

**AREA: Care and support of women and children**

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**caresupETHIOPIA streetchildren**

# **CHILDREN WORKING ON THE STREETS OF ETHIOPIA**

**A UNICEF REPORT**



**unicef**

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## **FORWARD**

The problem of street children and mothers has become a pressing problem in Ethiopia. A 1993 study<sup>1</sup> estimated the number of street children in Addis Ababa alone to be 40,000, of which approximately 10,000 are children working and living in the streets with no care or support. The remaining 75% or 30,000 are children on the streets who earn their living in the streets and go home to their families, relatives or friends. The majority of these children are living in conditions of severe deprivation which place them at both physical and psychological risk. Inadequate nutrition, long working hours and exposure to aversive weather conditions and physical abuse while on the street, endanger their development. The severity of the harsh living conditions is often amplified for young girls who face sexual abuse by adults, rape, unwanted pregnancy and early motherhood.

The current UNICEF Ethiopia street children programme is linked to the general development of the country, the five year development plan and the Social Welfare Policy of the Ethiopian government and was developed partly out of the study mentioned above. The program is linked to the rehabilitation efforts and plans of the Regional government and non-governmental agencies and is harmonized with NGOs working with children and mothers in difficult circumstances. The programme focuses on six towns, including Addis Ababa, Nazareth, Sheshamene, Awassa, Combulcha, Dessie, and Bahir Dar and highlights the multi-sector needs of children and women living on the streets. It addresses the provision of basic shelter, food and health services through the establishment of a network of family and community based organizations and linkages with the private sector local authorities, schools, public welfare associations and religious institutions.

It was decided that a rapid assessment would strengthen these efforts and maximize ongoing partnerships with implementing partners in the process by updating the existing data in five towns previously assessed and expand the research to an additional two towns. Background documents were provided and additional discussions were undertaken with Government counterparts, the ILO and current implementing partners to confirm the selection of these towns for the research. Discussions confirmed that although previous studies were carried out for the purpose of monitoring and evaluating the situation of street children and actually led to the development of the current street children programming, more current information is required to ensure appropriate programming in the future.

The Rapid Assessment is based on qualitative research that can be supported by elements of quantitative research. The qualitative information is obtained through open-ended interviews with working children and those connected with them (parents, teachers, outreach workers etc.). The quantitative data will be gathered through the efforts of the Research Team and questionnaires distributed among field workers of

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<sup>1</sup> “Study on Street Children in Four Selected Towns of Ethiopia,” Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, UNICEF, Ethiopia, University College Cork, Ireland, 1993.

outreach programmes in the research area(s). The methodology used for the research will be based on the ILO/UNICEF Rapid Assessment format.

Ethiopia is only one of seven countries to participate in the regional project, “The Most Intolerable Forms of Child Labour in Eastern and Southern Africa: A Proposal for Assessment, Analysis and Action”. It is a collaborative effort reflecting ongoing discussions between the UNICEF Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa (ESARO) and the Western and Central Africa Regional Office (WCARO). It was designed to address child labour through several phases of regional technical assistance. Firstly, the project would create a comprehensive approach to child labour among staff and counterparts through the development of qualitative research capacity, within the format of the UNICEF-ILO Rapid Assessment Field Manual. Secondly, it would strengthen related child protection programming efforts by providing regional assistance for analysis and advocacy of child labour issues at the national and local levels, and thirdly, it would ensure coordination within existing UNICEF country programmes for child labour interventions while reflecting the overall regional programming priority of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

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## Background

Ethiopia is located in eastern Africa. To the north it is bordered by Eritrea, to the east by Somalia and Djibouti, to the south by Kenya, and to the west Sudan. Ethiopia encompasses 1,112,000 square kilometers and has varied landscapes including rugged highlands, dense forests, and hot lowland plains. Depending on the elevation, the average temperature varies from 55 degrees F to 73 degrees F (McCann, 1996).

The 1994 census estimated the total population of Ethiopia to be 54,939,000, of which 27,361,000 were female. About 48.6% of the population is below the age of 15. The vast majority of the population (85%) lives in the rural areas, with a heavy concentration in the central highlands. The major economic activity is farming. Agriculture constitutes about 40% of Ethiopia's Gross Domestic Product and 90% of all export incomes, with coffee the leading export product (McCann, 1996).

