. They think if it is free and compulsory then everything including uniform should be free.

- Dropout rate among girls is caused by parents perception about education. They give girls education, low priority, since they will not be the main breadwinners, while dropout rates among boys is linked to the fact that they are regarded as good labourers especially on the farm and in the mining areas as illegal diamond and gold miners.
- Teachers and Parent relationship. The study revealed that relations among the teachers and parent is not cordial in most cases because parents do not value education. Some teachers posted to those places cannot speak the area's local language.

**Poor Facilities**

Due to poor facilities in terms of health infrastructure, electricity and water. Roads, recreational facilities and lack of access to television due to unavailability of power are other factors.

**Cultural/Religion/Tradition**

Some of the cultural practices encourage migration of children and youth to the urban areas to work or to seek wealth. For instance marriage of two or more women to a man is valued in most of the areas visited during the research.

Early marriage of young girls to grown ups. In most cases after such marriages conflicts develop and makes them feel uncomfortable living together with other wives of the husband. Others also do not want to be the slaves of the other wives.

**Ethnic violence.** This also contributes occasionally to the migration. This is commonly a tribal thing. An example is the conflict between the Nanombas and the Konkombas and the recent conflict at Yendi (2002).

## CAS-GHANA

**Religious Conflict.** Most parents from an Islamic background prefer their children to go to Islamic schools or the traditional Koranic teaching schools where they learn only Koran.

### **Extended Family**

Ghanaians, like other Africans, show great pride in the extended family. It has been one of the cornerstones of African culture and traditions, and it has served as Africa's social net for the young, elderly, disabled and disadvantaged.

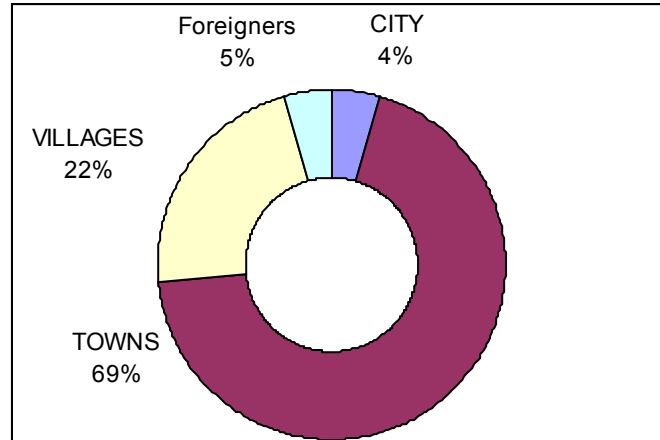
People have had large families for a variety of reasons, but they knew they could always rely on parents, siblings, grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins once or twice-removed when needed. But like many other traditions, the extended family is being eroded by urbanization, individualism, Western influences and growing socio-economic distress. Rather than try to wage an all-out war to preserve traditional Ghanaian life – a war all too many countries have tacitly or explicitly admitted that they have lost – Ghanaian society would be far better off accepting this evolution and dealing with the consequences.

The traditional extended family no longer exists in many communities, and Ghanaian society needs to start thinking of coping mechanisms to deal with this reality. Ideally, the State should take over these responsibilities, but it doesn't have the resources to provide its citizens the social net they deserve. There are no easy solutions, but it is an issue society needs to recognize and discuss.

## CAS-GHANA

Street children come from various places. Only 4% are from the cities or have been born in the city. 69% are from small towns while the remaining group comes from villages in the rural area. 5% are foreigners. (See Chart 5).

Cart 5.



### **CONCLUSION:**

In general we can say the Ghanaian street child is unique. They have been formed by their cultural inheritance, the climate in West Africa and social attitude of the Ghanaian people. A Ghanaian street child cannot be the same as a street child from Kenya for instance. Therefore we should accept them as they are.

## CAS-GHANA

- Most of the Ghanaian street children are migrants from their homeland.
- Most of them have a small job by which they earn some money for their survival.
- They do not sniff glue.
- They are not ex-soldiers of wars.
- They are not yet caught by the AIDS pandemic.
- They live and work in the streets and find protection among children and some adults of their own tribe.
- Occasionally they visit their relatives in their places of origin.
- Street children have formed their own culture in the streets.
- They lose their birth culture.
- They can be assisted on individual bases.

## YOUR CHILDREN

Your children are not your property  
They are Sons and Daughters of their wish to life  
They come through you but not from you,  
and although they are with you,  
they do not belong to you  
You may give them love  
but not your thoughts  
You may give their bodies a home  
but not their souls  
Then their souls live in a Tomorrow's Home,  
Where you cannot perceive them,  
not once in your dream.  
You may try to be like them,  
but dare not to make them like you,  
then life is not going backwards  
and does not remain yesterday.

Kalil Jebran



**VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS ON PLACEMENT:**

CAS encourages volunteers, Ghanaian as well as expatriates to work with the street children. Often the children respond favourably to new persons out of curiosity and interest.

Volunteers however have to pay for their stay themselves. As a charity, CAS is not able to pay allowances to volunteers. In some instances, CAS assists in finding suitable accommodation. The minimum period of stay is six months. It takes time for the children to know the volunteers and the volunteers need time to learn about their behaviour.

Social work students from universities in Ghana and abroad are welcome to learn their fieldwork practices with CAS. Although the supervision is an additional work for some members of staff we are ready to assist them.

CAS hopes that eventually a new generation of social workers will be ready to understand the street children and so be a support to them.

**ADMINISTRATION:**

The task of the administration is to help the directorate in liquidating and reporting to the donors and other interested persons. There are three secretaries assigned to do the following:

Typing of the progress and financial reports to donors on a quarterly basis; updating the register of the children and the sponsorship list monthly, typing of letters, social surveys, newsletters, record keeping, photocopies.

The aim of the secretaries is to ensure that the administrative machinery is always on course.

## CAS-GHANA

They also work hand in hand with the sponsorship department in preparing children for learning trades in schools and workshops.

The administrators are responsible for regular supply of stationery, maintenance of computers, photocopier machine, the filing system and record keeping.

They have to ensure a free flow of communication between administration and the other departments.

The role of administration is important because it has a link with all other departments in achieving the objectives of the organization. Secretaries have to update themselves in computer programs in order to keep abreast with the changing requirements of donors.

### **PROCESS AND MONITORING SYSTEM:**

CAS runs six departments. There is a department head and an assistant head for each department. Monthly, meetings are organized to discuss the activities within the department. The heads of department write monthly reports and financial statements. The bursar of CAS provides cash to all departments, which are supported by various donors.

Every second month, the Heads of department meet to discuss the general activities of CAS. Street children who wish to leave the streets pass through all departments.

The field workers contact them, they meet the street corner educators at the mini refuges, and they visit the main refuge and follow the activities organized at the education and demonstration departments.

## CAS-GHANA

They are prepared to go to Hopeland training centre and after a period of 6 to 9 months will either go on sponsorship or return to the main refuge for further preparation.

While in sponsorship, the follow-up team assists them. The same team organizes the settlement of the children.

