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**The Phenomenon of Street Children in Kenya: A Case Study
of Bosco Boys, Kuwinda, Nairobi**

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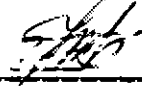
NAIROBI- KENYA

Student's Declaration

I hereby declare that the material used herein has not been submitted for
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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my brothers Aron and Surafiel.

“ You are always in my heart”.

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Finally, I am deeply grateful to my family and relatives for their support and also my friends and classmates for their encouragement and help.

ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

DEWARECE: De La Salle Watoto Rehabilitation Centre

FP: Family Planning

HIV: Human Immune Deficiency Virus

ILO: International Labour Organization

Kshs: Kenyan Shilling

MP: Members of Parliament

NGOs: Non-governmental Organization

UNICEF: United Nations Children Fund

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Kenya is among countries regarded ^{is regarded or is developing} as developing in the Third World. It also is among the African countries with a high rate of a population migrating into urban centres.

~~Majority~~ ^{and the rest?} of such population are in search for employment and better living conditions believed to be available in urban centres due to high technological advancements in towns.

Kenya also ranks among African countries with a very high rate of a second class generation of street children in most of its main urban centres.

Like the rest of the African countries, Kenya has many street children between ages four and eighteen who spend the major part of their lives in city streets. This phenomenon is one of the many social problems confronting the contemporary world. It is rapidly becoming of a terribly and glaring challenge particularly in the urban but also rural areas.

"The street child phenomenon was first noticed in Nairobi in the 1960s. Street children were then known as "parking boys". This term was generally used by people in the early 1970s instead of the phrase "street children."¹ The former term is derived from one of their popular activities, namely, directing motorists to available parking spaces along crowded kerbs, especially during peak hours. These children would the cars until the wo drivers returned. The drivers would usually give them tips. Their tips ^{Construction} depended on the generosity of the drivers.

Street children are posing a serious problem in Nairobi. Some leave their homes because they are forced into the streets in order to contribute to their families and to ~~themselves~~ meager incomes in whatever way they can. They engage themselves in shining shoes, selling newspapers, hauling garbage, begging, prostitution, washing cars, guarding cars and carrying luggage. The phenomenon of street children presents a serious social

1. ANPPCAN, Hearing on Street Children in Kenya: a Report on a Hearing Held in Nairobi. Nairobi: ANPPCAN, 1995.

challenge in Kenya. It needs to be considered carefully by individuals, communities, the society as a whole as well as international non-governmental organization (NGOs). Children need guidance in moral discipline and responsibility from parents. And leaders, the government, NGOs and churches should be good role models in the society. Here in Kenya, factors accounting for this phenomenon are multi-faceted and embrace socio-economic, cultural, political, spiritual and environmental realities. In particular, they include poverty, ethnic clashes, disease, unemployment, family disintegration, single parenthood, child labour, lack of parental love and care and other forms of child abuse right from their home.

The question of street children in Nairobi and other Kenya's urban centres has become one of the main social problems among others that demand an urgent and profound answer from everybody. City streets have turned out to be spheres of influence and attraction for this fast growing generation of street children. Hence the visible reality of large numbers of children of school-going age flocking in the urban-centres in Kenya. A country which is concerned about the future welfare and potentialities of its people must give top priority the proper upbringing of its children. Accordingly, every person should have a role to play in order to support the innocent street children.

There is a national steering committee in Nairobi. It focuses on the challenge of street children. A significant number of NGOs are emerging to deal with the plight of street children. Included in the NGOs are churches and foreign organizations. The Don-Bosco is a case in point. It is involved in rehabilitating street children into a normal life through providing training and counselling services. It provides a temporal home for the children as they undergo rehabilitation.

Memorandum of Don Bosco

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.0 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Don Bosco: a French and founder of Salesian Institute or congregation.

Street children: children, who shelter in the streets. They eat and earn their living from the garbage. Street children can be defined as “ those boys and girls who dwell on the streets with the purpose of making a living for themselves and their families. Accordingly, all children aged between three and twenty-five years who live, beg and work in the streets and those aged below three years who live and beg with their families in the street can be termed as street children. Three categories of street children can be identified:

1. “Full-time street children: those who work and live within the streets and have nothing or very little to do with their families.
2. Part-time street children: those who work or beg in the streets but return to their homes at night.
3. Temporary visitors: these are children who come to the streets during school holidays or special days for the purpose of begging or working.”²

Rehabilitation: the process of restoring or re-establishing a street child to his/her former state. It is a process restoring or bringing back street children to a condition of health or usefulness and constructiveness in the society.

² UNICEF Report, 1996, p. 20.

Undugu society: it is a name of organization that deals with street children. It is derived from the Kiswahili word for brotherhood, hence captures the core focus of the organization.

Slum: a residential area /place within a city. Slum is a squalid section of a city, characterized by overcrowded houses and people inferior living conditions. Slum areas lack adequate and proper human habitation facilities such as housing/shelter, electricity, water, sanitation, roads, schools, health centres and security.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of street children is almost a worldwide phenomenon, prevalent in urban areas, especially in the less developed countries. "In Kenya, street children were initially identified in the late 1960s as 'parking boys' but the problem of the street children began to be explicitly felt in 1970s."³

Initially, their number was negligible. However, with time, the number of street children is rapidly increasing day in day out. This reality poses a real dilemma to the society especially in view of the accompanying worrying implications. One cannot avoid wondering how best to respond to this problematic issue.

The living conditions of the street children are serious. These children are on the street out of sheer compulsions to survive. Those in Nairobi must strive to earn their daily bread. Some of them have to carry very heavy luggage, shine shoes, hawk small goods, wash cars, and perform scores of other jobs to support themselves and their families at very tender and early ages.

³ ANPPCAN, Hearing on Street Children in Kenya: A Report on a Hearing Held in Nairobi. Nairobi:

ANPPCAN, 1995.

The street children are exposed to bad weather and other risks while on streets. These children move around most of the time starving. They are vulnerable to various forms of chronic health problems, for example, cold, cough, malaria, typhoid, gastritis, anaemia and Tuberculosis (TB). They face the risk of deadly diseases such as HIV/AIDS and are subjected to physical and psycho-emotional abuse. Some are handicapped ~~physically or mentally~~ and are mostly involved in begging.

Besides, they are also prone to harassment by the public and even the police. And often, they fall prey to deviant habits and criminal activities. Most of them have lost contact with their families altogether and live on streets on their own, exposed to suffering. In their struggle for survival on the streets, such children are confronted with other difficult situations including malnutrition, improper food, clothing, shelter and sexual abuse. Other abuses are violence, child labour and depression.

There are individual, church, NGOs and government efforts to address this challenging reality. But the problem of street children rather than decreasing is in fact increasing. Evidently, we continue witnessing more street children in Nairobi. This leads us to ask ourselves some very pertinent questions. Is street life extremely damaging to the children physically, spiritually and mentally? Is it that those involved are not fully aware of the root causes? Have they studied such causes before initiating their projects? Is it that their methods are not effective? Could it be that they lack networking? These questions invite a research inquiry which this project hopes to respond to. Specifically, we will be guided by the undermentioned research questions.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the main root causes of the phenomenon of street children?
2. Why are street children apparently increasing in number yearly?

study of children

3. What do street children encounter on the streets?
4. What is the view of the public about street children?
5. What have families, the NGOs, the Church, the government, and the society at large done so far in search of meaningful solutions to the plight of street children?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the life experiences of the street children.
2. To explore factors underlying the phenomenon of street children.
3. To analysis the response of the Church, through Bosco -Boys, to the challenge of street children.

4. To make recommendations on how to concretely, through designing a project

proposal for street children, respond to their plight.

what is new in your recommendation?

1.4 BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

1. The life experiences of street children are pathetic.
2. There are street children in Bosco Boys from different slums because of poverty.

3. There are street children because of broken families.

4. There are street children because of ethnic clashes.

5. The response of the Church to the phenomenon of street children has not been effective.

6. A more integral approach is needed to alleviate the challenge of street children.

1.5 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The study deals with street children, one of our today's biggest social problem in Nairobi. Findings will, therefore, be a great contribution to not only the understanding of the problem, but also reaching a solution.

The research focuses on the wider capacity of looking at all the possibilities to deal with the problem and take probable actions in order to solve it. The study attempts to find out factors that are said to be core causes of the challenge of street children in Nairobi. The study gives prospects and recommendations in order to eradicate or minimize the plight of street children.

Most studies undertaken before ignore the importance of integral approaches in responding to the challenging reality of street children. The present study hopes to supplement these studies by underlining the importance of corporate efforts as the effective way to addressing the phenomenon of street children.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews literature related to our area of research interest. The literature reviewed deals specifically with factors underlying the phenomenon of children in the streets. Some of the major root causes include poverty, family breakdown, drug abuse, child labour, ethnic clashes, lack of parental love and care as well as family planning, among others. These are quite loud problems. They need to be addressed if the problem of street children has to be brought to minimal levels. The chapter is based on reference books, magazines, newspapers, long essays and full-scale projects related to our subject.

2.1 POVERTY

"Poverty means lack of sufficient material and cultural resources to sustain a healthy existence."⁴ Poverty is a culturally derived concept measured in terms of cultural expectations. It is relative to the extent in which human beings believe they are deprived of the necessities of life. Poverty is a low standard of living that undermines the health, moral and self-respect of an individual or a group of individuals. The term poverty is related to dissatisfaction and of a misery kind of living in the society. These lead to loss of one's self-dignity and respect. As a result, victims of poverty look for undesirable resorts of drug, drink, alcohol, domestic violence and irresponsibility, among others.

Hunger in societies ravages most people. Unattended to or neglected, the situation can be widespread and devastating. When it reaches threatening and alarming levels, the

⁴David Jary & Julia Jary, Ed. Unwin Hyman Dictionary of Sociology. (New York: Harper Collins Publications, 1995), p. 512.

government, in a crisis-management way, usually attempts to intervene without adequate preparation as if in the first place, it was unaware of the poor situation. Poor people should be helped to live with awareness that it is also their responsibility to bring about change towards a more comfortable life.

