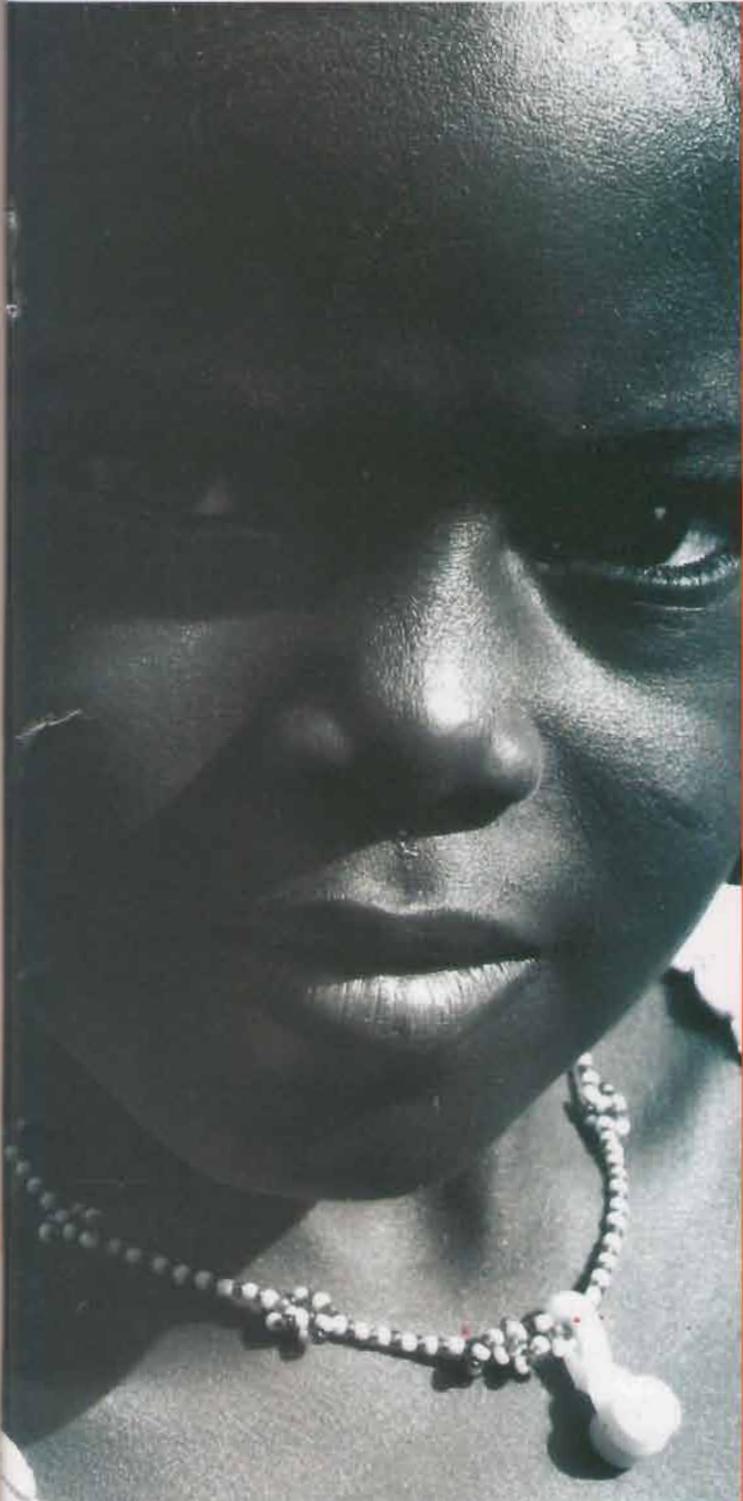




Department of Social Welfare



Ricerca e Cooperazione



CENSUS ON
STREET CHILDREN
IN THE
GREATER ACCRA REGION,
GHANA



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The authors are solely responsible for the opinions expressed in this document, which does not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Ghana and of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



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The views expressed in this manual are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the
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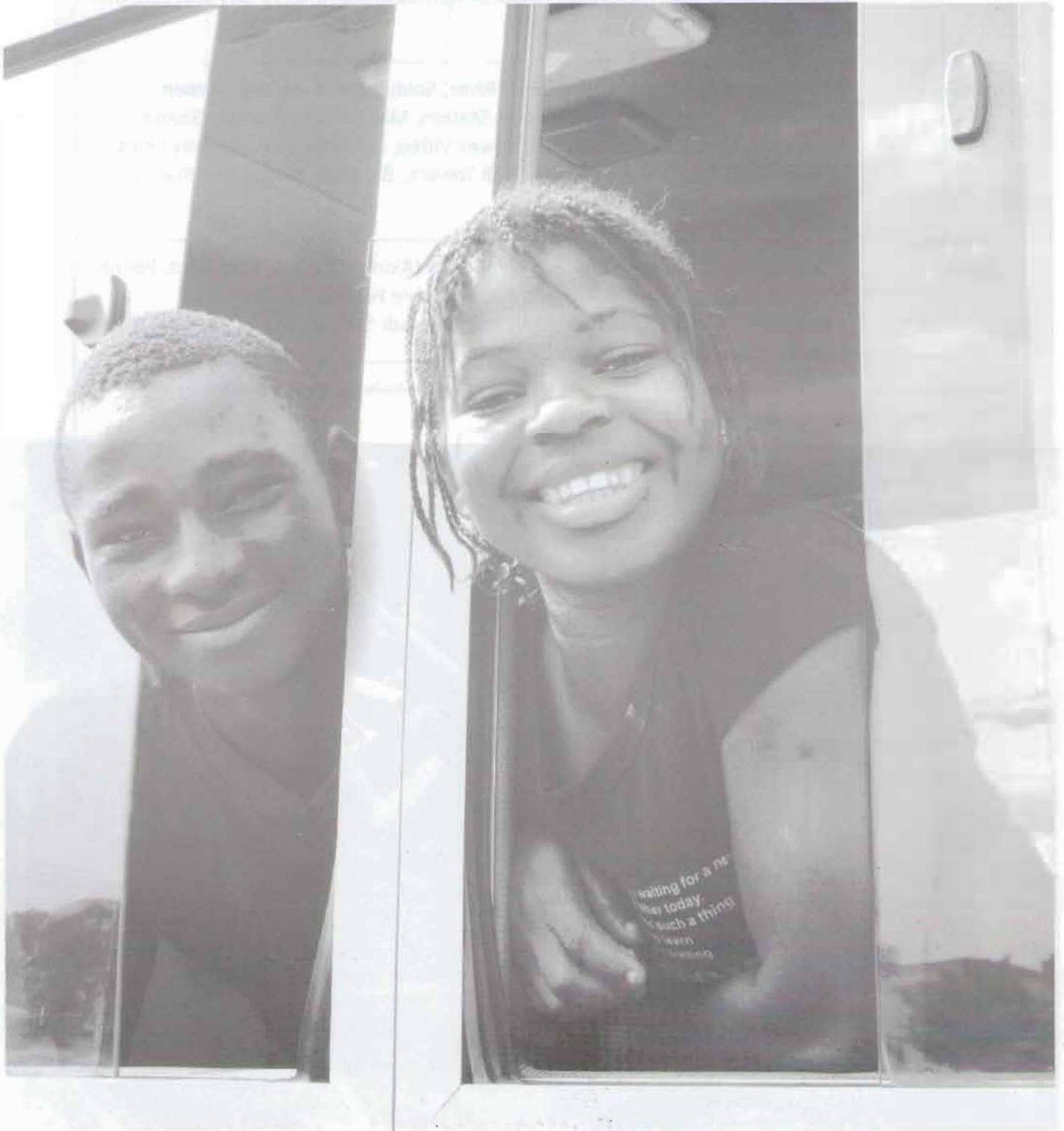
List of Acronyms

ACRWC	-	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children
AMA	-	Accra Metropolitan Assembly
CAS	-	Catholic Action for Street Children
CBO	-	Community Based Organization
CRC	-	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	-	Civil Society Organization
DSW	-	Department of Social Welfare
FBO	-	Faith Based Organization
FCUBE	-	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
GCB	-	Ghana Commercial Bank
GLSS	-	Ghana Living Standards Survey
GNA	-	Ghana News Agency
GO	-	Governmental Organization
GPRS	-	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
GPRTU	-	Ghana Private Road Transport Union
HIPC	-	Highly Indebted Poor Country
ILO	-	International Labour Organization
JHS	-	Junior High School
LEAP	-	Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty
MDG	-	Millennium Development Goal
MOFA	-	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MOWAC	-	Ministry of Women and Children
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organization
NHIS	-	National Health Insurance Scheme
NYEP	-	National Youth Employment Programme
OVC	-	Orphaned Vulnerable Children
PTC	-	Pioneer Tobacco Company
RC	-	Ricerca e Cooperazione
S.AID	-	Street Girls Aid
SADA	-	Savannah Accelerated Development Authority
SHS	-	Senior High School
TUC	-	Trades Union Congress
UNCRC	-	United Nations Convention on Rights of Children
UNHCR	-	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	-	United Nations Children's Fund
UTC	-	United Trading Company

Definition of Street Children

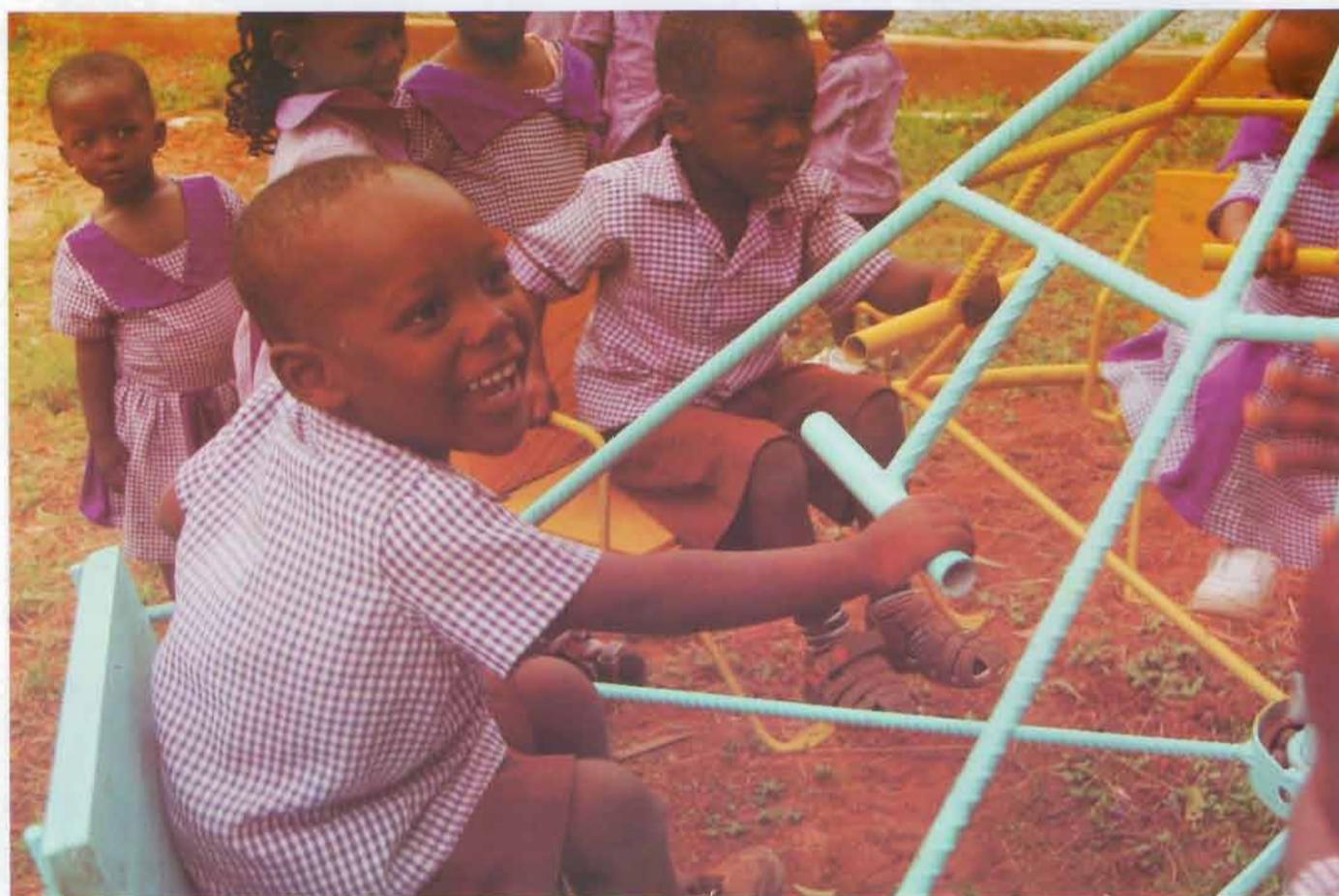
Children who are under 18 years, are born on the street and live with parent(s) on the street; migrated to the street; or urban poor children or Street Mothers who survive working in the street.