Therefore it is very important that the various departments work in close collaboration. A supervisor who is assigned to assist the child monitors the progress of a particular child.

Donors receive quarterly a progress report as well as a financial report, which has been audited by an external auditor.

### **LOBBYING AND NETWORKING:**

During the early years of CAS' existence it received quite some opposition from government officials and the general public. Street children were not known and the idea that they appeared in the towns and cities was not accepted.

Therefore it was necessary for CAS to obtain the facts about them and so prove that some kind of action was necessary to arrest the situation. After ten years of creating this awareness, the policy makers and social partners as well as the general public have accepted that this problem exists, but are not convinced as yet that something has to be done.

By publishing this booklet, CAS wants to impress upon the authorities that urgent action should be taken especially for those who get involved into crime and prostitution. There are many groups for instance who are advising the public of the dangers of HIV and AIDS, but there are not many groups who advises the very vulnerable group of prostitutes.

## CAS-GHANA

From the onset CAS was aware that this phenomenon of street children could not be solved by one NGO only. The numbers of children and the various social issues are too great. A strong network of NGO's and other organizations, which are collaborating and working together, can diminish the number of children on the streets but cannot eradicate it all together.

CAS has accepted that street children exist and that they have formed their own culture. By accepting this reality something can be done to improve the situation.

### **COALITIONS:**

Coalitions, which recognize the strength and abilities of its members are useful bodies. CAS is a member of several coalitions. Umbrella organizations on the contrary are often an obstruction to this process and are in our view not necessary.

1. The close collaboration of S.AID, The Salvation Army and CAS.
2. The Support group: all persons and organizations within the Catholic Church working with and for the people in need.
3. The Urban NGO group.
4. All NGO's and organizations registered by the Department of Social Welfare.
5. Juvenile courts and remand centres.

## CAS-GHANA

### CO-OPERATION BETWEEN STREET GIRLS AID, CAS AND THE SALAVATION ARMY

#### **CAS, S.AID and the Salvation Army are working in close co-operation and have made these agreements:**

- ◆ CAS receives girls as well as boys in the House of Refuge. Girls who are in difficulty and are in need of special attention can be referred to S.AID.
- ◆ CAS runs a sponsorship scheme. CAS will sponsor all girls from S.AID, who wish to be educated, if enough financial assistance can be obtained.
- ◆ S.AID will run the Baby Care program. S.AID will try to take care of Street Mothers and Babies. CAS can refer mothers with babies to them.
- ◆ The Salvation Army runs an outreach clinic. It tries to take care of Street Children, Mothers and Babies. S.AID and CAS refer all children and mothers who need medical attention to them. S.AID and CAS will continue to support this medical program with donations of medicines whenever possible.

As an example of this close cooperation, CAS handed over the Baby Care program to Street Girls Aid. (1996)

#### **BABYCARE PROGRAM:**

In 1995, the Baby Care program was established in Accra-Ghana. The aim was to assist street girls and street mothers to take proper care of their babies. The mothers were using “crèches” in the area they lived.

Older mothers, popularly known as Minders took care of babies of mothers who were working at the markets in Accra. The mothers paid the minders a small fee for their job. CAS workers came in contact with these minders and mothers and concluded that they should be assisted to take proper care of the babies living in the slums. The intention was to assist the mothers and improve the system they were operating. CAS did not want to start a new project. In 1996 S.AID took over the running of the crèches.

## CAS-GHANA

A survey was conducted in order to know why these mothers were living in these slums and where they came from. CAS also wanted to know why these mothers had no interest in returning to their hometowns. The results of this survey were an eye opener for CAS workers.

- Street mothers are from all regions of Ghana.
- They group, work and live together in ethnic groups.
- They are not in Accra to earn some money for their marriage, but want to build up their own independent lives. They mentioned freedom as the main reason, freedom from customary marriage, freedom of being a slave in the compound.
- Many are involved in the sex trade for additional income for themselves and their babies. Sex workers are stigmatised and cannot return to their hometown.
- As a result many have babies with unknown fathers. Many are not customarily married and therefore cannot return to their tribe and hometown.

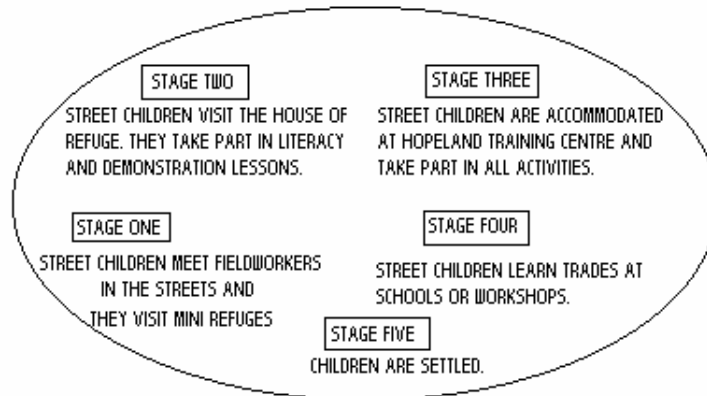
Children who are too old to remain in the crèche have to go to school. S.AID and CAS run a sponsorship scheme for these young children. Basically, the mothers are empowered to educate their children. The responsibility for this education is still with the mothers. At times teachers who are interested to pay special attention to these children are motivated to do so.

## CAS-GHANA



### CAS ACTIVITIES:

STREET CHILDREN FOLLOW FIVE STAGES AT CAS BEFORE LEAVING THE STREETS.



## CAS-GHANA

### **FIELD WORK DEPARTMENT:**

CAS' main activity is on the streets of the city of Accra. We have to go where the children are and be with them. There, we have the opportunity to advise and educate them. Field workers visit the streets five days a week.

During the early days, CAS field workers operated in many areas in the city of Accra. Accra City covers a vast area (324 square kilometers) and over the past years has expanded even more. Field workers cannot operate everywhere. Therefore, specific areas where many street children operate were selected as working areas. These have changed, due to the reconstruction of the road network as well as relocation of markets. Also sleeping areas for street children have changed several times over the years. In fact, working and sleeping areas for street children are not static.

CAS has twelve field workers on the streets of Accra and Ashaiman. Some of them have been with CAS right from the start and know the streets and the children very well.

A field worker is responsible for making contact with the street children, to gain their trust, listen to them and give advice and help. Field workers also interact with the adults in the area where the children sleep and work.

They know for sure the difference between an "Urban Poor" child and a street child. They know who is in charge and where the sleeping areas of the various ethnic groups are. Street children often operate and find protection by fellow street children of their own tribe or group that they regularly identify with. Children as young as five years, are living on the streets. However, there are also many young street mothers with their babies and families who are on the streets.

## CAS-GHANA

In Accra, many young boys and girls are working in the streets, but CAS' field workers cannot assist all.

During the rainy season, and occasions like the Easter and Christmas holidays many children who sleep in the open find it difficult to remain in Accra.

Several go "home" to assist in the farming and to have a re-union with relatives in celebrating the occasion. This reduces the number considerably during these periods.

The street children have to listen to many officials while in the streets. They include: the AMA (Accra Metropolitan Assembly) City authorities, the opinion leaders, and the leaders of the drivers unions, the security personnel, the gang leaders and traders that they work for.

