

**THE SVG NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON THE  
RIGHTS OF THE CHILD  
(NCRC)**

**SVG SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND**

**Contract NO. SVGSIF/TA1/ 1005**

**PROJECT: The Conduct of a Survey on Street Children within a Specified  
Geographic Area of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.**



**QUALITATIVE / QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS REPORT  
OF A  
SURVEY OF STREET CHILDREN IN  
St. Vincent and the Grenadines**

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Our hope is that all your generous contributions will ultimately make a significant positive difference in the lives of the many vulnerable children in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

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## ACRONYMNS

AIDS	-	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
CCSI	-	Caribbean Child Support Initiative
CID	-	Criminal Investigation Department
ECWI	-	The Evangelical Church of the West Indies
FAD	-	Family Affairs Division
ILO	-	International Labour Organization
KMPC	-	Kingstown Multi-Purpose Centre
LLBTS	-	The Liberty Lodge Boys Training School
NCPC	-	National Crime Prevention Commission
NCRC	-	National Committee on the Rights of the Child
NGOs	-	Non-government organizations
RCC	-	The Roman Catholic Church
SC	-	Street Children
SIDS	-	Small Island Developing States
SP	-	Service Providers
STDs	-	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
SVG	-	St. Vincent and the Grenadines
UNICEF	-	United Nations Children's Fund
WFFC	-	A World Fit for Children
WHO	-	World Health Organization

## 1-0 Background / Project Context

This Street Children Project designed to assess the nature and extent of the street children phenomenon in SVG, is placed within a context of efforts to improve the lives of children worldwide, the economies of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Caribbean and in particular the socio-economic conditions in St. Vincent and the Grenadines

St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) is a small multi-island developing State. The country consists of the larger island St. Vincent and a chain of smaller islands together known as the Grenadines, with a combined population of 110,000. According to the 2001 Population and Housing Census, a significant 30.7% of the population is under 15 years (32,575). Another 10, 000 youth may be added for the target child population -18 years..

UNICEF's mission is to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand opportunities to reach their full potential, guided by the provisions and principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Such principles state that a child is entitled to certain human rights, and also to care and protection.

The United Nations Special Session on Children in 2002 adopted a 'plan' expressed within the document "A World Fit for Children"(WFCC) that was intended to quicken progress on child development. The document encapsulated four broad subject areas:

1. Promoting healthy lives
2. Providing quality education
3. Protecting against abuse, exploitation and violence
4. Combating HIV/AIDS

Caribbean countries have agreed to implement the WFCC goals as well as the related Millennium Goals. Best intentions however may not be sufficient to combat the inhibitors of current socio-economic conditions. Sustaining human development becomes a serious and challenging issue in these conditions and the rights of children – particularly in the areas outlined by the WFCC – are invariably compromised.

The SVG economy is just beginning to show signs of recovery after stagnant or slow growth throughout the 1990s. Figures for 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005 show growth rates of 3.2%, 2.8%, 6.8% and 2.2% respectively compared to the 2001 figure of -1%. However, the downturn which preceded this improvement, due largely to the decline in the banana industry, has led to curtailed public spending, and **continuing under-investment in social services**. Unemployment remains high at 21% and public debt has increased to 74% of GDP (2004 figure).

At the same time, non-governmental organizations, who generally served as a buffer to communities by providing direct social services to those in need, are facing major cuts in funding, particularly from traditional international funders. Thus as demand for social services increase, the NGOs ability for service provision decreases. Those feeling the greatest impact of this situation are the needy communities, families and children.

Compounding this scenario is the global rise in oil and food prices, which impact heavily on the poor. The Kairi poverty assessment of 1996 placed this (poor) as 37% of the population. A new SVG poverty assessment is in progress currently.

The current fear and concern is that sustained economic stagnation and decline in those poor communities most affected by the changes in the banana industry, will inevitably lead to an increase in unemployment and underemployment, fragmentation and abandonment of families, increasing numbers of disaffected youth, increase in substance abuse, increase in illegal activities and erosion of the social fabric of communities.

It is in this context that UNICEF makes its plea for countries to meet the above child-specific indicators of the WFFC. Admittedly, commendable strides have been made in the basic goals in health and education such as child immunization, child mortality reduction, and universal access to primary and secondary schools. However much more needs to be done, hence UNICEF's call for focused investing in the following areas:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1. Early childhood development;</b></li><li><b>2. Quality education to meet the needs of ALL children;</b></li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>3. Legislative reform and programmes to address violence in society and</b></li><li><b>4. Programmes to comprehensively tackle the problem of HIV/AIDS.</b></li></ol> |
|---|--|

Preliminary local research revealed that causes of children and youth being on the streets or not attending school relate directly to those selected broad areas, and may indeed be preventable or addressed with attention to the four immediately above. Hence further exploration and definitive action in this report is timely and necessary.

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines continues to seek assistance from foreign partners to offset its economic declines. Of import to this Project is assistance from the European Union for specific social aid. The Special Framework of Assistance (SFA) Council Regulation (EC) No. 856/1999 of April 22, 1999 established a Special Framework of Assistance for traditional ACP suppliers of bananas to the European Union. Out of this fund grew the Social Investment Fund set up to assist vulnerable constituents.

Through the auspices of the Social Investment Fund resources were made available to the Ministry of National Mobilization, Social Development and NGOs to conduct this Street Children Survey. The first part of the Project Report includes the analysis of data collected. The subsequent sections are a Strategic Plan for follow-up implementation and action, and a Pastoral Programme to address the more immediate needs of vulnerable and street children. Saving our children is an imperative that cannot be ignored. This not simply because SVG is a signatory to world summits on children, nor is it just a moral obligation in consideration of basic human rights, but the development of our nation is dependent on the care, health and well-being of our children and families.

## **1-1 Executive Summary (Qualitative & Quantitative Analysis)**

Having ratified the Convention of the Rights of the Child, the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has committed to being more responsive to the needs of children and to provide safe environments in which they can be nurtured into worthwhile and productive citizens. Within other family issues, the problem of street children may be an indicator of the well-being of the family and of children in particular in terms of nutrition, health, education, economics, and general inter-familial relations.

Thus under the Ministry of National Mobilization and Social Development the Street Children Project was set in motion following a meeting on December 10<sup>th</sup> 2007, with the National Committee on the Rights of the Child (NCRC) coordinators of the project. The projected end date of the assignment is approximately May 26, 2008.

According to the Terms of Reference: “The main purposes of this survey of street children are to:

1. Acquire and analyse relevant information
2. Provide expert advice on:
  - a. the reasons why children take to the streets,
  - b. the extent and nature of the impact of the street experiences on children,
  - c. ways of integrating and restoring children to acceptable ways of society.
3. Provide the mechanisms for facilitating the reduction of the number of children taking to the streets.

### **Definition:**

The definition of a street child is “any boy or girl ...for whom the street (in the widest sense of the word including unoccupied dwellings, wasteland, etc.) has become his or her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood, and who is inadequately protected, supervised, or directed by responsible adults.” (Formulated by the Inter-NGOs 1983.)

The three important elements (consistent among various definitions) are:

- a) the street as a place of abode
- b) the street as a source of livelihood, and
- c) the lack of protection, care and supervision from adults.

The consulting team met with the NCRC on December 10, 2007 to clarify the scope and specific objectives of the study and discuss preliminary issues regarding the project. It was determined that the precise objectives were:

- To be able to provide some quantitative data on the numbers, location and demographics of street children in the selected areas.

- To provide insight on the causes of children taking to and remaining on the streets.
- To determine the needs of street children
- To explore options for rehabilitation.

The ideal vision of the NCRC would be to have these children off the streets in a protective environment – either returned to their homes or some prescribed institution.

## **Methodology**

The research methodology focused primarily on three distinct populations:

**Service providers; street children; and schools.**

The process involved observations (site visits), semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with the respondents.

Service providers and key informants were selected through purposive sampling after consultations with the NCRC. Convenience and snowballing sampling were employed in selecting children for the study.

Eight fieldworkers, working with the two consultants, were trained and deployed to the eight selected districts between Diamond on the Windward side and Layou on the Leeward. This aspect of the data collection took place between February 4<sup>th</sup> and March 10<sup>th</sup> 2008.

## **Findings**

Significantly, in the strictest sense, no child was found living entirely on the street – as a place of abode. Regardless of the circumstances, spending as much time on the streets as some children did was invariably by choice. Many moved from house to house because of dysfunction in their own home. Sixteen (16) children - 50% of those interviewed - said the street was a source of livelihood for them. A minority of these said the income was used to help their families.

Twenty (20) of the thirty-two (32) children interviewed said they did not go to school at all. This is a great source of concern to the authorities. All children of the “compulsory” school age (16 years) are expected to attend school although **compulsory education** has not yet been instituted in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. However Universal Access to secondary education assures each child of a place.

Interviews with parents in the community declared that there were many days that they did not have the funds to send their child(ren) to school. Financial difficulties was cited as the most significant factor hindering school attendance by 37.5% of the children interviewed. This factor makes the recurring link between street life and poverty. 15.6% of the children revealed that they had been expelled from school for violence. To a significant extent it was found that remaining causes of absenteeism were due to poor

parenting or a lack of parental supervision or care. Many of those children who do not attend school say they would like to go back to school.

Interviews with the service providers and school officials found that the causes of children taking to the streets related largely to dysfunctional homes – parent conflicts; step fathers who did not want the children who were not their own, or were abusive in various ways. The other significant cause was poverty or financial difficulties.

### **Rehabilitation**

An important discussion among service providers– both governmental and non-governmental – was the issue of **reintegration vs institutionalization**. Obviously, there are times when removal from the streets or from vulnerable situations to an institution becomes necessary.

The SVG government operates a home for boys – **The Liberty Lodge Training School for Boys (LLTSB)** Currently there are 30 boys in residence with ages ranging from 7 to 16 years. Personnel have said that the Centre/Home is a last resort – when all efforts at reintegration have failed. The aim of the centre then is focusing on working with the parents and boys to reunite them in their homes or at the least help the boys to “develop skills that would allow them to become responsible and productive citizens.” (From the **LLTSB** Mission Statement).

Members of the community at large must be commended for the informal manner in which they care for abandoned or neglected children. A more formal structure or system of fostering and of monitoring needs to be put in place to ensure that children do not suffer even more from rescue efforts. As a temporary measure a **Crisis Child Centre** where a child can call for help, receive a meal or spend a night may be worth consideration.

**Reintegration** is the primary goal of NGOs and the government institutions working with children. However, almost 100% of the NGOs feel that the governmental social and family services need to be more vigilant, effective, caring, and productive in the services provided to families living in vulnerable conditions. At the same time they do recognize that the task is enormous in a small country with scarce resources, and that many persons **are** being served well. Too often individual commitment drives the service rather than effective systems and procedures that demand maximum service from all.

**A review of the public and social systems** that are intended to serve children and families may be useful as the project process continues. It may be done in the light of this study, with a view to looking at community and family support, government policy, service provision standards and procedures, and increased collaboration with other service providers– government, non-governmental and the private sector.

## 1-2 INTRODUCTION

The concern of the government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines for the well-being of each child propelled the study of a phenomenon among children – the taking to and remaining on the streets for a variety of reasons. The issue is world-wide.

*“It is estimated that there are between 10 and 100 million street children in the world today. These children live a transitory life style and are vulnerable to inadequate nutrition, physical injuries, substance use, and health problems including sexual and reproductive health problems.”<sup>1</sup>*

In St. Vincent and the Grenadines the issue was compounded in that there does not appear to be any data or information on the extent or nature of street children to form a point of departure for any specific action of reintegration or rehabilitation. Beginning on September 29, 2000 the Searchlight Newspaper produced a series of articles on Street Children. The writer laid the blame for the issue squarely at the feet of the government: **“Government must take charge now.”<sup>2</sup>**

In consultation with the National Committee on the Rights of the Child (NCRC), coordinators of the Research Project refined the objectives and parameters of the study as laid out in the Terms of Reference and the Consultants’ Proposal:

### **Objectives/tasks emanating from the NCRC Meeting December 10, 2007**

- ◆ To be able to provide quantitative data on numbers, location, demographics, and activities (optional) of street children in the selected areas.
- ◆ To provide insight on the causes of children taking to and remaining on the streets.
- ◆ To determine the needs of street children – indicated by access to essential and other self-identified needs
- ◆ To explore options for rehabilitation. The ideal vision would be to have the street children off the streets in a protective environment - either returned to their homes or some prescribed institution or walk-in Centre.

The definition used in the Proposal was maintained, while recognizing that the referred three elements need not all exist at the same time. Any of the elements would constitute a street child.

### **Definition:**

The three important elements (consistent among various definitions) are:  
the time children spend on the street/ the street as a place of abode  
the street as a source of livelihood, and  
the lack of protection and care from adults

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<sup>1</sup> [www.unodc.org/pdf/youthnet/who\\_street\\_children\\_introduction.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/youthnet/who_street_children_introduction.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Nanton, Hawkins, the Searchlight Newspaper, September 29, 2000

### **Statement of the Problem**

There appears to be a number of **street children** in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. However, no organized arrangements or efforts exist to facilitate their removal, protection or care; nor empirical data on which a programme can be based.

### **Sub-Problems**

1. What is the true nature and extent of the undocumented street children phenomena in St. Vincent and the Grenadines?
2. Why do children take to the streets? What services are there for them?
3. What mechanisms are required to address and resolve the problem?

### **Objectives of the Survey (from the Terms of Reference):**

*The survey will have the following objectives to:*

1. *manage and implement a baseline survey of the situation of street children in the area of the Diamond estate on the Windward side of the island to Layout on the Leeward side of the Island to determine the extent of the street children phenomenon in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.*
2. *prepare a report of findings from the survey data. The report will include tables of results of the survey, profiles of the children (age, gender, family background, socio-economic situation)*
3. *include recommendations for programming*
4. *make recommendations for a comprehensive pastoral programme for these children*
5. *develop a strategic plan to manage street children*

### **Preliminary Approach**

Consultants began preliminary document reviews and informal meetings with service providers in order to ascertain what information might be available to develop the work plan and to prepare for the meeting with the NCRC.

In every instance concern was expressed about the problem of street children, but little national documentation was available. Leads were suggested such as the Soroptomist Club and the Salvation Army as organizations that have done work in the area. Subsequent contacts still revealed very little actual documentation. The Salvation Army (SA) proposal for a SVG National Children's Home indicates that a previous SA study cited "*the number of street children in SVG to be 51 children*". Regretfully attempts at locating that study were not successful.