By any basic indicator of development, Ethiopia falls under the list of the most underdeveloped countries. The per capita GNP is 100 USD, the total fertility rate stands at 7.0. UNICEF (1998). The figure for infant mortality rate is 113/1000, while the ratio of maternal mortality rate is 1400/100,000. Forty nine percent of the boys and 46% of the girls under 5 are underweight. The immunization coverage for the year 1999 for three antigens, BCG, DPT<sub>3</sub>, and Measles was, 38.41% (Health and Health Indicators, 1999). It is only 91% of the urban and 19% of the rural population that has access to safe water. Looking at the general picture of education, the primary gross enrollment for boys is 39%, while it goes down to 24% for girls. This figures decrease when we look at the gross enrollment at secondary school: 12% for boys and 10% for girls. The percentage of children reaching grade 5 is only 51 (UNICEF 1998).

Ethiopian culture, similar to its African neighbors, dictates a strong child work ethic, both in rural and urban areas. In rural areas there is no concept of early and late childhood; children are given some responsibility at the age of five or six. At this age, they shoo birds and baboons off and herd cattle with older siblings. As they grow older, they are trained in the culturally appropriate sex roles: girls go into the kitchen to help their mothers and boys go out to the field for outdoor work like herding the cattle and helping their fathers with the farm work. Similarly, in the city children, especially those from families of lower socio-economic statuses engage in different jobs to help with the

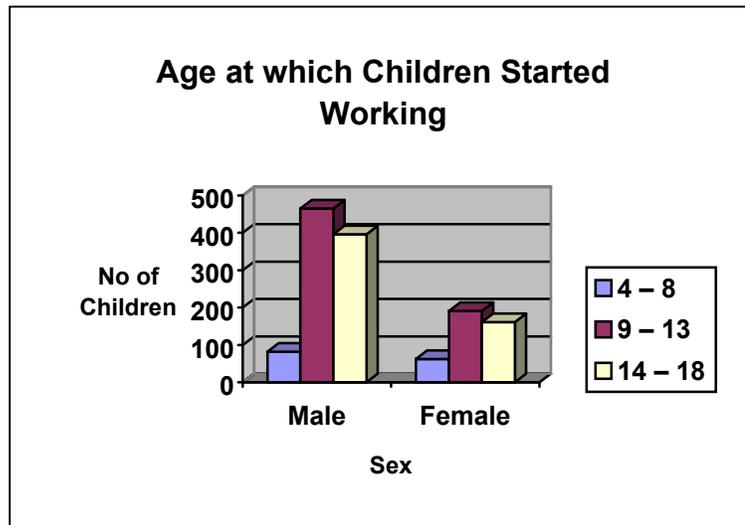
household chores and generate incomes to support their families, feed and cloth themselves and pay their school fees. Often the jobs these children undertake are tiring and risky both physically and psychologically.

The combination of poverty and strong work requirements for children make a conducive environment for the economic exploitation of Ethiopian children. One manifestation of child labor in the cities and major towns is streetism. Different groups of children are observed on the streets of Addis and other major cities. These include those who beg from pedestrians and drivers on sidewalks and at traffic lights: those who sit in the corners or walk on the streets undertaking different types of jobs such as shoe shining, street vending, providing change to taxi drivers, selling snacks, washing and watching cars, and carrying goods. Depending on the kind of jobs available in the city, children also engage in other types of jobs. For example, in Nazareth there are several warehouses where haricot beans and wild gum are stored for future export. In those areas where the warehouses are found many children, along with their parents, are engaged in chaffing and sorting the export items. Similarly, in Awassa there are a lot of children engaged in fish cleaning on the shore of Lake Awassa. In addition to children who are working on the streets and other open and visible areas a significant number of children, especially females work as domestics.

Though Ethiopia has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the problem of child labor is widely observed. This might be related to several factors like culture, level of economic development and modernization. There is no sufficient information about child labor in terms of both quantitative and descriptive data. The necessity of qualitative and quantitative studies are realized when GOs, NGOs and International Organizations plan an intervention programs to mitigate the problems of children working on the streets as well as those who undertake various types of jobs at homes. Accordingly, this study or Rapid Assessment is sponsored by UNICEF Regional Office and carried out with the aim of providing information that will help in designing a program that address some problems of children working on the street to better provide them access to education.