Millions of people in Africa are victims of chronic hunger. The wealth of many African countries is in the hands of only a few powerful rulers and those in charge. People themselves have failed to look for important issues. For example, in December 2001, I interviewed James Kihara, one of the street children in Kuwinda slum on how he got a chance in Don Bosco. He narrated of how they were displaced from Kibera slums when a Member of Parliament (MP) announced the lowering of rental rates to 25% without the consent of landlords. This caused war between tenants and landlords. As a result, most families lost their properties and had no place for shelter since their dwelling places and properties were destroyed through arson. If the MP of the area could have convened a meeting to discuss initiating a project that could uplift their standards of living, this could be appropriate. Unfortunately, he had not. This phenomenon of war has led to lack of food, shelter, and even education. "It is unjust for some members to live in great luxury, well protected while his/her neighbour lives in object poverty. One becomes less human while another becomes more human."⁵ This MP has instead inflicted pain and worsened the already deplorable condition of the likes of Kibera who now feel totally displaced with life which has no meaning at all.

The reality of street children is inseparable from poverty. Many of these children who are in the streets are from poor families. Majority of poor families live in slum areas. Healthwise, slum-dwellers are poor, characterized by inadequate or deplorable shelter,

⁵ George Kinoti, Hope for Africa and What the Christians Can Do. (Nairobi: International Bible Society Africa, 1997), p. 15.

food, clothing and sanitation. For children who come from such families, there is no difference really between sleeping on the street, or inside a plastic hut in the slums. The slum shelters are too small to accommodate a family. Hygienic conditions are virtually non-existent. There are hardly any decent toilet facilities; there are limited or no space at all in or around the buildings, leave alone access roads. Overcrowding is explicit hence diseases can spread rampantly. Food is a major problem in the sense that many families cannot afford adequate, and safe food. Parents and their children get up in the morning and sometimes go to bed without having eaten anything.

Poverty is a big problem here in Kenya. Many people do not have adequate food, shelter, land, or livestock. They are forced to abandon their children. As a result, children must seek for alternative survival strategies outside their families. Accordingly, some become beggars and if they do not get anything, they resort to stealing.

Because of hard life, the street children become tough and aggressive. They begin fending for themselves in the streets. Initially, they go back home but eventually they make the streets their homes. Poverty in Kenya can be categorized into two: primary and secondary. Primary poverty arises when the income of an individual or family is insufficient to provide for the basic needs required for physical efficiency. Secondary poverty arises from the mismanagement of an income that otherwise has been sufficient for the satisfaction of basic human needs. Parents find themselves unable to afford the basic needs required by their children. This is mainly due to economic hardships and unemployment. When children find themselves lacking life basics such as clothing, food, and shelter at home, they opt to run to the streets to have the unmet needs met by the street context. They receive food and other handouts from well-wishers to supplement what they scavenge for as waste food from dustbins.

2.2 UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment is a situation where one who is able to work looks for a salaried job in vain. Cases of this kind abound in Nairobi. Many people continue to stream from rural to urban areas in search for employment. Already, those with skills and professional training and experience cannot easily find employment. Yet most of those in the rural to urban exodus have very limited trade skills. They find it extremely difficult to get jobs in urban areas. Pitted against very hostile socio-economic situations, some of them neglect or abandon their families. Others send their children to look for whatever work they can find in order to survive. The children are sent to sell petty items such as sweets, fruits, groceries and papers, among other things. Apart from the throat-cutting competition on the streets as they jostle for customers, they have to battle it out with City Commission *askaris*, who regard their survival enterprises as illegal.

In certain cases, parents move to various towns to find for the children and for themselves better facilities such as education, good lifestyle, clean water and electricity. They end up with no job and no money. The result is to encourage their children to survive on their own. Unemployment brings for many people frustrations and despair. Because of this, the number of street children continues to swell unabatedly.

2.3 FAMILY BREAK-DOWN

By broken families is meant families in which the parents are divorced or separated.⁶ Family breakdown or disintegration is one of the underlying factors for the children in the streets. Consequently, too much responsibility is levied on one parent. This may result into poor planning of family matters and non-observance of basic duties that

⁶ A.S Hornby, Ed. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. (Oxford: Oxford University Press. Publication, 1997), p. 142.

... in the meaning of
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solidifies a family. As such "children take to the street as a clear option, especially in families of single mothers, who are disadvantaged by their inferior position to which women are often subjected in relation to property rights."⁷

When parents separate or divorce, children are the first casualties to suffer socially, economically, morally and psycho-emotionally. Sometimes when a family breaks up, both parents refuse taking responsibility for their children. Children have to fend for themselves in the streets since they are abandoned and nobody wants to take care of them.

There are cases where children lose their parents either accidentally or through diseases like AIDS. This leaves the children without any guardian, especially when there are no close relatives. Sometimes parents are maimed or killed during wars or ethnic clashes in their own countries or forced to seek asylum or refuge in exile due to political reasons. They might leave their children behind with nobody to take care of them. This way, children end up on streets due to lack of proper care.

God bestows upon parents the responsibility of pro-creating and taking full responsibility in providing the offsprings with the necessities of life like clothing, education and spiritual growth. A big number of street children are, therefore, victims of broken families.

2.4 SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES

Single-parent families are said to be a major causative factor to the phenomenon of street children today. Single parent family refers to a family with one parent and one or more children. The cause of single parent family could be separation or divorce from husbands who walked away or died. Some women had children after being raped or

⁷ ANPPCAN, Hearing on Street Children in Kenya: A Report on Hearing Held in Nairobi. (Nairobi: APPCAN, 1995), p.18.

through trial marriages. Others also bore children through incest from a cousin or other relatives.

Generally, women have not had ample access to education like their male counterparts hence very few of them are economically independent of men. When they are rendered single-parents, the burden is often extremely and strenuously overwhelming. They cannot adequately satisfy the basic needs of the children. Apart from ensuring the survival of its members, a family must provide a proper atmosphere for them to develop physically, socially, emotionally, morally, intellectually and spiritually in order for them to live meaningfully in a society. When a parent is left alone, this becomes an uphill task, particularly for a mother. And often, many of them, lose most, if not all benefits they had before after a relationship breaks. When a family experiences a breakdown of the union, children may go to the streets. Though single parents could refer to either single mothers or single fathers, many street children come from single mother families.

Problems related to single parenthood could be as follows:

- Loneliness could be a major problem. The single mother feels insecure without a husband to protect her.
- The community generally does not respect a woman having children at home without a husband. It views such women as unfaithful. This results in a stigma on those who have children outside marriage. Children also lack identity: everyone is called by a father's name. Not to be called by the father's name is abusive.
- Single mothers feel that the Church has no good place for them. Single mothers feel that they are far from God and far from Christians. Often, they are condemned and not appreciated or valued in Church. These women feel like condemned people/outcasts.

The majority of single parents are girls and women streaming from rural to urban areas with the hope of earning money for their lives. The women use any means in order to survive but end up in the mentioned pathetic situations. Single parents find it very difficult to provide the basic needs for their children and themselves. Other times, men run away from their wives, leaving the latter to remain with children. These problems affect the children and also the whole society. Because of these difficult situations, they are very needy and become vulnerable to any relationship with a man who appears to understand. Unfortunately, many of such men simply take advantage of them for sexual gains. When pregnancy results from such relationship, they are abandoned by the men and left with the burden of raising the child. Hence the single mothers are not able to provide basic needs. As a result, the children run away from home to go and live in streets where they may become thieves.

2.5 CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse may arise in different ways. Sexually, a parent or guardian may abuse the child by having sexual relations with her. A parent or parents may also inflict excessive pain or violence on children in the name of discipline. For instance, a parent brutally cautions, burns or tortures in some way a child over some minor offence. Child abuse may manifest itself as mental injuries where a parent uses abusive and devastating language or locking the child in a room as a form of punishment.

Child abuse may also arise when a parent denies the child food or adequate clothing. There is also "denial of a child's education, recreation, normal socialization process that enables the child to be integrated in the society."⁸ This affects children

⁸ Fabio Dallape . An Experience With Street Children. (Nairobi: Undugu Society of Kenya, 1997), p. 104.

physically, mentally, spiritually and sexually. This lack of love leads a child to look for another source of love and the streets may just produce the apparent right environment to such child.

2.6 CHILD LABOUR

Closely related and identified with child abuse is child labour. It could be defined as the activity of a human person whereby the necessities of life are satisfied and one's abilities are applied in accordance with his will and capabilities.⁹ But defining child labour remains elusive.¹⁰ This is because children often work for their own interest or to enhance their own development, without necessarily disrupting their education, their health, their recreation or their up-bringing. They may also work alongside parents as part of the enculturation process, which is positive in every society. Nevertheless, child labour is deemed to exist when the work children do is exploitative. It has been defined as the engagement of a child under sixteen years of age in the labour force to the detriment of his/her education, mental, intellectual, physical or moral development and social well being. This child labour involves full-time work at an early age, working long hours under inhuman conditions and exposure to undue physical, social and psychological stress for low wages. It occurs when this type of work hampers access to education. Generally it inhibits children's development or undermines their dignity such as was and still is found in the case of slavery or bonded labour and of sexual exploitation.

Child labour is a world phenomenon, not a problem that is limited to poor countries. It can hardly be eliminated without addressing poverty. Although it is true that

⁹Robert C. Broderic, The Catholic Encyclopedia, (U.S.A : Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1976), p. 333.

¹⁰ Aylward Shorter & Edwin Onyancha, Street Children in Africa: Nairobi Case Study, (Nairobi: Pauline Publication, 1999), p.52-53.

poor countries constitute a vast reservoir of child labourers, especially street children, it is important to try and eliminate child labour. This involves wider measures aimed at reducing poverty. For instance, some parents stop their children from school in order to have them employed so as to support the family. In such cases, children escape home to urban centres where they seek their own employment as house-helpers. It turns out that after a long life experience in urban life loitering on the streets without a job, such children turn to street life. It is common, in African families, to see children working in their home. Girls attend to young brothers and sisters and help their mothers with all sorts of domestic chores. Boys follow their fathers and grown-ups. This is part of the education parents give to their children and is not considered as child labour.

When families are very poor, they feel compelled to hire and send out their children to earn some money. This is done either directly or through middle-people. The children then become commodities, which are marketed or sold. In this case, the protective family structure is "substituted by" the imbalance of power between the employer and the child. The child becomes totally dependent upon the living conditions provided by the employer and the consequences are denial of education, denial of recreation, poor health and denial of the normal socialization process that enables the child to be integrated within the society. Girls tend to be sexually exploited. At times they hate life and end up as street children. Others are treated like slaves; they also need freedom and so they try to find it in the streets.