Street Children in search for money are either from poor homes or they left home due to family breakdown or other causes, to fend for themselves on the street.



Zones in which Research was Conducted in the Accra Metropolitan Area

Zone A	Agbogbloshie, Konkomba, CMB, June 4 th , Railways and Kantanmanto.
Zone B	Central Business District: Okaishie, Kingsway, UTC, Tudu, Novotel, Diamond House, New Tema Station, Old Tema Station, Labour Office, National Theatre, Total House, TUC, Cathedral, Regional Administration/Accra City Campus, and Makola.
Zone C	Circle: Kaneshie Station, Old Odaw River, Soldier Bar, Freedom Garden, Newtown, Nima, Mamobi, Neoplan Station, Mallam Atta Market, Ghana Telecom, Ebony Restaurant, Ray Power Video, Orion Cinema, Railway Lines, Odaw KVIP, Odaw Lorry Station, GCB Towers, Blow-up, Nima Lorry Station, Tiptoe area and PTC/Wakiki.
Zone D	Dansoman, Odorkor, Kasoa, Kaneshie area (Akutu Junction, First Light, Police Station area, Coldstore, Public toilet, Kaneshie Post Office, Frytol, Roadside/overhead, Kaneshie Market, Takoradi Station, Aseda Pharmacy, The Looks, Bubuashie, and North Kaneshie).



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Finally, to all those who contributed in one way or the other and have not been mentioned, we say, "Thank You".

Executive Summary

The Census on Street Children in the Greater Accra Region was carried out by the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) of the Government of Ghana and Ricerca e Cooperazione (RC), an Italian NGO, in collaboration with two local NGOs: Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS) and Street Girls Aid (S.AID). The Census was carried out within the project 'Improvement of the Living Standards of Street Children and Street Mothers in Greater Accra', executed between October 2007 and April 2011, co-funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and implemented by DSW and RC.

The main objective of the Census was to create a database on Street Children that could be used as a platform to enable Government to design relevant policies and spearhead the delivery of services in partnership with NGOs, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs), families, communities and other stakeholders, to prevent and/or greatly reduce the phenomenon of Street Children in Ghana.

The Census covered metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies in the Greater Accra Region. A total of 61,492 Street Children were counted. The distribution was as follows: at Kwame Nkrumah Circle, Dansoman, Agbogbloshie, Central Business District, Kaneshie and Odorkor, all in the Accra Metropolitan Area, 50,997 were counted. In Madina in Ga East Municipal Area, 1,757 were counted. In Ashaiman, Nungua Municipalities and Tema Metropolitan Area, 5,768 were counted. In Amasaman in the Ga West Municipal Area, 939 were counted; and in Dangbe West District, 2,031 were counted.

The Census, which primarily covered absolute headcounts, included age distribution, gender, categories of Street Children, sending regions, sleeping places at night, and types of jobs done on the street. The headcount was undertaken on the 23rd, 24th and 25th of May, 2009.

The ages of the Street Children ranged from less than one year, to less than 18 years. Approximately 43% were male, and 57% were female. The Census indicated that 28.53% were from the Northern Region; 19.8% from the Greater Accra Region; 10.26% from the Volta Region; 7.53% from the Upper East Region; 7.37% from the Eastern Region; 6.99% from the Ashanti Region; 6% from the Central Region; 4.5% from the Upper West Region; 2.85% from the Brong Ahafo Region; 2.38% from the Western Region; and 3.06% were nationals of other countries.

A deeper review of the demographics of the Street Children was undertaken in areas of health, education, violence and substance abuse, using a sample of 2,401 Street Children from the Census of 61,492. This was implemented from the 30th of June to the 9th of July, 2009.

The sample was collected from Zones A, B, C and D, all in the Accra Metropolitan Area; Madina in Ga East Municipal Area; Ashaiman Municipal Area; Amasaman in the Ga West Municipal Area; Dangbe West District; the Ledzokuku-Krowor Municipal Area; and Tema Metropolitan Area.

The proportion of girls to boys in the sample was approximately 59% to 41%, respectively. They were aged mostly between 10 and 18 years, with some being younger than 10 years. The different categories of Street Children contacted included those born on the street (5.1% of the sample); Migrant Children (76.9%)¹; Urban Poor (18%)²; and Street Mothers (0.08%).

¹Children who have migrated to the Greater Accra Region.

²Urban Poor are those who go to the street to hawk and/or work and go back home at the end of the day.

Several factors account for the issue of Street Children in Ghana. The findings indicated that search for money (86.8%) appears to be the leading cause. The search for job opportunities ranked second, with 6.4%; parental divorce ranked third, with 4%; and death of parent(s) accounted for 2.8% of the reason for the Street Children phenomenon.

The common types of health problems among Street Children include malaria, fever, cold, rashes, infection, and headache. About 68.4% of Street Children had a malaria attack in the last two months prior to the Census. About 13.6% of them complained of rashes, 7.7% of infection, 5.8% of cold, 3.3% of headache, and 1.1% of fever.

41.6% of the Street Children had dropped out of school, while 58.4% had never attended school. Many had dropped out of school within the past 15 years. The percentages of Street Children involved in the taking of drugs and alcohol were 6.8% and 3.6% respectively.

The recommendations for dealing with the issue of Street Children include prevention, management and mitigation measures such as advocacy, awareness creation and inter-agency collaboration between all stakeholder organizations. It is believed that the Government should extend support to poor families with children on the street through the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme, and that the Government should support the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) to carry out its mandate, while giving equal attention to the development of all parts of the country, to deal with issues of rural-urban migration.

Community based interventions should include the mobilizing of communities and community resources for development; behaviour management; the provision of educational programmes to help parents and children to deal with upbringing; and dealing with school drop outs.

The interventions for dealing directly with Street Children include the following:

a. For Street Children:

- having local authorities offer them protection
- offering free healthcare services
- giving them access to vocational training institutions without asking for previous academic qualifications;
- dealing with those in conflict with the law
- conducting further research to understand the attitudes and behaviours of those who do not appear to be interested in any help extended to them.

b. For Street Mothers who give birth on the street:

- giving assistance in terms of healthcare and the provision of basic needs
- offering vocational training
- giving access to credit, to enable them to start meaningful enterprises.

The local government authority should initiate programmes, with budgetary support for retraining and reintegrating Street Children into productive sectors of the economy. The National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP) could make an allocation for Street Children by recruiting youth for skills development.

³The LEAP Programme (2008) is a social cash transfer programme, which provides cash and health insurance to extremely poor households across Ghana, to alleviate short-term poverty and encourage long-term human capital development. It is a flagship programme of the Ghana Government's National Social Protection Strategy, which is being implemented by the Department of Social Welfare.

⁴The purpose of the NYEP (2006) is to explore, recommend and provide additional employment opportunities for the youth in all districts throughout the country and thereby create conditions that will facilitate their economic empowerment. The strategy is to set up national, regional and district-level employment task forces to implement the NYEP, including a combination of self-employment opportunities, wage earning jobs and voluntary service activities. The first phase of the Program has been implementing 2006-2009.

Background

This publication has been prepared as part of the three-year project 'Improvement of the Living Standards of Street Children and Street Mothers in Accra', executed between October 2007 and April 2011, co-funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and implemented by DSW and RC.

The main objective of the project was to improve the living standards of Street Children and Street Mothers, through capacity building and institutional support to DSW and two collaborating NGOs, CAS and S.Aid.

The project had nine main fields of action, namely:

1. Census on Street Children in Greater Accra
2. Child psychology training programmes for social workers, and counselling to better equip social workers to work with Street Children
3. IT training for staff of DSW
4. Training in Project Cycle Management
5. Supply of equipment to DSW
6. Scholarship programme for Street Children to go back to school and undertake skills training
7. Awareness creation on the plight of Street Children
8. Improvement of shelters and refuges in the city of Accra
9. Coordination of local and international stakeholders

The project has established a stakeholders' coordination system to enhance the impact of the actions undertaken by DSW and the local NGOs working with Street Children in the Greater Accra Region. This has been done through the organization of regular meetings among all stakeholders, during which future interventions are discussed and jointly planned. A joint partnership (public/private) has been built up, with the task of putting in motion a methodology and common guidelines for the implementation of the activities where experiences and know-how are shared.

The Census, on which this publication is based, was undertaken to collect data on Street Children to understand their characteristics that will enable stakeholders provide targeted interventions.

Structure of the Report

This Census analyzed the demographic profile of Street Children, and recommended the most appropriate ways to deal with the issues relating to Street Children.

Accordingly, Chapter 1 begins with a description of the overall aims and objectives of the project, the methodology used, and the problems encountered during the implementation of the project.

Chapter 2 looks at the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights of Children, and the Children's Act 1998 (Act 560) of the Republic of Ghana. This chapter looks at these documents in relation to the issue of Street Children, both in Ghana and worldwide. It also looks at the magnitude of this issue in Ghana.

Chapter 3 analyzed the Census figures in relation to age, gender, categories of Street Children and place of origin.

Chapter 4 deciphers the profile of the sampled Street Children, to give details of the Census conducted in Greater Accra. The demographic information collected reveals reasons for being on the street, areas where Street Children congregate, activities on the street, health problems, level of education, violence against Street Children, and substance abuse.

Chapter 5 discussed the services provided for Street Children by DSW, CAS and S.Aid.

Chapter 6 concluded the report with recommendations and intervention proposals that are necessary to enable policymakers (Government) and stakeholders curb the issue of Street Children.

CHAPTER ONE:

PROCEDURES FOR DATA COLLECTION

This chapter focuses on the aims and objectives of the Census on Street Children in the Greater Accra Region, and the methodology used to carry it out, including procedures and sampling methods. It also highlights the limitations of the survey and reveals the various research problems and constraints associated with it.

1.1 Purpose/Objective

The Census sought to create a database of Street Children in the Greater Accra Region that could be used as a platform to enable the Government to design relevant policies and spearhead the delivery of services, in partnership with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs), families, communities and other stakeholders, to prevent and reduce the Street Children phenomenon in Ghana. This Census Report looks at the demographic profile of Street Children in the Greater Accra Region, and presents an assessment of the problem. The report also discusses the interventions currently being offered to Street Children by Governmental Organisations (GOs) and NGOs, and suggests appropriate interventions.

1.2 Methodology

The Census sought to collect both quantitative data (headcount) and qualitative data (profile) of Street Children in the Greater Accra Region. The areas in which Street Children congregate were mapped and, in these areas, every street child met was counted.

A survey was conducted with a sample of Street Children, with a view to understanding their characteristics and acting as a guide to providing appropriate interventions. The survey investigated the profiles and problems of Street Children through structured interviews. Their profiles were analyzed for common factors among Street Children in the Greater Accra Region and appropriate recommendations were made for tackling this phenomenon.

- **Collection of secondary data**

The collection of secondary sources of data involved the following:

- Reviewing literature on Street Children
- Use of relevant documents on the economy of Ghana
- Use of the Internet to access vital information needed to complete this work
- Collating data from DSW and two NGOs that deal directly with Street Children in the Greater Accra Region

- **Collection of primary data**

The collection of primary data took two weeks to complete, and involved the following procedures:

- Carrying out orientation sessions with DSW, CAS and S.Aid)
- Developing the questionnaire and interview guides that were suitable to the nature of the project
- Selecting appropriate census enumerators
- Training the enumerators
- Pretesting the questionnaire for fine tuning
- Revision of the questionnaire and interview techniques
- Enumerators going to areas of concentration of Street Children, to collect data on them
- Giving Street Children GH¢ 2.00 to motivate them to give time and effort to the exercise

- **Street mapping**

Street mapping involved the following efforts:

- Identification of areas where Street Children congregate
- Identifying the characteristics of those areas where Street Children congregate
- Observation of Street Children's activities in those areas

Identification of categories of Street Children

The Street Children were grouped under the following categories:

- Second and third generation of children born on the street
- Migrant Children
- Urban Poor
- Street Mothers.