## Summary of Findings

The current assessment reveals that child labor is a serious problem in Ethiopia. It calls for immediate attention and concerted action from the government, NOG's, and International Organizations. More than 75% of the working children in this study are within the age range of 9 and 13.



These children have responsibilities to support families as well as take care of themselves. They work for long hours in increment weather without opportunities to fully participate in their rights to education, health care, play and recreation, and especially the right to be protected from economic exploitation.

There are several factors that pushed these children to work.

- Poverty: Many of the children come from female-headed households. They do not have access to nutritious food or proper clothes. They have extreme difficulty paying school fees. They work because a parent (parents) and siblings or older siblings are unemployed.
- Cultures, for various reasons, that tolerate child labor,
- Broken families,
- Death of parents,
- Large family size and as a result, inability to support the family
- Early marriage, especially in the cases of female domestics and prostitutes.

The children are working in various activities. There are some jobs which only male children are engaged and jobs which female children are exclusively engaged. For

example, children working as shoe shiners are entirely boys, and petty traders are mostly females. The following are jobs children typically undertake:

- Shoe shinning
- Street vending/peddling
- Selling bread and other snacks
- Washing and watching cars
- Mechanics
- Petty trading
- Cashier on taxi vans
- Providing changes to taxi drivers
- Housemaids or boys
- Porters
- Working in warehouses sorting export items
- Working as assistants to fishermen
- Cleaning fishes on lake shores
- Porters
- Prostitution

The children have several problems. First, and most important, they compromise healthy growth environments including education. Too many children drop out of school because they have to support themselves and their families. For some, the peak time for their work overlaps with school time. Others can not afford paying school fees, and buying school supplies and uniforms.

Children working on the streets, such as peddlers and shoe shiners, complain about the rough weather. Mornings and the rainy season are extremely cold. The heat during the afternoons and dry season is equally troublesome. The children do not have sufficient and proper clothing to suit the weather. They are often abused by older children and street gangs, their money snatched, and goods stolen.

After staying out on the streets for the whole day the children's earning is very minimal. Their earning ranges between Birr 1 to Birr 10 a day, the equivalent of USD .12 to USD 1.22. Domestic workers are paid monthly and the minimum pay is within the range of Birr 10 and 20 or USD 1.22 to USD 2.43 per month.

The children do not get sufficient and well-balanced diets. There are many that do not get 3 meals a day. Some have to share a meal between two. Many complain about health problems such as headaches, kidney problems, malaria, and blood pressure for which they never get treatment.

Aside from physical problems the children have various worries and concerns. Some of the reasons for their worries are:

- ⇒ the feeling of insecurity emanating from not making sufficient money,
- ⇒ not being educated and the prospect of unemployment
- ⇒ bleak futures,
- ⇒ the feeling they did not make enough money to feed themselves and their families, and
- ⇒ a parent or parents' health.

In Ethiopia, children working on the streets are not typically classified as the worst forms of child labour. Nonetheless, the problem of streetism is growing considerably in the country. Simultaneously, the extent of child labor is increasing due to poverty and social, economic, and political crises. Children between the age of 9 and 13 and even younger are engaged in different economic activities on the street. These children have health problems for which they did not get treatment. They are abused and threatened by older children. They are exploited and underpaid. They feel insecure and have worries about several things in their lives. And finally, school has become either a fantasy or an infrequent pastime when there is enough time and/or money. These circumstances indicate work that is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of the children. (ILO Convention 182 - Article 3).

## **Methodology**

### **Study Design and Data Sources**

This assessment has been a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative data comes from secondary resources such as the census, statistical documents from Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, and some other studies carried out on street/working children. Most estimates came from qualitative data gathered through various techniques.

In Addis the qualitative data was gathered from interviews held with:

- Working children themselves: Most of the interviews done in this study were conducted with children working on the streets or as domestics or in some places like mechanical workshops.
- Woreda administrators: Woreda is a section of the city which has from about 14 to 18 Kebeles (smaller divisions of the Woredas). The population size of the Woredas picked out for this study ranges from 66,402 to 82,589.
- Coordinators of UNICEF projects at the Woredas. In the three Woredas of the city where the study was carried out UNICEF has projects that support children working on the street.
- A project coordinator at the Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs: The three projects in the Woredas are coordinated by a person working in the Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs.
- Some parents: parents who were willing to be interviewed were included as one of the data sources.