The next phase involved planning designs, collection of secondary sources of data, and the development of data collection instruments – including an **ethical agreement**. Samples of the Interview Guide, Street Children Questionnaire, the Service Provider Checklist are found in the appendices. Following is a table of the informant

organizations, the selected areas and the team of Field Workers who assisted in the data collection.

**Table 1: Sampling selections of service providers and sites; List of field workers**

NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs)	GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS	SELECTED SITES FOR FIELD VISITS	FIELD WORKERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Roman Catholic Church</li> <li>▪ Salvation Army</li> <li>▪ Bread of Life Home</li> <li>▪ House of Hope</li> <li>▪ Our Lady of Guadalupe home for Girls</li> <li>▪ Catholic Soup Kitchen</li> <li>▪ Parenting Partners</li> <li>▪ Marion House</li> <li>▪ The Evangelical Church of the West Indies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Royal SVG Police Force</li> <li>▪ Criminal Investigation Dept</li> <li>▪ Social Services</li> <li>▪ Community Development Officer</li> <li>▪ National Crime Prevention Commission</li> <li>▪ Family Services Division – Director; Deputy Director</li> <li>▪ Family Court Prosecutor</li> <li>▪ Family Court Probation Officer</li> <li>▪ Liberty Lodge Boys Training School</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Diamond</li> <li>▪ Calliaqua</li> <li>▪ Sion Hill</li> <li>▪ Kingstown &amp; Environs</li> <li>▪ Ottley Hall</li> <li>▪ Campden Park,</li> <li>▪ Clare Valley/ Questelles</li> <li>▪ Layou.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Yasa Belmar</li> <li>▪ Rachel Beatty</li> <li>▪ Colin Haynes</li> <li>▪ Harold Lewis</li> <li>▪ Ronald Greaves/ Mark Bobb</li> <li>▪ Bernadette Ballantyne</li> <li>▪ Shamal Connell</li> </ul>

Anecdotal evidence from the Family Affairs Division, Ministry of Social Development and non-governmental organizations suggest that street children do exist in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. However, while there is mounting anecdotal evidence, little is known about the scope of this problem. The following **limitations** were encountered in attempting to address the issue:

- ◆ Poor organizational and institutional data collection and storage.
- ◆ Inability to locate and even verify reports that may determine locations or numbers.
- ◆ Children found, tend to be reclusive in giving information, resulting in a lack of knowledge of specific needs.
- ◆ Inability to consistently remedy aversive conditions

Thus, in addition to the required survey of street children, it was critical to source as much related information as possible to inform and direct the study. The project aims to provide a comprehensive assessment of the current situation of street children in SVG, through the implementation of a survey of children who fit within the accepted definition of street children. It will subsequently explore mechanisms for their care and ultimate removal from the streets.

### 1-3 LITERATURE AND DOCUMENT REVIEW

The issue of Street Children is a worldwide phenomenon, as many international organizations will attest.

According to the World Health Organization (Working with Street Children - Training Package on Substance Use, Sexual and Reproductive Health including HIV/AIDS and STDs)<sup>3</sup> :

Box # 1 - World Health Organization (Working with Street Children Training)

“It is estimated that there are between 10 and 100 million street children in the world today. These children live a transitory life style and are vulnerable to inadequate nutrition, physical injuries, substance use, and health problems including sexual and reproductive health problems.

Some street children are part of entire families who live on the street. Others are born to older street girls. Some street children are ‘on the street,’ which means that they still see their families regularly and may even return every night to sleep in their family homes. Children ‘of the streets,’ on the other hand, have no home but the streets.

Even if they occasionally spend time in institutions for children or youths, they consider the streets to be their home. .... Although street children support themselves in many different ways, they need the assistance of caring adults and charitable services provided by governmental or non-governmental organizations. Despite peer solidarity and support through charitable services, street children have extremely high rates of morbidity, disability and mortality. Improving the quality of life of street children is a difficult and challenging task.”<sup>4</sup>

Street children also form a part of studies – commissioned generally by UNICEF and the ILO on child vulnerability, status of children and child labour, which also inform international and regional studies.

The Caribbean is not at all exempt from the scourge of vulnerable children “of” or “on” the streets, although many studies do not appear to have been done in the Region. Horrific stories of the plight of street children and of child labour in Latin American countries are well-known. In the English Speaking Caribbean, some information may be found primarily on situations in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

<sup>3</sup> [www.unodc.org/pdf/youthnet/who\\_street\\_children\\_introduction.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/youthnet/who_street_children_introduction.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [www.unodc.org/pdf/youthnet/who\\_street\\_children\\_introduction.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/youthnet/who_street_children_introduction.pdf)

UNICEF continues its work in promotion and prevention of issues surrounding children coming out of the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>5</sup> The organization has developed studies on “Child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse; and Children without parental care” in collaboration with the International Social Service. Related studies have also been done on the Caribbean in collaboration with CARICOM.<sup>6</sup>

“*Guidelines for Working with Street Children*” by Judith Ennew found on the Internet was useful in providing practical directions for studies with Street Children:

*“There are two basic rules for work with any children:*

- *The main barrier to successful programmes is our own attitude.*
- *The main resource in any project is the children themselves.*

*Adults tend to assume they know what is best for children. But street children who have been taking a good deal of responsibility for themselves often have very definite ideas about what is best for them. The problem is that few people listen to them or use their skills and abilities.”<sup>7</sup>*

In St. Vincent and the Grenadines children found on the street are often there of family economic necessity – parents feel they cannot afford to send them to school, or they send them to vendor on the streets or to do odd jobs for money. Thus truancy from school may be an issue of importance since the education Act speaks of “Compulsory Education” – although it falls short of instituting compulsory education as a legal obligation.

However, the Act also states in Part 111 Division 1 #14 “Subject to available resources and to this Act, all persons in St. Vincent and the Grenadines are entitled to receive an education appropriate to their needs,” In any event questions remain: Are we dealing with

- Street Children – with the street as a place of abode?
- Truancy?
- Poverty?

## **Review of Other Literature and Secondary Data**

The process of acquiring secondary data for review has seen the least success as there is little documented information on street children in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.unicef.org/protection/index\\_22414.html](http://www.unicef.org/protection/index_22414.html)

<sup>6</sup> [www.unicef.org/barbados/cao\\_unicef\\_WFFC.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/barbados/cao_unicef_WFFC.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <http://tilz.tearfund.org/Publications/Footsteps+21-30/Footsteps+28/Guidelines+for+working+with+street+children.htm>, ENNEW, Judith, Guidelines for Working with Street Children.

Nevertheless, since secondary data includes data which has been collected by individuals or agencies for purposes other than those of our particular research study, we determined to find other related data for extrapolation.

**The St. Vincent and the Grenadines Population and Housing Census Report 2001** indicates that 30.7 percent of the population in 2001 were under the age of 15 years. The decrease in that population since the previous census of 1991 (37.2%) may have some impact on the number of children actually on the streets.

We note that the total children (registered) in all primary schools in 2007-2008 is 15, 424 (7993 M, 7431F). Children attending primary school in 2001 was at 18,807; down from 24,305 in 1991.<sup>8</sup> Further information obtained from the Ministry of Education statistician will be utilized for further analysis.

**The St. Vincent and the Grenadines Education Act 2006** was reviewed in terms of the “Rights and Responsibilities of Students and Parents” (Part 111). The present universal access to secondary schools may also be of significance to the study of street children in terms of the reduction of the numbers of youth on the street.

**Newspaper Articles:** The Searchlight Newspaper published a series of articles on street children in Kingstown in 2006. The general thrust of the journalistic study was to raise awareness of the issue and to challenge the governmental authorities to do something about it. Sept 29, 2006 Headlines read: *“Why are these kids on the street? Ministry of Education and Social Welfare department must wake up!”*

**Family Affairs Division (FAD):** The FAD supplied some documentation on the recommendations of a previous Steering Committee for the rehabilitation of street children, but concludes that nothing was done, particularly as the Ministry of Urban Development had been in the process of building a Crisis Centre. One undated three pages of a document was eventually located entitled “Steps for the Return of Abandoned/ Street Children to their Homes or for Placement in Foster Homes” speaks of “information stating that there are approximately thirty (30) children between the ages of eight and fourteen years who are practically victims of the social ill in question (children abandoned to the streets)”. The recommendations will be included in further deliberations.

Programmes:

- The Soroptomist Club in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development spear-headed a project in an attempt to address the issue of street children. A special committee was set up and a proposal drafted. The project was later abandoned and numerous futile attempts have been made by the team to obtain the draft proposal. However, the president of the club has committed to locating and supplying the

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<sup>8</sup> St. Vincent and the Grenadines Population and Housing Census Report 2001, p.24

information. The Salvation Army kindly submitted information regarding its programmes along with their proposal for the construction of a Children's Home.

- Major King of the Salvation Army shared their plan to build a National Children's Home at Buccament in collaboration with the Lion's Club. This document pointed to a previous study done in SVG that stated in 2003 the number of street children stood at 51. Regretfully that study, done under a previous leader could not be located.
- The Parenting Partners Association provided documentation describing their approach to fostering effective parenting practices. They are currently involved in a programme with fathers.
- The Roving Caregivers Programme, an Early Childhood Parenting regional project of the Caribbean Child Support Initiative (CCSI) being implemented in SVG was reviewed for its relevance to vulnerable children and families.
- Studies: A draft copy of the National Child Study 2005 has also been obtained although there is limited focus on street children.

Regional documents: In addition to the above UNICEF studies cited, Other regional documentation was sought and reports obtained include:

A Study of Child Vulnerability in Barbados, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines; a study on child labour in Barbados; a study of street children in Jamaica; UNICEF and ILO reports on the state of children in the Caribbean, and numerous studies on street children in Latin America.

The Caribbean Child Support Initiative, Barbados (CCSI), has a noteworthy library of research on early childhood and parenting in the Caribbean. This includes studies on "Childrearing in the Caribbean" and a related research Seminar in May 2006 in Dominica.<sup>9</sup> They have produced a documentary "Raising up a Child – Changing Attitudes to Childrearing in the Caribbean"(available on DVD).

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<sup>9</sup> Caribbean Support Initiative, "Childrearing in the Caribbean" Research Seminar, 25<sup>th</sup> -27<sup>th</sup> May, 2006 Fort Young Hotel Dominica. (Permission required for quotation).

## 1-4 METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

The study sought to provide insight to the extent of the street children phenomena in St. Vincent and the Grenadines by sampling the area between Diamond (on the east) and Layou (on the west) inclusive. A database of these children was to be compiled along with a qualitative assessment of their needs; the factors contributing to their circumstances; and options for their rehabilitation.

**Purposive sampling** was used in selecting service providers recognizing their unique position of importance to the study. {Purposive sampling involves pre-determining the set of individuals you want to participate in a study. It is used when the individuals, because of their position or experience, have crucial information which no one else can provide.}

**Snowballing and convenience sampling** methods were employed in selecting street children for the study. {The snowballing method involves using the few contacts gained to reach more persons by way of referrals. It is often used in research with hidden or hard to reach populations e.g. drug users and prostitutes.} The use of current or rehabilitated street children was employed here to enhance access to the sample and facilitate the snowballing method. These as well as persons familiar with the communities functioned as *gatekeepers*.

**Semi-Structured interviews** were conducted with street children and triangulated by the use of *focus groups*. Due to the demanding schedule of most service providers it was difficult to set up or coordinate focus group sessions with these individuals and the use of *structured interviews* here will be more efficient. Input from the NCRC meetings provide valuable input from a group of persons from various disciplines among NGOs and the government.

With the focus of the research in mind (appropriate protection/care of these children) and the stress on qualitative data, the team attempted to include one or two *case studies* as part of the research in order to obtain a more in-depth examination. These were, of course, entirely dependent on the cooperation and willingness of respondents.

### Participants

The research methodology focused primarily on three distinct populations:

**Service providers** (including organisations or individuals working with youth.) Accordingly a total of 23 service providers/social workers/key informants were interviewed, representing 13 NGOs and 10 government departments.

### **Street Children**

Interviews were conducted with thirty-two (32) children whose existing/current circumstances deemed them relevant to the study. (In a few cases the parent was interviewed on their behalf). Further insight was obtained/ gained from persons who had previously experienced similar circumstances, but whose situation had since been addressed. In this ‘category’ three adolescents and three parents – with a total of nine children were interviewed and two focus groups (of six children each) conducted. **A total of fifty (50) persons participated in this phase of the study.**

### **Schools**

In order to supplement the data gathered from site visits and interviews with children, schools within each area were asked to provide referrals for inclusion in the study. Additionally, principals were asked to supply a list of names of ‘children in distress’ within their institutions. Representatives from fifteen (15) schools – both primary and secondary, were contacted during this phase with substantial information being supplied by eleven (11) schools.

### ***Sampling Procedure***

Given the limited accessibility and small estimated population, *convenience sampling* was employed in selecting street children for the study. Based on the preliminary work and consultations with the NCRC, eight (8) districts within the wider area were selected for study; Diamond, Calliaqua, Sion Hill, Kingstown, Ottley Hall, Campden Park, Clare Valley/Questelles and Layou. Field workers conducted site visits in each area canvassing for children who may fit the focus of the research; and effort was made to rotate the times of day spent in each area so as to obtain more reliable data. (See Appendix # 5 for a full schedule of site visits completed during the data collection process.)

Field workers also engaged in informal interviews with members of the community, and representatives from schools and police stations in the relevant areas. This was necessary in order to find out about the existence of and increase access to any such children within the area. Additionally, field workers obtained leads about children in similar circumstances from the children themselves in a process of *snowballing*.

### ***Administrative Procedure***

It is important to mention at this stage that notwithstanding the anecdotal accounts, researchers encountered much difficulty locating ‘street children’. Deciding on the eligibility of the children found also proved challenging and the focus of the study was broadened to include a wider population of out of school and/or neglected children.

Using the leads provided, field workers conveniently selected and approached unsupervised children working and/or roaming the streets particularly during school hours. Upon determining their relevance to the study, researchers introduced themselves, outlined the objectives of the study and sought consent before proceeding with the interview. Every effort was made to follow the procedures as outlined in the ethical

agreement (See Appendix # 4). The majority of these interviews were conducted between February 3<sup>rd</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup> 2008.

### **Instrumentation**

An **interview checklist** or schedule was developed to indicate the specific areas to be covered in the service provider interviews (Appendix # 1). This was submitted to the NCRC for approval.