2.7 ETHNIC CLASHES

Ethnic associations are very important in Africa. People feel at home when they speak their mother tongue. This is the medium in which they like to exchange ideas, messages, so as to keep in close contact with others who belong to the same ethnic groups, especially in the urban centres. In many countries, however, the

uses of the local language or the associations related to ethnic groups have been labeled tribalistic.¹¹

But the truth is that the many conflicts that have taken place since the independence of most African countries are a sign that a flag, a political and a territorial boundary, did not unite peoples to the extent that they could consider themselves as one nation. On October 29, 1991 ethnic clashes erupted, for the first time, at Miteitei Farm, Nandi District on the border of the Rift Valley, Nyanza and Western provinces. At their peak, the clashes affected 3 out of 8 provinces and nearly 20 out of Kenya's 62 districts. By November 1993, over 1500 people had been killed and more than 300,000 others displaced. Most of clashes was in the Rift Valley. They were sent away from their lands. Their homes were burnt and their properties grabbed or destroyed. Many of them came to urban areas where they did not have relatives. Since then,

Life became difficult and some remained in the streets.

Kenya needs to overcome ethnic clashes, which create division among the citizens. For example, the 1992 ethnic clashes like many others, left innocent people dead and without property. Those who survived made their way into towns or scattered far away in order to escape. Streets became the only safe haven for them. It is in the streets that refugees could search for food. Ethnic clashes affect the whole nation in various aspects. They contribute towards underdevelopment, splitting families, displacement of people, destroying human and natural resources. As a result, children become orphans without mothers and fathers or even both. Among the options the innocent children have taken are to go into the streets in order to survive. It was surprising that sometimes at the Bosco Boys Centre, a child could tell the researcher that he did not know Nairobi well,

¹¹ Marioi Agular. The Rwanda Genocide and Call to Deepen Christianity in Africa. (Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publication, 1998), pp 22-23.

that he walked many miles to come to Nairobi. He did not have a relative in Nairobi hence remained in the streets.

2.8 HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS(HIV)/ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME (AIDS)

Currently, HIV/AIDS in Kenya poses a serious threat, compounding the phenomenon of street children. At least 600 people are reported to die daily as a result of AIDS and related illnesses. In this case, children are left orphans. AIDS orphans have been found to face increasing difficulties in locating a secure place within the extended family network. The household dynamics do not favour them. The decision by the extended family to foster orphaned children is not necessarily a matter of economics. Most of the families that agreed to foster a child were living below the poverty line, whereas the wealthier relatives tend to minimize their links with the orphans. When these wealthier families' members offered their help, it was not enough.

HIV /AIDS has not only affected children but also the whole of the society in one way or another. HIV /AIDS, perhaps, more than any other disease in the history of humankind, has a direct effect on one's chances for education. HIV /AIDS destroys an individual's self-esteem, curtails personal freedom, has a devastating psychological effects and can be a day-to -day nightmare for those who have developed full blown AIDS.

"HIV /AIDS is common among street children. This should not surprise us in view of their being so sexually active."¹² The street child phenomenon is therefore linked

12 Aylward Shorter & Edwin Onyancha. Street Children in Africa. Op. Cit, p.110.

to the question of AIDS awareness, AIDS prevention and the care of people living with AIDS.

2.9 Family Planning (FP)

Kenya's FP programme started in 1967. It is the oldest in the region. But until recently, FP had a negligible impact on the use of contraceptives and fertility. For a long time until the early 1980s Kenya had the highest levels of fertility in Sub-Saharan Africa. The ineffectiveness of Kenya's FP programme is attributed to lack of government's commitment to family planning and the programmatic emphasis on the supply side of family planning rather than on effort towards changing norms regarding family size. Yet this would be said of the period to 1978, because from 1979 the government's attention to FP and the broadening of FP programmes have been noticeable.

The change in government's policy to family planning has yielded significant changes in levels of contraceptive use and fertility. The use of contraceptives among currently married women increased from 6.8% in 1977/78 to 17% in 1984, 26.9% in 1989 and 32.7% in 1993.¹³

On the other hand, fertility declined from a high percentage of 8.1 children per women in 1977/78 to 7.7 in 1989 and 5.4 in 1993, the decline being slower (0.4 children) during the earlier period (1977/78 to 1989, and 1.3 children from 1989 to 1993). The decline in fertility has been happening when use of modern contraceptive methods among currently married women has been sharply increasing (from 4.3% in 1977/78 to 9.7% in 1984, 17.9% in 1989 and 27.3% in 1993). Still many of the children met in the streets say that they came from large families. Meagre resource with many mouths to feed, bodies to cloth etc, will always give option into the streets.

¹³Gule Gugulethu. African Population Paper No. 2: A Review of Family Planning in Sub-Saharan Africa. (Africa: African Publication and Environment Institute), 1994.

2. 10 CONCLUSION

This chapter has reviewed literature on street children. Factors underlying the phenomenon of street children have been identified and discussed. Evidently, their situation is pathetic, calling for profound response of the society. This is why, in addition to secondary sources, we had to experience their situation and talk to them and those who work with them. In this way, we hoped to get their views to help us meaningfully develop effective strategies to confront their situations. This is addressed in our Chapter Four. But before going to that, let us see in the next chapter, the research methodology that helped us in procuring data.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on research methodology. It comprises a description of the research sites, sample procedures, data collection procedures and methods of data analysis.

3.1 DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH SITES

The theme of the study revolves around the phenomenon of street children in Kenya with special reference to Don Bosco Boys, Kuwinda in Nairobi. In this case, although Nairobi City is the main focus, other different areas within it are included. Thus, Bosco Boys, Kuwinda; Bosco Boys Rehabilitation Centre Langata; Bosco Boys, Karen; De La Salle Centre; Sacred Heart Brothers and St. Charles Lwanga Brothers were areas from which the researcher got respondents.

3.2 SAMPLING PROCEDURES

Majority of respondents were male with very few female. The number of females are 8 and that of males 152. Once again, targeted centres in this study were Bosco Boys, Kuwinda; Bosco-Boys Rehabilitation Centre Langata and Bosco Boys, Karen. These centres deal with many street children and have offices that assist the children hence were chosen in order to provide the experience and information pertinent to our study focus. Our respondents were in three categories. First, there were street children. Second, there were those in Bosco Boys, Kuwinda and, third, people working with street children. The latter include religious, lay people and social workers. We interviewed about 12% boys from Don Bosco Boys Kuwinda, as representative sample of the whole population. We

used random sampling to get interviewees, particularly small and young boys. We contacted them through the Director as well as brothers and friends working there.

3.3 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The researcher collected data with the help of four research assistants who were two brothers, a social worker and a lay person. These had experience in encountering the reality of street children. To overcome the problem of language barriers, Kenyan brothers helped in interpretation during our communication with street children. Most of them used Kswahili. It was easy since these brothers understood the language of these children.

To conduct this research, various methods of data collection were employed. They were used in surveying the challenge of street children in the society. In so doing, both primary and secondary data were required. To generate the former, field research encompassing techniques of interviews, questionnaires, participation and observation were used.

3.3.1 Primary Data Collection

As mentioned already, primary data was collected particularly during field research which we conducted for two and a half months from June to August, 2000. These methods were helpful to the researcher. Let us briefly look at them.

1. Questionnaires

The questionnaires were administered to target various categories of respondents in Bosco Boys, Kuwinda; Bosco Boys Rehabilitation Centre Langata; St. Martin's Rehabilitation Centre Huruma- Kariobangi; Bosco Boys, Karen Town and Uhuru Park. A total number of 160 questionnaires were prepared and administered to street children and

religious people as already mentioned. The purpose was to get to the root cause of the challenge of street children. This was designed to assess the awareness of people's responsibility about the problem of street children. Out of the said 160 questionnaires only 108 were returned. This 68 % return was quite impressive.

2. Interviews

Scheduled interviews were carried out to establish various opinions of street children, parents and people working with street children. Interview schedules were for street children, social workers, lay people, and religious brothers and sisters. We interviewed social workers about the root causes of street children their needs, the role of church and the role of government in addressing the plight of street children. We also interviewed children living on the streets. Their historical background; reasons for their being on the street; and their future prospects formed our research focus. We used random sampling design to get the interviewees to give us the information we needed.

3. Participation and observation

Participation and observations were also instrumental in collecting primary data. We had our two and half month's experience in the field research in Bosco Boys, Kuwinda, in June to August 2000. During that time, we participated in various activities in Bosco Boys Kuwinda. These included teaching, playing, and working with the boys. Having such experience with these boys, we had observed different personality/characteristic traits from them. For example, some of the boys had discipline problems in classrooms, in the dinning room, and in various games. They would engage in fighting each other as well as express a " don't-care" attitude. If a stranger talked to them, they seemed unconformable

and would run away. On the other hand, some of them had very good personality and behaviour, displaying respect to people. Some were very intelligent in class.

3.3.2 Secondary Data Collection

Secondary data collection in this study was from various sources, in particular through library research work. Most helpful were Tagaza College Library, Catholic University of Easter Africa (CUEA) Library, Hekima College Library, De Paul Library, and De La Salle Library. In these libraries, were books, newspapers, magazines and the Internet which we reviewed. From library research, we gathered three categories of data. First, was information on socio-demographic and educational aspects of street children. Second, was the type and nature of work done by street children and related factors. Third, was data on problems confronting street children. This library research was helpful in our chapter on literature review.

3.4 METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

In the process of analyzing and interpreting the data collected, the researcher applied some elementary statistical tools. These tools include tables, frequencies and percentages.

The formula used to calculate the percentage is given as $F/N * = \%$

Where: N is the total number of respondents.

F is the frequency of occurrence of the problem.