Questionnaire

Developed by a technical committee comprising the Ghana Statistical Service, DSW, RC, CAS, S.Aid, Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA), the Labour Department and Ghana Police, the questionnaire covered the following thematic areas:

- Categories of Street Children
- Biodata (sex and age), family and migration pattern
- Survival of Street Children in Accra
- Working status and aspirations
- Health status of Street Children
- Substance abuse among Street Children
- Violence against Street Children
- Education level

Sampling Method

The sampling method was based on the type of data needed to write the survey report. Accordingly, the sampling technique used to collect data included the following:

- The absolute headcount (census) of Street Children
- The sample of 2,401 Street Children randomly selected from the Census data
- The purposive sampling method where the representatives of DSW, Directors of CAS and Street Girls Aid met together with DSW fieldworkers. Meetings took the form of discussions on the data collected from the field, and the nature of services provided to Street Children.

Informed consent

Street Children were informed about the nature and purpose of the Census and they freely participated.

Data analysis and report writing

The data analysis process included reviewing the primary and secondary data.

Research problems

Due to a number of factors, data collection had not been easy. In general, the following research problems and constraints emerged during the survey:

- Some questionnaires were inadequately filled in, even though the enumerators had undergone orientation sessions
- It was difficult to get Street Children to fill in the twelve-page questionnaire, as most of them were busy looking for work to do or items to sell, in order to earn income. This problem was dealt with by the motivation of GH¢ 2.00 for each survey participant.
- In addition, many Street Children are fatigued by seemingly constant research on them without corresponding benefits. They have become apathetic to researchers who call on them for information.

Justification for the Census

- Appropriate information on Street Children in Ghana is still scarce. This Census is different from previous efforts to collect data on Street Children in the Greater Accra Region, in that it is more extensive, and it also exposes the nature of the issue of Street Children for appropriate interventions

CHAPTER TWO:

REVIEW OF THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD, AU CHARTER ON CHILDREN, AND THE CHILDREN'S ACT, 1998 (ACT 560), IN RELATION TO THE ISSUE OF STREET CHILDREN

This chapter looks at the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), AU Charter on Children, and the Children's Act 1998 (Act 560) of the Republic of Ghana, in relation to the issue of Street Children, the definition of a street child, and the magnitude of the problem.

2.1 UN Convention on the Rights of The Child (CRC)

For the purposes of the CRC, a 'child' means every human being below the age of eighteen years, unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

The CRC is the most widely ratified human rights treaty. It sets forth a wide range of provisions that encompass civil rights and freedoms, family environment, basic health and welfare, education, leisure and cultural activities, and special protection measures.

The Convention has several 'foundation principles' that underpin all other children's rights. These include: non-discrimination; best interests of the child; right to survival and development; and views of the child. The CRC has been ratified by over 190 countries since it was adopted unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly in November 1989. Ratification commits countries to a code of binding obligations towards their children. Thanks to the CRC, child rights are now at the cutting edge of the global struggle for human rights, to be ensured by adult society as a matter of legal obligation, moral imperative and development priority.

Even though nearly all of the world's governments have ratified the CRC, they are often challenged by the overwhelming numbers of children on the street. The phenomenon of Street Children is global, alarming and escalating. Today, no country and virtually no city in the world is without the presence of Street Children. This is a problem of both developed and developing countries, but it is more prevalent in the poor nations of Latin America, Asia and Africa. Poverty, family disintegration due to health or death, neglect, abuse or abandonment, and social unrest are all common triggers for a child's life on the streets. The number of children living and working on the streets worldwide is now estimated at over 100 million, according to the UN Human Rights office.

The issue of Street Children is considered secondary to other issues affecting the development of society. However, the potential of Street Children is equal to that of other children, and this potential can be harnessed for the benefit of society. Among Street Children are future leaders, doctors, lawyers, psychologists and social workers, just to mention a few. The development agenda of the world will be defeated if these children are not protected and helped to develop their potential to take up positions in society.

2.2 The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC)

The ACRWC defines a 'child' as a human being below the age of 18 years. It recognizes the child's unique and privileged place in African society and the fact that African children need protection and special care. It also acknowledges that children are entitled to the enjoyment of freedom of expression, association, peaceful assembly, thought, religion, and conscience.

The Charter aims to protect the private life of the child and safeguard the child against all forms of economic exploitation and against work that is hazardous, interferes with the child's education or compromises his or her health or physical, social, mental, spiritual, and moral development. It calls for protection against abuse and bad treatment, negative social and cultural practices, all forms of exploitation or sexual abuse, including commercial sexual exploitation, and illegal drug use.

ARCWC aims to prevent the sale and trafficking of children, kidnapping, and use of children to beg. Despite all the provisions made in ACRWC for the protection of the African child, one of the major problems in Africa is the issue of Street Children. Many African countries are affected by large-scale population displacements and/or the presence of significant numbers of refugees, as the result of natural or manmade disasters and armed conflict (UNCHR, 1995).

In addition to generating child refugees and causing children to be orphaned or directly injured, warfare can be considered as a major cause of Street Children within some African countries, especially in Liberia, Somalia, Sierra Leone, and lately, Côte d'Ivoire. The scale of population displacement is in the context of environmental degradation and depleted resources. Poverty, illiteracy, disease, family breakdown, child abuse, child neglect, peer pressure, and sensation seeking are cited as the common factors creating the phenomenon of Street Children in Africa.

2.3 The Children's Act 1998 (ACT 560) of Ghana

The Government of Ghana, in fulfilment of its statutory obligation as a signatory to the 1989 Geneva Convention of the Child, enacted a legislative instrument, the Children's Act 1998 (Act 560).

The preamble of the Act states that it is:

An Act to reform and consolidate the law relating to children, to provide for the rights of the child, maintenance and adoption, regulate child labour and apprenticeship, for ancillary matters concerning children generally and to provide for related matters.

Section 1 defines a 'child' as anyone below the age of 18 years, and Section 2 discusses the best interest of the child, which should be paramount in every matter concerning the child.

In Section 6, subsection 2, concerning parental duty and responsibility, it is stated that '*every child has the right to life, dignity, respect, leisure, liberty, health, education and shelter, from his parents*'.

Subsection 3 (a and b) states:

every parent has rights and responsibilities whether imposed by law or otherwise towards his child, which include the duty to—

(a) protect the child from neglect, discrimination, violence, abuse, exposure to physical and moral hazards and oppression;

(b) provide good guidance, care, assistance and maintenance for the child and assurance of the child's survival and development.

Even though parental responsibilities have been spelt out in the Act, many parents in Ghana, especially in the rural areas, are not aware of about the existence of the Act until they find themselves in conflict with the law. As such, the offices of DSW and other government agencies throughout the country are inundated with daily complaints of parental neglect. Parents treat their children as if they are their individual property and they can decide what they want to do with them. They shirk the responsibility of taking proper care of their children's daily needs, including their needs at school. Many of such children do not feel cared for, and they go on to live their lives the way they want to. These are some of the children who leave home to fend for themselves on the streets.

The Children's Act provides for a Family Tribunal to deal with cases of parental irresponsibility. In the rural areas, however, many of such cases are not sent to the Family Tribunal, because of traditional beliefs that frown on taking 'home matters' outside the home.

Section 18 of the Children's Act (clauses f, g & h) highlights care and protection for all children when a child:

(f) is wandering and has no home or settled place of abode or visible means of subsistence;

(g) is begging or receiving alms, whether or not there is any pretence of singing, plying, performing, offering anything for sale or otherwise, or is found in any street, premises or place for the purpose of begging or receiving alms;

(h) accompanies any person when that person is begging or receiving alms, whether or not there is any pretence of singing, playing, performing, offering anything for sale or otherwise.

Although the Act states clearly what it means by care and protection for children, there appears to be no conscious effort to provide Street Children with the necessary care and protection. Children are conspicuous on our streets as it is easy to see some begging and others selling on the streets. Other children are used as guides for persons with disability who beg for alms on the streets while they should be in school. The NGOs actively involved in helping Street Children are overwhelmed by the numbers and lack of adequate resources, which have been a hindrance to the provision of substantial help.

The Act, in Section 19 (3), makes provision for the care and protection of such children, in which the DSW, a government unit, plays a lead role. It states:

If after investigation it is determined that the child has been abused or is in need of immediate care and protection, the Department shall direct a probation officer or social welfare officer accompanied by the police to remove the child to a place of safety for a period of not more than seven days.

Section 20 on care order of Family Tribunal states:

A Family Tribunal may issue a care order to the Department on an application by a probation officer or social welfare officer under section 19 (4).

(2) The care order shall remove the child from a situation where he is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm and shall transfer the parental rights to the Department.

(3) The probation officer or social welfare officer shall take custody of the child and shall determine the most suitable place for the child, which may be—

(a) an approved residential home;

(b) with an approved fit person;

(c) or at the home of a parent, guardian or relative.

Certainly, children should not be on the streets. Deliberate efforts should be made to remove them from the streets and harness their potential. DSW has many training centres, some of which could be restructured to give vocational skills training to Street Children. These training centres are: Swedru Boys Industrial School; Accra Girls Vocational School; Boys and Girls Vocational School in the Volta Region; Junior Boys Industrial School at Sekondi, and rehabilitation centres in all the regional capitals of Ghana. These training centres are mostly underutilized because they are under resourced. DSW should be provided with material and financial support to play its lead role of handling problems related to children.

The Children's Act also prohibits children from engaging in any work that is exploitative or hazardous to the child's health, education, or development. The minimum age at which a person can be employed is 15 years. If a person below 15 years is employed, he/she is considered a working child. For children who are above 13 years, however, the law allows engagement in light work.

There is some evidence that children in Ghana, even as young as seven years, are sometimes engaged in economic activities. Some 54.1 percent of an estimated 18 million persons aged 7 years and older, (comprising 8.7 million males and 9.3 million females), are currently economically active. Nearly 13 percent of children aged 7 to 14 years are economically active. Overall, the economic activity rate in rural areas is higher (58.6%) than that of urban areas (47.3%). The activity rate in rural savannah (29.8%) for the younger age group (7-14 years) is particularly high, compared to those in the forest (11.1%) and coastal (7.6%) zones. In urban areas, it has been observed that girls aged 7 to 14 years are more likely to engage in economic activities than boys, while in rural areas, boys in the same age group are more involved in economic activities than girls (Ghana Living Standards Survey, 2005).

Despite its excellent provisions, the implementation of the Children's Act remains rhetorical, since children - especially those living on the street - are deprived of parental care, education, health and their overall psychosocial development. Many children, especially Street Children, toil to earn their daily living.

2.4 Definition of a Street Child

UNICEF defines Street Children as children under 18 years old who spend most of their time on the street. UNICEF also presents three subcategories of Street Children:

UNICEF's subcategory of Street Children	Description
1. Street living children	Children who have lost ties with their families and live alone on the street
2. Street working children	Children who spend all or most of their time working on the street to earn income for their families or for themselves (they have a home to return to and do not usually sleep on the street).
3. Children of street living families	Children who live with their families on the street.

Table 1: UNICEF's subcategories of Street Children

The classification of Street Children by DSW, RC and collaborators when conducting the Census was as follows:

Classification of Street Children for the Greater Accra Region Census	Description
1. Children born on the street	Children born on the street and living on the street with their mothers or families.
2. Migrant children	Children who have left their homes, mainly from the rural and peri-urban areas of Ghana to city centres, and are living and working in the street. They are not under any adult control but are living with other children on the street.
3. Urban poor	Children who work on the street to augment family income or fend for themselves. They usually go back home after the day's work. Some of them attend school but go to the street to earn money for their education.
4. Street mother	Any girl under the age of 18 who is living on the street and having a child(ren).

Table 2: Classification of Street Children for the Greater Accra Region Census

The definition of a Street Child, therefore, is:

One who is under 18 years, is born on the street and lives with parent(s) on the street; migrated to the street; or is an urban poor child or street mother who survives working in the street.

This categorization of Street Children will bring about a better understanding of the problems and needs of each group, so that the appropriate interventions can be provided.

2.5 Magnitude of the Street Children issue in Greater Accra

Although there are official statistics on the phenomenon of Street Children in Ghana, the earlier efforts have been concentrated in the regional capitals. A headcount of Street Children in Accra shows a consistent increase over the years.