### **MINI REFUGES AND MEETINGS POINTS:**

The mini refuge is a rented shop where the field workers can meet the street children who cannot come to the main refuge because of the distance or work or other factors.

CAS introduced the mini refuge in Ghana in 1995. This idea was copied from a street children program in India, after a working visit to India by the director. In the beginning we tried to experiment with three of them in Accra. These refuges were operated in wooden kiosks, which were placed in some of the operational areas of our field workers. Even though, this program has been successful in India it failed miserably here as a result of uncooperative attitudes from city authorities.

The rationale behind the establishment of a mini refuge is to organize some of our activities closer to the working and living environment of street children. Children can meet the workers, play games and follow lessons in literacy and health.

## CAS-GHANA

Although the A.M.A. (Accra Metropolitan Assembly) Chief Executive gave us written permission to operate these kiosks, other authorities acted against it. The three kiosks were demolished in the process.

Armed with enough experience from these problems, we have devised a new way of running these mini refuges. Stores are rented instead in various suburbs of the city. Four are currently in operation in the following areas; Odorkor, Ashaiman, Madina and Agbogbloshie market.



**STREET CORNER EDUCATION:**

In the early years of CAS the idea of “street-corner education” was already born. Field workers went out in the streets to meet the children, but for educational programs children had to come all the way to House of Refuge. It was felt that if CAS really wanted to be “street-based” then education should be brought to the streets. It was only in the year 1999 however that an actual start was made for the realization of the plans.

But in 2001, a structured educational program for Health Education was developed for CAS and this program was used to do experiments in the streets. Field workers from CAS were trained to conduct the lessons and went out to try them at the street-corner. In many cases, this was indeed a street-corner. Sometimes the lesson took place in front of a shop, other times in a corner of a bus-station or at the platform of Railways. On one occasion a staircase inside a commercial building served as an auditorium. A condition for selection of a suitable location was that it should be a point where street-children already gather. Hence the name “meeting point”.

Another condition for a successful lesson is that it should be done at a time that children are free. This often meant teaching in the evening-time, if children in a certain area were busy all day to earn their money.

The main outcome of the experiment was that education at meeting points in town is possible, despite negative expectations. Once children and facilitators got used to the idea and found their roles, things moved smoothly.

Of course problems were faced: not every passing adult took it for granted that a good job was done and some interrupted lessons in order to find out what was going on.

## CAS-GHANA

Others were so eager themselves to listen to the lesson that they ordered the children to move away. But all this was also an opportunities to promote CAS and explain its goals.

An aspect that needs further planning is the fact that street-children are always on the move. This means it is very difficult to set up a continuous program, since the same group of children will never be there. How to conduct literacy-lessons under these conditions is a question that CAS still has to find an answer to.

Presently, the program is set up in a more permanent form. Methods and techniques for professional facilitation at meeting points have been developed. The Mini Refuges will be utilized for the program as well.



## CAS-GHANA

### **CARE INTERNATIONAL:**

CARE International = (Cooperation for Assistance and Relief Everywhere) invited CAS and three other NGOs to work in partnership on a saving scheme program.

The Accra Tema Metropolis was selected for a pilot project. The program is called the **ESCAPE** project: Enhanced Saving and Credit Association for Poverty Eradication. The idea is to form a group of people who are interested in saving their money with the view of improving their living conditions. For CAS this can be groups of street children: for instance shoeshine boys who are working together, or those who have been trained in a trade and are now working. We also have in mind the Kayayei (porters) mothers, truck pushers and Fan Milk ice cream vendors. We knew that training and guiding groups as such would be a difficult and time-consuming job. It involves trust and readiness to work together. For people who live on the streets it will be a very difficult but exciting exercise.

\*Fieldwork:and street Corner Education:

Patience Atakora, Theodora Ntummy, Anastasia Gablah, Courage Sakpadu, Joseph Amaano, Margaret Attah, Frank Korang, David Safo, Sandra Frempong, Comfort Bodza, Michael Ashie, bro. Henry Sunyeh

## CAS-GHANA

### **HOUSE OF REFUGE DEPARTMENT:**

The House of Refuge is a day care centre based in Lartebikorshie-Accra. Street children are free to visit the Refuge and take part in the activities and programs organised for them. All children who visit the Refuge are registered and are introduced to the various places at the Refuge. They are encouraged to bathe and wash their clothes. The Refuge has recreational facilities for playing games, and watching videos. Children can sleep and rest. Refuge staff are encouraged to advise the children to take part in the educational activities on offer. The education departments and demonstration department are based at the House of Refuge. An average of 80 children a day visit the Refuge. The offices of CAS are located at the House of Refuge as well. Here all the activities of CAS are organised.

#### DEPENDENCY;

- CAS does not want by any means for street children to become dependent on the organization.
- CAS does not provide food or accommodation for street children.
- CAS does not want to attract street children with gifts.

Aims: To give care and support to the children. To give them a chance to learn. To give them a voice and develop their self esteem.

The Refuge, a drop-in centre, is the base for activities and support for the children. It is also the Headquarters of CAS. All staff are expected to interact with the children. Children are free to come and go as they please as long as they keep the house rules; no fighting, stealing, drinking of alcohol, smoking and gambling.

## CAS-GHANA

CAS does not provide food or accommodation. About 60 - 80 children a day use the Refuge. It is open from 8 A.M. till 6 P.M. Monday – Saturday.

Home- the Refuge may be used as a “home” where children can sit, sleep, talk, bath, wash clothes, save money with the staff, watch TV and videos or play games such as oware, ludo, and table tennis. They can begin to relax.

Social work- they may wish to use the time to discuss problems with a social worker, to seek help and guidance, and think about their life and future. In addition to the field workers 3 social workers are based in the Refuge. They have supervisory and administrative roles as well as providing a social work service to the children.

The Education and Demonstration Department are based at the House of Refuge.

\*House of Refuge: Rosemary Baah, Gideon Markin, Adjetey Annang, Felicia Dzimadzro, Richard Quarshie, James Adjeh

\*Administration: Josephine Adom, Jemima Sosuh, Elizabeth Botwe, Jos van Dinther

## CAS-GHANA

### **EDUCATION DEPARTMENT:**

Education at CAS entails a broad spectrum of activities organized at the House of Refuge and at Hopeland Training Centre in Ashaiman. It includes: literacy training, drama, sports, music, and performances, which usually are organized on Fridays.

The department also runs a small library and computer centre to encourage the children to read and so improve their English and to get used to computers.

The policy of CAS is that the child should take the initiative to follow education. Street children are part of the decision making process and plan for their own future.

CAS staff take sufficient time in preparing the children who wish to be educated. However, the children are not educated in trades at the House of Refuge, but rather in existing schools and workshops.

The project collaborates with workshop managers and headmasters/mistresses of schools where street children can be educated. This network comprises of 110 workshops and 65 schools in and around Accra City.