In Nazareth, Shashemene, and Awassa, interviews were made with:

- Individual and group interviews with the working children themselves,
- Families of working children,
- Labor and Social Affairs officers,
- NGO's working with children,
- Key informants who have knowledge about the situation and prevalence of child labor, and
- Education and Health local government offices.

In Bahir Dar, Dessie and Kombolcha interviews were conducted with:

- Relevant government organizations,
- NGO's and Associations dealing with working children,
- Kebele administrators,
- School personnel,
- Employers, and
- Voluntary parents.

In Bahir Dar, Dessie and Kombolcha, a survey, developed based on the interview guidelines in the UNICEF manual, was utilized to collect the data. This has enabled the researcher to cover quite significant number of working street children.

Focused Group Discussions with working children and on the job observations were made in all the study sites.

### **Field Sites**

Seven cities were included in the assessment.

#### **Addis Ababa**

In Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, Woredas 3, 21, and 15 were chosen by UNICEF for the assessment. According to the 1994 census, the population of Addis Ababa was 2,112,737. Among the Addis Ababa population 32% are below the age of 15, indicating a high concentration of children.

The gross enrollment ratio for primary level of education during the academic year 1998/99 was 84.4 for males and 85.3 for females. In spite of the high rate of enrollment in the 1998/99 academic year, out of 130,700 students it was only 15.25% who managed to get a GPA of 1.8 and above in the Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate Examination, which also serves as an college entrance exam.

#### **Awassa**

Awassa is the capital of Southern Nations and Nationalities and People's region in the Sidama zone. It is found on the shores of Lake Awassa 275 km away from Addis Ababa.

The 1994 census indicates that Awassa has a population size of 69,169, of whom 39.1% are children below the age of 15. Approximately 55.2% of the population are migrants from areas outside Awassa.

### **Bahir Dar**

Bahir Dar is located 575 km away from Addis Ababa and is currently the capital of the Amhara region. According to the 1994 census, Bahir Dar population was 96,140. It is now estimated at 120,000.

A survey conducted in 1994 estimated the number of street children to be about 3000. Sources at the Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs indicate the numbers may have doubled since the survey.

### **Dessie**

Dessie is located 400 km away from Addis Ababa and it is the capital of South Wello. It is in the Amhara region. The 1994 census reported that the population size of Dessie to be 97,314.

### **Kombolcha**

Komobolcha is a small town, 25 km away from Dessie. It is also in the Amhara region. Its population size, according to the 1994 census, is 39,466. The current estimated population is 50,000. Kombolcha lies at the cross-roads of Affar-Assab and Dessie-Mekele road, with a strategic location for business and other activities. Recently, new factories like steel sheets, brewery, and other private industries have opened, offering opportunities of employment.

### **Nazareth**

Nazareth is located in Misrak Shewa zone of the region called Oromia. It is a capital for the zone. It is 99 km. away from Addis Ababa. Nazareth rests within an elevation range of 1500-2300 meters above sea level. Its annual temperature is between 15 to 20 degree centigrade and the annual rainfall within 700 and 800 mm.

According to projections made by the Plan and Economy Office of the zone, there were approximately 150,190 people living in Nazareth in 1998. Among these 42.9% were children. Of the total school age population (5 years and above) about 20% are illiterate and the rate of illiteracy is higher for females (25.1%) than males (13.5%). (1994 Census, Oromiya, VI, part II, p.183). The 1995/96 household income consumption expenditure survey of CSA reports that in 1996, about a quarter of (24.9%) the households in Nazareth earned less than Birr 2000.00, or USD243 per annum. 56.4% of the households earned less than Birr 4200.00 or USD , and 80.5% less than Birr 900 per annum (CSA Statistical Bulletin 204, 1998, p.329).

### **Shashemene**

Shashemene is located about 250 km to the South of Addis Ababa. According to the 1994 census, the total population of Sashemene is 52,080 and among these 39.7% are children below the age of 15.

According to unpublished document by NGO called ACCORD, 40% of Shashemene's population earns less than Birr 120 or USD 14.60 per month. The same document reveals that 60% of the population is engaged in informal economic activities to earn a living. 6.8% are employed in the public sector.