In 1991, the Department of Social Work at the University of Ghana conducted a survey and found 4,000 children living on the streets of Accra (Apt; Blavo & Opoku, 1991). In 1992, the number totaled 7,000, rising to 19,196 in 2002 (CAS, 2003). In 1996, 2001, 2006, CAS and Street Girls Aid conducted headcounts in the centre of the city of Accra and some suburbs, and saw increasing numbers of Street Children (10,600, 15,300 and 21,140) respectively. The headcount in 2009 by RC, DSW, CAS and S.Aid found the number of Street Children to be 61,492 in the Greater Accra Region.

This is an overwhelming number, compared to the previous data collected.

The number of Street Children in the Greater Accra Region could still be higher. There are Street Children who are highly visible and can be counted easily in any survey, but there are others who mainly work at night, especially sex workers. Therefore, depending on the time when a survey is conducted, some children could be left out. However, since this Census was conducted both day and night - and targeted sex workers as well - the figure could be near the accurate number of Street Children in the Greater Accra Region.

CHAPTER THREE:

CENSUS ON STREET CHILDREN IN GREATER ACCRA

This chapter looks at the Census conducted on Street Children by their age, gender, categories and place of origin. The Census on Street Children in Greater Accra revealed that 61,492 children were living and working on the streets. The data analysis on the Census is explained in the figures below.

3.1 Age Distribution of Street Children

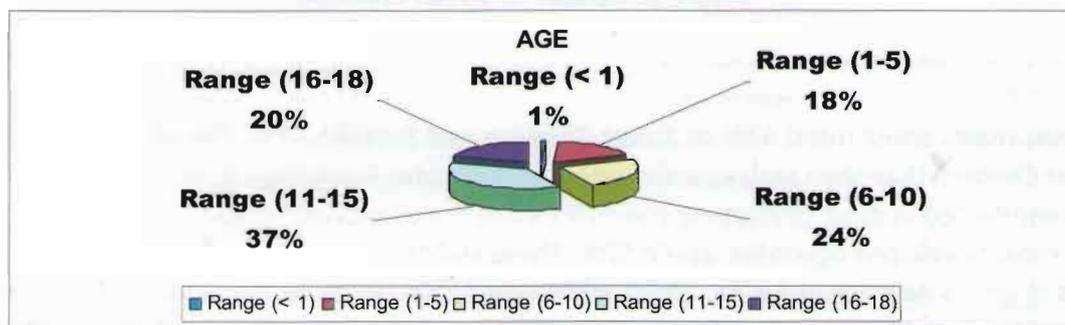


Figure 1: Age distribution of Street Children

The Census indicated that children who were less than one year constituted 1% of the total; children of 1-5 years constituted 18%; children of 6-10 years constituted 24%; children of 11-15 years accounted for 37%; and children of 16-18 years made up 20%.

3.2 Gender of Street Children

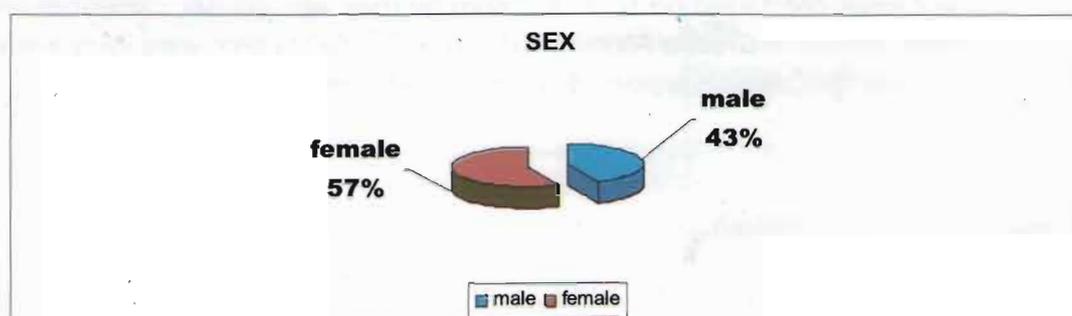


Figure 2: Gender of Street Children

In this Census, males constituted 43% of Street Children and females 57%. This shows that there are more female Street Children than their male counterparts in the Greater Accra Region, which is interesting, given that headcounts conducted in most developing countries show the proportion of girls among Street Children to be 30%; and in most developed countries, about 50%. These statistics do not support the situation in Ghana. The ratio of boys to girls is nearly equal (CAS, 2003), with some NGOs believing that it skews in favour of the girls. A study supports the fact that girls outnumber the boys on the streets of Accra (Haltloy & Huser, 2005).

There are several reasons why girls may be overrepresented on the streets of the Greater Accra Region. One reason may be the value attached to girl child education, especially in many rural communities where the education of the girl child is not imperative to many parents because they believe that the girl child's place in life is marriage, and her education should therefore focus on how to become a good wife. As a result of the parents' attitudes, most girl children drop out of school for lack of payment of their school fees. They are used as baby sitters and do many household chores that include cooking, spending hours fetching water for the whole family, and sweeping. In the rural areas, they go to farms to plant crops and collect firewood. These are just a few examples of the struggle the girl child goes through.

The boy child is insulated from such activities, which are tiring and time consuming. The girl child is forced out of school. When money for school fees is scarce, tradition-oriented parents often choose the boy over the girl, when it comes to the decision about who should go to school. Furthermore, in most cultures in Ghana, girls do not inherit property and must find their own. In addition, some parents are illiterate and therefore do not appreciate the value of education.

3.3 Categories of Street Children

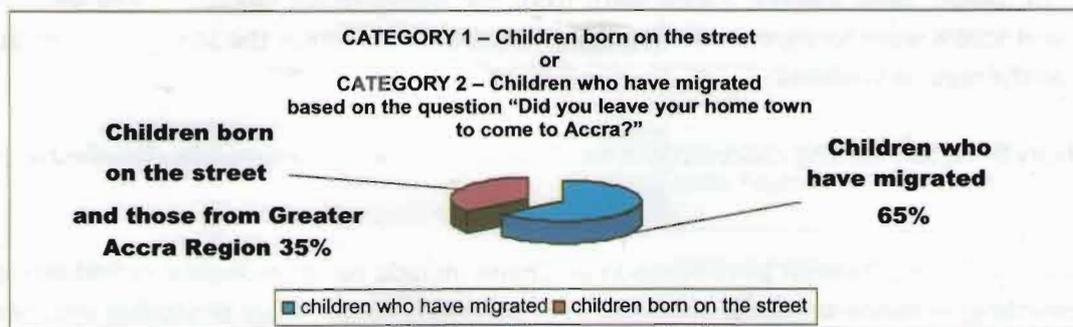


Figure 3: Categories of street children

From Figure 3 above, children born on the street and those from the Greater Accra Region together constituted 35%, while those who migrated to the Region constituted 65%. This points to the fact that many of the Street Children migrated to the Greater Accra Region.

3.4 Place of Origin

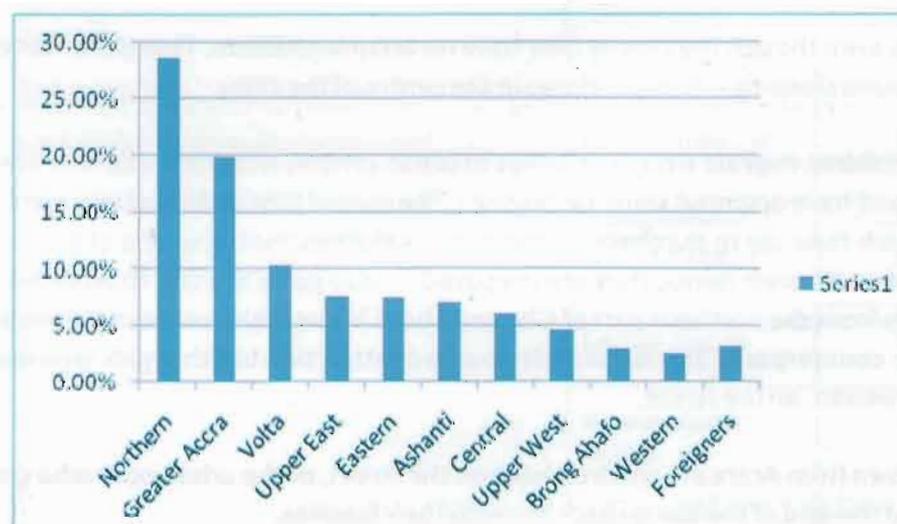


Figure 4: Place of Origin

The Census indicated that 28.53% of the Street Children surveyed were from the Northern Region. 19.8% were from the Greater Accra Region; 10.26% were from the Volta Region; 7.53% were from the Upper East Region; 7.37% were from the Eastern Region; 6.99% were from the Ashanti Region; 6% were from the Central Region; 4.5% were from the Upper West Region; 2.85% were from the Brong Ahafo Region; 2.38% were from the Western Region; and 3.06% were foreigners. It can be seen from the above that the Street Children in Greater Accra come from all the regions in Ghana. (43.41% from the northern sector + 55.86% from the southern sector)

There is a multiplicity of factors leading children onto the street. These factors are usually classified as push and pull factors.

The push factors in the Street Children phenomenon in Ghana include harsh economic conditions; parental neglect; single parenting; violence at home; poor health of parents through drugs or alcohol use; peer group pressure; sexual violence at home; migration of parents; poor crop yields; traditional practices; breakdown of the nuclear family system; and large family sizes. Others are inter-tribal wars; chieftaincy conflicts; poor infrastructural development in rural communities; and poor quality education in rural communities.

The pull factors include the economic opportunities in the cities, and children's expectation of earning income in the cities in order to survive in life. Though the Government of Ghana is making efforts to develop rural areas through rural electrification, better roads, schools and other development programmes, children find their way into city centres that are experiencing enormous social and economic transformation, like Kumasi, Sekondi/Takoradi and Accra.

As to be expected, the development going in the rural areas is far slower than that in the urban centres. Cities generate new opportunities and demands for categories of workers like house helps, shoeshine boys, and people to sell petty items in the street to pedestrians and passengers in moving vehicles that are caught up in traffic. The expectation of cash income encourages rural labour to migrate to the city to supply such services that may not normally be provided by urban dwellers.

Rural folk come to cities even though they know they have no accommodation. Therefore, Street Children from rural areas are mostly found sleeping in front of stores in the centre of the cities.

One other reason why children migrate from rural areas to urban centres is that they admire other children who have been to the cities and have acquired some belongings. The menial jobs children carry out on the street give them some income, which they use to purchase for themselves clothes, footwear and other items. When other children see their friends with such items, they are prepared to also go to the city to work and acquire similar things. In particular, girls from the northern part of Ghana go back home with new possessions and appear to be 'doing better' than their counterparts. This is the main source of attraction to other girls who want to undertake similar risks to find the 'wealth' on the street.

Most of the Street Children from Accra are children born on the street, or the urban poor who come to the street to look for money, and at the end of the day go back home to their families.

In the Ashanti Region, even though poverty could be one of the reasons for children leaving home to move to city centres like Accra in search of money, this might not be the main driving force for the exodus. Many Street Children who come to the city of Accra from the Ashanti Region are said to be 'business minded'. They are mostly found engaged in the selling of audio and video CDs and other fast-moving items. Their dreams may be bigger than one can imagine.

CHAPTER FOUR:

THE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE STREET CHILDREN SAMPLE IN GREATER ACCRA

This chapter details the profile of Street Children in the Greater Accra Region, with a description of basic demographic information from the primary data collected from them through structured interviews. The chapter details the areas where the survey was conducted, the categories of Street Children, reasons for being on the street, areas where they congregate, activities on the street, health problems, level of education, substance abuse, and violence against them. Observations on the Census were also made.

As part of eliciting further information on the profile of Street Children in the Census, a sample of 2,401 Street Children living in the Greater Accra Region was collected. The sample consisted of 977 males and 1,424 females who were in daily contact with street life in the Greater Accra Region. The age distribution of Street Children interviewed ranged between 10 and 18 years of age, with an average age of 13. They consisted of 59.3% females and 40.7% males.

The following represents the basic demographic information on the sample interviewed, which sheds light on the nature and magnitude of the problem.