### **LITERACY PROGRAM:**

The definition of a street child is inconsistent but many agree that most street children are illiterate or semi-literate. Street children are a vulnerable group, especially the girls. The most vulnerable are the street babies. The children should be regarded as children and not as delinquents or anti-social beings. Street children behave differently to “normal” children. Street children have their own culture and value system.

## CAS-GHANA

Many children are in the streets because of family problems, either one parent died or the parents divorced or live separately. As a result, the children cannot get money to go to school. Also the traditional family values are changing. However, we should encourage street children to reunite with their families wherever possible.

Some street children resort to crime and prostitution in order to survive. There are no educational programs available for street children and the programs do not meet the needs of street children. Many parents in the rural areas see little reason to educate their children. Our findings have shown that institutional education is not a viable way to educate street children. Compulsory school attendance is not a solution.

The number of street children in Accra is rising and has reached levels that should be of concern to us all.

### **PEER-TO-PEER EDUCATION:**

- Street children are a very fluid population. CAS acknowledges that it is difficult to access the peer to peer education for street children.

### **AIDS AND HIV:**

In August 2000, a mini survey was carried out at CAS to check the level of knowledge children have about AIDS. It was focused on children who visit CAS' refuge. Their average age was 15 years.

Most of them have come across some kind of education about AIDS; through local radio programs, church groups, lorry stations and field workers at Kaneshie. However, the information on AIDS had been absorbed only in a sketchy way.

## CAS-GHANA

- 75% could name at least one correct mode of transmission.
- 60% knew one way to protect them-selves against the disease.

All the same, many fairytales came up. Most of them made up of facts put together in the wrong way.

For instance:

- You can get AIDS from flies.
- If you don't wash your hands after you have been to the toilet, you can get AIDS.
- You can get AIDS if you eat with infected persons.
- You can avoid AIDS if you stop drinking alcohol.

A base line study among street youth in Accra conducted by CAS revealed:

- 95-98% of the respondents were aware of the disease.
- About 90% were aware at the mode of transmission of the disease.
- Up to 30% had misconceptions about the way the disease can spread from place to the other.
- 33% gets information from friends and media.
- 47% said they abstain from sex.
- 23% said they are faithful to one partner.
- 9% use the condom.

8% said they would protect themselves.

## CAS-GHANA

### **ACTIVITIES:**

CAS assists the street children to be numerate and literate. They are taught at three different levels. These include; stack illiterates, Semi illiterates and JSS dropouts.

The lessons vary, attention is paid to Maths, English, Writing and Reading. All children who show an interest in being educated go to Hopeland training centre prior to sponsorship. At Hopeland the classes can be intensified because the children are accommodated and are stationary.

### **MUSIC:**

Street children like music. They like to sing and play instruments such as keyboards, bass guitars and western drums. Children often practise and some opt to become professional performers. Some of the children attended a music school and are now part of a band.

Local cultural drumming and dancing seems to win the heart of many. Those who have no instrument accompany the music with clapping and foot movements. Although the children are from different cultural backgrounds they have no problems imitating others.

### **DRAMA:**

When children enter the street in an independent life their character traces change from various ones to apparently extrovert, thus they develop lots of humors to enable them to stay happily on the street.

These kinds of attitudes make them like drama and pose as good actors and actresses when it comes to acting.

## CAS-GHANA

Drama started during the inception of CAS' various activities. Drama was chosen after close observation of the children's behavior as an integral part of the activities, which will make the children happy and learn to cope with one another. Considering the level of interest in drama CAS felt it could be used to educate children literally. In line with these developments much effort and logistics were put in so as to dramatize all classroom activities to get children to participate freely.

### **HEALTH – CLINIC:**

Since 1996 CAS in collaboration with the The SALVATION ARMY CHURCH runs a clinic at the House of Refuge. CAS was not able to take care of all the health problems themselves. During the early days, CAS workers acted as nurses and doctors while the Catholic doctors association came to the Refuge once a week. The services improved when Sr. Annamma Mathew, a trained nurse came to assist CAS. Of course, CAS could employ nurses to do the work, but as an organization we don't know how to run it effectively.

The purpose of the clinic is to give special medical treatment and advice to patients who form part of our target group. These are children who cannot pay for their medical expenses as well as transportation to the hospital. To ensure that proper treatment is given, children are seen on daily basis.

If the full course of treatment is given to a child at once, even when instructed well, many children loose or sell the pills. Hence, the children are given medical advice and guidance on an individual basis.

## CAS-GHANA

Once a week the nurse visits Hopeland Training Centre. She takes care of those who are ill and educates the children about health. Most treated conditions at the clinic are:

- Malaria, Wounds, Coughs, Rashes, Bilharzia, Dental cases,
- Abdominal pains, Diarrhoea, Measles, Piles.

### **MALARIA:**

There is a high prevalence of malaria among street children according to the reports from our clinic run by the Salvation Army. This is because children are exposed to mosquitoes since they sleep in the open. We have on our records an average of 16 children who are given malaria-treatment every month, making up for 30% of cases recorded at the clinic.

Malaria prevention is very hard for street children. This is because children cannot protect themselves against mosquitoes. The surroundings of the places where they sleep are full of stagnant water and/or choked gutters.

### **NUTRITION:**

A mini-survey conducted by CAS shows that about 40% of the street children have only one or two meals a day. A little over 50% have 3 meals a day. This depends on how much money a child has found for the day.

Other surveys reveal similar facts.

## CAS-GHANA

The main types of food that they eat are:

- Rice
- Waakye = Cooked Rice and beans
- Banku = Cooked corn and cassava dough
- Porridge
- Kenkey (plain or with fish)' = raw corn dough
- Cooked Yam
- Gari

Some children eat the same type of food on two or three occasions the same day. It is an unbalanced diet. The type of food mainly affordable to the children contains little or no protein and is generally of poor quality. A child can often only afford to feed the stomach with “gari”(dried cassava) and sugar.

Most children eat in wayside places. These are tables on which bowls with food are placed. The food is usually cooked at a nearby house and then brought to the roadside. Most times it is not kept hot and is exposed to dust and flies.

Water has to be carried to the spot, and plates and spoons are usually washed in water which is not too clean. Water to wash the hands is not available. Sellers are only concerned about their profit, not hygiene. Generally, there is scarcity of water.

Street children are not aware of health risks that a dirty environment brings. They buy food anywhere.

In the health education program of CAS a lot of attention is given to this issue, since it is this behaviour that can be changed by learning. Eating well and keeping clean are after all the best guarantees for good health.

**HEALTH EDUCATION:**

The street children live, work and sleep on the streets of Accra. They do not attend school and nobody takes decisions for them.

They cater for their own needs, yet they receive harsh treatment from adults. Generally, they live from day to day and think little about the day after tomorrow. They are ignorant about health and illness. They have poor personal hygiene and poor nutrition. The nature of work they do is dirty and risky. Their place of abode is very poor and they are physically and sexually abused. Their health is at risk.

However, even in these circumstances they can make an effort to prevent illness:

- ❖ They can maintain good personal hygiene.
- ❖ They can try to eat a balanced diet.
- ❖ They can try to avoid unhealthy practices.

The key to these choices is education.