Discussions were used to interpret tables, relating frequencies and percentages and other vital information. This is what has constituted data analysis out of which some conclusions have been drawn. On the basis of this analysis, some recommendations have been made. Let us then move to the next chapter on data analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Three dealt with the research design and methodology. This helps us to progress to the present chapter which focuses on data presentation, analysis and discussion. The data presented in this chapter was collected in various ways so that it could guide us towards analysis. It gives the findings gathered through questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires were administered to target groups in the Bosco Boys, Kuwinda and street children who live on the streets. Those interviewed were 28 from Bosco Boys and 49 street children from Nairobi City and also fifteen social workers and religious people:

4.1 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The period from the middle of January to the end of March, 2002 was spent on data analysis. It is pretty hard to dig out exact information about Kenyan street children. The majority of street children have adapted a peculiar way of telling their life history. They lie about their family background, ages and reasons leading to their presence in streets. It is understandable that this is their survival technique world-wide.

as how did he come out with the
Again, emotional reactions to the street children make it difficult to remain objective and to report accurately about them. Researchers are forced to make their inferences. This, however, undermines the children's ability to emerge as real human beings in their difficult situations. Due to this unclear picture, one cannot easily judge their honesty and sincerity. Also, the researcher remains sceptical about his/her perception and the accuracy of his/her research work. The researcher examined factors related to the

phenomenon of street children to come up with effective strategies. The role of the Church in addressing the problem of street children through rehabilitation programmes was also considered. The samples below were used to reinforce the analysis of the data collected. We made attempts to present the data in two categories, namely, questions to children who live on the streets and those in Bosco Boys, Kuwinda.

Table 1: Age Profile of Respondents

Response	Questionnaire A		Questionnaire B		Average total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
10- 19	42	86	11	40	53	63
20 - 29	6	12	14	50	20	31
30 - 39						
40 - 49						
N/R	1	2	3	11	2	7
Total	49	100	28	100	77	100

The above Table 1, illustrates the different ages of the children who live on the streets and in Bosco Boys, Kuwinda. From the table, an average of 63% of street children walked out from their home at the early age and live on the streets. It shows that the problems of these street children started right from their homes. Some of the factors that pushed children to the streets were poverty, family break-down, and child abuse, among others. These children tried to search for their basic needs out of their own home.

How did they manage at such a young age?

Table 2: Gender Differences of Street Children Who Responded to the Questionnaires

Response	Questionnaire: A		Questionnaire: B		Average total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Female	8	16			8	8
Male	40	82	28	100	68	91
N/R	1	2			1	1
Total	49	100	28	100	77	100

Table 2 reflects the gender differences which we have on the streets of Nairobi. In this data analysis, 91% of the respondents were boys. There were 8% girls. The number of boys is growing very fast rather than decreasing. ^{why?} These children are on the streets because of different reasons including, peer pressure, family problems and ethnic clashes.

Table 3a: Living Parents and Guardians of Street Children

Response	Questionnaire A						Questionnaire B						Ave. %		
	Alive						Alive						Yes	No	N/R
	Yes		No		N/R		Yes		No		N/R				
F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%				
Father	2	5	22	45	2	4	1	4	1	3	6	21	47	40	15
Mother	3	6	14	29	2	4	1	5	9	3	4	14	61	31	9
Guardian	1	2	36	75	1	2	1	5	3	1	9	32	41	43	17

Table 3a points out whether the street child's parent/guardian is alive or not. It discloses that 47% of the street children knew that their father was alive. The table shows that 61% of the street children knew that their mother was alive. Some 47% of the street children did not know about their guardians. This table shows us that 61% of street children know more about their mother than their father or guardian. These children went to the streets at an early age hence do not know the guardian and their own background. It seems that majority are from single-mother families. As we got the information from the respondents,

these street children did not know the background of their parents because of death, ethnic clashes and family break-down.

Table 3b: Parents and Guardians of Street Children Known

Response	Questionnaire A						Questionnaire B						AVE. %		
	Known						Known						Yes	No	N/R
	Yes		No		N/R		Yes		No		N/R				
F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%				
Father alone	19	39	8	16	22	45	13	46	5	18	10	36	43	17	41
Mother Alone	28	57	8	16	13	27	14	40	1	4	13	46	54	10	37
Guardian	10	20	1	2	38	78	10	30	2	7	16	57	28	5	68

The above Table 3b shows that a number of the street children know their parents/guardians. As the table indicates, an average of 43% of street children know their father, 54% know their mother, and 28% their guardians. The results indicate that a good number of these children know their parents. Majority of them know their mothers than fathers. That means that they come from single-mothers families. This may underline economic factors as being the reason for them being on the streets. Thus, their mothers cannot adequately cater for their diverse but basic needs, particularly in an urban situation where the cost of living is prohibitively high.

Table 4: Siblings

Response	Questionnaire A		Questionnaire B	
	F	%	F	%
Brothers	42	86	27	96
N/R	7	14	1	4
Sisters	42	86	24	86
N/R	7	14	4	14

Table 4 indicates that the majority of street children have brothers and sisters. From Questionnaires A, 86% of street children have more than two brothers. According to Questionnaire B from the Bosco Boys, 96% have brothers. Besides, questionnaires A and B record 14% and 4% lack of response respectively. They expressed uncertainty over knowledge as to whether or not they had brothers and sisters. It could be understood to mean that these children left home at an early age to live on the streets. But the table shows that they are numerous in their family. Apparently, their families could not provide for the basic needs of these children, forcing them into the streets. From these findings, we can conclude that efforts to address the challenge of street children must address their family backgrounds. Most of children have siblings, parents and/or guardians. What needs to be established and addressed is what forces them out of the homes to the street which obviously are not luxurious as such. What they are running away from must be addressed.

Table 5: Educational Level of Street Children.

Response	Questionnaire A		Questionnaire B		Average total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Primary	38	78	16	57	54	68
Secondary	7	14	1	4	8	9
College						
University	1	2	6	21	7	12
N/R	3	6	5	18	8	12
Others						
Total	49	100	28	100	77	100

From Table 5 above on the level of education of street children, the majority (68%) had primary education. This was followed interestingly by questionnaires A and B recording an average of 12% of those with university education. Finally, was 9% of those who had reached secondary school level. The rest did not respond. From this table, it can be inferred that most street children reach primary school and then drop out, most probably

because their parents are too poor to pay their school fees. Some of the street children attend schools on part time basis and they return to the streets in search of something. But the majority drop from the schools because of financial problems. The same would apply to those with secondary and university level education. Given the high rate of unemployment, non-completion of all these levels of education cannot guarantee to anyone, meaningful employment.

Table 6: Questionnaire A. Person(s) the Street Children are Living with.

Response	F	%
Both parents	4	8
Father alone		
Mother alone	13	27
Father and step mother	1	2
Mother and step father		
Brother/ sister	5	10
Relative	3	6
Others	19	39
N/R	4	8
Total	49	100

Table 6 shows that the street children live with different relatives. From the above table 27% of street children live with their mother and 10% live with their brothers or sisters.

As the table indicates 39% of the respondents live on the streets either alone, or with their friends. From data analysis, a big number of street children live with their mother, the root causes of being with mother or alone were family break down, poverty, unemployment and death, among others. These factors can even force a single mother to indulge in commercial sexual. Hence we found out from the data analysis that a single mother, jobless, with six or seven children, would have it as impractical to provide all the alone basic needs of her children. This is a real dilemma.

Table 7. Reason of Leaving Parents.

Response	Questionnaire A		Questionnaire B		Average total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Basic needs	17	35	6	21	38	28
Education	5	10	11	39	16	25
Abused	7	14			7	7
Peer pressure	3	6	1	4	4	5
Search job(s)	4	8	1	4	5	6
Others	3	6	4	14	7	10
N/R	10	20	5	18	15	19
Total	49	100	28	100	77	100

Table 7 above presents reasons why street children left their homes. It is evident that a leading 28% score of street children left home to search for basic needs and 25% for education. It is worth noting that the latter is, in fact a basic need. Hence basic needs in total constitute 53%. An average total of 7% were escaping from domestic abuses, probably, by their own parents. It comes out strongly from this table that most of the causes that drive children to the streets revolve around austere conditions in the home. The children's basic needs remain largely unmet, forcing them to seek alternatives outside the home for survival. They become victims to the general impression that, fortunes are in urban areas. We have also seen how some run away from different forms of abuses meted against them by parents. It is unfortunate that instead of homes being havens that can nurture them, they end up being dens of brutal domestic violence.

How can the problem be addressed?

Table 8: How Street Children got in Touch With Bosco Boys Kuwinda.

Response	F	%
Through parents	5	18
Through police	3	11
Through social workers	13	46
N/R		
Others	7	25
Total	28	100

Table 8 above indicates how street children got in touch with Bosco Boys. The majority of them (46%) got in touch with it through social workers. This is followed by contacts established by parents (8%) and the police (11%). About 25% of these Bosco Boys come through some guardian, or other ways. These are some of the examples of boys who came to the centre through different groups. The figure shows us that people cooperate with each other to assist the street children in various ways. This is a challenge to all people. But it also brings to the fore the need for corporate efforts in addressing the problem.

Table 9: Questionnaire A. Usual Place for Sleep.

Response	F	%
Home	21	43
Street	19	39
Home and street	9	18
Total	49	100

Table 9 points out that street children who usually go to sleep in various places. As indicated, 43% go home to sleep, 39% of them sleep in streets and the rest sleep sometimes at home and sometimes in the streets. We gathered from the respondents that many sleep in veranda while some of them sleep at bus stops. These street children encounter many problems on the streets. For example, they are arrested and even killed by police, beaten by public. They also often fight amongst themselves.

Table 10: Whether They Work to Gain Some Income for Living

Response	F	%
Yes	21	43
Sometime	17	35
No	10	20
N/R	1	2
Total	49	100

Table 10 shows that some of the street children work to gain some income for their living. From the result of Table 10; 43% were affirmative whereas 35% intimated that they had occasional work sometimes. The rest (20%) were clear that they didn't work. These street children have different methods to earn their bread, for instance, stealing, begging, collecting and selling things, snatching object, shining shoes, and carrying luggage. These children run away from home, looking for basic needs, because their own families were not able to provide for their needs.

Table11: Questionnaire A. Type of Activities Undertaken by Street Children.

Response	F	%
Shoe polishing	1	2
Car washing	4	8
Peddling		
Selling news papers	1	2
Lottery selling	1	3
Begging	14	29
Collecting new paper	2	4
Others	19	39
N/R	7	14
Total	49	100

Table 11, indicates the type of activities undertaken by street children on the streets like shoe polishing, car washing, lottery, begging, collecting and selling newspapers, among other activities. These children are involved in any activities in order to get their daily bread. Sometimes, they snatch handbags, steal ^{and} threaten people with human waste.