A register of **response areas** for street children was developed to cover all the information which would be needed from this group in the study. This was also submitted to the NCRC for approval and was used to facilitate the two (2) focus group discussions. A **questionnaire** was then adapted from *My Community Our Earth Project* in Jamaica to reflect the response areas drafted. These were used to guide the semi-structured interviews of street children. (See Appendices # 2 and # 3 for both)

### **Recording Tools**

Tape and digital recorders were used in the service provider interviews and focus groups (where permitted) to aid in the efficiency of the data collection process.

### **Field Workers**

The first training of field workers took place January 26, 2008 at 9 am at the Anglican Pastoral Centre. A total of eight field workers and two gatekeepers were subsequently enlisted and trained/oriented to assist with the field work. One or two persons volunteered time to help with leads in various communities. Weekly meetings were held – with commendable attendance and participation, for updates and reports from the previous week and planning and deployment for the next.

### **Analytical Approach**

Findings will be analyzed in the **Response Areas** of the addendum to the Work plan:

<p><b>Box # 3 Response Areas</b></p> <p><b>Group A: Service Providers – Support Institutions &amp; Social Workers</b> (See Report 1-5-2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Causes and needs (as perceived and/or articulated by street children)</li><li>◆ Attempts at reintegration of street children - success and challenges</li><li>◆ Attitudes towards programme implementation and recommendations</li></ul> <p><b>Group B: Street Children</b> (See Report Sec 1-5-1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Specific causes for taking to the streets (push and pull factors)</li><li>◆ Needs – measured by access to facilities and others (articulated)</li><li>◆ Attitudes towards 'help'</li><li>◆ Demographics</li></ul> <p><b>Group C: Community Members and Organisations</b> (See Report Sec 1-5-2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Perception of Causes and Needs</li><li>◆ Efforts to help</li><li>◆ Recommendations</li><li>◆ Experiences</li></ul>
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## 1- 5 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This section provides the main findings and analysis of the Survey done in the Project. It covers interviews and interactions with children, youth, parents, service providers, including government authorities and officers; non-governmental organizations; churches; school officials. The previous section on methodology describes the parameters, participants and procedures for the study.

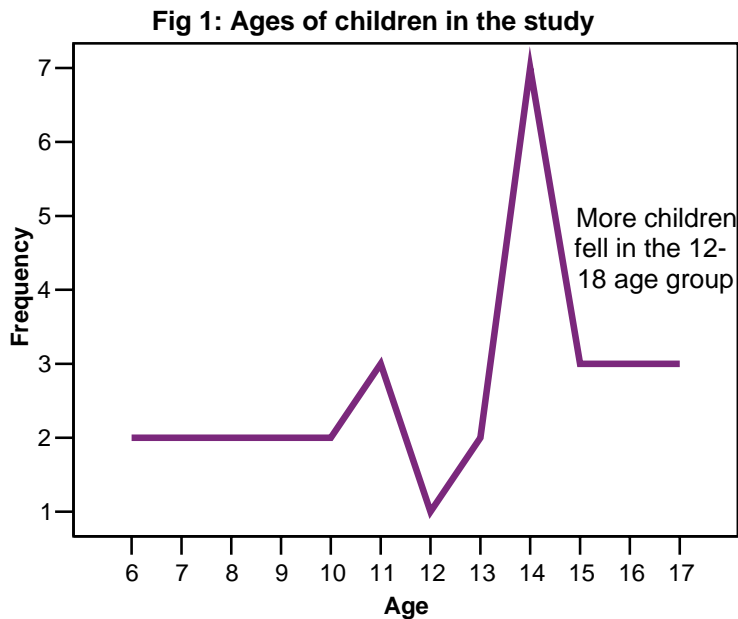
### 1-5-1 STREET CHILDREN

#### 1-5-1.1 FINDINGS

##### Demographic Profile

##### *Age and Gender*

The study found a total of thirty-two (32) children who either fit some aspect of the definition of street children or whose existing circumstances deemed them relevant to the study. Boys outnumbered girls in the sample, 78% to 22%. This was unsurprising as worldwide figures indicate a significantly higher number of street boys than girls. Ages ranged from as young as six (6) years to seventeen (17) years. The mean age however was 12.3 years with a total of nineteen (19) children in the older 12-18 age group and thirteen (13) in the 6-11 category. Figure 1 shows the ages of children in the study and Table 2 examines this distribution of age by gender.



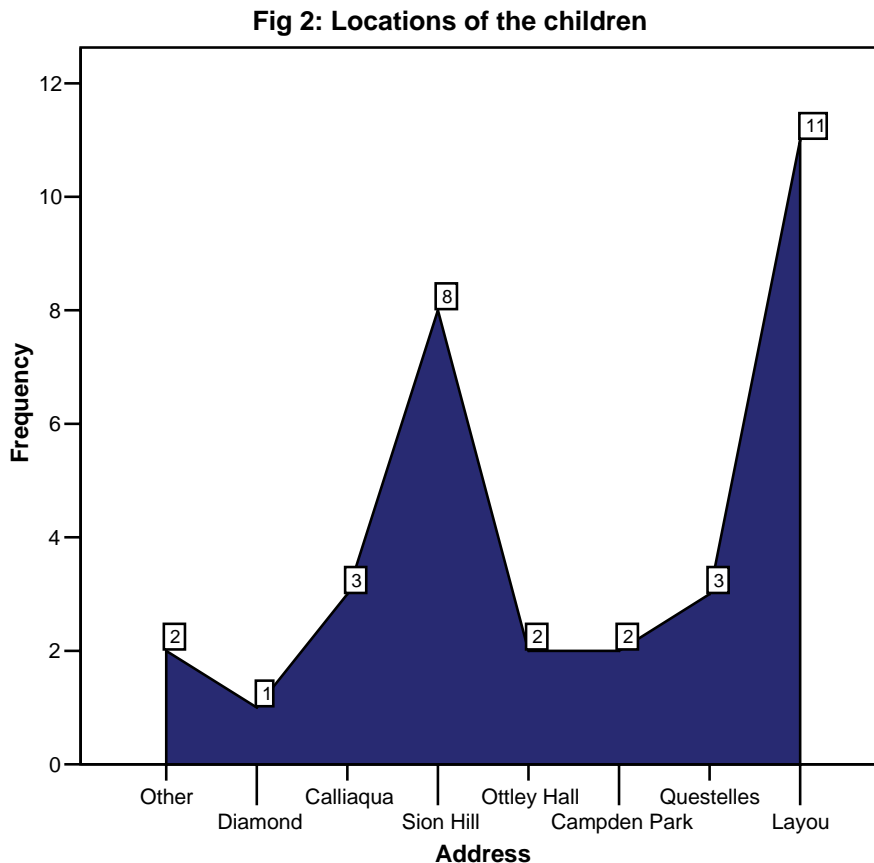
**Table 2: Ages of children by gender**

Age	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
6	0	2	2
7	2	0	2
8	2	0	2
9	2	0	2
10	1	1	2
11	3	0	3
12	1	0	1
13	1	1	2
14	6	1	7
15	3	0	3
16	3	0	3
17	1	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>32</b>

There were significantly fewer females than males.

### Location

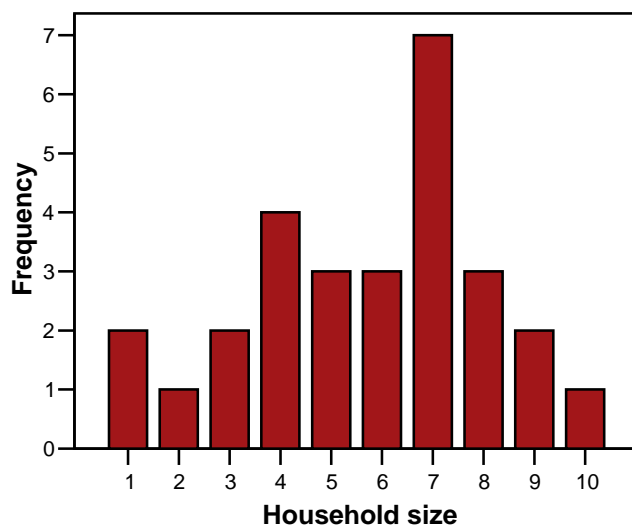
Except for a few, most children were found in the communities in which they reside. The town of Layou stands out as having the highest frequency – a total of eleven (11) children. The majority of these were children who, due to insufficient financial resources, were unable to attend school but who received a moderate level of parental supervision. Their specific circumstances are detailed in database entries S1 to S11 and are analyzed later in the section. The area of second highest frequency was the Sion Hill/ Arnos Vale areas which together accounted for twenty-five percent (25%) of the children. Specifically, these areas were Walvaroo (2), Roseau (2), Pole Yard (3), and Cane Garden (1). Importantly these areas also accounted for the more serious cases of poverty, inadequate supervision and a high proportion (five out of eight) of these children engaged in economic activities on the street. Again these will be analyzed later see database S12 – S15, C1-C3 and W1 for details. In the remaining communities one was from the Diamond/Stubbs area, three from the Calliaqua, Glen and Prospect areas, two each from Ottley Hall/Edinboro and Campden Park/ Lowmans area and three from Clare Valley/ Questelles area. Additionally two children who work on the streets of Kingstown, indicated that they live in Riverre which was outside the geographical location for the study. These were represented under ‘Other’ in the Figure 2 below.



### ***Household characteristics; Structure, size and income***

Questions pertaining to household characteristics yielded insightful findings. In terms of structure, single parent households were the most common reported in sixteen (16) cases, for which all but one were female-headed. This is in keeping with the social landscape of the country and wider Caribbean society with a large majority of single-parent households. The second most common family structure was households headed by an aunt or uncle, reported in 5 cases. This brought the number of households headed by one adult to twenty one (21) of which nineteen (19) were female-headed. In fact of the thirty two children, only one reported living with both parents. Moreover two males (ages 14 and 16) reported that they live alone.

**Fig 3: Number of persons in household**



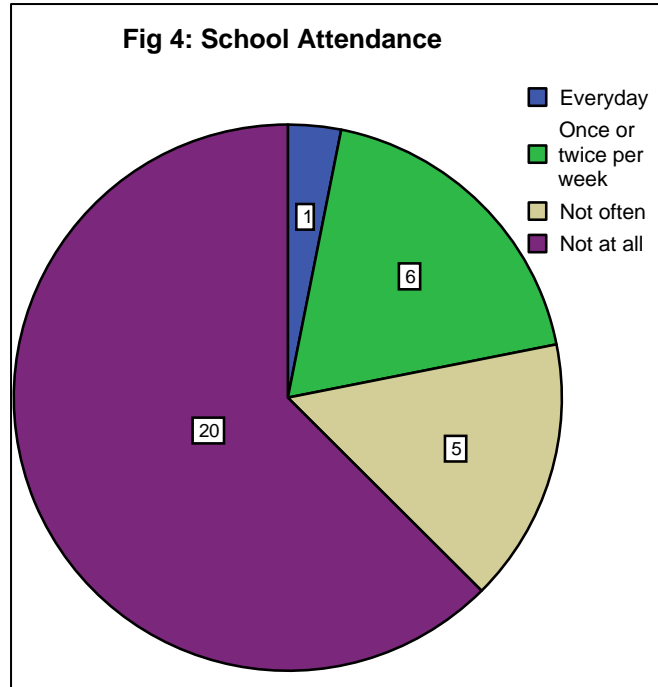
Notwithstanding the lack of adult presence in households, children in this sample came from relatively large families (see Figure 3 left). A considerable fifty percent (50%) of the children had a household size of six and more persons. In fact these sixteen (16) children represent a cumulative household size of 119 persons. The large households were not due to a presence of extended or multiple-family homes as only four children indicated this family structure. Instead, it may be an indication of the number of siblings, cousins (and grandparents) in the home. These demographics have implications for a high dependency ratio within the home,

that is, the proportion of dependents (children and elderly) to be serviced by working-aged adults. Such high dependency ratios are always a cause for concern. Indeed, in this sample, children from relatively large households (six and more persons), together with children living alone, accounted for 56% of the ‘working’ children (9/16).

Even more significant is the fact that only 34% or eleven (11) of the children in the sample indicated that their caretaker was reliably employed. Three revealed that their guardian benefited from occasional employment while in the majority of cases (53%) they did not work at all. These figures are telling of the tremendous economic give a grim account, pressure /burden some families endure.

## Education

As mentioned, the children interviewed were encountered outside of the school setting whether on the streets in the communities or following referrals from residents. Overall the children had poor school attendance. Only six children indicated that they go to school with any regularity (everyday, once or twice per week) while the majority of those interviewed (25) do not attend to school often if at all. The study found financial problems/difficulty to be the most important factor hindering school attendance. This was cited by 37.5% of children while 15.6% revealed that they had been expelled for violence. In a few cases children cited frequent ailments (2) and disinterest as contributing factors.



Of the children enrolled in school (12), most were in the 6-11 age group and were registered in classes at the primary level (consistent with their ages), as shown in the table. Conversely, the out of school group consisted mainly of older children with most indicating that they had dropped out in the early secondary forms (See table).

**Table 3: Current or last class attended**

Current/ Last Class Attended	Children Enrolled in School	Children Out of school	Total
Grade 1	2		2
Grade 2	2		2
Grade 3	3	1	4
Grade 5	1	1	2
Grade 6		1	1
Senior 3		1	1
Form 1	2	3	5
Form 2		6	6
Form 3	2	1	3
Not Stated		6	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>32</b>

### *Aspirations*

Despite not having a sound educational background, almost half of the children interviewed had clearly articulated career goals. These included a wide variety of professions such as teaching, accounting, medicine, auto mechanics, law enforcement and business management. A few expressed interest in becoming skilled workers (such as a mason, plumber and steel bender) and professional footballers. Five were undecided and two children indicated that they simply wanted to “*make money*”. **In general, aspirations among the children interviewed were high and this is an important characteristic of end-users to any Pastoral Care Programme. The internal motivation and ambition displayed by the children will enhance the impact of any remedial programme undertaken.** This fact was independently confirmed by the Family Court Probation Officer.

## 1-5-1-2 ANALYSIS (Street Children)

### Categorisation – of sample according to the definition

**The definition** of a street child is “*any boy or girl ...for whom the street (in the widest sense of the word including unoccupied dwellings, wasteland, etc.) has become his or her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood, and who is inadequately protected, supervised, or directed by responsible adults.*” (Formulated by the Inter-NGOs 1983.)

The three important elements (consistent among various definitions) are:

- d) the street as a place of abode
- e) the street as a source of livelihood, and
- f) the lack of protection, care and supervision from adults.