The main focus of health education for the street child is to create awareness about the risk involved and to give the knowledge that will suit their present situation. The syllabus for our health education is used to make choices and to change behaviour. It's not about medical knowledge. They are not expected to have any form of medical information.

It is not about community health, it is to make children conscious of their behaviour and to help them make sound choices. The knowledge they receive from the program serves the choice that they make. Also we considered the children's level of literacy when preparing the syllabus and when facilitating the lessons.

## CAS-GHANA

We don't use medical terms like: virus, immune system and protein in the lessons. Children could understand better when we use teaching aids.

Our lessons last about thirty minutes. This is because the children cannot concentrate for a long time. The lessons are designed in two ways; children discuss problems and solutions instead of the teacher telling them what to do. Lastly, we also focus on lessons as short-term consequences of unhealthy behaviour, so that it fits the thinking capacities of children who are struggling to survive.

### **THE CHOICES THEY MAKE:**

The simplest way street children can care for their body and stay healthy is expensive. Children bath in bathhouses in town, they pay for the use of water and they buy a piece of soap every day. They also buy chewing sticks and pay for the use of toilet facilities. A child who has spare clothes keeps them with a watchman who keeps them for a payment. All these expenses have to be paid daily. Therefore, the children "economize" on these activities in order to have more money for food, leading them into an unhealthy state.

### **FANMILK:**

The literacy program of CAS for vendors of Fan Milk Ghana Ltd aims, among other things to improve the reading and writing skills of vendors who have attained some level of formal education and also to teach others who are illiterate. The program, which started in March 1995, has a syllabus, which covers English Language, Mathematics and General Knowledge. Trained literacy facilitators are assigned to specific depots to teach the vendors. Lastly, we also focus on life skill training and health education.

## CAS-GHANA

For those with sufficient knowledge basic information about small-scale business is included in the syllabus. Participation by the vendors has been encouraging and they have contributed positively to discussions.

The program can only function well when the Heads of the Depots cooperate. They have to encourage the vendors to take part in the lessons, they have to arrange the classroom and provide furniture. At an average 15-20 vendors take part in the lessons, which take place early in the morning before the vendors leave the depot to sell the ice cream and yogurt. The vendors are 15 to 25 years. Those who take part are all boys. On average, part time teachers teach three classes a week in each depot.

\*Education: John Fosu, Nicholas Saakwah, Seth Lampty, Theophilus Nathan, Carlijn Brenninkmeijer, Melvin v/d Pouw Kraan.

\*Clinic: Eunice Dei



**DEMONSTRATION DEPARTMENT:**

The demonstration department started in 1993 soon after the establishment of the House of Refuge. The aim is to offer the children ideas about what could be learnt in their future. Street children do not know which trade to choose. Some of those sent on sponsorship complain that the trade they are learning is not to their liking and expectations. Furthermore the children can experience how it feels to stay and sit at one place or work site , in stead of roaming around all day. The preparation period offered by CAS should be adequate, and the trades introduced diverse. Children are exposed to some of these handiworks before they embark upon their training in workshops or schools. This is a very important part of their preparation, because without a good exposure the children find it difficult to follow certain rules prevailing in workshops and schools. Not too common trades such as weaving, wood carving, candle-making, bead making and ceramics are introduced.

Furthermore there are drawing, colouring and painting sessions for the children. Catering is one of the latest trades introduced.

Several instructors employed are ex-street children who have been trained by workshop managers. Often they have good contact with the children. However, they are not trained as instructors and this at times causes problems.

Trade teachers and instructors should have a working relation so that the approach is universal.

Creating awareness is an important exercise of CAS. The demonstration department plays a great role in this activity. Products made by the children are sold to the public in the CAS shop, at some art-shops and hotels in town and at exhibitions and bazaars.

## CAS-GHANA

During these activities, the general findings on the plight of street children are displayed as well. Leaflets, stickers and photographs of CAS project and street children are displayed to better inform the public about this problem, which exists in society. CAS hopes that other NGO's and organizations join to assist and support the children. As part of creating this awareness, CAS has a web-site showing its activities and general findings (<http://www.btinternet.com/~CAS/>).

\*Demonstration: Gifty Kuuba-ibong, Peter-Paul van Keysteren, Mensah Goku, Kweku Frimpong, Kweku Adu, Josephine Agbi, Fuhard Osuman



**HOPELAND TRAINING CENTRE-DEPARTMENT:**

Street-children who have opted to leave the streets and learn a trade, are prepared at the House of Refuge.

In order to prepare them better, those who want to go to a school or workshop are first sent to Hopeland Training Centre, a department of CAS.

Twenty girls and twenty boys can find accommodation at this centre. They stay there for a period of 6 to 9 months.

At the centre, the staff pay a lot of attention to the children. The children take care of animals such as chicken and ducks, pigs and rabbits, take part in a ceramic workshop and make candles.

Intensive literacy and health classes are given. Basically, the children take care of themselves. They buy their own food and cook for themselves. They wash their own clothes.

Some recreational facilities are available. Some of the staff live at the centre while others live nearby.

Two income-generating workshops are established at Hopeland, ceramics and candle-making. From the centre, field work activities in Ashaiman and Tema are organised.

\*Hopeland: Alphonsus Azaah, Marcellin Dakpo, bro. Peter Agboso, James Adjei

\*One social worker, one ceramic teacher, one candlemaker, a literacy and health teacher, sports teacher and a nurse.

**INCOME GENERATING VENTURES:**

In order to sustain the demonstration department, CAS has started two income generating activities, ceramics and candle-making.

The aim is to have an income for the department and to give ex-street girls an opportunity to have a job and so improve their lives. Products made are sold at bazaars and exhibitions and to persons who visit CAS. At times orders are made for larger quantities and particular kinds of products.

This activity is still in its initial stage and no profit is made as yet.

\*Ceramics: Abraham Quist Sallo

\*Candlemaking: Harry Hihetah, Racheal Markin, Dorothy Pokwaah.



## SPONSORSHIP DEPARTMENT:

YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW.

The sponsorship was started in 1995. Sponsorship is the process where interested street children are either sent to school or for apprenticeship training in vocational skills in workshops.

The scheme did not start in a vacuum, but came as a result of research conducted by Bro. Jos van Dinther in 1992, and persistent demands from children who visited the refuge during the infant stages of the organization.

The research revealed that many vocational and technical schools could enrol many more children and workshop managers were already training children from poor families.

The main objective behind the scheme is to empower the children. We believe that the long-term solution to their problem is to help them acquire skills either through formal education or apprenticeship training. CAS can support 250 children in the scheme at a time. Four hundred and Eighty children have so far passed through the sponsorship scheme since 1995.

The sponsorship scheme has come of age and thus is being managed as a full department. There have been some successes after seven years operation. In every enterprise there are also failures or setbacks.