### Sampling and Respondents

Accidental or accessibility sampling was utilized to select informants. The researchers went to all the places in the cities where working children were found in high concentration and interviewed the children who happened to be working or who finished working and were hanging around. Children who were interviewed were also asked to bring their working friends for interview. Auto mechanical workshops, warehouses, and other places in which we find many children working either on employment or apprenticeship basis were visited and the children interviewed. However, in some of the places there was resistance from the owners or those individuals under whose supervision the children work. Children working as domestics were found at evening schools and around the places where they are sent to buy vegetables and other goods.

The most inaccessible were those children who were engaged in prostitution. In Addis, some were asked for interviews and interviewed on the streets while waiting for customers late in the night. The drop-in center established by Hope Enterprises was also visited to find prostitutes who would volunteer for interviews. However, the researcher was advised by the social workers that the prostitutes may be offended and, even if they volunteer they may not be open and frank in their responses without establishing a rapport for which the researcher did not have time. Therefore, the social workers were interviewed for information that could complement the few interviews held on the streets.

The constraints included:

- ◆ children that did not want be interviewed, especially when adults were around;
- ◆ more girls refused the interview than boys;
- ◆ the number of working boys were much more than the number of girls. This might be because many of the working girls are hired for domestic work at homes, restaurants, and bars where the researchers did not have much access;
- ◆ many of the employers did not allow the researchers to interview neither the children nor themselves.

### Interview Guides

The interview guides in the ILO/UNICEF Field Manual were used for this rapid assessment with some modification for the Ethiopian cultural context. (See Appendix I for copies of interview guides). An example is the interview guide prepared for girls working as prostitutes.

### **Interview Guide for Child Prostitutes**

- 1. Personal Data**
  - Name (if not offensive or if it does not make the child defensive)
  - Sex
  - Migrant status
  - Hurts, sickness, accidents
  - Main needs, problems
  - Future plans, desires
- 2. Family context**
  - Parents alive, living together
  - Parents working, what
  - Who is the primary care giver or bread winner
  - Number and age of siblings
  - Good and bad things about family situation
- 3. Present living condition**
  - Living with family or others
  - Eating what times, where, how long, what conditions
  - Sleeping, what times, where, how long, what conditions
  - Good things and bad things about current condition
- 4. Schooling**
  - Ever attended school, if so where, for how long, when
  - Attending now, when
  - If no longer attending, why stopped, whether wants to return,
  - good and bad things about school
- 5. Job**
  - How did you get into prostitution?
  - Have you had another job before?
  - If yes, what did you do and why did you quit the job?
  - What do you want to do in the future?
- 6. Earning and Spending**
  - Do you always get clients?
  - How much is your average daily income?
  - How do you spend your money?
  - Do you have to support your family?
- 7. Problems and Prospects**
  - What problems do you encounter when you stay out on the streets late in the evening?
  - What problems do you encounter with your clients?
  - What is your problem in terms of food, clothes, and housing?
  - What is your future plan?
- 8. Health Issues**
  - Do you take any precaution to protect yourself from STDs including HIV/AIDS?
  - Do you have sufficient information about HIV/AIDS?
  - Do clients cooperate with you in terms of using protection?

The interview guides were continuously tested in the field. Based on field experiences, the instruments were modified and made clear. This helped improve elaboration and instructions when giving interviews.

## Data Analysis

The data, interview transcriptions and field notes were coded. Coding took place in two stages: open and axial. During the open coding, interview transcripts were read thoroughly and the codes written at the margins of each phrase, sentence or paragraph. This was done after the first round of interviews.

These same codes were recoded, a process that supports Marshal and Rossman's (1995) argument that data collection and analysis go hand in hand to promote the emergence of substantive theory grounded in empirical data.

The themes were constructed based on the recurring ideas and events which helped in identifying patterns. Emerging patterns were examined critically; that is the researchers tried to find alternative explanations and compare the findings using the maximum comparison method with what is found in the minimal literature she came across (Christian & Carey In Potter, 1996). This procedure increased the credibility of the data. Once patterns were identified, and attempts made to find different explanations and logical interpretations, the report writing began.