#### *The street as a place of abode*

The study failed to unearth any one child who in the strictest sense can be placed comfortably into the ‘category’ of street children as none of them fit this criteria. While their place of abode may be unstable, no cases were found where children had to resort to the streets as a permanent or temporary dwelling. However the majority of children spend a significant amount of time on the street for various reasons mostly related to choice. In many cases the streets provided an opportunity for children who are out of school to occupy their time.

**Non- economic Activities:** Aside from earning a living, participants engage in a range of activities on the streets in the communities and at other places of interest.

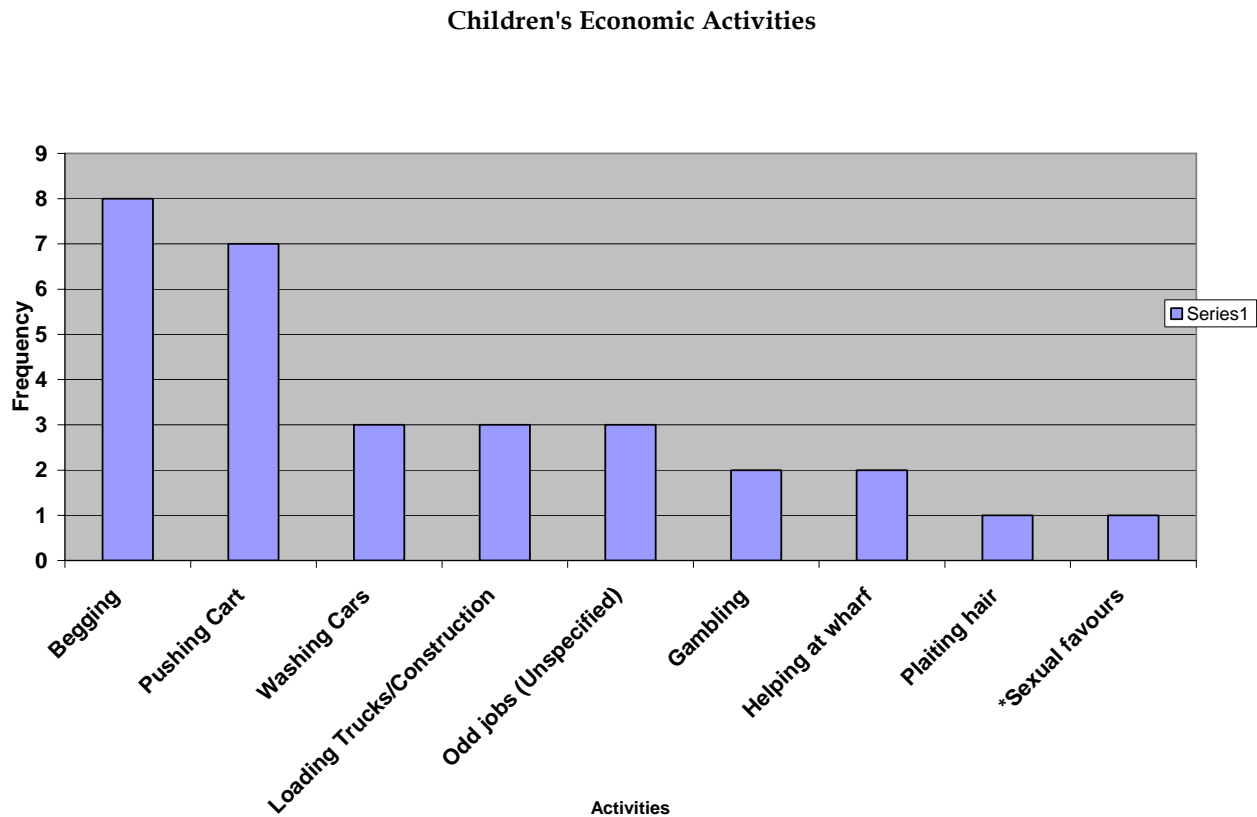
**Table 4: Children’s activities**

*Day/ Night-time Activities			
Roaming streets/neighbourhood	10	Liming at rum shop	2
Socialising/playing with friends	11	Liming at video arcade	1
Making trouble	1	Going to parties	1
Going to the beach	1		
Fishing	4		

### *The street as a source of livelihood*

A total of sixteen (17) children (53%) indicated that they use the street as a source of livelihood. They engage in an array of errands/odd jobs including pushing carts, washing cars, loading – and offloading vehicles – (boats and trucks), construction related activities and begging passers by. The study revealed these methods to be most profitable with some children being able to earn from a few coins/dollars per errand to \$40 per day as a cart operator. All but one of these children were male, and the majority (11) were from the 12-17 age group. However this was not reserved to older boys, as boys as young as seven (7) engaged in these activities. The table below shows the various economic activities these seventeen (17) children reported being involved in.

**Fig 5: Children's Economic Activities**



***Inadequate protection, supervision and direction by responsible adults***

This element of the definition can be applied to most of the sample in varying degrees. Two (2) children/boys ages 14 and 16 reported that they live alone and can be categorised as having no permanent adult protection/supervision. In one instance domestic problems prompted the child to leave home (at about 12) and seek ‘refuge’ in a vacant family house while the 14 year old indicated that both of his parents are deceased. However, these two present extreme cases of lack of adult protection and most are not so clearly defined.

In the majority of cases, children received inadequate adult protection and supervision evidenced by the amount of time spent and the activities engaged in while on streets (as reported above). This was due to a complex interplay of factors including – ill/incompetent guardian, negligence, poverty, and behavioural difficulties on the part of the child.

As a result of this inadequate protection nine children (8 males and 1 female) reported that they were often harassed on the streets from persons in the community, vendors and the police.

**Table 5: Harassment on the Streets**

<b>Do you often get hassled on the street?</b>	<b>Yes (7)</b>	<b>Sometimes (2)</b>	<b>N/a (X)</b>	
<b>By whom?</b>	<b>Older boys (3)</b>	<b>Community Members (3)</b>	<b>Vendors (2)</b>	<b>Police (1)</b>

**Attitudes:**

**Table 6: How do you feel about your situation?**

Response	Frequency
Bad/Unhappy	23
Good	1
Don't Know	1
Not Stated	7

***To receiving assistance***

Most of the children and parents interviewed showed a positive attitude towards receiving help. Twenty-three (23) of them indicated that they were unhappy with their current situation and would like assistance. In fact, most were expectant of government

intervention, whether by virtue of an understanding of the study or due to an underlying attitude of reliance on government support.

***To school***

Of the twenty-five children who do not attend school regularly, a total of eighteen (18) had strong positive attitudes and expressed a desire to return. Many stated that being out of school was the least favourite aspect of their circumstance; and one they would readily like to have changed. A few revealed that they longed to be among their peers, but for the most part, the children themselves lamented the fact that they were not getting a proper education (see table below). They showed a good appreciation for the correlation between school attendance and overall achievement. Similarly in all seven (7) interviews with parents, their greatest regret was their inability to send their children to school.

***To your situation (at home and on the streets)***

The questions testing this variable had low response rates, but together, the responses provided give insight to the children’s general attitudes to their circumstance. The major push and pull factors for children leaving school and taking to the streets (whether temporarily or indefinitely) are also uncovered.

As previously mentioned, absence from school was the overarching concern about their general situation. However, for five children in circumstances of poverty, lack of food was the main source of distress, and four who made a living on the streets this was harassment from others. Another noteworthy regret expressed was not having a parent or other adult to depend on.

**Table 7: What things do you dislike?**

<b>About your home</b>		<b>About your situation</b>	
No love/attention/ care	5	No proper education	18
No one to play with	2	No food	5
Not enough food	1	Get hassled on streets	4
Strict Parents	2	No one to depend on	**3
Not stated	24	Get into fights	1
		No friends/peers	1
		No work	1
		Nothing/don’t know	3
		Not stated	4

**\*Multiple responses given**

Due to some discrepancies on the part of the researchers, only a few children supplied answers to the question “*what don’t you like about your home?*” Nonetheless, a similar theme emerged. Seven of the ten pointed towards difficulty with parents/caretakers citing

that they were either too strict or did not show any love, care or attention. Parents were also partly implicated in two more cases where children said that there was often no one at home to play with or talk to.

**Table 8: What things do you like?**

Factors	Frequency
Making money	7
Freedom	5
Being with friends	4
Nothing	1
Not stated	***

Another key item questioning what children liked best about their situation also succumbed to discrepancies resulting in a low response rate. Nevertheless, the information obtained was consistent with other findings (from service providers etc.) about the *'pull factors'* involved in children taking to the streets. The ability to earn money on the street presents a major incentive and 37.5% (7) of working children noted that the money-making capacity was what they liked best about their situation. Consistent with their reported activities other children cited that having freedom and being independent were their favourite aspects; both allow the ability to see and spend time with friends.

Meanwhile, *push factors* for taking to the streets seemed to revolve around difficult financial situations and poor parent-child relationships. There is also a strong correlation to being out of school and being on the streets as children typically find some other way to occupy their time.

### **Needs**

The children were asked to identify some of their specific needs to the interviewers and things they would like to see changed. Predictably financial assistance was high on this list of needs. Some children wanted to see their general situation of poverty improved, and others specified the purpose for which it was needed; to go to school, uniforms, clothes, and for food. Two children, interviewed together pointed out that they *\*\* 'want money so they don't have to work'*. *\*\** Two more stated expressly that they wanted to get back into school and work on the weekends – clearly showing the need for financial support.

**Table 9: Children's Needs**

Needs	Percentage
Financial Assistance (General)	7
Financial Assistance (to re-enter school)	7
Assistance in gaining entry to school	3
Better job (child and parent)	4
To be independent	1
To change behaviour	2
Mentor	2
Father to be home	1
Nothing	2
Not stated	9

\* **Multiple responses given.**

The following is a compilation of the data collected from the children in the study.

- ⇒ It provides the profile of children in the sample. Age, location or school (names have been omitted to protect their identity and code names are used instead).
- ⇒ The database draws attention to and itemises areas of concern as discussed in the study; including attendance at school, exposure to the streets and parental supervision.
- ⇒ The underlying **causes** (where supplied) are also indicated, chief among them being lack of basic financial resources.
- ⇒ A '**risk analysis**' is presented, summarising the most significant dangers faced by each child (as reported in the study). These include being in gangs, frequent fights with persons in the community and having minor legal offences.
- ⇒ Finally, '**vulnerability**' is assessed as being Low, Medium or High. This assessment is done in the context of the street children research project, and is based upon the relative risks faced by each child.

A summary of information provided by the schools is also presented. However no risk analysis could be executed due to inadequate data.

## Database

<b>Code</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>School Status</b>	<b>Roams Street</b>
B1	Male	9	various - lwr Questelles	Out of School	Yes
B2	Male	14	Campden Park	Out of School	Yes
B3	Male	11	Clare Valley	Out of School	Unsure
B4	Male	11	Lowmans Leeward	Out of School	Yes
S1	Male	15	Layou	Out of School	No
S2	Female	17	Texier Rd Layou	Out of School	No
S3	Male	16	Middle St Layou	Out of School	Unsure
S4	Male	14	Pasture Layou	Poor attendance	Unsure
S5	Male	15	Velox St, Layou	Poor attendance	No
S6	Male	8	Texier Rd Layou	Poor attendance	No
S7	Female	13	Texier Rd Layou	Poor attendance	No
S8	Female	6	Texier Rd Layou	Poor attendance	No
S9	Female	6	Texier Rd Layou	Poor attendance	No
S10	Male	7	London Rd Layou	Poor attendance	Yes
S11	Male	10	Layou	Poor attendance	Unsure
S12	Male	15	Walvaroo	Out of School	Yes
S13	Female	14	Walvaroo	Out of School	No
S14	Male	16	Roseau	Out of School	Yes
S15	Male	14	Roseau	Out of School	Yes
H1	Male	14	Stubbs	Out of School	Yes
H2	Male	17	Glen	Out of School	Yes
H3	Male	12	Prospect	Out of School	Yes
C1	Male	7	Pole Yard, Sion Hill	Out of School	Yes
C2	Male	8	Pole Yard, Sion Hill	Out of School	Yes
C3	Male	11	Pole Yard, Sion Hill	Out of School	Yes
C4	Male	13	Reviere	Out of School	Yes
C5	Male	14	Reviere	Out of School	Yes
M7	Female	10	Edinboro	Poor attendance	Yes
M8	Male	9	Edinboro	Poor attendance	Yes
R1	Female	17	Calliaqua	Poor attendance	Yes
M6	Male	14	Byrea (formerly Questelles)	Out of School	Yes
W1	Male	16	Cane Garden	In school	No

**Database – Continued**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Works on Street</b>	<b>Inadequately Supervised</b>	<b>Cause</b>
B1	Yes	Yes	Parent working in Grenadines; Grandmother Caretaker
B2	No	Yes	Ill parent
B3	No	Yes	Ill parent
B4	No	Yes	Behavioural Problems
S1	Yes (JOB)	Unsure	Expelled
S2	No	No	
S3	Yes (JOB)	Unsure	Problems at previous school
S4	Yes (mom)	<b>No</b>	Financial difficulty
S5	No	No	Financial difficulty
S6	No	No	Financial difficulty, sickly
S7	No	No	Financial difficulty
S8	No	<b>No</b>	Financial difficulty
S9	No	<b>No</b>	Financial difficulty, mildly disabled
S10	Yes	Yes	Behavioural Problems
S11	No	<b>No</b>	Financial difficulty
S12	No	Yes	Choice, delinquent
S13	No	No	Financial difficulty
S14	Yes	Unsure	Expelled
S15	No	No	Expelled
H1	Yes	Yes	Parents deceased
H2	Yes	No	Expelled
H3	Yes	Unsure	Financial difficulty
C1	Yes	Yes	Poverty
C2	Yes	Yes	Poverty
C3	Yes	Yes	Poverty
C4	Yes	No	Family Circumstance
C5	Yes	No	Family Circumstance
M7	No	No	
M8	Yes	Yes	Poor parental supervision
R1	Yes	Yes	Parental pressure
M6	Yes	Yes	
W1	Yes	No	