Table 12: Problems Which Street Children Encounter

Response	Questionnaire A		Questionnaire B		Average total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Insecurity	28	57	5	18	17	38
Insufficient food	23	47	6	21	15	34
Feel is lonely from parents	3	6	4	14	4	10
Separation from parents	—	—	1	4	1	4
Others	4	8	9	32	7	20
N/R	4	8	3	11	4	10
Total	62	126	28	100	45	116

Table 12 shows that the total number of the respondents is 62 instead of 49 because the respondents could make and indeed made more than one choice. The table demonstrates the number of street children who encounter problems on the streets and in Bosco Boys. Respondents identified lack of security on the streets, especially during the night. It indicates that 17% of the respondents cited insecurity as a problem. For Bosco Boys, lack of freedom, feeling of loneliness and separation from parents as well as being mishandled by some of their siblings was prevalent. These children are often attacked by police and by the public at any time and at any place either during the day or night. The second problem is insufficient food. At least 15% of street children suffer from malnutrition. They eat from dustbins. These street children lack daily bread. They are seen scavenging for food, moving from place to place on the streets in search for, among others, food. If they get anything, they eat it. Yet most of the time, they remain hungry. From our data collection, life is hard and tough to street children. And also these street children missed family love, care and protection at their early age hence are really suffering. In spite of this, street children feel happy and at ease being on the street, rather than at home where they feel insecure because of various forms of domestic abuse.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present chapter has dealt with of the findings. Questionnaires were the main source of collecting data. We were guided by the main assumption that poverty has pitied children in the Nairobi streets and Kuwindu slums to crisis situations; that broken families have contributed to this social atrocity; that single parenthood cannot be ruled out; and those street children have been mercilessly abused by the rich, their own parents and by ~~the~~ the entire society. Poverty and unemployment have stood out as major causes. Accordingly, to deal with this social crisis, we need to comprehend needs of street children.

Street children are a national issue. The government, church, parents, NGOs and individuals should work corporately to address this challenge of street children. The government needs a policy of caring for the street children by creating reformation centres where such children can receive proper counselling and guidance. It should also create job opportunities for their parents. The government should also provide policies that promote economic growth. Pragmatic poverty reduction strategies and free education for all must be worked out. Policies that can improve the land rent are necessary so that poor people can be settled. The government should prevent land grabbing and fairly distribute national resources. It also should protect the rights of children, create employment schemes, social welfare schemes, and free health facilities. The government should thoroughly study social problems and undertake necessary intervention strategies.

Perhaps both street begging and giving to street beggars should be outlawed. Instead, street beggars should be encouraged to go to homes for the needy. And people should be encouraged to support such homes. A tax should be levied on all workers to support the homes.

is anything with such tax? can you support paying of such tax

The Church should support the government by helping the street children understand how God is present in their situation. It should champion the cause for social justice and spiritual nourishment of the kids. Besides, it ought to foster moral rehabilitation for the street children. The Church needs to give guidelines that can strengthen marriage institutions and responsible parenthood, family life education and moral values. Such morality can be promoted in the society through, for example, trying to re-unite these children with their family.

NGOs should promote programs that can help the poor to earn a proper living in order to feed and clothe their children. They should also build homes to support these kids educate them and help them financially. They should join hands with the government in establishing rehabilitation homes. They need to fight against corruption, and be involved in building and sponsoring projects that deal with children. In general, NGOs need to cooperate with the government and the Church in addressing the root causes of the street children.

Individuals need to be concerned with street children and in small or big ways help them by providing for their needs. They should be more generous toward causes for street children, encourage personal initiatives to provide shelter, clothes and; educate the children by paying school fees. In both urban and rural areas, root causes for street children should be known so that some steps can be taken to reduce the number of street children. Steps of this kind include creating job opportunities, providing basic needs such as education and resettling the homeless. Again, this requires cordial relationship and cooperation of all organizations and institutions.

Social workers are kind of bridge between these children and their parents. They are able to trace parents and guardians of these children. For these social workers to be more effective, financial assistance is vital.

Parents are also called upon to collaborate with the social workers. The parents should be monitored and educated. Thus the Church's commitment and cooperation of rich people and well-wishers can bring further progress. The entire society is also challenged to be more positive and adopt a spirit of teamwork towards the eradication of this problem. Through these assured measures, the number of children in streets can be reduced significantly. And by so doing, Kenya will solve many other social problems that could result from a neglected part of the young population of the country.

It is in a healthy society that children can grow holistically. A society should put in place structures for an emotional, material, spiritual and psychological atmosphere for this to happen. Therefore, we should all unite and develop a strength that will empower us to do things that seem to be impossible.

4.3 CONCLUSION

The plight of street children should be everyone's concern: the government, NGOs, Church, and private business institutes which should adopt right attitudes towards street children. Street children are like any other child from the rest of society. What they need is love and appreciation.

The study has indicated that the phenomenon of street children is a prevalent challenge in urban and rural Kenya. Children are forced to the streets because of poverty and family instability. Many impoverished families cannot afford school fees, stationery, and uniform. This pushes the children to work and beg on the streets to supplement the household income. There are also children who have left their homes for street life because of poverty, diverse child abuses and family break-down. But the fact remains that these children are on the street for their own existence as well as that of their families and the community.

The Church has responded to the challenge in part by initiating many rehabilitation centers in some major urban areas. The government must step up efforts to effectively address this reality as part of its responsibility towards the development of its entire people. All in all, however, this problem must be tackled and solved from a collaborative standpoints. The government, NGOs and Church must work together.

From my experience and research, the street children themselves know their own problems. They highlighted the key issues which have formed the discussion of our work. Therefore, children cannot stand without any support and guidance from the adults who are directly involved in their up-bringing.

Families should be concerned about taking care of their children. Through the help of government and NGOs and United Nations agencies, families should be educated and financially helped. Teachers, through guidance and counseling, should show love and concern in encouraging children to study.

Lastly, the International Labour Organization (ILO) laws, should be strictly reinforced by the governments and NGOs. In this way, children will not be exploited through child labour.

State and Municipal level
International level

It is everybody's responsibility, therefore, to protect the rights of the child. We need to support the child to grow up holistically: physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, morally and socially. In this case, parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that the child has an adequate standard of living. The state's duty is to ensure that this responsibility can be fulfilled. State responsibility can also include material assistance to parents and their children. Life is the most precious gift from God, should be protected with the utmost care at all levels of growth. Saving street-children from our Kenya's urban centres means saving the entire Kenyan society from the streets.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION.

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the Christian response towards street children whose experiences have been the centre of discussion in the preceding chapters. Christians believe that they all are God's people and belong to Him regardless of race and socio-economic status. God's desire is that each one of them receives his salvation. Christians believe that a child is a blessing/gift from God. Indeed, He calls Himself the defender of the helpless: the widows, orphans, and by extension, we believe, the new born and the unborn. The Church is God's voice in His world.

5.1 CHILDREN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT (OT)

In the OT, children are presented as a great gift from God (Psalms 127: 3-5), instruments of God's activity and symbolically a guarantee of the covenant between God and the people of Israel. In view of the pivotal role of the children in the continuity of the society, a favorite and ideal image was that of father, mother and numerous children around a table (Psalm 28: 3-4). Birth was considered a divine miracle and those with extreme difficulty or seemingly impossible due to old age were committed to extraordinary divine intervention (Genesis 17:17; 21:6). In the early Biblical period, immortality was linked to living on through children who carried on the name of their parents (Genesis 48:16).

That is why parents are expected to have absolute authority over their children. It is a right for children to be educated through strict obedience often enforced through punishment (Proverbs 13:24; 19:18). The OT gives parents the responsibility/duty to take

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care of children, according them the right to be strict in such way that they bring up children who are God fearing, well behaved and responsible (Proverbs 22:6). God created male and female in His image and blessed them, urging them to be fertile and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it (Genesis 1:27-28).

5.2 CHILDREN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT (NT)

Children are essential in God's plan. They need growth, development, care, love and affection. Jesus himself recognized their centrality in God's Kingdom and emphasized that they should not, therefore, be exposed to situations that are dangerous to them (Mark 10:13 -15). In the NT children are principally a model or image for the believer to emulate. Mark's Gospel presents children as models of discipleship. Jesus underlined this through actions and words. On some occasion, He took a child in His arms and illustrated the principle of humility in discipleship (Mark 9: 33-37). On another occasion, it is recorded of how Jesus was very angry with his disciples for being a hindrance to children. Indeed, He had allowed the children to approach him asking his disciples not stop them because the Kingdom of God belonged to them (Mark 10:14). He then took the little ones in his arms, placed his hands on each of them and blessed them. Christians need to have open hands and eyes in order to effectively address the needs of street children.

The reason could be that children have some positive qualities inherent in them. For instance, humility and faith are blended together in Jesus' call to a relationship of childlike trust in God as "Abba." Jesus displayed in His words and actions the compelling love for children that he insisted was God's fundamental disposition toward human beings (Mark 10:14). Children have a direct relationship with Jesus; the kingdom of God is for them. Jesus accords children a unique reception and recognition.

Jesus suffered the pain of being without a home, experienced cold and hunger, even as his parents fled to Egypt (Matthew 2:13) He understands well the pains of street children and wants to redeem them.

The NT especially, the gospels narrate the story of Jesus who had love and concern for children. They are honest and humble. His own birth story and the care, love, and protection He got from Mary and Joseph is what children could receive from their parents, relatives and guardians notions. When Jesus was born, many innocent children were killed. Even now, in the world, many children have been killed in different ways. Children were blessed as Jesus taught and healed in the "borders of Judaea and beyond Jordan." People brought their little children to him so that he might lay his hands on them (Matthew 19: 13-15; Mark 10: 13-16).

Protection of children has to be paramount and should not be neglected. The reason is that children kind of guarantee the continuity of human life, the rebirth of their parents. As the older people age away, the children flourish, representing the budding of the new generation of humanity and a source of strength for parents when they come to the end of life's road. Therefore, children reveal the continuity and sign of growth in the Church.

