

***“Monitoring and Categorization of Street Children and
Creation of their Registration System”***

(Case Study)

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Executive Summary

Reasons and Purpose of the Study

Project envisaged identification of number of 'street children' in the selected localities, their categorization and situation analysis; as well as creation of information bank, formation and implementation of new reliable forms for the registration.

Design and Methodology

About 1,322 children have been interviewed and registered by application of the specially designed questionnaire and the registration form in 15 localities throughout the country. Interviews were carried on the basis of full trustfulness and voluntarism. Designed of the questionnaire allowed to stratify the obtained results by following variables: age, gender, activity and parent's occupation.

Implementing Agency

Study was carried out by the NGO 'Momavali' with the financial support of UNICEF and in close collaboration with the local government representatives.

Children's Rights Issues Addressed

Study addressed the issue of child protection. Several articles in the Convention on the Rights of the Child are intended to protect children in need. World fit for Children Calls us to protect children from all forms of abuse neglect, exploitation and violence.

Conclusions, Results, Recommendations

In total 1,322 children were studied within the scopes of the project. 64% out of those were girls and 46% were boys. 59.2% (783) of studied children were registered in different institutions but most of them continued their activities in the streets. 10.5% of registered children were orphans, 3,32 % did not have mother and 14.2% did not have father. 79% (1,046) of studied children were school-aged and more than 80% of them expressed a desire to continue the study or learn some crafts and skills.

It was concluded that there is a lack of coordination among governmental and non-governmental organizations dealing with street children. Lack of capacity was also identified as one of the problems. There is a need in social workers specializing in this particular profile. It was recommended to improve child registration system and carry out the measures of similar character on the regular basis.

Evaluation provided information which was used for updating the situation related to street children. Identified gaps and recommendations were considered for future planning and programme/project implementation.

1. Situational Analysis of the Problem

a. Causes

After the re-establishment of independence in Georgia and during the transition period, the country came face to face with a lot of acute problems. Political and social-economic problems together with the ethnic conflicts caused high level of unemployment, poverty and general social vulnerability in Georgia. As the social conditions worsened, the issue of so-called 'street children' arose. This is absolutely a new problem for our society, thus hard to solve. Most of such children are accumulated in big cities mainly in - Tbilisi. In 1996 NGO 'Children and Environment', with the assistance of the UNICEF, prepared a project on "Statistical Evaluation of the Number of Street Children in Tbilisi and Methods for their Registration". According to the data provided by this project, in those years about 900 children were registered as children with anti-social behavior; most of them were either begging or peddling to earn living. Today, the picture has changed, these children not only trade, but they steal, become prostitutes, substance and alcohol abusers.

In November-January of 2001-2002, NGO 'Momavali' (The Future) with the assistance of the UNICEF, implemented a project envisaging identification of exact number of 'street children', their categorization and situational analysis; as well as creation of informational bank, formation and implementation of new reliable forms for the registration of these children.

In the following cities of Georgia 1322 children have been questioned and registered:

Tbilisi (615 children – 46.5 %), Rustavi (13-1.0 %), Telavi (95-7.2 %), Akhmeta (13-1.0 %), Dedoplistskaro (6-0.4 %), Lagodekhi (31-2.3), Kachreti (56-4.2 %), Sagaredjo (9-0.7 %), Gori (15-1.2 %), Khashuri (5-0.3 %), Bordjomi (1-0.07 %), Akhaltsikhe (11-0.8 %), Kutaisi (42-3.1 %), Zugdidi (250-18.9 %), Poti (162-12.2 %).

The research was held together with the local governments of the above-mentioned cities, which is quite important from the point of data accuracy.

b. Reasons and Mechanisms for Children Going out into the Streets

Most of the interviewees (about 80 %) name social and financial difficulties as main reasons for their going out into the streets. They express wish to return to their families provided that the conditions improve; Hence there are cases, when the children are forced by their family members (parents, grandparents, elder siblings) to go out and earn money in any way. 276 children are below school age, thus they do not have any opinion on this issue. 429 children have left school on different levels of study (so-called dropout children). Most of these children express wish to continue studies if they have a chance to make for the missed time and return to the grade relevant to their age; some of these children would like to acquire some profession.

The fact that the children go into the streets strongly depends on the situation their parents are in. The research showed that mothers of 486 children and fathers of 345 children are unemployed; mothers of 67 children and fathers of 9 children are beggars; mothers of 127 and fathers of 43 children do petty trading in the streets. Whereabouts of mothers of 39 and fathers of 228 are unknown to their children, mothers of 108 children and fathers of 193 children have died (82 of them are orphans).

Children in the streets are: beggars – 310 (23.4%); tramps – 358 (27.1%); traders or workers – 148 (11.2%), thieves – 30 (1.2%), prostitutes – 6 (0.4%); it is possible that these activities often overlap.