### SOME PROBLEMS WITH THE SCHEME.

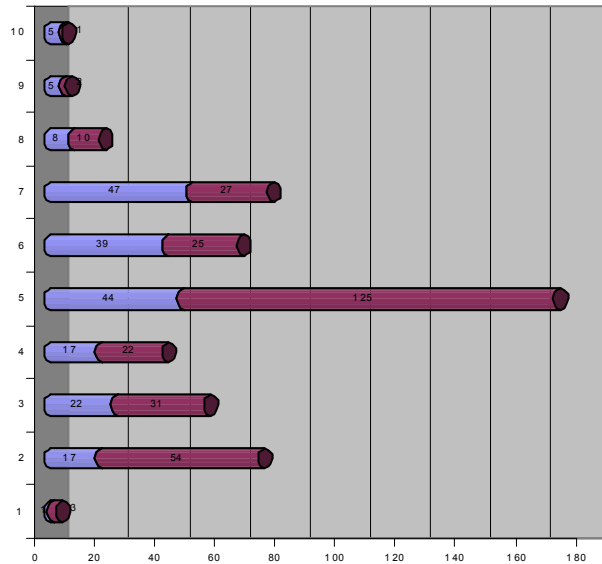
There are many problems associated with the sponsorship program. However, we highlight only on a few of them. Among the problems are lack of adequate funding and under-staffing.

## CAS-GHANA

Because funds are limited, we are not able to employ enough staff to assist the children while in training. Consequently follow-up activities are not done satisfactorily. There is also the problem of dropout among the children. This causes a waste of already scarce resources.

The job market today also poses a big challenge, to the scheme and the beneficiaries (children) after acquiring skills. Most employers would not employ our category of children due to competition as a result of massive unemployment in Ghana.

GIRLS AND BOYS ON SPONSORSHIP 1993-2002



**SETTLEMENT:**

After training the children are assisted to start their life in a modest way. This is done, by either giving the child a small amount to start an enterprise or assist him/her to find a job. This is however not given to the child on a silver platter. We believe that the children should not be dependent on CAS. Children are encouraged to take the initiative to help themselves before we come in with the package.

We acknowledge the fact that we need to do more with respect to settlement but all will depend on the generosity of our current and future donors.

**COOPERATION WITH SOCIAL WELFARE:**

The OSU Boys and Girls ‘ Remand Home were established after the Second World War by the Ghana Government, as a place of lawful custody for young offenders who had come into conflict with the law in the Greater Accra Region.

The young offenders aged from nine to seventeen are often admitted to the home through the courts. The children stay in the Remand home until their cases are disposed of at the courts. Some children stay for a long period in the home owing to delays in the court proceedings.

The Probation Wing.

The Osu Remand Home also has facilities for children released by the court on supervised probation with a condition of residence in the probation home. Probationers stay for a minimum of six months and a maximum of twelve months in the home. Children whose parents can afford are put in schools in the neighborhood during the probation period.

## CAS-GHANA

As with the remand children, the majority on probation are from the streets and therefore need to be supported to go through their vocational training. Even after one year, when they are discharged, they are allowed to continue and complete their courses.

Since 1996, CAS has offered 12 remand children sponsorship. The Department of Social Welfare attaches a social worker to the child and monitors the training of the child. However, CAS finances this training. CAS sees its role as an assistance to government's support for these children.

### **THE FUTURE OF THE SPONSORSHIP SCHEME:**

In terms of sustainability we plead with the society as a whole – the government of Ghana, non-governmental organizations, churches and the civil society to come to the aid of the scheme so that many children may be helped. On our part we hope to change our strategy on the preparation of children for Sponsorship. Also, we hope to employ some permanent staff to do the follow-ups for the scheme.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Street children should be educated to a JSS basic level to be a good apprentice. The apprentice should be able to read and write in English. The children should be well prepared and have the basic knowledge of English and Math's and other subjects.

Presently, many street children apprentices attend work irregularly; many are showing signs of laziness and mishandle the tools and equipment. They show a poor attitude, quarrel often and do not follow directions. However they have the physical strength to do the work.

## CAS-GHANA

Their conduct should be judged on an individual basis.

The preparation should include better career counselling. They should be trained to respect and be humble, and they should have deductive reasoning skills.

During training the apprentice should be supervised closely, receive regular visits from supervisors, have sufficient tools and the accommodation should be close to the workplace.

### **FOLLOW-UP:**

Street children follow training in schools and workshops. Often the schools are boarding schools and accommodation is provided for those who are following apprenticeship training in workshops.

At most, four or five children are placed in the same school. CAS has learnt from past experiences where larger groups of children were in the same school. This proved to be the wrong approach. Teachers treated the children differently and the children grouped together to demand their rights. The network of schools and workshops is very extensive presently (109 workshops and 65 schools).

Children in sponsorship have to be visited and encouraged to continue their education. They need logistical and financial support. Problems have to be solved and their progress monitored. Supervisors as well as follow-up coordinators are assigned to carryout this activity. At least once a month, a particular child is visited.

\*Sponsorship: George Afum Ansah, Paul Avevor, Charles Baffoe,

\*Follow-up: Patrick Gyereh, Faustina Awuku

## CAS-GHANA

### **VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL EDUCATION: FOLLOW UP RESEARCH**

CAS runs a sponsorship scheme for street children who wish to leave the streets and learn a trade. The scheme started in 1995 and by December 2002, 600 children would have been or are still in the scheme.

The majority of the children follow the apprenticeship system, but there are others who have gone to the various schools from kindergarten to university.

We conducted research in three phases, to assess:

- whether the children are well trained,
- whether those who are trained have established themselves in the trade
- what job opportunities are available in Ghana?

Some students of Legon and Accra Polytechnic assisted us in this research and we are very grateful to them.

### **APPRENTICESHIP SYTEM**

CAS is working together with employers of 109 workshops in and around the Accra Metropolitan area. 59 employers or children following training in various workshops were interviewed.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • 26 are trained only practical.          | - 54 are satisfied with the training      |
| • 21 in theory and practical.             | - 5 are not satisfied                     |
| • 1 is learning it by observation.        | - 46 of the supervisors were satisfied    |
| • 11 partly by observation and practical. | -13 of the supervisors were not satisfied |
| • 28 can speak the English language       | - 55 did not change the trade             |
| • 18 can write in English                 | - 4 changed the trade                     |
| • 31 cannot speak English                 |   |
| • 25 cannot write in English              | - 38 attended the training regularly      |
| • 3 can write a little                    | - 21 did not attend regularly.            |
| • 13 are not sure.                        |   |

## CAS-GHANA

- 23 used hand-tools during training
  - 21 machines
  - 15 machines and hand-tools.
  - 40 received a reward during training
  - 6 received a token
  - 13 did not receive a reward.
- 38 had a regular workload
  - 7 had a high workload.
  - 14 did not have a regular workload.

## PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

- 26 no problems
- 11 regulations of the workshop
- 10 lack of money
- 4 lack of trust
- 4 not enough tools
- 1 transport, 1 peer pressure, 1 sickness

## AFTER TRAINING

- 14 are of the opinion that they are well trained
- 3 compare themselves better than those trained previously
- 2 on equal level
- 40 does not know.

## SETTLED

- 15 are working in the trade they have learned
- 6 found immediate employment
- 3 waited for 3-8 and 16 months.
- 40 are waiting to be employed.