4.1 Areas in which the survey was conducted

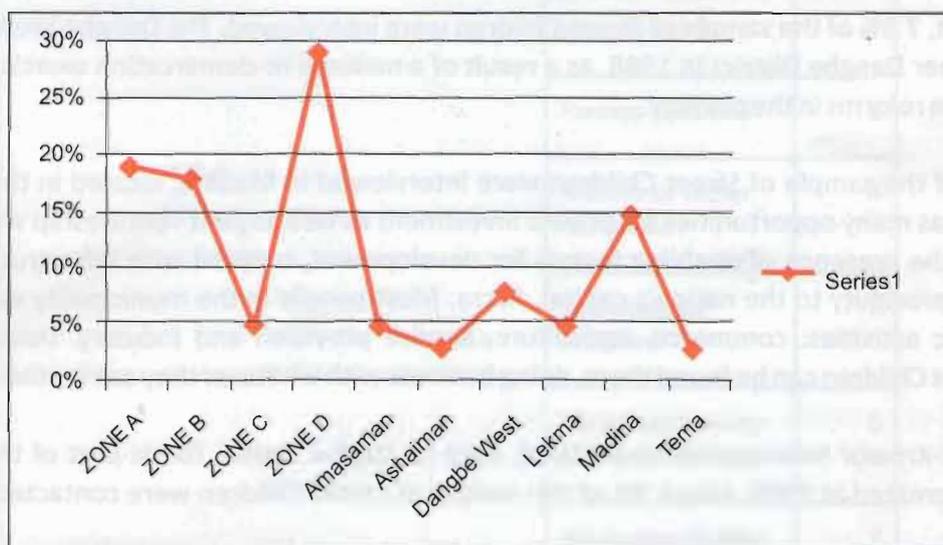


Figure 5: Areas in which the survey was conducted

The survey was conducted in Zones A, B, C and D, all in the Accra Metropolitan Area; Amasaman in Ga West Municipal Area; Ashaiman; Dangbe West; Ledzokuku-Krowor Municipal Area; Madina in Ga East Municipal Area, and Tema Metropolitan Area (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accra> - cite_note-4).

The percentage of Street Children contacted in Zones A, B, C and D constituted 65.3% of the sample. Accra is the capital and largest city in Ghana, with the population of the city proper estimated at 3,963,264 as of 2011, making it the largest metropolitan conglomeration in the country, by population. As a prime city, Accra is the administrative, communications and economic centre of the country. It also doubles as the capital of both the Greater Accra Region and the Accra Metropolitan Area. There are many economic opportunities in the city of Accra that attract people - including children - looking for means of survival.

The survey also interviewed 4.4% of the sample of Street Children in Amasaman, the capital of Ga West Municipal Area. Ga West consists of many rural settlements such as Sapeiman, Ayikai Doblo, Obuom, Mayera, and so forth. Most of the people living in these areas are farmers. Unfortunately, soil erosion due to sand winning and stone quarry activities have destroyed the hitherto prosperous agricultural settlements. Many people have been thrown out of their jobs, and poverty is rife among them.

The sample of Street Children contacted in Ashiaman was 1.7%. Ashaiman grew as migrants from the Dangme West District, precisely the Ada area, came to settle in the town and were subsequently followed by other ethnic groups including the Ewes and people from the northern parts of the country. The main occupations in Ashaiman are farming (especially crop farming, livestock and poultry raising), fishing, manufacturing, food processing, quarrying and construction, commerce and *kente* weaving.

In Dangbe West, 7.9% of the sample of Street Children were interviewed. The Dangbe West District was carved out of the former Dangbe District in 1988, as a result of a national re-demarcation exercise carried out due to decentralization reforms in the country.

About 14.7% of the sample of Street Children were interviewed in Madina, located in the Ga East Municipal Area. Ga East has many opportunities for private investment as well as joint ventureship with the public sector. This is due to the presence of enabling factors for development, coupled with infrastructural setup and the municipality's proximity to the nation's capital, Accra. Most people in the municipality engage in one of four main economic activities: commerce, agriculture, service provision and industry. Due to these economic activities, Street Children can be found there, doing business with whatever they can lay their hands on.

The Ledzokuku-Krowor Municipal Area (LEKMA), with its capital Teshie, forms part of the new districts and municipalities created in 2008. About 3% of the sample of Street Children were contacted and interviewed in this area.

In the Tema metropolis, 2.9% of the sample of Street Children were interviewed. Tema is a city on the Atlantic coast, located east of the capital city Accra. Originally, a small fishing village, Tema, grew after the construction of a large harbour in 1961, and the city is now the nation's largest sea port. Tema is one of Ghana's two deep seaports; Sekondi/Takoradi is the other. Tema is also home to an oil refinery and it is an important centre of manufacturing. It is linked to the capital by a highway. Economic activities are very brisk in the sea port area and children who are found there are usually involved in fishing and other activities.

4.2 Categories of Street Children sampled

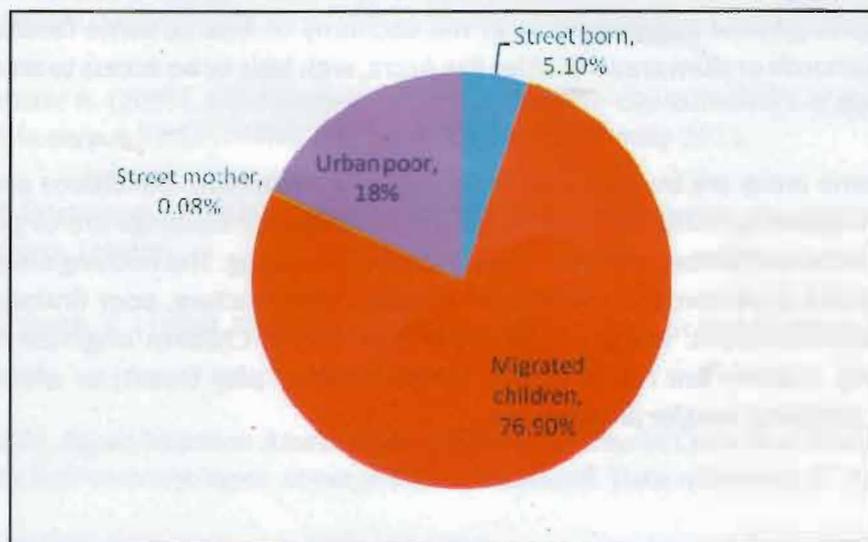


Figure 6: Categories of Street Children sampled

The data in Figure 6 above reveals that 5.1% of the sample of Street Children were born on the street; 76.9% migrated to the street; 18% were the urban poor; and 0.08% were street mothers.

- **Street born**

After a hard day's work, most Street Girls sleep in unprotected open places, such as lorry and railway stations. These vulnerable girls become victims to unscrupulous men, who rape them or take advantage of their situation to lure them into sex and give them pittance. Some of these girls become pregnant and give birth to children on the street.

Some Street Children are engaged in casual sexual relationships with people they are living with on the street, whom they look up to for their defence and survival against the hazards of street life. These relationships take the form of a promise of protection in exchange for sex.

There is, however, a new generation of Street Children born to Street Mothers, who by themselves have lost contact with their families. The Street Mothers live on the streets with their children. Every open available space is where they find shelter. They sleep in front of stores and wake up early enough to allow store owners to do their business.

- **Migrant Children**

Apart from children born on the street, there are others mostly from rural areas who have migrated to the city centre of Accra and other places, in search of better living conditions. Children have been migrating from rural areas to the cities for decades, but since the early 1990s, their numbers have been growing rapidly, and experts worry that Ghana's population of Street Children will explode in the coming years, if appropriate measures are not taken to stem the exodus of children to city centres.

As a result of poverty, some parents encourage their children to go to the city to earn money to support the whole family. They cite examples of other children who have 'made it' in the city, to motivate their children to undertake the journey into the obscure street life.

- **Urban Poor**

According to the Ghana Living Standards Survey 2005/6, poverty in Ghana fell from 51.5% in 1991/92, to 28.5 % in 2005/6. Despite general improvements in the economy of Ghana, some families living in impoverished neighbourhoods or slum areas⁵ in cities like Accra, with little or no access to amenities, are facing increased hardship.

Most of these low-income areas are built up with little room for expansion. Conditions are generally depressed, with poor supporting social and engineering infrastructure. Buildings are of poor quality material such as mud, untreated timber and zinc roofing sheets for walling. The housing environment is characterized by haphazard development, inadequate housing infrastructure, poor drainage, erosion and high population concentrations. Many of the urban poor Street Children originate from these settlements where many children are not in school; where children play truant; or where they are involved in drug taking, gambling, and/or prostitution.

4.3 Reasons for leaving home

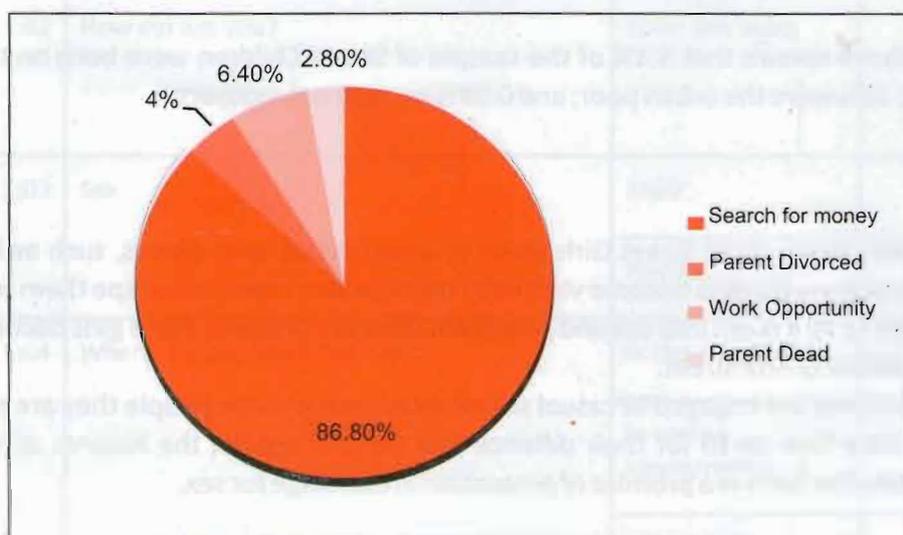


Figure 7: Reasons for leaving home

This Census showed the effect of various interrelated factors leading to the existence of Street Children in the Greater Accra Region. Search for money was revealed as the leading cause of the Street Children phenomenon, accounting for about 86.8%. Other causes included parent divorced (4%), work opportunity (6.4%) and death of parent(s) (2.8%).

⁵ For example, Nima and Maamobi, in Accra.

Search for money

Search for money is the driving force of rural-urban migration, as some children do not envisage a viable future for themselves in their rural communities. The 'search for money' can be equated to 'poverty'. Even though Street Children are searching for money, most of them work long hours for a mere pittance. Girls toil in the markets selling food or 'ice water', and many serve as porters, carrying heavy loads on their heads. They typically earn between GH¢ 3.00 and GH¢ 5.00 on a good day, and rely on their colleagues for food on days when they do not make any earnings. With the number of Street Children increasing daily, menial jobs may become increasingly scarce and, as an unfortunate consequence, some street girls may engage in prostitution as a main source of income.

Divorce

The Census revealed that another cause of Street Children is divorce. Family instability is becoming more common in Ghanaian society and the real cause of this problem should be fully investigated. Parental remarriage after a divorce becomes a problem for children who are maltreated by their step-parents.

Work opportunity

Children who have dropped out of school or have never been to school actually see working on the street as a way of engaging themselves in an activity for the rest of their lives. There are menial jobs on the street that do not require any special skills, such as head porting, selling of sachet water and other items, washing of car windscreens, and so on.

Death of parent(s)

The death of a parent(s) often leaves a child with no one else to lean on. This forces children to look for means of survival. In the recent past, immediate family members usually took custody of children when their parents died. This tradition is gradually eroding as economic pressures on families prevent them from helping others in the extended family. There's no doubt that before European penetration with its introduction of formal education, colonial administration, agriculture and money economy, Ghanaian (and African) societies depended largely on the extended family system for survival. With the introduction of the money economy, economic pressures have greatly affected the role and function of the traditional family system. When people have problems, they often have to depend on their own resources for a solution.