Many children are begging or going around together with their parents. Some of the children say, that the reason for their tramping is adventure and have no wish to go back home.

c. Identity Documents of the Children

The research was conducted according to the new, original questionnaire, on the basis of full trustfulness and volunteerism (attachment 1). Given questionnaire includes information about actual information of the children, such as: age, gender, activity, situation and occupation of his/her parents. In the electronic version of the database there are photos of more than 800 children (photos of only those children who volunteered to take them).

d. Situation in the Shelters and Rehabilitation Centers, their Activities

There are different types of organizations: shelters, free canteens, rehabilitation centers in almost all the cities, where the research was conducted:

	City (Region)	NGO	# of Children
1		Children Shelter “Rtsmena” (Faith)	77
2	Tbilisi	Charity House	6
3		Catharsis	1
4		Reception-Distribution Center of Gldani	37
5		Gldani Orphanage for Abandoned Children	25
6		Children’s Society “Satnoeba” (Mercy)	48
7		Psychological-Social Rehabilitation Center for the Street Children “Beghurebi” (Sparrows)	38
8		“Momavlis Sakhli” (House of Future)	40
9		Music Boarding School “Lotkini”	2
10		House for the Street Children “Egrisi”	12
11		Rehabilitation Center “Lampioni”	27
12		Telavi	Charity House
13	Kachreti	Rehabilitation Center	56
14	Gori	Society “Biliki” (Path)	15
15	Khashuri	Department of Youth’s Affairs	5
16	Akhaltsikhe	Rayon Department of Social Aid	11
17	Zugdidi	Regional Committee	54
18		The Union “Nergebi” (Seedlings)	20
19		Georgian Center of Education “Egrisi”	37
20		Registration Department of Education	87
21	Poti	Free Canteen	79
22		Georgian Department of Youth’s Affairs	69
23		Rehabilitation Center	14

Children enter these institutions through various ways. For example, a child enters Kachreti Rehabilitation Center as a result of a resolution of the commission for the under-aged, or from Gldani reception distribution Center where s/he gets after the raids held by the police. The process is similar in the rehabilitation centers of the local governments. As regards the shelters founded by the Non-

Governmental Organizations, NGOs find the children or their parents and bring them in the shelters. The same structure works for the shelter of the patriarchy. Most of them represent non-governmental sector. These organizations serve 783 children (59.2 %). From the listed organizations, two (Kachreti Rehabilitation Center and “Momavlis Sakhli”) were founded by the governmental institutions, in order to deal with the problems of specially this category of children; other governmental organizations only take care of them. The role of the non-governmental sector is inestimable. They do everything to improve the conditions of the children with anti-social behavior and help them integrate into the society. As to the rehabilitation works, they mainly include psychological rehabilitation and education. Special attention is given to the children’s catering, observance of personal hygiene, examination of their health (especially control of skin and venereal diseases), and providing them with basic education. For example, “Beghurebi” is implementing a project allowing the children to get basic educational assistance in the shelter as well as in the streets. With the help of the organization, several children were taken to the elementary schools, nine received a profession.

These organizations are mainly financed by the foreign donor organizations. There are cases when some of them were funded by the local budget. For example, the Mayor’s Office of Tbilisi is financing five of such programs, but these funds are not enough to fully meet children’s needs. In addition to the financial difficulty, these organizations face many other problems: their logistics don’t satisfy the needs; their staff members are experienced people of various professions, but they lack special training.

e. Educational Activities of the Shelters and Rehabilitation Centers

One of the main directions of the rehabilitation centers and shelters is education of the children. Most of the school-aged interviewees have left school at different levels of study (429 – 32.4 %). The institutions prepare the children under their supervision to return to school, but this process does not have any system, it is based on the initiative and enthusiasm of the employees; this fact is encouraging but the problem cannot be resolved in this way. Kachreti Rehabilitation Center and “Momavlis Sakhli” are the only ones, which can provide systematic lessons to the children and ensure their official enrollment in the school. The fact, that there are no special, intensive programs or children allocation mechanisms in the schools, deters the resolution of the problem. The problem of preschool-age children also stands still – this is because, there is no systemic two way connection between the state owned kindergartens and the NGOs. Future prospects of these children are also of a big concern, since there is no mechanism allowing to continue work with these children after their return to the families.

f. Factor ensuring children’s return to the families

Most of the children (around 80 %) consider improvement of the social conditions as a necessary factor for their return to the families.

2. Number of the Children

During the research period – from November 2001 to January 2002, 1322 children were recorded and categorized in fifteen cities of Georgia.