### **CRC Definition**

Child Labor: Children that

- ⊗ work too young
- ⊗ work for too long hours
- ⊗ work in hazardous conditions
- ⊗ work under slave like arrangements
- ⊗ do work that interferes with their physical, mental, spiritual, moral and/or social development.

## Findings

### **Addis Ababa**

The assessment in Addis Ababa covered three Weredas. A total of 240 children, 153 boys and 87 girls, participated both in individual interviews and Focus Group Discussions. The following table gives some basic information about the interviewed children.

**Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Interviewed Children in Addis Ababa**

Characteristics	Wereda 3		Wereda 15		Wereda 21	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Age</b>						
4 – 8	6	2		1		
9 – 13	51	11	20	15	40	9
14 – 18	19	11	7	22	9	13
<b>Place of Birth</b>						
Addis Ababa	37	10	12	11	28	3
Out of Addis	39	14	15	27	21	19
<b>Types of Jobs</b>						
Shoe Shinning	24		10		15	
Providing Changes	10					
Street Vending and Peddling	21	1		2	8	4
Selling Bread and Other Snacks	1	4	3	6	3	3
Petty Trading		2	3	6		2
Washing and Watching Cars	7		6		7	
Mechanic	3				2	
Cashier on Taxi Vans	1		1			
Porters	2		1		6	
Housemaids/Houseboys	6	14		14		11
Prostitution		3		10		2
Others	1		3		8	
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>22</b>

35.6% of the respondents were girls. 57.2% were born and grew up in places outside of Addis. Most of them came to Addis within the last four years. Some of the reasons for their migration were broken and unstable homes, poverty, requests by relatives living in Addis, and encouragement by friends who migrated to Addis. Sometimes two or three reasons are combined to push the child to the city. In most cases poverty works together with the other causes.

Most children started working early in their lives. 30.8% of had already started working when they were between the age of 5 and 8. 65.4% have started their jobs when they were between 9 and 12. There are a variety of jobs in which the children are engaged. Many children do shoe shinning, domestic service, street vending and peddling, selling bread and other snacks, and washing and watching cars, in descending order. However, the types of jobs in which girls and boys predominate vary. For example, all shoe shiners and those who wash and watch cars are boys while most of the domestics (approximately 87%) are girls. Both boys and girls are more or less equally distributed in selling bread and snacks.

There are children who combine two or three jobs. Shoe shiners combine their shinning with washing and watching cars. Those who work around the market areas carry goods in addition to shoe shinning. Many of the children who sell newspapers provide changes on Mondays since newsletters are not out on Mondays.

Each job is taxing in its own way, both physically and psychologically. Over half of the children work everyday (66.7%) and the rest work everyday except Sunday. All the children other than mechanics and shopkeepers work all day. However, those who go to school half a day get some breaks while attending classes and shoe shiners and street vendors always have time when they do not have customers, during which they talk with friends and sometimes play.

Children working on the street explained that they are constantly exposed to heat and cold without proper clothing. Abuse by the policemen when they are found working on the streets without permission is expected. Abuse and beating by elderly children from the streets are problems all working children have to endure. Moreover, each job has its own hazards. For example, those children who provide changes for taxi drivers explained that sometimes taxi drivers beat them, spit on them, or shove them. Some complained that gangs snatch their money. For children sleeping on the streets their shoe shinning boxes get stolen while they are sleeping. Particularly for the newcomer, life on the street is rough. The children explained that every corner, by default, belongs to those children who usually work in that area. A newcomer is considered as an invader and will have trouble being accepted to work on that specific street.

In addition to the above problems the children have a number of worries or concerns that emanate from the nature of their work and the amount of income they earn. About 50% of the interviewed children indicated that they are anxious about what to eat tomorrow and what to feed the family. 37.8% explained that they worry when they do not make enough money to feed themselves and to give the family, and 12.2% said that they worry about their futures, the prospects of no education and unemployment.

The amount and timing of pay vary from job to job. As indicated earlier domestics usually get monthly pay. The children engaged in other jobs except mechanics earn as soon as they finish giving service or selling their goods. Therefore, their pay is calculated in terms of daily earning. Mechanics are paid weekly. Except one mechanic all of them get five Birr\* a week and one Birr each day for transport; their total weekly income amounts to 10 Birr a week. One of them do not earn anything except tips some customers might bestow.