5.3 CHURCH'S VIEWS ABOUT CHILDREN

The Church should involve its ministers within the community even the more. In other words, the Church must balance the spiritual and social life of the people. It is true that most religious institutions are not readily open social challenges hence difficult to bring the Good News of the Lord among the people. But it is advisable to integrate our service with Gospel values. The "Good Shepherd" image (cf. John 10:7-16), underscores readiness, concern and solidarity that transform suffering into joy and hope.

Children are born in the world of sin. It is important that proper guidance and discipline be given to them. Aware of this reality, the Second Vatican Council declared the following concerns depicting parents as the initial educators of their children.

The Church is playing a great role in her social ministry in the world. Her commitment is to preach the Good News of Jesus Christ to all human beings. The Church nourishes the people of God, seeking to send the unjust structures of the society. The Church has always stood firm and denounced evil situations and bad practices of people. The Church knows that God created all human beings into his image and likeness (Genesis. 1:27).

In Nairobi, the Church today is pragmatically involved in addressing many problems of the innocent people in the society. The Church is dealing with social problems like broken families, rehabilitation of street children, families and youth. She denounces poverty, violence, and rape and land grabbing.

The role of parents as educators is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it. For it devolves on parents to create a family atmosphere so animated with love and reverence for God and people that a well-rounded personal and social development will be fostered among the children. Hence, the family is the first institution from which children acquire social virtues and values which every society needs. It is through the family that children are gradually introduced into civic partnership with fellow human beings and into the people of God.

The Church warns parents to avoid child abuses and to create a happy family. Parents should have good relationship between them and treat their children properly. It is true that children are involved in different sorts of work in order to help their families. But children should never be made to do heavy work. "The Church in the person of Pope Leo XII in his encyclical letter, *Rerum Novarum* condemned this practice. He stated that "

great care should be taken not to place children in workshops and factories until their bodies and minds are sufficiently mature."¹⁴

Parents have the responsibility to introduce their children to the physical, religious, social, economic and spiritual life of the community. Love and authority or discipline have to be the virtues that provide the atmosphere for care and nurturing the psycho-social and spiritual development of the child. This is what promotes a sense of self-worth in developing interpersonal responsibility.

5.4 CHILDREN IN THE AFRICAN SOCIETY

In Africa, the birth of a child is a great joy and celebration. Both men and women desire children. They are regarded as the seal of marriage, society saw children in different ways. In most communities, when a boy or girl was born, there was great celebration. However, the majority of children today lack basic needs and care.

In traditional Africa a childless marriage is calamitous or disastrous for the couple, the extended family and the clan.

Child-bearing is a sacred duty that has to be carried out by all normal individuals of the society. The main purpose of marriage was to bear children. The woman's status in the society depended on the number of children she bore, and her entire life was centered on children. The children were greatly valued because traditionally the man's wealth depended on the number of wives and children he had.¹⁵

In some African countries, the woman's role was to increase the man's wealth by begetting children. Marriage could not be sealed without children. In this way, the woman became very vulnerable and helpless. Once children were produced, however, the marriage was sealed and it was very rare for such a marriage to break up. Children

¹⁴ Pope Leo XII, *Rerum Novarum*. (New York: Pauline Press, 1962), p. 26

continued the lineage and prolonged the life of their parents. This factor has been greatly affected by urbanization and the condition of contemporary society. In African countries, it is important to have children who can maintain the family line of inheritance. The children have a duty to bury their parents properly, remembering them, taking care of the grave and maintaining a good relationship with the ancestral spirits of their dead parents. Children in Africa were also seen as economic assets in terms of their potentials on the farm and the agricultural produce that came to the family as income. More children meant more food production.

In many communities, children belonged to the clan, and could not be left without needs just because the parents were poor. Members of the clan contributed to the welfare of the poor. Accordingly, none could run away from home just because of poverty. Children were never abandoned since the whole clan was concerned about the sound upbringing of the children in terms of morality, strength, and welfare.

5.5 Conclusion

Street children are part of the society, constituting not only the present, but also above all the future humanity. Children are very poor and marginalized. Therefore, the church should continue performing the mission or proclaim to all. Jesus is for all, to every one and to the whole humanity. The church should denounce action such as denouncing social, economic, cultural and political sins of society. Christians believe that Jesus died on the cross for the liberation and redemption of the people in this world. His church is, therefore, obliged structural changes in order to favour the poor, especially street

¹⁵ Jesse N. K. Mugambi & Arne Nasimiyu-Wasike, Eds. Moral and Ethical Issues in African Christianity. (Nairobi: Publishers 1999), pp. 154 -155.

children. We know that children are vulnerable and delicate. Consequently, grown-ups should respect and promote the rights of street children.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT PROPOSAL

6.0 Project Name: Delasalle Watoto Rehabilitation Center (DEWARECE)

6.1 Project Location: Korogocho

Korogocho:- is a Gikuyu word which means junk or things which have fallen apart. This is the connotation behind the name of one of the slums found in Nairobi. It is in the Eastern part of the city, about 15 kilometers from the Central Business District. The population of Korogocho is estimated at 130,000.¹⁶ Like the name suggests, Korogocho explicitly strikes one as a place of abject poverty. It lacks basic facilities such as health care, education, water, electricity and access roads, among others. Conditions of living lamentably characterize the deplorable state of slums. This readily leads the majority of the people to theft, drug trafficking and addiction, petty and high levels of domestic violence, crime, the phenomenon of street children and diverse forms of child abuse. These are challenging realities to the society. Enormous though they are, they call for more awareness to help the poor people, especially the children so that they may live at least a decent life and be good citizens.

The selection of a location is a very crucial task in any organization's project planning. This location is convenient for the proposed project because it is not far from the City Center where most of the street children are found. DEWARECE will also present a clearer picture of the background and environment from which these children come. As at now, Korogocho is one of the largest slums in Nairobi. It is faced with problems of poor infrastructure and deteriorating and dirty environment. Inaccessibility to water and electricity are other problems confronting members of this community. Their dwellings are very poor and of low quality.

John Anyan to extract info from the study conducted

6.2 PROJECT OVERVIEW

De la salle Watoto Rehabilitation Center (DEWARECE) is to address the rapid growth of children on the streets of Nairobi. As regards human dignity, these children deserve better care, like any other person. They encounter various difficulties in their daily lives. Many of them have no family. Due to mistreatment and intense hardships in life, they are potential hard-core criminals. Providing them with a home would be a good step in addressing effectively their plight.

The project could initially accommodate 30 street children. Given the researcher's working field experience in this area, he is familiar with some of the hardships they undergo. It is necessary to rehabilitate and reform these poor little ones as a sign of respect for human dignity. They obviously deserve a better life.

The rehabilitation center could be a new home for them. As they settle, they would find access to food, clothing, education, security and health care. Structures need to be put in place to address issues related to discipline and their integral human growth. Thus they may somehow regain the lost parental care and be responsible people for the better holistic development of the society.

At their young age, they also need recreation: football, volleyball, basketball, dancing, swimming, drama, scouting and singing, among other games to develop their skills and talents. These would also help them to remain in the center. It would also keep them active, with their minds at work. Their idleness has led most of them into glue-sniffing/taking, abuse of drugs, stealing and petty crimes, among other social evils.

¹⁶ From an Interview With a Social Worker in Korogocho, January 15th 2002.

6.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The population of street children in Kenya is 150,000. Out of this figure, 50,000 are based in the city of Nairobi.¹⁷ Half of the children are aged between 5 and 17. And with Nairobi itself, 50% of the street children are born in the slums of the city while 35% are born in rural areas of Kenya but have migrated to Nairobi. And 15% are those who had no settlements in Nairobi yet they boarded vehicle from small towns such as Kakamega, Kisumu City, Nyeri, Nakuru and Eldoret among others, to find a stay in Nairobi. There are many other causative factors underlying the increase in number of street children. Poverty, tribal clashes, decline of economy, natural disasters such land slides, and family instability/breakdown are among them.

The great challenge is that we are called to take the initiative and redeem our society for the betterment of our marginalized brothers and sisters. The proposed project partly answers to this challenge.

6.4 PROJECT GOAL

The main goal is to reform, rehabilitate or mould the poor and abandoned children on the streets to become concerned, responsible and reliable citizens of the society.

6.5 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. To provide street children with shelter.
2. To provide street children with education, skills and trades so that they may be self-reliant.
3. To initiate the behavioural change and intellectual maturity of street children.
4. To enhance the responsibility of street children as true and concerned citizens.

6.6 BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

1. If children are well trained, chances are high that they will attain positive behaviour leading them to be good and responsible citizens.
2. Rehabilitation is needed to help children know that they are supposed to be rational and attain a healthy environment.

6.7 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PROJECT

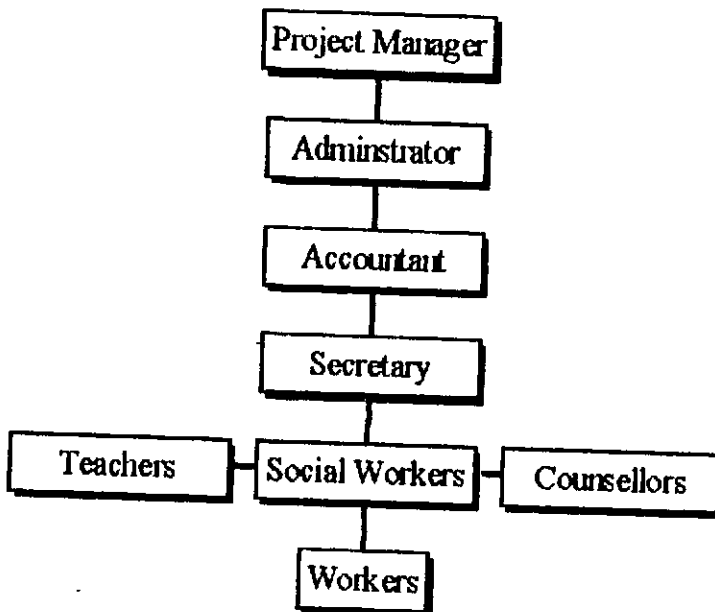
Why did we start a project in Korogocho slum? Why a rehabilitation center for that matter? And why should the place be Korogocho?