### Database – Continued

Code	Risk Analysis	Needs/Wishes	Vulnerability
B1	Unstable abode, Roams streets/ village	Parent return	High
B2	Minor offences, Roams street, gangs,		High
B3	Unsupervised, roams street	Getting into a school	Medium
B4	Gangs, Delinquent	Help with discipline	High
S1	Minor offences, out of school, stable job	Getting into a school, mentor, change in behaviour	Low/Medium
S2	Out of School, Supervised	None	Low
S3		Return to school	Low
S4	Out of School, Financial difficulty, Frequent fights	Money for school	Medium
S5	Poverty, Out of School	<b>Urgent:</b> Financial assistance	Medium
S6	Age, Out of School, Frequent fights,	Fin assistance	Low/Medium
S7	Poverty, Out of School, Supervised,	(Mother: Job, Financial assistance)	Low/Medium
S8	Age, Out of School,	Financial assistance	Low
S9	Age, Out of School,	Financial assistance	Low
S10	Age, Delinquent/ ill-disciplined	(Mother: Help with discipline)	High
S11	Financial difficulty, Out of School	Financial assistance, Return to school	Low/Medium
S12	Roams streets, Out of school		Medium
S13	Out of school, financial difficulty	Financial assistance	Low/Medium
S14	Roams/Works street, Out of school	Getting into a school, Fin assistance	Medium
S15	Out of School, Roams street, supervised	Return to school	Low/Medium
H1	Lives alone, Good support system	Financial support	High
H2	Roams/ works street	Get a job	Medium
H3	Works/Roams streets	Return to school, financial assistance	Medium
C1	Unsupervised, poverty, on streets	**Fin assistance, food, clothing etc.	High
C2	Unsupervised, poverty, on streets	**Fin assistance, food, clothing etc.	High
C3	Unsupervised, poverty, on streets	**Fin assistance, food, clothing etc.	High
C4	Works for family	Money for food clothes	High
C5	Works for family,	Money for food clothes	High
M7	Poverty	Money, uniforms, meals etc.	Medium
M8	Age, on streets, poor supervision	Parent home more often	Medium
R1	No financial or other support from Parents	Financial Support, Guidance	Medium
M6	Roam/Work Streets, Poorly supervised	Fin assistance, Return to school	High
W1	Lives alone, In school, Good support system	Financial Support	Low/Medium

## Database – Information Supplied by Schools

### Clare Valley Primary School

Code	Age	Indicators	Risk
B5	12	Poor attendance	
B6	7	Poor attendance, Financial difficulty	Medium
B7	10	Poor attendance, Parental Neglect	High
B8	10	Poor attendance, Parental Neglect	High

### Belmont Government School

Indicators:		Poor attendance, Poor families in need of assistance		
Code	Age	Grade	Address	Risk
M1	5	Grade K	South Wood	Medium
M2	7	Grade 1	South Wood	Medium
M3	9	Grade 3	Fairbaine	Medium
M4	7	Grade 1	Glamorgan	Medium
M5	11	Grade 5	Welcome	Medium

### Calliaqua Anglican School

Indicators:		Poor attendance, Parental neglect, Financial difficulty		
Name	Grade	Address	*Risk	
R2	Grade 1	Glen		
R3	Grade 1	Glen		
R4	Grade 1	Glen		
R5	Grade 1	Glen		
R6	Grade 1	Golden Vale		
R7	Grade 2	Glen		
R8	Grade 2			
R9	Grade 2			
R10	Grade 2			
R11	Grade 2			
R12	Grade 3			
R13	Grade 3			

R14	Grade 3		
R15	Grade 3		
R16	Grade 4	Fairhall	
R17	Grade 4	Golden Vale	
R18	Grade 4	Calliaqua	
R19	Grade 5		
R20	Grade 5		
R21	Grade 5		
R22	Grade 5		
R23	Grade 5		
R24	Grade 6	Glen	
<b>**Sion Hill Government School</b>			
	<b>Indicators</b>	Poor attendance, Financial difficulty, Lack of care	
	1 Student	Grade 3	
	2 Students	Grade 4	
	6 Students	10+ yrs	
	6 Students	11+ yrs	
	5 Students	12 + yrs	

\*Risks could not be assessed due to incomplete information

\*\*No names or other personal information was supplied

## 1-5-2 SERVICE PROVIDERS

### 1-5-2-1 Findings and Analysis

As stated in the Methodology of this report (Section 1-4), *purposive sampling* was used in selecting service providers recognizing their unique position of importance to the study. It was found that the selected service providers– governmental and non-governmental – provided valuable service in providing basic and other needs of many vulnerable children and families in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. However, the study also found many challenges in responding to these needs.

Enrew, in “Guidelines for working with street children”<sup>10</sup> aptly describes the issues and challenges in interventions for children and in doing a research project such as this one:

*“The main barrier to successful programmes is our own attitude.....Children deserve help that is appropriate to their own individual surroundings and situation. They deserve solutions that will be long-lasting, that will not end if funding fails.”*

Perceptions and attitudes of **service providers** interviewed varied from empathy - “children are hurt” to the notion that “some children are just bad” to the sterner “parents need to be **made** to be accountable and take responsibility for their children”. The Field Workers in this project were themselves a study in the wide range of attitudes and perceptions. One worker admitted that the experiences of the children were too painfully close to home for comfort. By the end of the site visits the field workers were all compassionately touched by what they found.

Enrew echoes/captures the thoughts and perceptions of street children where she states:

*“Adults tend to assume they know what is best for children. But street children who have been taking a good deal of responsibility for themselves often have very definite ideas about what is best for them. The problem is that few people listen to them or use their skills and abilities.”*

The study found that children were looking for immediate basic-needs help – even from researchers. Food, money, shelter were expected. Our initial gatekeeper, who at 22 years has been living on the street for over eight years, felt that the divisions of the Ministry of Social Development should have food vouchers to immediately hand to any child in need that crossed their paths.

*Snowball sampling* augmented the original list and other relevant service providers were contacted and interviewed. See Appendix # 1 for the interview checklist instrument.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://tilz.tearfund.org/Publications/Footsteps+21-30/Footsteps+28/Guidelines+for+working+with+street+children.htm>, ENREW, Judith, Guidelines for Working with Street Children.

Interviews were sought with other key informants to gain further insight into the magnitude of the street children phenomena in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

In addition, in order to complement site visits being done, principals and teachers from schools (**Group B above**) within the eight designated areas were asked to provide information on children who may be suffering from neglect or other hardships, and children exhibiting frequent absenteeism from school. Data from the schools are included in the database provided.

**The Areas for analysis were:**

- ◆ Causes and needs (of children being on the streets)
- ◆ Attempts at reintegration of street children - success and challenges
- ◆ Attitudes towards programme implementation and recommendations.

**Table 10: Service providers Interviewed**

<b>GROUP A</b>		<b>GROUP B</b>	
<b>NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS</b>	<b>GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS</b>	<b>PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Roman Catholic Church</li> <li>2. Salvation Army</li> <li>3. Bread of Life</li> <li>4. House of Hope</li> <li>5. Our Lady of Guadelupe home for Girls</li> <li>6. Catholic Soup Kitchen</li> <li>7. Parenting Partners</li> <li>8. Marion House</li> <li>9. The Evangelical Church of the West Indies</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Royal SVG Police Force</li> <li>2. Criminal Investigation Dept</li> <li>3. Social Services</li> <li>4. Community Development Officer</li> <li>5. National Crime Prevention Commission</li> <li>6. Family Services Division – Director; Deputy Director</li> <li>7. Family Court Prosecutor</li> <li>8. Family Court Probation Officer</li> <li>9. Liberty Lodge Boys Training Centre</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Multi-purpose Training Centre</li> <li>2. Sion Hill Government</li> <li>3. Calliaqua Anglican</li> <li>4. Buccament Primary</li> <li>5. Belmont Government</li> <li>6. Thomas Saunders Secondary</li> <li>7. Intermediate High School</li> <li>8. Emmanuel High School, Kingtown</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Kingstown Preparatory</li> <li>10. Kingstown Anglican</li> <li>11. C.W. Prescod Primary</li> <li>12. Questelles Government</li> <li>13. Lowmans Leeward Anglican</li> <li>14. Clare Valley Primary</li> </ol>
<b>GROUP C</b>			
<b>FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES CONSULTED/INTERVIEWED/VISITED</b>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Female Diamond resident, who has taken into her home several children</li> <li>2. Female McKies Hill, Kingstown resident who has fostered several children.</li> <li>3. KFC (Management and Security Guards)</li> <li>4. Chinese restaurant</li> <li>5. Visit with families in Diamond</li> <li>6. Initiated a programme on Street Children on an Interactive Call-In Radio Programme February 4, 2008. (Recordings are with Consultants and the PS Ministry of Social Development)</li> <li>7. Parents -Teachers Association of Calliaqua Anglican School, Forum, March 17, 2008</li> </ol>			

## **Perception of the Street Children phenomenon**

Significantly, all Service providers (SPs) interviewed recognize or claim that there is a marked reduction of children on the street who may be begging or sleeping.

*Police: I know there was a time when you would see lots of them on the street up to about 10 of them about 2005. Last year there was a visible absence.. I really don't see that many any more. Remember I told you about dysfunctional adults who would molest them. We have done our part when we meet them on the street.*

*Interviewer: When you meet a child asleep under a gallery what do you do?*

*Police: Bring them into the Central Station & we try to find the parents.*

Reasons given for the reduction of children found on the streets included:

- They are now sent to Liberty Lodge
- They are treated too badly on the streets by older vagrants.
- Police chase them from the streets
- Universal access to secondary education.
- Economic alleviation through employment; for example the increase in the number of nurses being trained

As a result of the small number of children actually found on the streets, the study focused equally on all three elements of the definition. We found that children may have a home as in a place to sleep. However, given the lack of supervision, care and protection, and other basic needs, more time was spent outside of that home whether on the streets or with friends or other relatives.

### **Following are comments by the respondents to the three key questions:**

Respondents were initially asked about their experiences with vulnerable children or to describe the work of their organization that may relate to the project of finding the extent and nature of the street children problem in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Subsequent questions focused on the response areas identified previously.

### **# 1 CAUSES AND NEEDS – OF CHILDREN ON THE STREETS**

#### **Non-governmental Organisations Comments**

*“Children are hurt; Homes not functioning well. Children may be abused; not cared for; they have nowhere to go. Children need love”.*

**Older Street Person:** Home not comfortable; children need to feel comfortable. Step father wanting to control and limit activities like visiting friends. Not happy in home – no facilities, TV nothing. No love like other families. Mother listens to step-father and afraid to care about her children. Children abandoned; abused.

“Poverty. Family structures. Parental abandonment and neglect. High incidents of incest.”

“ Some parents don’t have a clue; behavioral problems, then parents apply harsh discipline and the children run away. Abuse – Sexual, physical, verbal. Economics – parents are not able to provide”.

**Rep. Guadelupe House for Girls:** On the whole in the West Indies, girls are not likely to be living on the street. They may be abandoned or neglected but can usually [find] somewhere to lodge – however unsafe that place may be. Street children is a ‘boys’ issue; girls may be homeless but not living on the street.

“Parental Care; parents do not accept their responsibility; Fathers need to be made to accept their responsibility & at least compelled to give maintenance for their children. Many of the problems are because of the social pressures on mothers. Children need love”.

**Private individual:** “Society norms and standards have declined. For example society no longer frowns on teen age pregnancy. In the past there was no toleration for nurses or teachers who had children outside of marriage. Harsh as it was, it was actually a prevention and a protection for the society economically..... Values need to be taught early. Have to begin early with the children. Society has unleashed values on itself. We have abandoned our responsibility.....Society defiance increases.”

A series of articles on Street Children appeared in the **Searchlight newspaper** in September and October 2000.

**October 6<sup>th</sup>:** The youngster stated that he spends his time diving in the sea in the Kingstown Harbour. “My mother does tell me a whole heap of wrong things and I don’t like that; most of the time I does just get vex and run away,” said Kendell ....., a cousin of Sylvanus. “She even tell me why somebody don’t kill me, so I got vex and run away”.

**To summarize causes identified by NGO respondents:**

1. Positive/empathetic focus on children – hurt; need love; abused
2. Negative focus on children – bad; want their own way; discontentment; want too much what others have
3. Poor parenting – young single parents do not know how to parent; neglectful fathers; inappropriate discipline.
4. Dysfunctional Families – all types of abuse; step fathers domineering family; family conflict; different parentage

5. Parents leaving the country and/or the home.
6. Economics – poverty
7. Societal decline in acceptable standards of behaviour.

### **Governmental Organizations Comments**

**The Liberty Lodge Boys Training School (LLBTS) and the Kingstown Multi-purpose Centre (KMPC)** have been included in the service provider category. They have a dual function as service providers as well as having direct involvement with street and/or vulnerable children.

**The perceived causes** by the law enforcement and social service organizations were generally similar to the NGOs– with the majority seeing the cause as that of dysfunctional homes; poor parenting and poverty: Comments included:

*“Barrel Children become street children. No love in their lives.”*

*“Poverty. They just run away and stay away. Poor parenting. Kids are disgusting. Some have everything and they still behave badly.”*

*“Daddy may not be the child’s father. Mother may not be the child’s mother...and the child might feel that they don’t belong.”*

*“Juvenile Delinquency. They just bad. They just don’t want to go home. Prefer to identify with groups.”*

*“Poverty. Sometimes parents....I have known situations where parents will tell child: ‘Can’t mind you. Go look for work’. Some send their daughters out to look for money. Lack of supervision. Parents in Grenadines. 10-12 yr old may be looking after siblings, where mum is gone to work or just gone.”*

### **Were the findings with regards to the perceptions of the causes of children on the street of significant difference between non-government and government establishments?**

Governmental workers appeared focused on roles and responsibilities. However, working within prescribed roles may not always be in the best interest of the vulnerable child.

This was seen in the question to one government agency regarding the intervention of police officers if they discover child abuse in a home. The response was that the police would not know if there was abuse in the home as their purpose was simply to contact the parents of juvenile children who had committed some offence.

Generally, by many NGOs there was the sense that Government agencies were those responsible for dealing in a more resolute way with the issues of vulnerable children. The study found that there appeared to be some possible inhibitors:

- a) Delimiting focus on “roles and responsibilities”.
- b) Lack of clear internal directions e.g. job descriptions, and monitoring
- c) Inadequate training.
- d) Lack of clarity as to who was responsible for what action.
- e) Lack of collaboration on process or solutions.
- f) Lack of documentation or records to allow for a systematic approach to service.

**A focus group was held with three SVG Police Force officers:**

- A Superintendent
- An Inspector
- A Sergeant (female)

The Informants expressed concern about the poor parenting and dysfunctional families that contributed to the conduct of young offenders. Many parents seemed reluctant to come when called and notified that their child was in police custody. Once a child is picked up on the street, a parent must be contacted. A parent is responsible for a child up to the age of 16 years. When parents do not come in, the Family Affairs Office is contacted. There needs to be closer collaboration between Police and Family Affairs in identifying and following up on homes where nonchalant or disengaged attitudes of parents signal family dysfunction.