## SUPPORT RECEIVED AFTER TRAINING

- 24 advise received
- 1 extra tools
- 3 additional clothes
- 1 advise, clothes and funds
- 11 no support
- 15 extra funds received
- 1 extra education
- 2 accommodation
- 1 exam

## CONCLUSION

Children who have been trained in workshops are generally satisfied with their training and trade they had chosen.

Most of them have been trained practically while 12% of the children are trained theoretically as well. 16 % of the children who have been trained can speak English and 10% can write English.

Not many encountered problems with adaptation. Only 6% had problems with following the regulations prevailing in workshops. Although the apprenticeship training is going well, there are several difficulties with employment after training.

## CAS-GHANA

A number of traditional trades, although often chosen by children, do not have sufficient job opportunities any longer. Some of them can only be practiced in main cities and towns where there is electricity available, and sufficient market opportunities. Several of these trades are for girls and women, namely: hairdressing, sewing of women dresses, soap making.. The trades for men are; car mechanics, bricklaying, painting, and skills associated with electricity will become available.

A typical trade for men is carpentry and joinery. Children learning this trade should not limit it to carpentry and joinery alone, but should extend it to furniture making or internal decoration. Trained in this manner will create many more job opportunities.

Although the sewing trade for girls does not have many job opportunities, sewing for men does almost not exist.

Some years ago CAS asked GRATIS to conduct a feasibility study in the ceramic trade. The result of this study revealed that although all the raw materials for ceramics are available in Ghana, not many people choose this trade because the specialized training is not done here. Ghana imports many earthenware items. But these could be made locally.

We at CAS are trying to interest children in trades, which could have job opportunities later. Trades in the computer industry, electronics, catering, trades associated with the tourist industry. Others are candle making, rabbit rearing and bee keeping.

In general we can say that we should remain open to new ideas, but it is important that whenever a choice is made, the training should be good and thorough.

For us it means a minimum training of three years. During this period the grade two trades test should be conducted. Those

## CAS-GHANA

who are able should continue with their training. It is very important that the children obtain certificates, certificates which help them to get a job. Whenever possible, the children should follow additional classes in the English language so that they will be able to sit for theoretical tests as well. Without the English language, their chance to obtain a job diminishes.

### SCHOOLS

A number of children are in formal education (121) Street children are in primary schools, JSS and SSS or in vocational and technical institutes. During the first years of the sponsorship program, CAS grouped street children in one or two schools. This approach proved not to be good because the children were stigmatised by their fellow students and masters alike. Also, they grouped together to demand more assistance from CAS. Now, CAS sends only a few students to one particular school to avoid the above- mentioned problems.

We, interviewed the Headmaster and Mistresses. Some of them were not aware that they were training an ex street child. Some schools have poor administrative records and therefore were not aware where the children came from.

In general, the children performed well at school, only one of the children we sent, proved to be too weak academically. However, some schools demand so many items and contributions from parents and guidance that we as a charity could not provide.

In most schools, the other students accepted the children as friends. Ex-street children have no home to go to. Therefore accommodation was provided for them either in boarding or in a hostel. Nine of them stayed in private homes.

## CAS-GHANA

The Heads advised CAS to do more counselling so that the children are more respectful and study well. A few (3) of the children had a bad record at the school. Some Heads were very pleased with the children and asked for more children. However, some children like to travel home at times and do not return in time or do not ask for permission.

Street children who attend school become normal students and no longer associated with the streets.

### **SUSTAINABILITY OF CAS ACTIVITIES:**

*We at CAS have a problem with this word “sustainability”. Our \*evaluation report\* says this; it will not be helpful to look at “sustainability” in the narrow context of the project. A project of this kind is not and cannot in itself be sustainable. The main requirements are human resources and this implies financial resources, which do not and cannot generate income for the project.*

*The project is essentially a social service for which there can be no charge to the users. “Sustainability” must be looked at in the much wider context of society in general. The project should be seen as an investment in humans who on a longer-term basis will have made a sustainable life for themselves and their families, a life which is an alternative to life as a grown-up criminal.*

**\*Embedded evaluation-Cambridge Partnership for Organisational Transformation  
26, Benian’s Court, Storey’s Way, Cambridge CB3 0DN UK 1996**



**SUMMARY:**

Children are in the streets of Accra and other regional towns. They are there for various reasons, reasons, which cannot be solved easily. The problem of street children is very complex and has grown over the years. The data obtained and the researches conducted have revealed this complexity.

Policies for street children are needed in order to protect the children and minimize the growth of the street children population. We encourage the Ghanaian society to accept this phenomenon of street children and the reasons why they exist. Only a collective approach and good policies can reduce the problem. Therefore we have made an attempt to give suggestions for good policy.

**SUCCESS STORIES:**

**THE SUCCESS STORY OF SEKINATU ALI –  
HAIRDRESSING**

Sekinatu Ali is 21 years old now and presently handling her life as a mature young woman. Like most other street colleagues, Sekinatu never had the opportunity to enjoy real parental protection and love. She ended up early in life becoming a parent and also becoming responsible for a large family of about 10 including her stepsiblings. Eventually she left everything and went to the street. To her, she has no regrets because the street played a major role in shaping her life.

According to Sekina, she spent 4 years of her lifetime on the streets of Accra selling iced water and oranges for money. Born some 21 years ago at Bawku in the Upper East region of Ghana. She lost her father at a very tender age. Though she was lucky to have started a formal education she was also very unlucky to have come out of school without a formal certificate. She dropped out at primary 4 due to the death of her father. She later followed her stepfather to Accra.

According to her story, she left home as a result of the relationship between her stepfather and herself. According to her, “ I don’t want to recount my story with my stepfather. I simply don’t like him”. Though she recovered from that, she under-went a lot of street experiences, leading a rough type of life. When she left however, she took some things with her that today help her with her new type of life.

Sekina met CAS in 1999 and was registered as a visiting street child. According to her, she visited the Centre regularly and participated in almost all programmes run by the Centre. Sekina

## CAS-GHANA

also had the chance at the Centre to explore her talent as an actress.

According to her, she could not go into acting because of her problem with English language and some local languages like Ga and Ewe.

Sekina in the year 2000 had the chance of benefitting from the CAS sponsorship package. To her, “it was real hell going through 2 years training in Hairdressing under the supervision of my mistress”.

According her, “ I needed courage to work under my mistress because I was determined to learn the Hairdressing profession for my life”. She said: ‘I could have run away but I stayed, because of the motivation I received from CAS. They managed to supply me all I needed to go through my 2 years training. I never lacked anything from food, health care, clothes and accommodation”.

Though there were some ups and downs, she recounts them as part of life. Sekinatu was able to do a lot for herself during the 2 years training by occasionally working part-time to make a few Cedis. “ I managed to work hard in order to save money for my future”.

Presently, Sekinatu is out of training and running her own training centre in the city with the few Cedis she managed to save during her training. CAS has also decided to supply her some Hair dressing equipment to enable her to employ and train other children as well.

According to her, she is happy with CAS’ contribution to her new life and hopes to thank the project one day.