The project would give a feeling to the children that there are people concerned about their life and that they themselves can still make a family with other societal members. Indeed, it is their right to live a better life even without their own family members.

Korogocho becomes a symbol of the way we can live in the place we are used to with a positive attitude. The place can still be habitable only if we become positively responsible and concerned for change in that community. It symbolizes that even in wretched and fragile situations, meaningful life can be derived.

¹² From an Interview With Social Worker in Korogocho, January 20th 2002

6.8. PROJECT'S ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



Project Manager: will be in control of all the activities of DEWARECE. It is his/her responsibility to control and manage all activities of the project. He would be in charge of local and foreign fund raising, integrate other organizations into the centre and participate in seminars, local or international, which are relevant to the centre.

Administrator: is to assist the Project Manager in his /her absence.

Accountant: is to deal with money: income and expenditure. He/she will do the budgeting for the project, keep and maintain a good record on the finances.

Secretary: will be noting down and maintaining all the necessary information about DEWARECE. She/he would be responsible for communication, collection of the bio-data of the children and giving reports.

Teachers: will teach children at the centre to read and write.

Social Workers: will be bringing the children to the centre from various places.

Counsellors: are to help in the counselling of street children in their crises.

Casual Workers: will ensure that the environment, that is, inside and outside the compound of the project, is kept clean. They will also be cooking food and clean the children cloths.

6.9 RISKS

1. Because of resource limitations, it is hard to provide the children with everything. After finishing their training, if not followed up and assisted, it may be very difficult to initiate a project by themselves.
2. At their early and tender age, it is hard for them to leave drugs. Such change is gradual and takes a long time for them.

6.10 SWOT ANALYSIS

1. Strengths

- a. There is potential collaboration from the members of the community since they see these street children as a social problem that should be meaningfully addressed.
- b. Networking with the local government is likely to work. That is, the government has indicated willingness to provide land and assist with security and bringing the street children to the centre.
- c. The location is accessible to power, water, electricity, telephone and roads.

2. Weaknesses

- a. Inadequate funds due to dependence on some probable donor.
- b. Voluntary personnel might not be available.
- c. The children are prone to going back to the streets in spite of all the efforts by the centre.

3. Opportunities

- a. There is likelihood/possibilities to enlarge networking with other charitable organizations.
- b. There is a chance to involve churches and their institutions, donors and even well wishers.

4. Threats

- a. Inability to employ very highly skilled and committed personnel who can professionally handle the complex issues of street children.
- b. Access to drugs in schools.
- c. Due to limited accommodation, some are likely to be influenced by their friends who are outside DEWARECE and may even return to their previous modes of lifestyle.

6.11 PROJECT ACTIVITIES

DEWARECE, Korogocho Work Break-Down Structure for 2003-2005. All money values are in

Kenyan Currency. The Current Exchange is Rate 1 US \$ @ 78 Ksh.

PHASE I: From January 2003-December 2004

ACTIVITIES	WORK BREAKDOWN	TIME/DAY	COST (Kshs.)
Rent	Furnish the house with necessary equipment e.g. Furniture, kitchenware, bedding, and toiletry for each child.	20 days	120,000
Employing workers	Advertise job vacancies through the church.	21 days	1000
	Recruitment and selections	14 days	2000
	Assigning people to their right place.	14 days	3000
	Accept children from the street through social workers	60 days	50,000
Selection for children. Study and take bio-data of each child. E.g. parentage	Medical care clothes, school fees, stationery and uniform.	14 days	120,000
	Regular evaluation of children's progress.	24 days	24,000
	Visiting schools and evaluating children.	10 days	40,000
	Recording each child's performance and behaviour.	10 days	90,000
Food purchase & service	Buying food every weekend and transport it to the centre.	49 days	950,000
Office equipment	Buy computers, telephone, fax, machine, photocopy, e-mail, stationery and cabinets.	60 days	130,000
Planning for seminars	In schools, in parishes and in the centre.	2days a years	120,000
Sports facilities	Soccer, basketball, volleyball and indoor games e.g. table tennis.	20 days	100,000
Sub-Total			1,750,000Kshs

PHASE II: January 2004- December 2005

ACTIVITIES	WORK BREAKDOWN	TIME/DAY	COST
Buying land	Process of purchasing land eg. getting title deed	120 days	1,500,000
Cars	Raise money to buy minibus and small car for the centre.	60 days	2,500,000
Organize regular group guiding and counseling section.	Seminar on guidance and counseling by a counselor.	20 days	25,000
	Talk with children for advice; learning about themselves and their history.	15 days	7,000
	Meeting with social workers and a counselor.	10 days	25,000
	Teach the children the importance of education.	15 days	—
Organize education support program to prepare children.	Teach the children importance of education.	15 days	—
	Take children to visit the schools around Korogocho.	4 days	—
	Coaching children in basic writing and reading individually.	30 days	—
Staff salary 10%			505,700Kshs
Sub-total			5,057,000Kshs
Grand total			6,807,000Kshs

6.12 PROJECT BUDGET

ITEMS	OPERATING BUDGET			TOTAL
	DESCRIPTION	FIRST PHASE	SECOND PHASE	
Recurring cost				
Director	20,000 @moth x12 month	240,000	250,000	490,000
Assistant director	17,000 @month x12month	204000	205000	409000
Accountant/secretary	13,000 @moth x 12month	156000	157000	313000
Social worker	12,000 @month x12 month	48000	49000	97000
Teachers	10,000 @ month x12 month	600000	700000	1300000
Security	5,000 @ month x 12monthx2	120,000	130,000	250,000
Cooks	7,000 @ month x 12month	168000	169000	337000
Counsellor	10,000 @ month x12 month	120000	130000	250000
General cleanness	6000@mx12x2	14400	14500	28900
Sub total		1,670,400	1,804,500	3,474,900
Staff salary				3822390
Furniture for house				
Beds	35 @ 2250	78750	78760	157510
Mattresses	35 @ 700	24500	24600	49100
Chairs	35 @ 1200	42000	43000	85000
Tables	35 @1000	35000	36000	71000
Shelves	35 @ 1000	35000	36000	71000
Sub total				433610
Number of boys donor (sponsorship)	25,000x12x30	9,000,000	10,000,000	19,000,000
Food	40000@m x12x30	14400000	14500000	28900000
Education consultants		380,000	390,000	770,000
Office equipment				
Three computers	three computer @ 55,000	165000	166000	331000
Shelves	5 @ 5000	25,000		25,000
Chairs	10 @ 130,000	1,300,000		1,300,000
Desks	10 @ 135,000	1,350,000		1,350,000
Maintenance	two times @yrs x20,000	40,000	410,000	3,006,000
Sub total				3,006,000
Training				
Seminar	2 seminar @ yrs x 2	120,000	130,000	250,000

Classes furniture				
Desks	35 @ 1200	42000		42000
Chairs	35 @ 700	24500		24500
Sub total				66500
Rent, utilites & transport				
Electricity bills	200000@ year	200000	200000	400,000
Water bills	100,000@year	100,000	101,000	201,000
Postage bills	15000 @ year	15000	16000	31000
Sub total				632,000
Recreation & sports				
TV	2 set@ 20,000	40,000		40,000
Maintenance	6000@ year	6000	6000	12000
Sports equipment	50,000 year	50,000	3000	53,000
Sub total				105,000
Grand total				48,670,000Kshs

6.13 Summary

The project will target the basic needs of street children in order to assist them to come out from their problems which they face in their daily life. We have already seen that children use any means on streets such as begging, snatching purses, eating from the garbage dustbins to survive. The centre will try to provide the street children with food, clothing and education to develop their talents in order to be good citizens. We, therefore, hope that you will consider our request. This project will help the street children meet their basic needs. Reports about the centre's activities will be submitted bi-annually. We will keep updating you on our progress. And the reports will contain the progress, the strengths, the weaknesses, opportunities available and the threats the project is facing. A financial report will also be released bi-annually and annually, including the total figures of previous years.

Prepared by Yoseph Brhane Deres.

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Approved by Mr. Zacharia Samita.

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Appendix. I

QUESTIONNAIRE A: FOR STREET CHILDREN WHO ARE LIVING ON THE STREETS.

- 1) Name (optional): _____
- 2) Age (years) a. 10 - 19 b. 20 -29 c. 30 -39 d. 40 -49 e. 50
- 3) Gender : Male Female
- 4) Nationality _____
- 5)

	Alive		Known	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Father	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mother	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guardian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Numbers of brothers _____
7. Numbers of sisters _____
8. Ethnic group _____
9. Place of birth:
- Country _____
- Town/city _____
- Region _____
- Village _____

10. Educational background:

A. Have you ever attended school?

i. Yes ii. No

B. Are you still attending school?

i. Yes ii. No

C. If, Yes indicate your highest level of education.

a) Primary b) Secondary c) College d) University e) Other (specify)

11. a. You are now living with:

i. Father and mother ii. Father only iii. With relative

iv. With mother only v. father and step mother

vi. Mother and step father vii. With brother /sister

viii. Other (specify)

b. If you are not living with your parents, where are you living? _____

c. What was the reason for your living?

i. In search of basic needs ii. Education

iii. Abused iv. Peer pressure

v. In search of job vi. Others

12. a. where do you usually go to sleep?

i. Home ii. Street iii. Home and streets

iv. Others (specify)

b. If street, specify the place?

i. Veranda ii. Church/ Mosque iii. Bus stops

iv. Others (specify)

13. A. Do you work to gain some income for your living ?

i. Yes ii. Sometime iii. No

b. If yes, specify the type of job (s):

i. Shoe polishing ii. Car washing iii. Peddling

iv. Selling news paper v. lottery vi. Begging

vii. Collecting news paper viii. Other (specify)

14. a. What are some of the problems you are encountering on the streets?

i. Security ii. In sufficient food

iii. Feeling lonely from your parents iv. Others (specify)

15. a. Is there any improvement in your life since you left your home?

i. Yes ii. No

Explain how is life on the streets? _____

Appendix. II:

QUESTIONNAIRE B: FOR BOSCO BOYS , KUWINDA

3) Name (optional): _____

4) Age (years) a. 10 - 19 b. 20 - 29 c. 30 - 39 d. 40 - 49 e. 50

5) Sex : i. Male ii. Female

6) Nationality _____

5)

	Alive		Known	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Father	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mother	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Guardian				
----------	--	--	--	--

6. Numbers of brothers _____

10. Numbers of sisters _____

11. Ethnic group _____

12. Place of birth:

Country _____

Town/city _____

Region _____

Village _____

10. Home district _____

11. You left your family because of: i. Abused ii. Basic need

iii. Peer pressure iv. Others (specify)

12. Educational background:

A. Have you ever attended school?

i. Yes ii. No

B. Are you still attending school?

i. Yes ii. No

C. If, Yes indicate your highest level of education.

i. Primary ii. Secondary iii. College iv. University v. Other (specify)

13. What was the reason for your living?

i. In search of basic needs ii. Education

iii. Abused iv. Peer pressure

v. In search of job vi. Others

14. How did you get in touch with the Bosco Boys Karen?

i. Through your parent

ii. Through Police

iii. Through social worker

iv. Others (specify)

15. Where were you staying before you came into Bosco Boys Karen? _____.

16. A. would you like to stay at the centre or go back to the street?

i. Stay at Don Bosco Boys Karen.

ii. Go back to the street.