4.4 Activities of Street Children

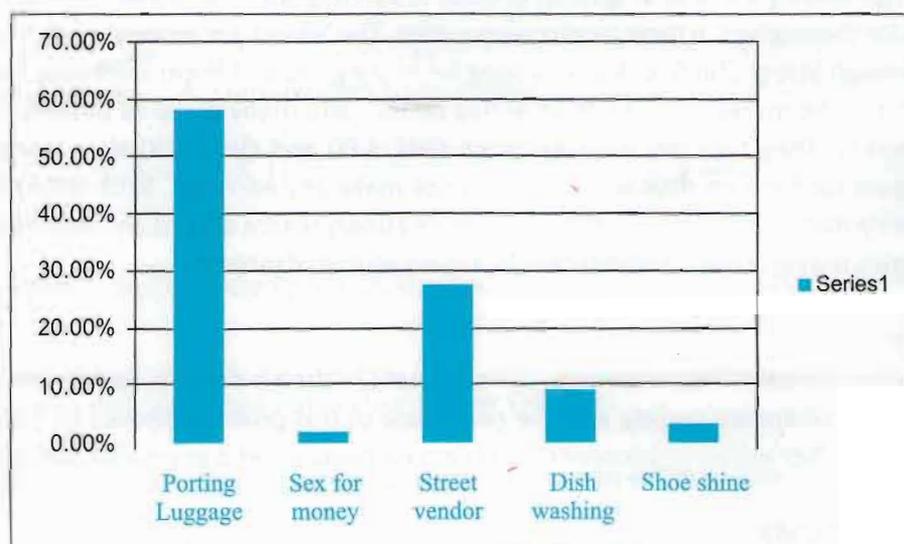


Figure 8: Activities of Street Children

The Census indicated that the majority (58.2%) of Street Children are head porters; 27.7% are street vendors; 9.1% are dish washers; 3.2% are shoe shine boys; and 1.8% are sex workers.

The most popular jobs for boys are shoe shining, truck pushing, street vending and being market porters. Meanwhile, girls from the northern part of the country often engage in head porting (popularly known as 'kayayei'). They tend to carry such heavy loads in head pans that it might seem as though they could break their necks. They follow shoppers who buy goods and put them in the pans as they follow them. They are given amounts as low as 50 pesewas, for wasting hours following one shopper. The male counterparts are usually found carting goods in trucks.

Street Children are also engaged in selling of different items on the street. They are often found selling coconuts, sugarcane, phone credit, ice cream and sachet water, just to mention a few. Some of them are dish washers in 'chop bars'⁶, and others shine shoes. Some adults take advantage of these Street Children and engage them in the sex and drug trades. Other Street Children carry rubbish for a fee. They are referred to as the 'kaya bola'. Others are involved in windscreen or car washing, scrap iron collection, shoe shining, fishing, and being tro-tro drivers' mates⁷.

Small children often start with begging, since they are too young to do physically demanding work like porting. Others act as guides to physically challenged people. Many Street Children do more than two jobs at the same time.

⁶Local eating places, often serving traditional Ghanaian dishes.

⁷Bus conductors for small minibuses.

4.5 Health Problems of Street Children

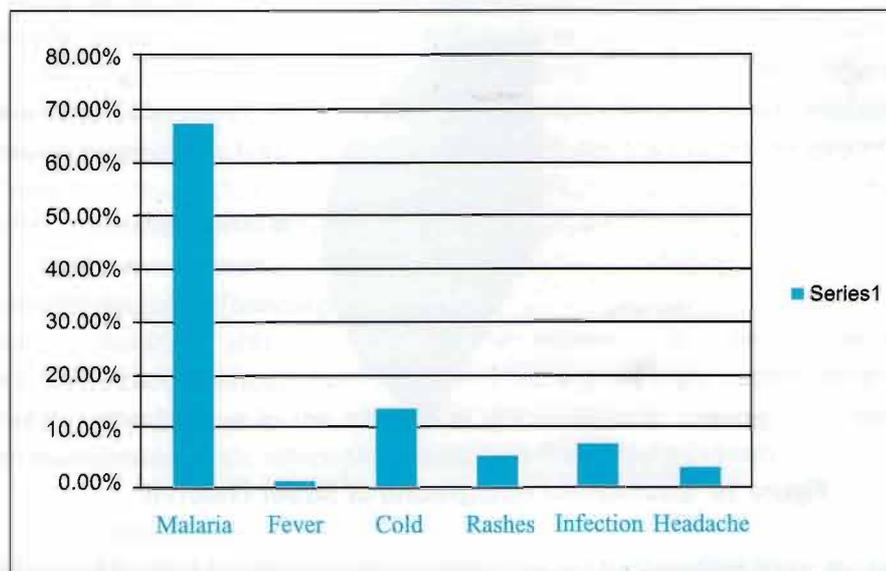


Figure 9: Health Problems of Street Children

Street Children suffer from various health problems. In this Census, 68.4% complained of malaria: this was the most common ailment among them. 13.6% complained of colds; 7.7% had infections; 5.8% had rashes; 3.3% had headaches, and 1.1% had fever.

Malaria is a common tropical disease resulting from mosquito bites. Street Children often suffer from mosquito bites, since they sleep in open spaces in front of shops and lorry parks. They also suffer from colds because of their exposure to unpredictable weather changes. In December, during the harmattan season⁸, certain parts of Ghana experience very cold temperatures, especially the north and the plains of Accra. Many people, including Street Children, get flu. Street Children also suffer from skin diseases and infections, as they live in dirty environments and sleep on the ground with cardboards or mats. The tensions they experience on the street often lead to headaches.

The lack of access to medical services often leads to many untreated cases of illness among Street Children. Street Children are also exposed to health hazards such as cholera, drug related illnesses and sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV/AIDS.

Even though Ghana has a National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), many Street Children are not registered under the scheme. They do not have access to healthcare because they cannot afford to pay the required premiums. Some of the NGOs working with Street Children have indicated that in general, Street Children do not have NHIS cards.

The pattern of the health seeking behaviour of Street Children indicates that 31.6% of Street Children usually go to public hospitals when they fall ill; 21.7% carry out self medication; 13.5% use traditional herbal medicine; 3.9% buy drugs from pharmacies; and 3.4% seek help from NGOs. Others (25.9%) are not able to find the appropriate treatment and will do anything or nothing about their health problems when they fall ill.

⁸The harmattan is a dry and dusty West African trade wind. It blows south from the Sahara into the Gulf of Guinea, between the end of November and the middle of March. The temperatures can be as low as 3 degrees Celsius.

4.6 Educational Background of Street Children

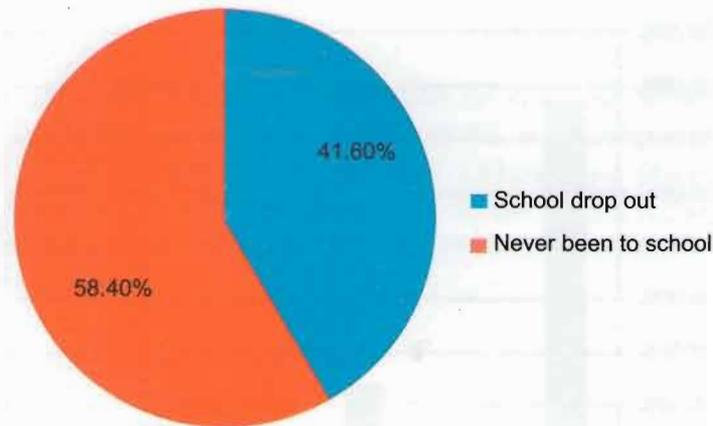


Figure 10: Educational Background of Street Children

In the Census, data on the educational levels of Street Children indicated that 41.6% of Street Children dropped out of school, while 58.4% had never been to school at all. Many children who have dropped out of school or did not go to school find nothing to do at home, and therefore the street is usually the place where they can find an activity to occupy themselves with.

Many children become school dropouts because their parents cannot afford to take care of them at school. Some children refuse to go to school on their own accord, for reasons such as academic failure, poor teaching, punishments at school, bullying, and so on.

The dropout rate for females is higher than for male children. Net primary school enrolment (which is the second Millennium Development Goal) rose from 81% in 2006/07 to 83% in 2007/08; to 89% in 2008/09 (Preliminary Education Sector Performance Report, 2009). For every 100 boys, there are 96 girls. There is also a clear gender gap in education, with almost twice as many females (2.7 million) as males (1.4 million) never attending school. As stated above, male attendance rates are generally higher than those of females, throughout Ghana and across age groups (GLSS, 2005). This might account for the fact that there are more street girls than boys.

4.7 Literacy Levels of Street Children

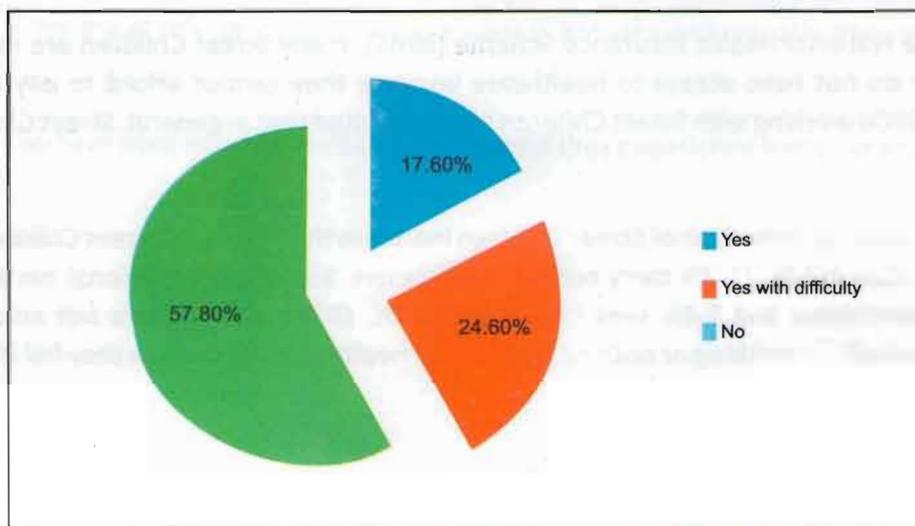


Figure 11: Literacy

During the Census, the Street Children sampled were asked questions on literacy, to find out their ability to read or write. In Figure 11 above, 57.8% could not read, 17.6% could read and 24.6% could read with difficulty. This is not surprising, since many Street Children, as already noted, are school dropouts, or have never attended school before. The majority are therefore not able to read.

4.8 Numeracy Levels of Street Children

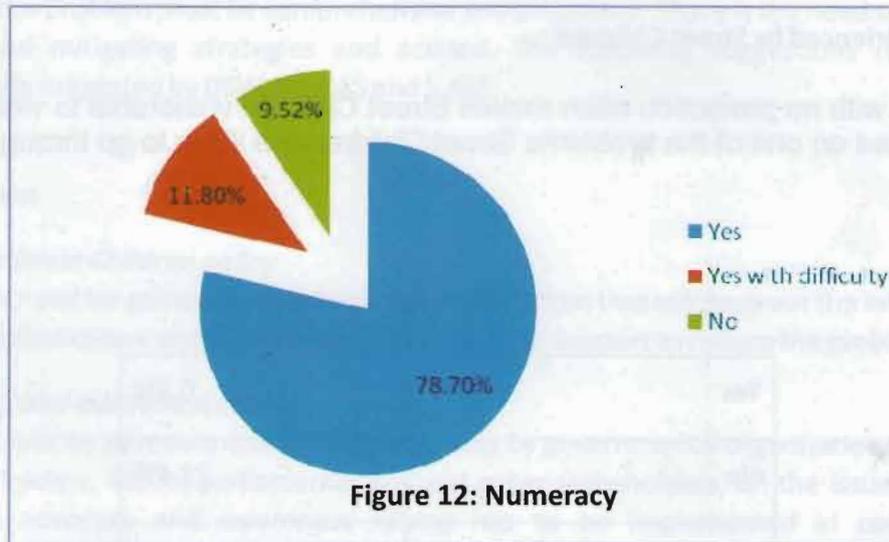


Figure 12: Numeracy

In their interviews, Street Children were also asked questions involving calculations to elicit information about their numeracy levels. In Figure 12 above, 78.7% of Street Children indicated that they could count money; 11.8% could do it with difficulty; and 9.52% could not count money at all. Street Children need this skill to be able to count the money they earn. Fortunately, many indicated that they had the ability to do so.