Tbilisi (615 children – 46.5 %), Rustavi (13 - 1.0 %), Telavi (95 - 7.2 %), Akhmeta (13 - 1.0 %), Dedoplistskaro (6 - 0.4 %), Lagodekhi (31 - 2.3), Kachreti (56 - 4.2 %), Sagaredjo (9 - 0.7 %), Gori (15 - 1.2 %), Khashuri (5 - 0.3 %), Bordjomi (1 - 0.07 %), Akhaltsikhe (11 - 0.8 %), Kutaisi (42 - 3.1 %), Zugdidi (250 - 18.9 %), Poti (162 - 12.2 %).

Detailed information about the number and activities of the children and their parents is given in the tables (see attachment 2). It is also interesting that the research started in late autumn and continued through wintertime. Probability of the children in the streets during this period is relatively small compared to spring, when the holidays start and weather is more convenient for doing their “job”.

3. Comparative Analysis of the Conditions of the Children in the Shelters/Rehabilitation Centers and of Those in the Streets

59.2 % (783 children) are registered in the institutions, but many of them continue their activities in the streets, the cases of overlapping are frequent.

The children in Kachreti Rehabilitation Center (56) and “Momavlis Sakhli” (40) stay there permanently. Other institutions provide their services only during the daytime; there are some that offer their services during the night, but for the limited number of children. Above mentioned two institutions are founded as rehabilitation centers. This means that their function is to ensure children’s return to the society through efficient psychological interaction, intensive educational courses or by teaching them crafts, in the short period of time, and this way, provide their services for as many children as possible. Actually both these institutions exercise functions of the orphanage, that’s why the efficiency of implementation of the main goal decreases.

Due to the non-stable funding of the NGOs and lack of logistics, their potential is not fully used. In spite of this, they have still achieved significant result – they have obtained children’s trust; because of this factor the children feel safe and more-or-less comfortable, they learn many interesting things, learn crafts, participate in the circles according to their interest, do sports, play games, etc. But, because of the lack of professional social workers and financial difficulties, relationship with the parents is not regular, this slows down the return process of the children to the families. It is also important to consider, that in many cases the children go into the streets because of the poverty, and this is the problem, which cannot be resolved by any of the above mentioned organizations.

Majority of the children spend most of their time in the streets (even those, who get the services of the above mentioned organizations). They are occupied with different activities, but all of them have the same goal – to earn living, in many cases – not only for themselves. They are absolutely unprotected from physical or other violence; their rights are absolutely violated.

4. Categorization of Children

a. Gender

Out of the total number of the children 64 % (844) is male and 46 % (478) – female.

b. IDs

These category of children often become objects of interest for law-enforcement or caretaker bodies, but they aren’t able to identify them or provide relevant documentation for them. The research showed that 662 (42.5 %) children have no identification documents. Many of those IDs, which exist are rather suspicious, since they are based on the words of the children (except those cases, when a child is a student).

c. Orphanage and Social Orphanage

There are registered 82 children, who have neither of the parents (orphans), 26 have no mothers and 111 – no fathers.

Cases of socially orphan children are also often: 39 children don't have mothers, 228 – fathers, 2 children's mothers and 28 children's fathers are prisoners.

We have no information about mothers of 383 children and fathers of 473. If this information becomes available, the above mentioned indicators are expected to increase.

d. Activities of the Children

Children in the streets are occupied with various activities: begging – 310 (23.4%); going around – 358 (27.1%); selling or working – 148 (11.2%), stealing – 30 (1.2%), prostitution – 6 (0.4%); studying – 481 (36.5 %). Such distribution doesn't necessarily mean that these children are dedicated to only one activity, they may be involved in several different ones at the same time. For example: a child may be begging, stealing and studying at the same time. The information given in this document shows, which activities are given advantages to by the children.

4 cases of drug-addiction have been revealed but if further research is done, this number will significantly increase.

e. Special Social Circumstances

Among the conditions causing difficulties to the registered children family problems occupy the most essential place: 486 children's mothers and 345 children's fathers are unemployed and mothers of 127 and fathers of 43 are occupied with small, irregular trade. Mothers of only 70 and fathers of 84 have stable jobs. They don't receive any social aid from the government.

Another important factor is the attitude of school administration towards dropout children – they don't do anything to help children return to school. This is caused by the drawbacks in the Georgian law on the Education: according to it only 6 years of elementary study is mandatory (till 12 years old), but according to the international conventions children may be employed only from the age of 14. There is a 2-year gap, which is one more reason for the children to go into the streets. Another important issue is decrease in the number of extracurricular institutions.

5. Conclusion

The number of children with anti-social behavior is 1322. 64 % (844) of them are boys and 46 % (478) - girls. 59.2 % (783) is registered in different institutions but most of them continue their activities in the streets, overlapping is quite often. 82 of the registered are completely orphans, 26 don't have mothers, 111 – fathers.