B. Give reason for your answer above _____.

17. a. Cite some of the problems you are encountering at the Bosco Boys Karen?

i. Security ii. In sufficient food

iii. Feeling lonely iv. Separation from your parents

v. Others (specify)

18. How was your life like when you were in the street? (Explain) : _____

19. A. What are some of the problems you are encountering on the streets?

i. Security ii. In sufficient food

iii. Feel lonely from your parents iv. Others

20. Is there any improvement in your life since you left your home?

i. Yes ii. No

21. How is life in Bosco Boys Karen?

Explain _____.



Bonn and Sande with their mother, Mwende. While (below), she minds them in spite of her circumstances.

She says she did not even know who the child's father was since she had many sexual partners.

"How I delivered a healthy baby was a miracle because I did not visit a clinic. When I was in labour, no one took me to hospital. I was assisted by some of the older street mothers."

The makeshift maternity was a City Council toilet, an environment that exposed the mother and child to greater risks.

Mwende, however, gave birth to a healthy baby boy. She is worried he will join other bigger street children if no one comes to her aid.

"My son has learnt the survival tactics in the streets. He can beg on his own, but I wish he did not have to do it," Mwende says, adding, "at times he is harassed by bigger boys who snatch what he has collected. It hurts to see him go through this," Mwende says.

While still struggling to survive, early last year, Mwende linked up with a man from Huruma slums (the twins' father) with the hope of settling down in a "better" environment and perhaps better security.

However, her hopes were dashed when her "husband" was arrested by the police early this year, just before the twins were born.

She says she does not know why he was arrested and her efforts to trace him in the police cells have failed.



She says she has been forced to run back to the streets to beg to feed her children.

When we found her on a veranda along Muindi Mbingu street, a street she has made her home, she was putting her babies in a carton for an afternoon nap.

Unlike other street mothers and children, Mwende and her children are clean. In fact her twins have become like a blossoming rose which every passer-by is tempted to pick.

We were convinced she was not in the streets by choice

when she asked us to find out whether there was any charity that could rehabilitate her and the children.

And, as Mwende and her children continue to spend night after night in the cold, she hopes as the sun goes down and the light is replaced by darkness of the night, her troubles, too, will be buried in the darkness.

She hopes as the light takes the place of darkness in the morning, a benevolent hand will be extended to reach out for her, even if only to help her children.



Will the children survive the rot on Nairobi streets?

MY attention was drawn to the filthy, unhygienic conditions of the streets of Nairobi during my first visit. At times, I'd never thought on the way to work or to school that probably could have pulled such a big number of people.

I picked up a small child on the street and he was playing with the dust. A crowd gathered.

"I thought it must be bleeding, crying for the someone had committed a sin."

I closed in cautiously, afraid that the specter could be bizarre. But I was wrong. The crowd was drawn by two tiny, filthy children on Mombasa Street.

"They are cute. Oh, they are so sweet, if you give them one of them," I went out the cries from the crowd.

The twin boys lay in a carton oblivious of the excitement around them. And as people threw coins in a container that their mother had kept on her right side, the boy stared back at the crowd with innocent smiles that could be deciphered easily. "Thank you for your nice gift."

The boys, Boniface, Silvester and Sunday Njorobe, were named on the day they were

born. She ate from dustbins while expectant and gave birth twice in a dirty City Council toilet, writes Florence Mukiebe

born in a filthy environment.

These bundles of life are the best thing that could have happened to them. Mwendu, 20, had a very hard time to get them into the world.

But for her, the birth of the twins is a miracle. She is giving a sweet person with out a month to chew it.

A girl like a flower that will never blossom because of the problem that grows in the soil. A cruel life that the five-month old twins will lead unless a Good Samaritan intervenes.

Mwendu, now a street mother, was born in Kibera Nairobi. She dropped out of school in class three because her parents could not pay her school fees.

The situation was compounded in the early 1990s when her parents died forcing her to be the bread winner for her teenage brother who was later to die in the streets.

"Our relatives refused to take care of me. I found they had problems in bringing me up,

the children," says Mwendu in tears.

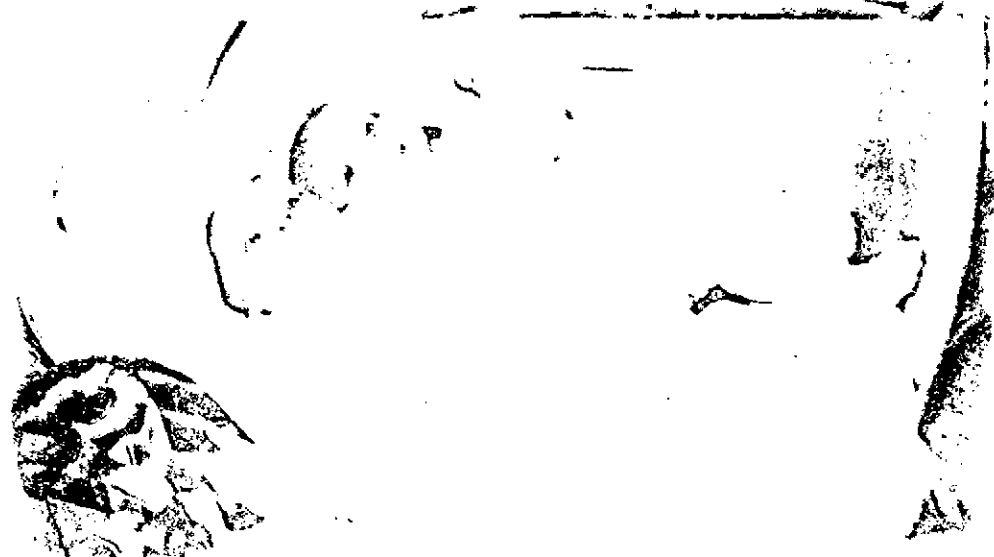
And to be food for themselves, they put up with families of the street. In the end, the women became too much for them and ended the child life to leave.

"We had no choice but to start scavenging on the garbage first in Kibera and with time we found ourselves in the city centre scavenging up with other street children and doing all sorts of bad things," explains Mwendu.

"I have been living in the streets for the last nine years, but how I wish I could get out of here. I would not like my twins to be in dustbins like us."

Mwendu recounted how sad she was when she got her first-born, a boy who is now two years old. He, too, lives with her in the streets.

"I was not supposed to have children. I like my girls on the streets. I was helped by older children to get a night shelter. They made a room for us."



CARTON BABIES: The twins inside their carton house.

— Pictures by Felix Mas

Child abuse on the increase in Kenya

FROM the cases reported on rape of minors, and battering of children by their parents and guardians, children's rights are still being violated in Kenya. This is despite Kenya being a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The basic children rights are registration of birth, immunisation, education, care and protection, health-care, protection against child labour, protection against abuse by parents, and other custodians, sexual exploitation, and protection against conflicts.

Most communities in Kenya measure a child's worth by the amount of work the child is capable of doing.

The girl-child is the most affected, with parents opting to educate boys.

The girl-child is faced with more social problems and expectations. However, thanks to changing attitudes, their enrolment in schools has improved.

Her role within the family unit are defined. She is expected to wake up early to go and fetch water and complete the household chores before she can go to school.

Their counterparts in urban areas are better-off. Statistics on primary school enrolment indicate an upward trend, while the girl-child's performance in national examinations has equally been commendable.

The disparity between rural and urban areas is an indica-

By Joyce Mkaluma

tor of how social classes are responding to the needs of the girl-child.

There are other areas where the law is silent with regard to children's rights, especially battering or punishment.

A case in point is that of six-year-old Patricia Rankathali, who brought charges against her mother Ntauleng, for abuse, neglect, and assault for trying to discipline her when she played truant.

This is a precedent as more charges could be brought to the South African courts as children become aware of their rights.

Most children in Kenya are not aware of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, thus they continue to suffer brutality in the hands of their parents and teachers.

Some are forced to work to assist their parents.

Girls are forced to leave their rural homes for urban areas to work as ayahs, while being paid meagre wages. Boys are forced to seek cheap labour in the rural areas, instead of attending school.

The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Labour and Human resource Development Dr Kangethe Gitu, said last month that over four million children aged between six and 16, may be involved in child labour.

If the Government is aware of this, why is there no action being taken to help these children? A case highlighted

recently by the KTN of the abducted Wajir girl, exposes the gap existing in our laws regarding children's rights: Who has a right to confine a child against her will?

Another case of 10-year-old Julia Chepskogei, whose employer inflicted serious injuries on her and refused to take her to hospital.

She was left bleeding throughout the night, and this but a tip of the iceberg of the suffering children are subjected to.

More children are being forced into the streets due to abuse and neglect.

Lack of appropriate shelter and food are some of the factors which contribute to children seeking a better life in the streets.

Their dreams are not realised as life in the streets is hard and is a survival for the fittest.

In the streets the children are often forced into sniffing glue and crimes which lead to their death. Recently, a case was published where some Kenyan street children were lured to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to fight alongside the rebels with a promise of money and better life.

Will their hopes be realised or they will return to scavenge in the streets?

The yet-to-be tabled Children's Bill is not clear on the well-being of the girl-child. It is still silent on how issues relating to child abuse and the need to improve their admission to learning institutions, can be addressed.