**The Family Affairs Division (FAD) Director and Deputy Director were interviewed.**

It was ascertained that the role of the FAD “ *is to see to the well-being of the family – ‘toddler to the grave’*” The FAD services also included “*Some level of counselling for juveniles, dysfunctional members of family, and intervention between spouses. Referrals may be made to other agencies.*”

Significantly, there was little documentation available in the division to contribute to the Study. The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) was cited as the institution that had the initial contact with young offenders apprehended on the streets, and the CID may have records. If the parents could not be found, then the FAD was called to represent the juvenile in Court. There appeared to be assumptions by both institutions that the other would keep records on these young offenders who have no supporting family. It appears that the Family Court Probation Service has the obligation for follow up of these young offenders and their families. It may be appropriate for FAD to have a more active and collaborative role in the family situations of children and youth who spend a great deal of time on the streets, making a livelihood there – oft times with illegal activities. The FAD concurs saying hence the request for this study.

**Questions must be asked:** Does FAD – or the CID, or the Family Court – have the **resources** to extend their services more effectively into vulnerable families whose children may be on the brink of a life of crime, of hopelessness or helplessness? Can more of these children/youth be “saved”? Should institutional priorities, policies and practices be changed to address issues of street children? Is the deployment of resources

effective in meeting the needs of children and families? Is sufficient and appropriate child protective legislation in place to address and prevent child issues?

**Unclear and Conflicting responses were found in interviews e.g.:**

<i>What occurs when a child is found late at night on the street by a police officer?</i>	<i>They are picked up, brought to the Station and attempts made to find a parent.</i>
	<i>If it is a female, she would be kept on a chair (not the bench with regular offenders) for the night and a female officer assigned to remain with her.</i>
	<i>They were left on the street – unless they were committing some offence.</i>
	<i>They are “hassled” by police.</i>

**Such conflicting data lead to further questions:** Are the relevant Service providers adequately **trained** to meet the need? Are standard **procedures** in place? Are the **attitudes** of the relevant officers helpful, hurtful, or hindering?

**Box # 5 Two illustrating stories:**

- 1. The Central Police Station was called by the researcher to report that a 13 year old girl was found on the street after 9:00 p.m. claiming she had no where to stay. The Officer stated they could do nothing as they had no facility for her to sleep.*
- 2. A watchman (not security) at a Kingstown restaurant told of an 11year old boy who generally hung around at the place where the watchman worked at night. The police came looking for the boy as they had learned that some older men were using him to steal stuff. When the police eventually caught the boy, they beat him ruthlessly for him to disclose where the stolen goods were.*

**Our conclusion** is that there is agreement on the **causes** of the problem of street children, vulnerable children, children at risk. However, current **governmental systems can be more effectual in working together in more preventative and interventionist ways** that would reduce or prevent the number of children who remain at risk or spend inordinate time on the streets, as a result of those causes.

In addition, exposure to and **increased training in child development** and the deleterious effects of some parent-child relationships and child-rearing in the Caribbean would be valuable. There are an increasing number of studies on Caribbean families available, although the study found that the sharing and dissemination of this information needs to be greater and more visible.

## # 2 ATTEMPTS AT REHABILITATION OF STREET CHILDREN - SUCCESS AND CHALLENGES

### Efforts at Rehabilitation:

It is essential to note that in addition to the **FAD**, other governmental arms such as the **Family Court Probation office**, **LLBTS** and the **KMPC** appear to be attempting pro-activity in their work in addressing some of the articulated causes of vulnerable children in our society, with a definite view of rehabilitation for young folks who invariably have fallen off the tracks.

**One probation officer at the Family Court** described his hands-on approach. Recognizing the role of the parents, he appears to work very closely with the juveniles and their families. He feels that the children whom he sees in his capacity as a Court probation officer, are invariably victims of parental conflict or other family dysfunctions.

**The KMPC**, led by their Principal appears to be adopting an institutional caring approach to their teaching/service delivery with youth who are invariably seen as “drop outs” of the regular school system, unable to cope academically or socially. The student body of 270 children range from 12 to 17 years of age.

**The school Counselor** saw issues surrounding street children as a hemorrhage, and was adamant that the time to stop the bleeding was now before children actually ended up on the streets. Family situations need to be examined and addressed by Social Services. Financial, emotional, psychological and social assistance need to be given where needed. The School operates on the principle of **love** for the children as family, and attempts to meet all their needs. Social Services need to be more effective!! The school claims a significant change towards learning and self-development among the students.

**The LLBTS, which falls under the Ministry of Social Development** is seen by many as a successful government attempt to reintegrate or rehabilitate the young boys. The Centre currently houses 30 boys, with two others coming in daily for classes. The aim of the Centre is to work with the boys and their parents with an expectation that in two years the boys can be reintegrated into their families. Challenges exist in terms of reintegration as despite numerous efforts by the staff, several parents do not participate in the programmes designed to assist them in parenting and in making their homes places of love, comfort and support for the children. The following interview provides some insight into the needs of the boys:

The **FAD** solicits assistance for the community in providing foster care for children. This system needs to be strengthened, although several “success” stories have occurred.

### Efforts at Reintegration:

This question attempted to elicit information on efforts of the respondent organizations at the reintegration of children found on the street or vulnerable children in general. This

question is to be informative in light of the fact of the apparent reduction of children on the street in order

- a) to get a sense of where the children might be found currently
- b) to learn of success efforts that would become models for future programs or situations that may benefit from other resources or expansion.
- c) To learn of unsuccessful attempts so as not to necessarily repeat them.
- d) To examine preventative measures and methods.

The question would also inform the attitude of parents /families at reintegration or rehabilitation of the children back into their own better functioning families.

The following (Box #6) is a response by a key informant on the causes of children taking to the streets provides useful context to the issue of reintegration of street children into healthy lives at home.

**Box # 6: Key Informant House of Hope**

*“Lack of proper parental guidance is a major cause. Parents go to work very early (~7am) and returning late at night, leaving kids without adequate supervision. They would dress the children for school very early and then leave them alone .The children therefore take to the streets in order to look for food or to hang out with their friends. **Some girls even end up in the homes of men who take advantage of them instead of going to school.** They are afraid to return home since they might be flogged. Overall, the lack of food seems to be the major stimulus as most children used to be found hanging out begging around KFC. Violence and Abuse by relatives in the home were other significant factors. Children who move from home to home and encounter the same sort of abuse eventually prefer to fend for themselves on the streets rather than going back into the same sorts of situations.” (Anita Nanton, a former principal of the Kingstown Anglican School, Interview by Yasa Belmar, Field Worker.)*

Can these young lives be reintegrated? ...and reintegrated into what? What would need to be changed for those homes (described in the above Box) to be warm and comfortable – emotionally and physically?

- Improved economic situations that will improve home and school supervision.
- Improved economic situation where children will not have to go on the streets to look for food.
- Enforcement of laws against underage sexual relations and domestic violence.
- Parental training in parenting skills including discipline

Given that such changes may not all be possible immediately, consideration may need to be given to allowing those children a sense of self-reintegration by **providing a place of safety and sustenance while they remain on the street.**

Of note, it was recognized that recent government initiatives have helped and are helping to change the economic prospects of many persons. The current Nursing Programme was mentioned as having significant impact on poorer families. The programme trains and employs an increased number of nurses - women in particular.

### **Non-governmental Organizations**

Several of the non-government organizations (NGOs) and community individuals interviewed continue to make efforts at the reintegration of street children. These include

- a. Facilitating returns to their parent-homes,
- b. Arranging for the children to be sent to other homes or institutions
- c. Providing sundry assistance while the children are out of their homes.

Mothers have been known to take food and clothing to their children who have left home by choice or by expulsion through step fathers.

**The Evangelical Church of the West Indies (ECWI) and** its members work closely with families in Diamond assisting in financial and emotional ways, enabling them to stay together. One Church member in Diamond, integrated six children in her home, whose mother was going to Canada, and leaving the children – oldest 12 years – to fend for themselves. Two of the children were interviewed and appeared to be happy living with their adopted mother. However the field worker meeting with them reported that they expressed some apparent imaginative fantasies about having visited their mother in Canada. This may speak to an inherent longing to be with their natural mother. Studies show that children often long for relationship for a natural mother in cases of absences or separation. The ECWI Pastor Amos Dennie has himself successfully fostered or adopted many children in his own home. His approach is that they are totally integrated into his family, and loved as much as his natural children.

**Individuals and families** continue to foster children on behalf of the Family Affairs Division (FAD). One apparent success story tells of a 12 year old embroiled in a step-father pregnancy law-enforcement saga. The baby was adopted by a Canadian couple. FAD asked a local woman to keep the young child-mother. That child has since been living with the foster mother. Today, at 18 years of age she is preparing to write eight CXC subjects this year.

**The Roman Catholic Church (RCC)** is committed to helping vulnerable children:

- Nuns at the Pastoral Centre appears to provide a loving hand and ear to young girls living away from their own homes or on the street.
- Our Lady of Guadalupe Home for Girls (Marriaqua) is soon to be opened.
- The Bread of Life Home (Belmont) is a home that for 16 years has been taking in vulnerable children. It now focuses on children with HIV/AIDS, and houses 8 children – not all with HIV/AIDS.

**Marion House and Parenting Partners** are involved in working with parents in order to strengthen the parent skills and economic conditions in order to improve the parent-child

relationships. Marion House tends to work with young mothers, and Parenting Partners is presently involved in a Fathers' programme.

Although recognizing the vulnerability of a significant number of children in SVG for reasons outlined in the above discussion on "Causes and Needs", the difference between street children and children living in conditions and situations of abuse and neglect are seen by NGOs as quite different. Often in responding to our query about street children, NGOs immediately informed the consultants that their work did not include or extend to street children. Further probing revealed differently.

Major King of **The Salvation Army** explained by stating that street children had already acquired certain habits and behaviours which would be difficult to serve effectively in their proposed "National Children's Home". Their goal "To improve the social and economic life chances of vulnerable and high-risk children under eighteen years old", would be a pre-emptive or preventative measure. Thus fostering and adoption would be a part of their modus operandi in terms of reintegration and rehabilitation of children.

The soon-to-be-opened Our Lady of Guadalupe Home for Girls shares similar objectives, but may be more open to assisting girls in crisis or "distress" on a limited basis. They expect to reserve two of their twelve residence spaces for such circumstances:

**The Mission/Philosophy of the Home is:**

- To create a caring environment
- To facilitate reunification (if at all possible) with family or independent living
- To educate both residents and family

It is obvious that there needs to be different solutions for different children and families. All of the NGOs stated that they understand that providing for street children or dysfunctional families cannot or ought not to be done by the Government alone. **However, to provide more effective service NGOs would like more government help than they now receive. Increased subventions or resource assistance would be welcomed by all. Some specific other needs expressed include:**

- The director of the Bread of Life Home indicated that their greatest need is to have access to Counseling services – e.g. a child psychiatrist - for the children.
- The Salvation Army would like Government assistance – resources and increased involvement in getting the National Children's Home project started.
- The ECWI would like to secure government lands in Diamond to build a Centre focusing on pre-school, youth, and family life. A previous promise fell through.
- Families in Diamond would like the Family Affairs Division to help with the children they have taken in. Also to work with those who have not got the means themselves to send their children to school or feed them properly.

**Rehabilitation and reintegration**

For purposes of the study, **rehabilitation** refers to efforts and activities to care for street or vulnerable children away from their homes; maximizing their ability to function, interact and socialize with peers, care-givers and other adults in a protective and caring environment. **Re-integration** speaks to the process of enabling the children to return to their family homes; maximizing the abilities of both children and parent(s) to co-exist in a home that is protective, caring and functioning well.

Perspectives of many services providers and most current literature recognize that children belong in their own homes with their own families. Thus the study found that in most – if not all -institutions or situations where rehabilitation is the offered service, re-integration into a well-functioning family (preferably the natural family) is the ultimate goal. The study found that most children would have liked and longed for such a goal, although at this point in time, comfort and care were not to be found in their own homes. The focus group at LLBTS told that the boys were happy there. Yet one staffer describes the children’s needs as follows:

***Int:** If you think of children who might be on the street. What kinds of needs would they have?*

***LL:** First and foremost, I think these children have the need of parental guidance. That is one. Because the parents – although they might be there, but not of the standard who cares. It’s like this, you sleep in a house, but I can go my way & you go yours. .... But basically these children here, I see they need the parental support. Love that parents can give, that children should get. ....You can actually see that is what they lack when you are interacting with them. They will come and hug you. That is what they want. That is what they are created for. Sometimes you are doing something else, and you have to stop, Sometimes I lock my door and they come knocking on it & I have to open it. And we sit down and talk and so, because that is what they want. That is what the children want. **No institution can really fill that need...No matter how you try... To a certain extent.***

Additionally, an excerpt from a now 22 year old who once found refuge in a home and ended up assisting for many years, speaks to the issue of **reintegration vs. institutionalization**. She sees the Home as a place of refuge and hope, but not really a home.

*“This is a home for children, yet it’s quite hard to run efficiently, all children have different problems trying to cope or live, no proper counselling programme, not enough financial support, not enough praise to successfully encourage healthier lifestyles for these children. Hence it is a place of refuge for those who are determined to live for better. It is still a place where there’s hope.”*

These sentiments with regards to the re-integration of children were expressed with great frequency by both NGO and Governmental informants. Many, especially among the Government establishments, expressed the opinion that parents should be MADE to accept responsibility for their children. Will forced reintegration work? By itself, most probably not. However, with continuous parental education and social support systems,

it is thought that many children and families can be helped to function in an environment conducive to care and growth.

Law enforcement practices (e.g. police) appear to focus on finding the parents in order for them to take responsibility for their offending child, but they do not appear to have the capacity to look into the circumstances of the home. The Family Court takes that responsibility further and in their investigative capacity, appears to address some of the family complexities – not without resistance from parents. Their Group Support Outreach Programme attempts to raise the boys’ self-worth and challenge them to reach within themselves.

Needless to say, some parents may not have the capacity or ability to care for their children. **Hence the need for caring institutions, social and protective services that fully understand the characteristics and ramifications of dysfunctional families, and have a compassionate desire to compensate for the well-being of the child.**

NGOs - including churches and individuals, are making creditable efforts at keeping families together and reintegrating those children having difficulty staying within the family confines. However, insufficient resources limit their effectiveness. It therefore **behooves the government to work in partnership by giving recognition and support to NGO involvement in service delivery.**

It is also commendable to see the number of individuals – themselves with very little resources who willingly take on the responsibility of caring for the children of mothers who are reneging on their responsibilities. We saw this in Diamond and in other areas. Greater monitoring and support in these situations could be provided by the government services e.g. Family Affairs. **A more structured foster care system – perhaps with elements of possible reintegrating families would be valuable.**

Studies done by the Caribbean Child Support Initiative on child rearing in the Caribbean have some interesting comments on the issue of children being moved from one home to another – one caregiver to another. Such conclusions strengthen the case for reintegration back into original homes for street and vulnerable children.