**THE SUCCESS STORY OF GEORGE AGYEPONG – A  
MINING ENGINEER**

George met CAS in 1995 when he was 16 years old and roaming the streets of the city selling carrier bags to raise money to support his life.

According to his story, he never had any serious problems in life as far as his daily needs and education is concerned. To him, his hatred for his society started when he hit the streets soon after completing successfully his junior secondary school education. His result was excellent. He came out with a distinction. However, George could not immediately continue his schooling because his father lost his job.

George met CAS around this time of his life through a catholic sister fieldworker. To him, he hated society because it was very difficult for him reconciling his two ways of life in terms of the general culture he had already acquired and the street culture he was steadily growing in.

According to George, though he regretted resorting to the street for survival, he had no choice because that was what the society decided to give him. Sometimes he had to fight his colleagues to survive. George got enrolled at CAS centre where he became a regular visiting child. He participated in a lot of programmes, benefited from a lot of counselling about the growing bitterness he had in him at that time.

George, after a year and half relationship with CAS benefited, from the sponsorship scheme. According to him, his whole world changed again when CAS offered him the opportunity in 1996 to go back to the classroom for a certificate and a profession. He passed the first 3 years of his senior secondary school education with distinction.

## CAS-GHANA

Soon after, he did a part-time teaching job to earn some Cedis to prepare him further in life. His result was again marvellous and qualified him to enter any university in the country.

Finally, in 1999, he enrolled at Kwame Nkrumah University via the school of Mines at Tarkwa to read mining engineering through CAS' support. George will graduate in July 2002. According to him, he is thankful to CAS because he is in the process of becoming a qualified engineer.

As part of his training, he has also benefited from a lot of mining practical and demonstration work with a lot of mining organizations. In all he had proved to be a hard working and committed student. George admitted that, CAS' role and contribution has helped to bring him far in life and hopes to pay CAS back one day.

Presently, he has been appointed as a Board member of CAS project representing the children's interests.

- \*Research –Health education: Margaretha Ubbels
- \*Research – Literacy : Terrence Robert Nelsen
- \*Research – Vocational/Technical education: CAS staff + lecturer and students of Accra Polytech
- \*Research – Exodus Report: Eric Beauchemin, Paul Avevor, Charles Baffoe

## CAS-GHANA

### SUGGESTED POLICY PROPOSALS FOR STREET CHILDREN IN GHANA.

These policies on street children are supplementary to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Febr. 1990) and the Children' Bill (1998).

#### **The Street Child.**

A street child is a child who lives in the streets. (Age group 0-18 yrs). S(he) often does not appear presentable. Keeps an unkempt hair. Is not well mannered and is often shabbily dressed. The child tries to survive and adopts various ways to do so. The street child is not supported by anyone.

A street child should be protected by law and be covered by the child rights and protection law.

#### **The Urban Poor Child.**

An Urban Poor Child is a child who finds him/herself in an urban setting and has some kind of home to go to where there is support, but is in the street because of lack of basic necessities of life. UN convention on the right of the child should be applied.

#### **The Root causes, the family:**

The reasons why street children are in the streets are mainly related to family breakdown and family problems (86%). 14% of the reasons are related to poverty and poverty related problems. (CAS findings). Therefore, the families of street children should receive counselling and be assisted and educated by the Department of Social Welfare.

**The children who are born in the streets:**

Children born in the street are the most vulnerable children because of the environment they live in. They are in constant danger of becoming ill, come in early contact with crime and unlawful practices. They grow up without any culture except the culture of the street. Therefore, these children should receive the full protection of the law.

**Abandoned Children:**

These unfortunate children, when identified should be placed in a foster-home or orphanages.

**The Society:**

Society should accept that street children exist and that they have formed their own culture. Awareness should be created for the plight of street children.

Therefore, family counselling groups and all the Social services available in the country should care for these social issues.

**Effective management with children who are already in the streets.**

The management of children in the streets implies the acceptance of this phenomenon. It also implies that NGOs are ready to listen to the children. Government should put together resources to tackle these problems.

Those who are willing to leave the streets should be prepared and given the opportunity to learn.

## CAS-GHANA

Those who want to stay in the streets should be advised on issues such as health, behaviour and cooperation with the authorities.

Those who are new in the streets should be counselled by professional social workers.

### **PREVENTION:**

Family counsel groups and facilities should be started in all districts. Church groups and other organisations should be encouraged to take care of families within their communities who cannot cope with their children. Organisation dealing with family planning methods should educate the parents.

The private sector should assist to lessen these social problems and create job opportunities.

The media should pay regular attention to educational social programs; such as HIV and AIDS, family planning, care of children, importance of education. Documentaries made in other African countries could be useful.

School programs should include information on children living in difficult circumstances (i.e. street children).

### **Programs; Shelter, Health care, Counselling services, education.**

The Ministry of Social Welfare and Health should be empowered to assist the children in the streets.

NGO's and other organisations should be assisted to provide immediate relief.

**Macroeconomic policy:**

“O” levels are the minimum levels of education required for employment. (CAS findings). Therefore, street children should be encouraged and assisted to be educated and find adequate opportunities to find a job.

**Child Labour: WORKING CHILDREN.**

In June 1999, an international human right law (ILO convention No 182) was adopted to tackle and eliminate the worst forms of child labour. These laws should be enforced in Ghana.

Definition:

Child labour is forced labour by means of exploiting the child physically and emotionally.

Labour:

There are various forms of child labour namely:

1. Children are asked to work in the farm or in the household after school.
2. Children are forced to sell items or beg in the streets. Usually they have to hand-over the profit or face punishment.
3. Children are lent to work for a fee. Parents lend their children to firms and parents receive compensation. These children are visited by their parents and or relatives and are allowed to go home at times. This kind of labour exists in the mining and wood industry, the agricultural and fishing sectors and servants such as house-help and chop bar attendant. Often these children are exploited. At times, girls as well as boys end up in prostitution.
4. Street children take on a small job for their survival.

## CAS-GHANA

### **Child prostitution:**

Many street girls, as young as 12 yrs (but also some street boys) are involved in prostitution. The young ones are trained in brothels and pimps control them.

The children should receive free medical care and be offered alternatives such as education and other job opportunities.

### **Child Abuse and Exploitation:**

This can take place in the families, but also in the streets. Children can be abused mentally, socially, physically, sexually and in work situations. The abuse can also be a result of cultural practices.

Law should prosecute offenders.

### **Teenage pregnancies:**

Teenage girls who become pregnant should be protected at all times. They should be counselled by professional social workers.

### **Advocacy:**

Creating awareness is an important task. Therefore the society should be informed about the facts of the phenomenon of street children.

### **City Authorities + Environment:**

The City Authorities should work hand in hand with NGO's and other organisations, which are on the street. City authorities should advise all people in the streets on places where to stay and where to work.

**The role of the GNCC and other bodies who protect children:**

- They have the mandate to coordinate child related programs, create the awareness and conduct advocacy. These bodies are advisory bodies, which prepare proposals to the government. The Children's Act was prepared in 1995. Another mandate is conducting research.

Catholic Action for street children- CAS  
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