4.9 Substance Abuse among Street Children

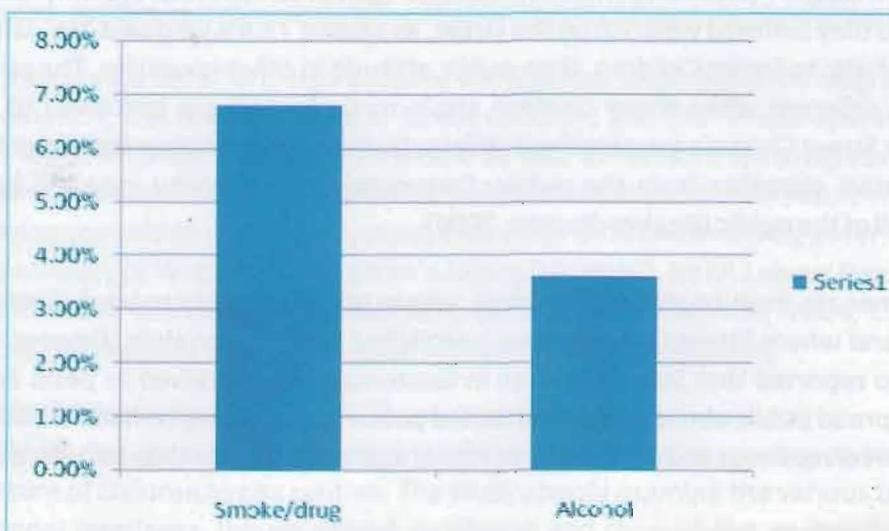


Figure 13: Substance Abuse among Street Children

Data collected through the interviews indicated that 6.8% of the sample of Street Children consumed substances or drugs, and 3.6% consumed alcohol. Many (89.6%) indicated that they were not taking drugs. However, according to CAS officials, this does not tally with their experience of working with Street Children. According to them, more than half of the Street Children take drugs on a habitual basis, and gender is no exception. Substances consumed by Street Children include sleeping tablets, ephedrine, cigarettes, tobacco, marijuana, cocaine, heroin and alcoholic beverages such as 'akpeteshie'⁹. The Street Children enjoy their drug taking habits in groups and some adults take advantage of their vulnerability and engage them in drug peddling.

4.10 Violence Experienced by Street Children

Living on the street with no protection often makes Street Children vulnerable to violence. Below is information presented on one of the problems Street Children are likely to go through while on the street.

Yes	0.3%
No	73.4%
Yes sometimes	20.7%
Yes, plenty of time	4.9%
Yes, plenty of people	0.7%

Table 3: Violence Experienced by Street Children

From the interviews, there was no indication of massive violence against Street Children. Only 0.3% of the Street Children sample indicated they suffered violence on the street, as against 73.4% who said 'No'. Ghanaian society tends to be more sympathetic to Street Children, than public attitude in other countries. The public attitude in Ghana may however be different when these children attain maturity and are perceived to be capable of committing crimes. Older Street Children are perceived differently than younger ones and they may be the ones who attract all the negative attention from the public. Fortunately, the majority may still be enjoying the benevolence and goodwill of the public (Boakye-Boaten, 2006).

Unlike Ghana, reports emanate from countries like Brazil, where police brutality towards Street Children has been well documented, and where Street Children have been killed in execution style (Deweese & Kless, 1995). Alexander (1987) has also reported that Street Children in Guatemala are perceived as pests and delinquents and that has led to widespread public abuse and unwarranted police intimidation. Le Roux & Smith (1998c) also suggest that the public perceives street youths as an impersonal aggregate, rather than as individuals.

⁹ Local gin.

However, there might be acts of violence against Street Children in Ghana, which the children themselves do not consider as violence. There could be violence against the smaller Street Children by older peers who threaten and collect monies from them. They could also be violence from the community as a reaction to the existence of Street Children in particular settings and areas where their presence is not appreciated. That apart, violence could be experienced while working for their employers or through other peers working in the same place, such as when selling items on the street in areas where other people or other children exercise control. Violence normally ends with the children having cuts and bruises, since it often involves fighting. Sexual abuse is a common problem for most young and new female Street Children.

4.11 Observations of the Census

- ***Difficulties in collecting data***

There is usually a problem with the definition and categorization of Street Children. This survey, for example, collected data on Street Children who were classified as migrants, urban poor, street born and street mothers. There is the need for proper categorization, so that precise interventions can be used to deal with the issue of Street Children, since they are not a homogenous group.

Some Street Children are highly visible, such as head porters, truck pushers, those selling on the street, street mothers, and children born on the street, who can easily be counted. However, there are others who are highly invisible, such as those used in the drug trade, and prostitutes. There are also children who work only at night. Those who work at night may be sleeping in the daytime and may not be counted by census enumerators. The invisibility of some Street Children is therefore one of the major difficulties in conducting such a census. As stated earlier, this Census was conducted during the day and night, to reduce - as much as possible - the impact of the 'invisibility factor' on data collection.

Many Street Children move from one location to another in search of customers, and in general, for any opportunity to earn a living. This obviously creates problems for those who want to count them, since at the time when the enumerators finished collecting data and moved out from a particular location, a street child may have moved in and may miss the chance of being counted. There is therefore the need to be aware of such movements, so that mopping up exercises can be carried out from time to time as the headcount goes on. In this Census, to mitigate the impact of these 'movements factors', a street mapping exercise to assess movements and presence of Street Children at a given time was undertaken from 18th to 28th November 2008, and from 2nd to 13th February 2009. Wristbands were given to every child counted, to reduce incidence of double counting.

Another factor taken into consideration while conducting the Census, was that the number of children on the street has seasonal variations. For instance, the number of Street Children may vary during and after the Christmas period. During the rainy season, some children go home temporarily, to help their parents on the farm. They may miss being counted, even though they will return to the streets in a few months. The number of Street Children may be highest during holidays, when children do not have to go to school. The children of poor rural families often take advantage of this spare time to earn extra money for their families.

CHAPTER FIVE:

SERVICES PROVIDED TO STREET CHILDREN IN GREATER ACCRA

This chapter discusses the government's role (via the Department of Social Welfare) in dealing with the issue of Street Children; and it also discusses the roles of two NGOs (CAS and S.Aid) working directly with Street Children in Ghana: their activities and programs and the interventions they employ to deal with the issue of Street Children.

5.1 Department of Social Welfare (DSW)

As a government department, DSW plays a lead role in matters concerning children in Ghana, as mandated by the Children's Act 1998 (Act 560). The Department operates under three core programmes, namely: Child Rights Promotion and Protection, Community Care, and Justice Administration.

Under the Child Rights Promotion and Protection Unit, child rights protection programmes focus on welfare services, where a child becomes a ward of the Department, resulting from neglect, abuse, abandonment, death or mental incapacity of a parent. The DSW has three children's homes located in Accra, Kumasi and Tamale, which accommodate abandoned and neglected children. From time to time, the Department receives trafficked children and has to ensure that they are sent back to their parents. Sometimes child prostitutes are rounded up by the police and put in the custody of DSW.

Social workers in DSW also play roles by ensuring that parents take care of their children when such matters are brought before them. These remedial functions, however, have been undermined by inadequate resources. At the children's homes, the cost of feeding, education, healthcare and leisure are borne by DSW, with insufficient government budgetary support. In most instances, material and financial support come from philanthropists, CSOs and religious organizations. In the event of trafficked children sent to DSW, sourcing funds to trace and reintegrate such children is a problem. Sometimes UNICEF intervenes to provide daily needs like food and clothing to children in the custody of DSW, before Government can eventually come in to help.

Justice administration services performed by the Department include:

- Preparation of social enquiry reports for the courts
- Operation of residential facilities for children in need of supervision
- Tracing of family of children in conflict with the law

There are remand homes operating under DSW in all the regions of Ghana. Children who find themselves in conflict with the law are usually sent there on remand while the court decides on their cases. Street Children's contact with DSW dwells typically in the area of coming into conflict with the law.

Under the Community Care Programme, NGOs are being registered, among them those dealing with the issue of Street Children. Community Care Programmes also cater for Orphaned Vulnerable Children (OVC) and Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP), and they check the incidence of Street Children.

Since 1991, DSW has been involved in the early work of NGOs like CAS and S.Aid, when those organisations started looking at the issue of Street Children in Accra. With financial assistance from Save the Children Fund, DSW, together with the Department of Social Work at the University of Ghana, Legon, and Hope for Life, conducted a survey into the phenomenon of Street Children. The survey was the first of its kind. The research was carried out successfully and the first report was prepared and published by Nana Apt, E.Q. Blavo and S.K. Opoku (1991), with the title 'Street Children in Accra'. Presently, there is a unit for Street Children at DSW, and it is hoped that Government will be more involved in solving this social problem. This unit must be appropriately resourced to activate the post-census findings and recommendations.

The issue of Street Children is not new to Ghanaian society, and therefore the need for a clear policy to deal with this problem is crucial. This will enable stakeholders, including voluntary organizations, to take appropriate initiatives to support Street Children.

5.2 Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS) www.casghana.com

In the absence of sufficient government support to Street Children, it was the emergence of various NGOs, such as CAS and S.Aid (established in 1992 and 1994, respectively) which tried to help decrease the magnitude of the problem. These NGOs take the form of 'drop-in' or day care centres, where Street Children can receive medical treatment, wash and keep their money and belongings safe. Importantly, the refuge is also a place where Street Children can receive advice about their life and future.

Every day, CAS sends field workers out to comb the streets of Accra. They know where the Street Children work and sleep; they earn their trust and then invite them to the organization's day care centre, or House of Refuge. This refuge caters for about 40 Street Children per day. It is the nearest thing to a home for them, where they can bath, wash their clothes, rest and play games. At the refuge, the children participate in formal class work, such as literacy and numeracy, and they participate in workshops like weaving and pottery. There is also a modest library and computer centre.

Many of the children just use the place as a safe, clean place to rest. But those children who show that they are serious about leaving the streets, are sponsored to attend CAS's Hopeland Training Centre. At this facility outside Accra, the children get more one-on-one attention and do intensive class work that is intended to prepare them for entry into vocational school or formal education. Once their training is finished, graduates are given a modest amount of money to start a business, or they are assisted with job placement. About 1,500 children have been assisted to leave the streets through this process. However, for every child assisted by CAS or other NGOs in Ghana, many more go unassisted.

¹⁰ In 1991, DSW was involved in the preparatory stages towards the formation of these NGOs.

5.3 Street Girls Aid (S.Aid)

Street Girls Aid (S.Aid) is a Ghanaian Non-Governmental Organization that assists girls and young mothers who are living on the streets of Accra. S.Aid promotes the psychological, social and physical well-being of these Street Children, and strongly advocates for their rights. Street Girls Aid recognizes that each child is unique and the services offered by this NGO reflect the complex needs of living on the street. Programmes range from skills training, early childhood care, health education and literacy classes.

Programs are administered in several different environments. A House of Refuge situated in Achimota, a suburb of Accra, serves as a drop-in centre for female Street Children, as well as a temporary home for pregnant street girls. At the refuge, girls can seek safe shelter and learn proper infant care. In addition, S.Aid employs social workers who conduct daily visits to six different locations around Accra where street girls are most prevalent. These social workers establish contacts with the street girls and offer them sound advice, a reliable resource for help and, if necessary, referral to appropriate care.

Four day care centres servicing 650 children have been established, where young children are properly cared for and provided with the education necessary to enter primary school, while their mothers work on the streets. New children arrive in Accra everyday, only to become Street Children. S.Aid, along with its partner, CAS, utilizes all available resources to respond to the needs of this growing population (<http://www.said-ghana.com>).

Even though the efforts of CAS, S.Aid and many other NGOs cannot be underrated, the number of Street Children continues to increase each year. There is the need for more pragmatic and coordinated measures to tackle the issue of Street Children at the roots.

CHAPTER SIX:

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERVENTION

This chapter provides some of the recommendations by DSW, RC, CAS and Street Girls Aid, that could be used to effectively deal with the phenomenon of Street Children in Ghana.

The solution to this problem must be comprehensive and pragmatic. There is the need to undertake preventive, management and mitigating strategies and actions. The following suggestions represent some of the recommendations suggested by DSW, RC, CAS and S.Aid.

6.1 Prevention

- ***Need for Street Children policy***

There is a need for government policy on Street Children that will spell out the interventions and roles of various stakeholders and the nature of governmental support to reduce the problem.