Caution is urged in cases where the absence of one or other parent through, migration, illness, incarceration, substance abuse or other causes the “shifting” of children from their home or from one location/household to another. Such situations provide the proverbial “red flags”. Despite assumptions that the child may be better off through better care and ownership of material things, recent research challenges such assumptions claiming that the silent psychological and social pain brought about by feeling of neglect, abandonment, and loss of “mother love”, may be quite harmful to the relocated children. In addition there is often little monitoring of the lives and new circumstances of these children which may be overburdened by the new household chores and demands.

### # 3 ATTITUDES TOWARDS PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings from the service providers data acknowledged current efforts by both government and non-governmental organizations. The strategic plan process must now examine the strengths and weaknesses of the existing services in order to

- a) “provide the mechanisms for facilitating the reduction of the number of children taking to the streets” and
- b) devise “ways of integrating and restoring children to acceptable ways of society”.<sup>11</sup>

Almost as a sequel to issues of reintegration and rehabilitation of vulnerable and “high risk” children, the study attempted to look at various attitudes towards programme implementation and recommendations of Service Providers. These will be factored into the initial stages of the **Strategic Plan** and **Pastoral Programme** to be developed in the next phase of this study.

Three questions on the Service providers Checklist solicited information in these areas – specifically focusing on Street Children:

- a. Recommendations for rehabilitation: Thoughts on re-integration and institutionalization*
- b. Attempts at addressing Street Children (executed or heard of)*
- c. Challenges removing children (experienced and forecast)*

As indicated previously, several non-governmental organizations initially indicated definitively that their programmes were not geared to street children. Almost 100% of NGOs felt that the government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines must have the main responsibility. Their responses are included in the section on recommendation(Box # 7).

As researchers probed further, findings revealed that the Churches and individuals were those with the greatest flexibility to attempt to directly address the basic needs of street children in terms of food, clothing and caring. Shelter was the most challenging. Reintegration into the children’s own homes was invariably the goal of all efforts.

In many instances there was a sense that current efforts were cosmetic and temporary. Children are able to go to Soup Kitchens or the Salvation Army who may waive the lunch fee; even the KFC and other restaurants may offer left-overs, but where do the children

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<sup>11</sup> Terms of Reference Re: Survey of Street Children , pg.1

go after that? Other NGO institutions have specific clientele e.g. HIV/AIDS or home for girls, but all with limited space and resources.

**The Roman Catholic Church** is committed to helping vulnerable children – on a personal and individual level, and in providing two institutions – one expected to be open soon as a home for girls “in distress”. However, even as they prepare to open the Our Lady of Guadalupe Home for Girls, their position is similar to the NCRC; that re-integration should be the ultimate goal and service providers must find a way to facilitate this through counseling with parents. The Director is not deterred by the fact that these parents often do not show an interest, but is tailoring her programme to seek/reach out to the parents.

**The Evangelical Church of the West Indies** tends to work with a Family focus in the Diamond area. Hence the desire to build a Centre for children and families to be served and counseled in one location. The plans range from pre-school to skills development and adult education for youth and adults.

**Several individuals** – known and unknown – continue to carry the weight of caring for other persons’ children in their homes – with varying degrees of “success”. Examples of these were heard in the Interactive radio programme on Street children. One woman spoke sadly of a young boy she took home from the street. He lived with her for about a year. She and the Randy’s Supermarket owner tried to rehabilitate him. The latter gave him a job and at one point a home. Today that young man now in his early twenties can still be found sleeping day or night under Y deLima’s – strung out on drugs. That same woman also cited some stories of “success”, where the child remained with her and progressed in life and livelihood.

The **Government Organizations** invariably had specific recommendations and comments in responding to the three questions relating to rehabilitation:

- a. *Recommendations for rehabilitation: Thoughts on re-integration and institutionalization*
- b. *Attempts at addressing Street Children (executed or heard of)*
- c. *Challenges removing children (experienced and forecast)*

**The LLBTS**, appears to be working reasonably well in terms of providing a comfortable home for deviant, abandoned and neglected boys. The ultimate goal is reintegration with the families after two years. The real challenge is to motivate parents to attend the parenting programmes which are critical in any efforts at reintegration and in enabling certain basic changes in parenting patterns that will create a more healthy home environment for all who live there – including the child who was taken off the street or neglected or abused in many ways.

Many government sponsored programmes or activities are aimed at working with children and/or parents to develop a sense of maturity, well-being, healthy interpersonal relationships and close bonding between parent and child.

## 1- 6 RECOMMENDATIONS

This Section on **Recommendations** includes those coming out of the findings and analysis of the survey of service providers.

**Non-governmental Organizations** expressed that the government must bear primary responsibility for dealing with vulnerable/ street children and dysfunctional families. They recognize that the government cannot do it alone and are quite prepared to continue doing their part, but would like more recognition and support as **partners in service delivery** to this critical component of nation building.

### Box 7

**NGO recommendations falling under the government's role and responsibilities are summarized as follows:**

- Build more **institutions** to house high-risk children.
- Provide short term aide through a **drop-in centre** – many children did not want to conform to the rules and regulations of an institution.
- Ultimately endeavour to re-integrate children into their own homes, by **counseling and effective parent programmes.**
- Provide **economic relief** through jobs for parents.
- Be more **responsive to families** in social and economic turmoil
- Have a more **caring attitude** towards the children and mothers in their service delivery
- Enforce **compulsory education** to ensure that all children are at school.
- Provide the plethora of teacher-learner, financial and social stimuli to ensure that children can be schooled effectively.
- Help parents to be more accountable and responsible for their children.
- Streamline the care of children depending on and appropriate to circumstances as far as is possible. Street or vulnerable children are not a homogenous group.

### Governmental Service Providers

The following identifies some of the on-going or recommended programs within governmental organizations interviewed. They also highlighted / recommended areas of need that will better enable re-integration of children into their families. This scan is

important for devising a strategic plan and for developing a pastoral programme that will improve the lives and life-chances of vulnerable children:

### **1. SVG Police:**

- Needs and Recommendations:
- A detention home for Juveniles and genuine street children. They should not be kept with hardened criminals
- A police social services system to compliment the FAD.
- Greater focus on community policing.
- The police officer recently assigned to the Ministry of Education needs to be very involved in mechanisms that ensure that every child is in school as expected.
- Active and urgent resuscitation of the **Police Service Clubs**

### **2. National Crime Prevention Commission**

- Break down communities into small zones. Invite parents to come together. Involve Health Clinics. Models for older children
- NCPC has a Community School-based Programme to educate on crime protection and prevention. They attend school assemblies; meet with classes that have the greatest problems; as is necessary they talk with individual students. The Police Officer assigned to the Ministry of Education is involved.
- Set up Neighbourhood watches that look out for children and the elderly.

### **3. Family Affairs Division (FAD)**

- The department is still currently lobbying for **legal clout** to ‘authorize’ some of their activities especially where the removal of children from their homes is concerned. Currently, they are not authorized by law to do so. In practice however, this has been done on many occasions, and the department has never been challenged in court. Public censure helps where the ‘lack of authority’ exists.
- Placements in the foster care programme were successful only for a short time. Some children returned to the streets. A proper and more dynamic system of foster care needs to be instituted.
- The unwillingness of some street children to stay in a home/institution due to an affinity for the street, remains a challenge to the FAD
- The FAD needs to do more home visits and to provide greater home support – financial, social, emotional and economic.
- Provide TV and more radio programs on Parenting

## **Internally:**

The FAD needs

- To improve record keeping; documentation; training;
- To review /implement / enforce procedures;
- To develop/secure/use proper procedure manuals and working systems with checks and balances.

In assessing the magnitude and causes of the problem the FAD focus requires efforts to reach and empower persons to become better parents and to make better choices in the interest of their children and families.

## **Other Family Services Issues Observed**

- Services and procedures need clear structures
- Relations with police very informal – standard procedures are required.
- Operational manuals were not found
- Foster Care Informal – system requires formalization to include monitoring, support and required specific assistance.
- Documentation & Reporting – implementation required.
- No documentation/statistics on Street Children – implementation needed.
- Tighter systems for the monitoring and assessing of probation officers and case workers.
- A review of Child Legislation

## **4. Family Court**

- Need to set up a place for Juveniles – including girls.
- Juvenile Offenders should not be placed at Liberty Lodge.
- Parents need education for children to remain at home.
- Mothers are struggling – father is not there
- Use ante-natal programmes to reach mothers
- Review Public Assistance Plan /Act/Practices
- Police need to better understand their role in helping families.
- Juvenile Offenders invariably come from dysfunctional homes – work must start there if the boys are to be reintegrated into the family.
- The Probation Outreach Support programme can be a valuable tool for helping children and youth to understand and deal with their home situations: : The groups meet three days a week and often longer than the one hour prescribed.
- Youth who can't deal with home situations tend to drift from homes towards one another.
- Suggestion: Children are born healthy. Hospital should spot situations where healthy children are going to unhealthy homes and alert the FAD immediately for monitoring and follow-up.
- Train and sensitize social and health workers to recognize problems and provide early interventions – counseling and material help.

**Education and Health** are among other governmental offices that are crucial players in preventing, addressing and resolving issues surrounding street children. **The study has shown the place of education and the fact that many children are being deprived – whether by choice or not, this must be addressed.** Health clinics and hospitals play a vital role in the birth and lives of families. They will have an important role in strategic solutions.

**Other Recommendations coming out of the Study include:**

1. Food Vouchers for children
2. A dedicated **hotline** for children in distress
3. A Drop-In Centre where children may get a meal, counseling or simply talk with an adult; perhaps spend a night
4. Big Brother, Big Sister Programmes.
5. Private Sector God-parents programmes – corporations adopting a child providing financial assistance, emotional support, internship training.
6. Placing certain controls on parents. Once a person has a young child a person must be registered and has to attend classes or something to instill certain values in the parents.
7. The need for effective early childhood interventions – at home and in pre-schools.
8. The Roving Caregivers Programme operating in Barrouallie, Byera and Sandy Bay is a home-based stimulation programme for birth to three year-olds and their parents that is worth looking at as a model for starting prevention very early.

## 1-7 CONCLUSION

The plight of children in St. Vincent and the Grenadines is an issue of grave concern. The study showed that although few children may see or use the streets as a place of abode – as apparently was the case not too many years previously – many children spend more time on the streets than in any place of permanency. The study represents a sampling of the situation of the country as a whole. Undoubtedly, different geographic locations or areas will have different responses. Many other service providers, churches and communities are making significant contributions to the problem of street and vulnerable children. Nevertheless, the conclusion is that the samplings have indicated that the issue of vulnerable children across St. Vincent and the Grenadines needs to be addressed with a sense of urgency.

Issues of the **rehabilitation** of children are central to the study. As expressed in the vision of the NCRC, the findings point to **reintegration** as the goal of all service providers. **Reintegration** must appropriately address conditions of poor parenting and the dysfunctional elements within the homes of children who are unable to remain comfortably/safely there. As a result they spend more time on the streets or away from home.

Recognizing the non-functioning state of some families, and the fact of resistance of some children to reintegration, considerations need to be given to short or medium term measures of temporary care, protection and shelter. Thus **institutionalization or fostering** may be options in those cases where immediate reintegration requires longer-term work with both child and parent.

Concurrently, within the context of the larger family problems, lie some significant issues that require urgent and immediate attention.

1. Social Services/Family Affairs Division may wish to follow up immediately on families e.g. in Layou. Fieldworkers found **conditions of dire need** where children as young as six years old could not be sent to school.
2. Social Services/Family Affairs Division need to investigate issues of children not having **adequate nutrition** or sufficient to eat in their homes, or children on the streets “scrunting” for something to eat.
3. The Ministry of Education might attempt to monitor **absenteeism** from school. The reasons expressed need to be examined quickly and remedies found. (12 out of 32 children in the Street Children findings)
4. Education and social services need to investigate **non-attendance** at school by children of compulsory school age. This issue raises the practice of expulsion and transfers from school (twenty (20) children in the Street Children Findings)

The literature cautions with regards to the need to “listen” to the children. The analysis of the street children data advises: *“In general, aspirations among the children interviewed were high and this is an important characteristic of end-users to any Pastoral Care Programme. The internal motivation and ambition displayed by the children will enhance the impact of any remedial programme undertaken.”*

The Private Sector is one component of the society that was not tapped into. Even as all informants suggest that much more needs to be done by government and non-government organizations in order to make possible the general goal of re-integrating into healthy functioning homes, the role of the Private Sector must also be explored. The KMPS has been involving that sector in their efforts, and suggests that this is a Sector that can be successfully co-opted into a system of collaboration, especially as they too will be beneficiaries of a more productive youth and society on the whole.

Within this discourse on rehabilitation, reintegration and institutionalization decisions / actions may be guided by a caution from the Guidelines previously cited from “Guidelines for working with street children by Judith Ennew.”<sup>12</sup>

*“However, children deserve help that is appropriate to their own individual surroundings and situation. They deserve solutions that will be long-lasting, that will not end if funding fails.”*

**Subsequent activities to the study process includes:**

- a) The organization of a wider forum for dissemination and input into the next steps.
- b) The development of a strategic plan to manage street children (Terms of Reference)
- c) Make recommendations for a comprehensive pastoral programme for street children. (Terms of Reference)

The work will continue in collaboration with and direction from the National Committee on the Rights of the Child. Additional reporting covering the above activities will be attached to this report.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://tilz.tearfund.org/Publications/Footsteps+21-30/Footsteps+28/Guidelines+for+working+with+street+children.htm>, ENREW, Judith, Guidelines for Working with Street Children.