It is remarkable that during the implementation of this project the representatives of all units (local government and local self-government bodies, patriarchy, NGOs) tried their best to help project participants.

It is also interesting that the works started in late fall and continued through the wintertime. Probability for the children to be in the streets during this period is relatively small compared to spring, when the school holidays start and the weather is more convenient to work. People in almost all regions mentioned it (the interviewers were collecting additional information about certain issues from the population).

79 % (1046) of the children are school-aged, more than 80 % of them expressed a desire to continue the study or learn some crafts and skills. One of the deterrent factors of this process is nonexistence of relevant educational programs.

The government, as well as NGOs works with this category of children, but there is no coordination, exchange of information or sharing of experience.

People who work on this problem aren't professionally retrained. Most of the children don't have IDs, Contacts with the families of these children aren't enough. There are no social workers specializing in this sphere. There is no united coordination structure.

6. Recommendations

Performed work allows us to introduce the following recommendations:

It is necessary to implement complete coordination among the NGOs, to ensure connection between them and relevant units of the local government. Due to these reasons, it is recommendable to create united coordination structure.

Special intensive educational programs should be created.

Also, there should be some short-term courses for professional education.

Training (retraining) courses for social workers should be created.

In order to update the information about the number and category of children with anti-social behavior, it is necessary to ensure regular, twice a year similar research-registration of such children.

Ministry of Education of Georgia shall be asked to prepare relevant amendment to the Georgian Law on Education.

F O R M

No _____

Last & First Name _____

Gender _____ Birth Date _____ Birth Place _____

Address of a child _____

Special marks _____

Last & First Names of Mother _____

Last & First Names of Father _____

Occupation of Father _____

Who supervises the child _____
(Parent or Guardian)

Information about the closest relatives _____
(Those who can perform responsibilities of guardian)

Current location of the child _____

Education of the child _____

Occupation of the child _____

Which factor will make the child leave the street _____

What reason will make the child return to the family _____

Additional information _____
(Does the child have official documentation)

Signature of the interviewer _____

Date _____

Location _____

Representative of Gamgeoba _____

	Tbilisi	%	Rustavi %	Tela vi	Akhmeta	Dedoplistskaro	Lagodekhi	Kachreti	Sagaredjo	Gori	Khashuri	Bordjomi	Akhaltsikhe	Kutaisi	Zugdidi	Poti																
Boy	348	56,6	11	84,6	63	67,3	8	61,1	3	50				44	78,6	5	71	7	46,7	5	100	1	100	8	72,7	29	68,5	152	60,8	101	62,3	
Girl	267	43,4	2	15,4	32	32,7	5	38,9	3	50	11	35,5	12	21,4	2	29	8	53,3						3	27,2	13	31,5	98	39,2	61	37,7	
w/ID	344	55,4	1	7,7					6	100	12	38,7	56	100			15	100							7	16,8	97	38,8	118	72,8		
no ID	271	44,6	12	92,3							19	61,3				7	100			5	100	1	100			35	83,2	153	61,2	43	27,2	
Orphan	16	2,6	1	7,7	1	1,1								8	14,3			1	6,6					11	100			12	4,8	32	19	
no Mother	16	2,6									1	3,3	1	1,9			4	26,7								1	2,3	3	1,2			
no Father	66	10,7	4	30,1										6	11,4											11	27,1	13	4,1	11	7,4	
Tramp	110	17,7			34	35,2			6	100	31	100				7	100											143	57,2	23	14,2	
Beggar	208	33,8	3	23,1																5	100	1	100			28	66	64	25,6	6	3,7	
Sells	127	20,6	4	30,1																					11	27,1	6	2,4				
Steals	3	0,6	3	23,1																						2	4,6	22	8,8			
Prostitute	4	0,7																							7	63,7	1	2,3	1	0,4		
Student	142	23,2	1		61	64,8								56	100													97	38,8	118	72,8	
Drug abuser	4	0,7																														
don't know	21	3,4																										4	1,6	15	9,2	
MOTHER																																
Tramp	11																										5	7				
Unemployed	333		3		14		2		3		11			26			10									31	44		29			
Beggar	65																									2						
Sells	85		8											13			4									1	16					
Works	52		1		1									7												1	8					
Deceased	32		1		1									9			1							11		1	15		32			
Prisoner	2													1																		
doesn't have	20						6		3							2											3		5			
don't know	16				79		5				19					5					5					1	157		96			
FATHER																																
Tramp	4																															
Unemployed	221		5		16		2		6		17			19		2	4									16	38		5			
Beggar	9																															
Sells	35													5												1	2					
Works	37		1		14		10							16			3									6						
Criminal	20													1			1											4		2		
Deceased	82		5		1		1							14			4						11		11		25		43			
don't have	180		1		1									1			3									4	24		14			
don't know	27				63						14					5					5					4	157		98			