- ***Advocacy and awareness raising***

There should be advocacy and awareness raising by governmental organizations, social workers, chiefs, opinion leaders, NGOs, parliamentarians and other stakeholders, on the issue of Street Children. An effective advocacy and awareness raising has to be implemented in cooperation with media professionals and governmental agencies, through radio, television and newspapers. There should be constant advocacy for the application of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child and the Children's Act 1998 (Act 560). Advocacy has to be carried out to ensure safety measures for children at risk, including Street Children.

- ***Inter-agency collaboration***

There is also the need for collaboration between governmental organizations and other stakeholders, in providing services to remedy the issue of Street Children. Governmental organizations (like DSW under the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare; the Department of Children under the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs; and the Labour Department), as well as NGOs dealing with Street Children and other stakeholders, should work together with a common knowledge base and shared strategies, spelling out roles and inter-collaborative techniques to handle the issue of Street Children.

With their concerted effort, organizations will together understand the magnitude of the Street Children phenomenon; the characteristics of Street Children; and the modus operandi to be used in handling them. Together, these organisations should be able to measure the progress of their interventions. This will prevent the replication of efforts that yield little results and often result in wasted resources.

A steering committee should be formed, chaired by DSW and involving governmental organizations such as the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC), NYEP, Labour Department, Ghana Police, the Department of Community Development, District Assemblies and NGOs, CSOs and CBOs, networking with the major aim of tackling the issue of Street Children holistically.

- ***Need for further research***

Specific studies should be conducted in all the regions of the country, to know the root causes of the departure of children to city centres. The study should examine the various traditional practices such as traditional marriages, female genital mutilation and child labour, as possible additional causes of the Street Children phenomenon. In addition, drug addiction, alcohol use and violence against Street Children should be included in the research. Also, research must be conducted into the specific reasons why some Street Children do not seem to be interested in any help extended to them.

- **Need for equal development nationwide**

Efforts to enhance the development of the three northern regions should be amplified to prevent the exodus of children down south. It is hoped that the Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA), which is meant to develop the three northern regions as well as neighbouring savannah areas of the Volta and Brong Ahafo Regions, will provide the impetus for accelerated economic development and empowerment of people living there. SADA is not only a mechanism to help scale up development in the selected areas, but it also aims to help transform agriculture in Ghana by enhancing infrastructure development and promoting agri-business.

It is crucial that the government develops long-term effective policies to deal with problems related to rural poverty and carries out effective rural development programmes to decrease the rate of rural-urban migration. Planning should involve NGOs, especially those working in areas related to community development and urban planning.

- **Support to families**

The Government, through DSW, should extend support to poor families at risk of losing their children to the street. The LEAP Programme and the threshold aimed at reducing poverty in the country should be extended and increased for many more families whose children are found on the street for economic reasons.

There should be awareness creation about child rights and protection at the community level.

- **Behaviour management and educational programmes**

There should be behaviour management educational programmes in communities, to educate parents on how to handle children who exhibit behaviour problems. Many parents are unaware of how behaviour problems develop through the processes of socialization. Knowledge of these facts may reduce child delinquency and help prevent the Street Children phenomenon, in some cases.

6.2 Management and Mitigation

- **Support to DSW**

As a government establishment, DSW plays a lead role in synchronizing the efforts of stakeholders fighting against the menace of ever-increasing numbers of Street Children. The Department needs to be adequately resourced to take up the challenge of dealing with issues concerning children in general, so that the incidence of Street Children can be curtailed. The Department should be resourced to support families having difficulties raising children, through the provision of counselling services.

Furthermore, the rehabilitation centres across the country that are under DSW, could be restructured to give vocational skills training to school dropouts or children who have not been to school. DSW should include working with Street Children as a core programme and should work in collaboration with NGOs to institute mentorship programmes for Street Children in all districts. This will involve effective group work with Street Children, with the objective of guiding them to harness their strengths. DSW should also develop a comprehensive programme to support teenage mothers, and there should be awareness creation about child rights and protection at the community level.

- ***Dealing with school dropouts***

Schools have to be targeted, to ensure that teachers can effectively deal with children with emotional and behavioural problems. The school should be such an exciting place that every child should desire to go there to learn new skills. There should also be effective strategies for implementation by parents, school authorities, chiefs and opinion leaders, to deal with school dropouts and ensure that they go back to finish their schooling. The Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Programme (FCUBE) should be strictly followed, to ensure that children complete their basic education. Government should also look at the possibility of extending free education to secondary level.

- ***Having access to vocational training institutions***

Street Children should be able to have access to vocational training institutions, without the prerequisites of academic credentials. Such a project should be strongly supported by all NGOs working with Street Children, who believe in the efficacy of the vocational training programmes provided at the government and private levels, which Street Children should benefit from.

- ***Mobilization of Communities***

There is the need for NGOs, CSOs and Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) to mobilize communities and community resources. These will be in areas related to the mobilization of voluntary action, raising awareness and raising funds locally in aid of NGOs dealing with Street Children.

- ***Assistance to street mothers***

The mothers of children born on the street should receive special assistance from the health sector, as well as protection from city authorities. There should be a refuge where these street mothers and their babies can stay. The appropriate measures should be taken to help them acquire skills with which they can earn some income to take care of their child(ren).

- ***Dealing with children in conflict with the law***

Children who come into conflict with the law should be handled according to what is enshrined in the constitution of Ghana as the rights of the child. They should not be put in adult cells, and DSW should ensure that all such children are moved from adult cells to remand homes, and handled appropriately. Counselling services could be offered to families and the child, to prevent future criminal behaviour.

- ***Protection of Street Children by local authorities.***

If children find their way onto the street, they should be protected by the local authorities, and modalities should be worked out to help them leave the street. This could be done in collaboration with agencies working with Street Children.

- ***Free healthcare services to Street Children***

Street Children should be given free medical treatment at health centres. They should be registered free of charge with NHIS.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

CONCLUSION

There is great concern about the growing numbers of Street Children in Ghana. In view of this escalating problem, this Census on Street Children was undertaken by DSW and RC, in collaboration with CAS and S.Aid, within the project 'Improvement of the Living Standards of Street Children and Street Mothers in Accra', executed between October 2007 and April 2011. The project was co-funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Its main objective was to improve the living standards of Street Children, through capacity building and institutional support to DSW, CAS and S.Aid.

The Census covered the following thematic areas:

- Categories of Street Children
- Biodata (sex and age), family and migration pattern
- Survival of Street Children in Accra
- Working status and aspirations
- Health status of Street Children
- Substance abuse among Street Children
- Violence against Street Children
- Education level

The Census found out that there are some 61,492 Street Children in the Greater Accra Region. The categories of Street Children included those born on the street, migrant children, the urban poor and street mothers. The Street Children came from all regions in the country to live and work in the streets. They were engaged in activities such as head portering ('kayayei'), truck pushing, shoe shining, selling of assorted items, begging, collection of rubbish for a fee, washing of bowls, and so on.

The Census findings highlighted search for money as the main cause of the Street Children phenomenon in the Greater Accra Region. Other factors were pinpointed as causes of this problem, such as parental divorce, death of parent(s) and search for job opportunities. Earlier literature revealed multiple factors, such as family breakdown, harsh economic conditions, intertribal wars, chieftaincy conflicts, single parenting, child neglect, truancy, violence at home, large family sizes, peer pressure and poor educational facilities in rural communities as causes of the Street Children phenomenon in Ghana.

Street Children face health problems such as malaria attacks, flu, infections, skin rashes and headaches, among other ailments. They are at risk for cholera, drug related sicknesses and sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

Street Children also have poor educational backgrounds and they experience some violence on the street.

The recommendations made for dealing with the issue of Street Children include advocacy and awareness creation; inter-agency collaboration; equal development of the country; and extension of support to poor families with children on the street, through the LEAP Programme.

There is the need to support DSW to carry out its mandate; provide behaviour management and educational programmes for parents and children to deal with upbringing; deal with issues of rural-urban migration, deal with school dropouts; give Street Children access to vocational training institutions; and mobilize communities and community resources for development.

Assistance should be provided to street mothers who give birth on the street; to children in conflict with the law; and to children on the street. Free healthcare services should be provided to Street Children. There is a need for further research to understand the attitudes and behaviours of some Street Children who do not appear to be interested in any help extended to them.

Also, local government authorities should initiate programmes - with budgetary support - for retraining and reintegrating Street Children into productive sectors of the economy. NYEP could particularly use this Census Report to target Street Children for national benefit.

The Census has created a database that could be of immense help to Government, either at national or decentralized levels, in the making of policies and interventions for Street Children. NGOs also have a ready database from which to assign their efforts and resources.

Aside from updating records of an earlier census, the Census has created a platform for harnessing interagency efforts, including private/public partnership, aimed at improving the livelihood of Street Children and street mothers.

DSW, RC, CAS and S.Aid deserve commendation for conducting the Census. The contributions of the Ghana Statistical Service, Ghana Police, MOWAC, Labour Department, and Ghana Private Road Transport Union (GPRTU) are highly appreciated.

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DRAFT SPEECH

LAUNCH OF CENSUS REPORT ON STREET CHILDREN CONDUCTED IN GREATER ACCRA

HON. DEPUTY MINISTER (M.E. & S.W)

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies (the ambassadors of Italy, the Netherlands and the European commission)

Country Representatives of International Organizations

Invited Guests,

Members of the press

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me much pleasure to be present here today to participate in the launch of a census report on street children and street mothers conducted in the greater Accra region of Ghana in May 2009 followed by a survey in November 2010.

The occasion is not only a historic one but a testament to how synergies among stakeholders and social partners can work to the mutual benefit of development partners. That today, we have a census on street children that covers an entire region and not a business district or a sampled area within a region is commendable and we should all rejoice and be glad.

Mr. Chairman, your Excellencies, the census on street children in Greater Accra Region was carried out by the Department of Social Welfare under the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare and Ricerca e Cooperazione, an Italian NGO in collaboration with two local NGO'S – Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS) and Street Girls' Aid (S'Aid). It is a component of a three year partnership programme co – funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of Ghana and RC (an Italian NGO).

All over the world, governments have always depended on appropriate and relevant data, especially of her people who are disadvantaged, to plan and execute social intervention programmes that seek to address the challenges that confront her people. The issue of street children in particular should concern not just government alone, but other social partners such as are today seated here. We often say that our children are the future leaders. I dare say they are partners in our search for peace and development today.

Your Excellencies, the issue of street children has been a major concern of the government of Ghana for which the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare through the Department of Social Welfare has been playing a leading role to mainstream them into the development of the human resource of our nation. This census report looks at the demographic profile of street children in the Greater Accra Region, and presents an assessment of the problem. The report also discusses the various interventions currently being offered to street children by governmental organisations (GOs) and (NGOs), and suggests appropriate interventions.

The census has also created a data base of street children in Greater Accra that could be used as a platform to enable government to design relevant policies and spearhead the delivery of services, in partnership with development partners.

Intergovernmental organisations, non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations, community based organisations, families and other stakeholders and thereby called upon to harmonise our resources such that the synergy thereof would work to prevent and reduce the street children phenomenon in Ghana.

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, the census which covered all the assemblies in Greater Accra indicates that Accra Metropolitan Assembly area holds the highest number of 50,997 street children, followed by Tema metro with 5,768. The lowest of 939 came from Ga West municipality. The total number of Street children found in Greater Accra as at November 2010 adds up to 61,492.

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, these figures certainly are worrisome and all of us must work to check any further increase. Government through the National Social Protection Strategy supports the extremely poor and certain vulnerable groups to access opportunities created by our economic growth. Indeed all social intervention programmes including NHIS, Capitation grant School feeding Program, Metro Mass Transport, NYEP, Free School Uniforms and Exercise Books are examples of interventions by government to prevent further drifting of our children and young persons to the street. Once the capacities of families are enhanced by these interventions, the anticipation is that

poverty and allied excuses would gradually be unacceptable as reasons for children leaving school and working in the street.

Mr. Chairman let me conclude by thanking you once again for the honour done me. I also thank all the participating countries, most especially the government and people of Italy for co-funding the project. May I humbly request that the recommendations arising from the report constitute another opportunity for a new partnership with other development partners. This would ensure that there is continuity. All those working with street children should come on board the partnership that is created by Social Welfare so that we can focus.

In the light of a good work done by this report, I dutifully launch the census report of street children conducted in Greater Accra in November 2010.

Thank You.