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**CHECKLIST FOR INTERVIEWS WITH SERVICE PROVIDERS–  
INCLUDING CHURCHES**

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Person Interviewed: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number (w) : \_\_\_\_\_ cell \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Best time to call: \_\_\_\_\_

**Objectives of Interview:**

To determine

1. Best methods of establishing contact with Street Children \_\_\_\_\_
2. Best methods of establishing contact in terms of priority or frequency \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Best methods of building trust \_\_\_\_\_
4. Services currently provided \_\_\_\_\_
5. What worked; what was not as successful \_\_\_\_\_
6. What incentives are helpful – meals; money; treats; etc. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Organization's or Individual's Perception of causes and needs \_\_\_\_\_
8. Similarities or commonalities re reasons/causes why children take to  
the streets. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Frequent locations for encountering SC \_\_\_\_\_
10. Estimated numbers in any particular area \_\_\_\_\_
11. References for gatekeepers – SC who may assist in the research. \_\_\_\_\_
12. Recommendations to address the needs of SC \_\_\_\_\_

**RESPONSE AREAS FOR STREET CHILDREN INTERVIEW**

**Children**

***Characteristics***

Name

Age

Family background

- No. of people in household
- No of Siblings
- No. of Income Earners (Specify: Stable/Incidental)

Education: Level of schooling

Community of Origin ... Usual place of abode/trade (fixed or mobile)

Aspirations

***Causes***

- Why they initially came
- Why they remain
- Age at turning to street
- Willingness to leave
- Parental Knowledge
- Efforts to reunite with household and by whom
- Any existing ties to home

***Experiences/Conditions***

Support network/group – (Specify: on or off streets original home or other)

Access to hygiene facilities

Means of obtaining food

Income activities (if any) or method of livelihood

Sleep on the street (Specify: fixed or mobile location)

Any other activities undertaken on the street

Exposure to risky activities (Level of risk)

Prostitution

Drugs (Using or selling)

Abuse (Sexual, physical)

Violent activities

Stealing/ Begging

***Perception of Needs***

- Current situation adequate
- Changes they would like

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STREET CHILDREN**

*(Adapted from MY Community Our Earth Project -  
Wolmer's High School for Girls, Jamaica)*

1. Name: .....(Optional)
2. Gender: Male ..... Female .....
2. Where do you usually live? .....
3. How old are you? .....
4. How many brothers and sisters do you have? .....
5. Who do you live with? .....
6. Do your parents work? Yes..... No ..... Sometimes.....
7. How many persons live in your house? .....
8. Why are you not in school today? .....
9. How often do you attend school?  
Every day ..... Once or twice per week ..... Not often .....
10. What class are you in ? ..... Or... Last Class you were in? .....
11. What would you like to become? .....
13. What do you do when you are on the streets during the days?  
.....
14. Where do you ...
  - o Eat? .....
  - o Bathe? .....
  - o Sleep? .....
15. What do you do when you are on the streets at nights? .....
- .....

16. Do you often get hassled? ..... By whom? .....
17. What do you like most being on the street? .....  
.....
18. What do you like least being on the street? .....  
.....
19. Do you make or get money on the street? .....
20. How much? .....  
How do you make money? .....
21. When did you leave home? .....
22. Why did you leave home? .....  
.....
23. Would you like to go back home? .....
24. What don't you like about living at home? .....  
.....
25. Does your mother know where you are? .....
26. Who has tried to get you back home? .....
27. Who cares about you most – at home and on the street? .....  
.....
28. How do you feel about your current situation? .....  
.....
29. What change would you wish for? .....  
.....

(Interviewers will attempt to find out the level of risk faced by the child on the street)

***Thank You for helping with this Research. We hope it will eventually assist Street Children***

**Ethical and Consent Agreement for Interviewing and Interacting with street children during the study of Street Children authorized by the Minister of National Mobilization, Social Development etc.**

Engaging in social research directly involving street children requires the setting of certain ethical principles despite the anomalies of not receiving parental consent and of protecting the confidentiality and rights of children in such vulnerable circumstances.

**Three requirements are critical:**

1. Clearly advising the children of the purpose of the interview. What the researcher is doing and why. That is... the purpose and objectives of the study.
2. Obtaining the consent of the child for any further interaction
3. Obtaining clear consent for recording the interview or interaction as it takes place.

*Consent may be verbal, but it must be sought and received. The integrity and competence of the researchers are critical.*

**Process for Interviewers and field workers interacting with Street Children**

1. Briefly state who you are and that the project has been authorized by the Ministry of Social Development. If requested, you may give my contact numbers 456-1196 (fixed line) 455-9415 ©. At your discretion, you may give your numbers.
2. Explain that the National Committee on the Rights of the Child & the Ministry of Social Development is concerned that every child in St. Vincent receives the basic rights of
  - a) Being treated with equality
  - b) being loved and cared for by their parents or guardians
  - c) adequate food, housing / shelter, sanitation, health care, protection and education
  - d) expressing their own opinions and views on any issue.
3. The Committee/government recognizes that there may be children who live on the street and are not receiving the basic rights of care and protection. They need to know the extent of this concern. That is - How many children, where they are and what are their needs.
4. Explain that if they prefer, we will only take their first names – or no name. However, they may need to be located later, for any programmes or solutions coming out of the suggestions of their experiences. Their names will be treated with confidentiality. However, we request that they try to make themselves

available for any programmes of assistance that may become available as a result of the study.

5. Explain that the reports of the Study given to the government will present collaborative information. No names will be quoted. Confidentiality in terms of information provided cannot be guaranteed, but will be reported without names or identification.
6. The Children need not answer any questions to which they do not wish to respond.
7. If tape recorders are used, **absolute permission must be given by the child/children.**
8. The Children must not be forced to participate. Stress the voluntary nature of participation.
9. Incentives – of food, a little money or other appropriate gift may be offered.

**Consent Form – if necessary.**

I understand the purpose of the Study of Street Children in St. Vincent is to find out the extent of the problem, and to develop a programme to help children in need of shelter, care and protection. I consent/agree to participate as much as I want. I know that the information will be put together in a report to the Ministry of Social Development. My full name is not to be used. / My full name may be used. / My first name may be used.

Signed .....

Date : .....

**FIELD WORKERS SCHEDULES  
SITE VISITS COMPLETED**

<b>AREA</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>DATE/TIME</b>	
KINGSTOWN	Bottom Town	February 11 5:30 -6:30 p.m.	
	House of Hope	February	
	Paul's Avenue	February	
	Market/Tokyo	February	
	KFC Outlets	January	
	Kingstown		Feb 4: 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
			Feb 8 : 6:30 -9:30 p.m.
	Kingstown / Roseau	Feb 9: 11:00 p.m.– 12:30 a.m.	
	Kingstown	February 4 8:00 – 9:00 p.m.	
	Salvation Army /Kingstown	February 6 9:15 – 10:15 a.m.	
	Long Wall	6:00 – 7:00 p.m.	
	Central Police Station	February 6 10:30 – 11:00 a.m.	
	Marion House	February 7 11:00 -11:30 a.m.	
	Kingstown	February 7 6:00 -7:00 p.m.	
	Kingstown	Feb 7 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.	
	Kingstown / Little Tokyo	Sat Feb 9 <sup>th</sup> 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.	
Cane Garden/ SionHill	February 12 6:00-7:00p.m.		
Little Tokyo Back Street	February 14 12:00 a.m. – 1:00p.m.		
Schools	Thomas Saunders Secondary	February 20 2:30 -3:00 p.m.	
	Intermediate High School	February 21 1:30 – 2:15 p.m.	
	Kingstown Preparatory School	February 26 9:30 – 10:00 a.m.	
	K/town Govt School (Stoney Ground)	March 4 <sup>th</sup>	
	C.W. Prescod	February 26 & 28	

<b>AREA</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>DATE/TIME</b>
	Primary	10:15 – 10:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m. – 12:15p.m.
KINGSTOWN SCHOOLS	Kingstown Anglican School	February 26 12:noon – 1:00 p.m.
	Multi-purpose Training Centre	4 vists
	Liberty Lodge Boys Training Centre	Jan 25 4:30 p.m. Focus Groups (2)
	JP Eustace Sec	February 28 1:00 – 1:45 p.m.
	Emmanuel High School Kingstown	
SION HILL	Sion Hill	February 4 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
	Walveroo	February 9 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.
	Sion Hill Government School	March 4
	Walvaroo	March 6 <sup>th</sup> 3:15pm – 3:35pm
	Roseau	March 8 <sup>th</sup> 10:10am – 12:20pm
DIAMOND	Community	Feb 14
	Community	March 1
	Stubbs Police	February 26
CALLIAQUA ARNOS VALE	Calliaqua	February Mon 4 <sup>th</sup> ; Fri 8 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday 12; Thurs 14 Feb 18, 19, 20 & 21 Feb 22, 24, 26, 27, 28 Feb 28 & 29 – 4:40 -6:30 p.m. Mar 1
	Pole Yard	Sun Feb 3 4:30 – 6:00 p.m.
	Glen	Feb 10 & 13 <sup>th</sup> Feb 16 <sup>th</sup> & 17 Feb 23 & 24 Mar 2 <sup>nd</sup> – all 5-7 p.m.
	Calliaqua Anglican School	Tue 12 <sup>th</sup>
		Feb 26 – 1:00 -2:00p.m.
	Belmont	Feb 26:

<b>AREA</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>DATE/TIME</b>
	Government School	12:noon – 3:00 p.m.
BUCCAMENT	Buccament Primary School	Feb 20 <sup>th</sup> 11:05am – 11:45am
	Buccament Secondary	February 8
OTTLEY HALL	Ottley Hall	Feb 28 – 4:30 – 7:00p.m.
	Ottley Hall / Edinboro	March 1 3:00 – 6:30 p.m.
CAMPDEN PARK	Campden Park	Feb 9
	Bethel Secondary	February 18 <sup>th</sup>
QUESTELLES	Lower Questelles	Feb 8
	Questelles Government School	February 27 11:30a.m. – 12:00 noon
	Questelles Government	February 14
LOWMANS	Lowmans Leeward Community	February 15
	Lowmans Leeward Anglican School	February 15
CLARE VALLEY	Clare Valley Primary School	February 18
	Clare Valley Community	February 18
LAYOU	Layou Community	Feb 18 – Feb 25 All day 5 days

<b>FIELD WORKERS</b>
Yasa Belmar
Harold Lewis
Collin Haynes
Shamal Connell
Rachel Beatty
Collin Haynes
Bernadette Ballantyne
Ronald Greaves (1 <sup>st</sup> phase)
Mark Bobb (voluntary)

## TERMS OF REFERENCE Survey of Street Children

### **Background**

St. Vincent and the Grenadines submitted its initial report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child in June 2002. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was particularly concerned about the lack of data on street children and the absence of a sustainable programme to address the needs of these children. Since that time, there have been isolated attempts to plan programmes for these children but these efforts proved to be futile as difficulties have been encountered in determining where these children are, the exact number of street children in the country, and what their specific needs are.

The vision of the Ministry of National Mobilisation, Social Development and Local Government is to create the impetus for St. Vincent and the Grenadines to be more responsive to the needs of children and provide safer environments in which children can be nurtured into worthwhile and productive citizens. It must be noted, therefore, that the absence of data on which evidenced-based decisions can be made, has become critical to the support and realisation of this vision. In this context, a National Survey on Street Children will elucidate and provide explanation as to the nature and extent of the Street Children phenomena, noting the specific causes for children taking to the streets and to provide advice to ensure the removal of these children from the streets and possible reintegration with families and pastoral care for their rehabilitation.

The main purposes of this survey of street children are to:

1. Acquire and analyse relevant information
2. Provide expert advice on:
  - a. the reasons why children take to the streets,
  - b. the extent and nature of the impact on the street experiences on children,
  - c. ways of integrating and restoring children to acceptable ways of society.
3. Provide the mechanisms for facilitating the reduction of the number of children taking to the street.

Currently street children are known to daily roam the streets of Kingstown and other communities. The Family Affairs Division, in an effort to organize these children, has encountered difficulties locating them and has come to recognize that they are “children of the night” as many of their activities are undertaken during that time.

The Department is unsure of the extent of the problem throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the exact number of such children wondering the

streets. Moreover, there are no conclusive answers to the question why these children take this course of action.

Although these children are seen from time to time, there is no indicator as to whether the numbers are increasing or decreasing. In this regard, a determination needs to be made regarding the extent of the presence of these children on the streets and the social and economic impact it has on the country.

### **Objectives of the Survey:**

The survey will have the following objectives to:

1. manage and implement a baseline survey of the situation of street children in the area of the Diamond Estate on the Windward side of the island to Layout on the Leeward side of the Island to determine the extent of the street children phenomenon in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.
2. prepare a report of findings from the survey data. The report will include tables of results of the survey, profiles of the children (age, gender, family background, socio-economic situation)
3. include recommendations for programming.
4. make recommendations for a comprehensive pastoral programme for these children
6. develop a strategic plan to manage street children.

### **Scope of the Survey**

The survey is to be completed by a consultant who will work with the NCRC and its affiliates from the representative organizations. The scope of work of the evaluator/consultant will include the following:

1. Develop the survey framework, design and methodology agreed upon with the NCRC team.
2. Develop the survey instrument and conduct validation of the instrument.
3. Develop the survey implementation work plan.
4. Prepare report and present the findings in a workshop to be organized for the purpose of disseminating results to the NCRC.
5. Prepare a strategic plan to address issues raised in the survey.
6. Design a pastoral programme for street children.

### **Deliverables**

The project deliverables are as follows:

1. Evaluation framework/design and implementation plan agreed with the NCRC
2. Evaluation instruments developed and validated
3. Data analysis

4. Completion of first draft of the survey report
5. Written and oral presentation of first draft of the survey report
6. Finalisation of the survey report
7. Draft strategic plan and pastoral programme to address the problems of street children
8. Written and oral presentation of 6 and 7 above.
9. Submission of final survey report, strategic plan, and pastoral programme as one report.

The consultant will submit draft reports to the Permanent Secretary within the agreed time frame and revise relevant sections of the report by incorporating comments from the Ministry of National Mobilisation and the NCRC.

The consultant will also provide timely response to any additional queries or comments arising from the survey if required.

#### **Qualifications and Experience Required.**

This type of survey requires consultants with proven experience on the design and implementation of baseline surveys. Knowledge of survey and evaluation techniques in addition to child-related studies is desirable. Prior evaluation experience will be an asset.

#### **Reporting Timeframe**

The consultant will submit through the Permanent Secretary to the NCRC, a work-plan within one week of the award of contact. The work-plan should show a calendar of specified activities, timeframe of preparation for the field work, data-entry and cleaning activities. The consultant will submit written draft reports to the NCRC through the Permanent Secretary for comments at least two (2) weeks prior to the oral presentation of draft reports.

The consultant will give one final presentation corresponding with the final written report to the Permanent Secretary, NCRC and relevant personnel. The final presentation will outline the survey process, findings and major recommendations with provision time for questions.