The average daily income for the rest of the children varies from Birr 1-3 to Birr 10-15 a day. In terms of their earning majority of them are within the ranges of Birr 1-3 (42.9%) and Birr 4-6 (46.7%) and only a small minority, 10.5%, fall within the ranges of Birr 7-9 and 10-15.

This meager earning is spent on a number of vital things. Many of them feed themselves. Even those children who live with their families eat their lunches out. Most of them buy their own clothes, pay school fees and buy their school supplies. Above all a large majority of them assist their families. About 79.7% of the children explained that they support their families in various ways. Those who live with their parent/parents give the money left from their food and their savings to their family everyday. The others, especially those children who came from the Guraghe area, save and send the money left from their food, rent, and clothes, to their families at least once in a year for the highly celebrated holiday in September. Approximately 14.3% of the children support their siblings since they are orphans.

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• One US dollar is equivalent to approximately 8.218 Ethiopian Birr.

By any standard, the life situation of these children is below average. 27.6% of the children live with their parents, where poverty sends them to the street for income to assist the family. Some have fathers who are sick or retired and the families have to depend on the meager incomes mothers and children earn. Furthermore, these families do not have constant incomes. It depends on the market situation and the amount of services the children could render in a day in exchange for money. Many children have large families; 50.8% have between 1 and 3 siblings, 37.9% have between 4 and 6 siblings, and 11.4% have between 7 and 9 siblings. Moreover, about 36% of the children live in female-headed households due to divorce or death of a father. This group represents a disproportionate number of poverty stricken families in Addis Ababa. Children in comparatively worst situation are those who have to support their siblings in addition to taking care of themselves since both parents are dead (13.7%). Those living on the streets (6.9%), sometimes referred to as hard core street children, represent the worst case scenario.

Most of the children (43.8%) get only two meals a day. About 38.4% indicated that they get three meals a day. Among these, except those who live with their families, most of the children share a meal between two. Even these meals are not nutritious. In the morning, breakfast is bread and a cup of tea and lunch and dinner are *injera* (a flat

<b>MEALS FOR CHILDREN WORKING ON THE STREET</b>
I do not eat 3 meals a day. I only eat breakfast and dinner and not lunch. I take a bite from those children who eat lunch.
I will have a loaf of bread and a cup of tea for breakfast and another loaf and a cup of tea for lunch. I do not eat dinner at all.

pancake like bread made of flour from local grain) with *shiro* (a kind of stew made of peas flour). The exceptions are domestics about 82% of whom get three meals a day most of them having the same dishes the rest of the family gets.

Problems of housing constitute another serious problem. In explaining their needs many children indicated that their houses do not have tap water and toilet. Much more girls complained about this than boys did. Boys working on the street explained places they use for washing and waste disposal are public toilets, street corners, garbage disposal tanks. Some said they use toilets in some small restaurants paying from 15 to 30 cents each time they use.

### HOUSING

Problem of housing is a serious problem for me now. The room I sleep in is rented out to several other people. There is not space at all. I sleep on a rag at one side of the corner, putting a torn sheet over me.

There are also children who rent a room each night paying between Birr 1.50 and 2.00 a night. They sleep on rags and these rooms are shared by as many as 8 children who sleep in every corner and side of the wall. Even those children who rent houses on monthly basis or live with their families have problems with space, split walls, and leaking roofs.

Education, school supplies, clothing, food, money, and jobs were listed as immediate needs by the children. More than half of the children (62.1%) attends either a half-day or an evening school. About 32.2% have dropped out of school. A number of reasons have been given for dropping out. These

include broken family, economic constraints, interference with work (some shoe shiners explained that a lot of work is available in early morning and after 5:00 p.m. when people leave their work places during which time they have

to be in school), supporting family, and the responsibility of caring for younger siblings. Among the interviewed children 5.6% have never been to school and they can not read, write, and do some basic math.

### DROPPING OUT

Fuad who works as a shoe shiner explains why he was a drop out, "I was in grade 1 back home. I discontinued my education when I came to Addis Ababa to work in order to help my family.

### Awassa

Awassa is the regional capital for Southern Nations and Nationalities and People's Region. As a result the number of government offices, NGO's, and private organizations is comparatively high. Quite a number of both adults and children migrate to Awassa in search of better opportunities.

According to informants there are about 1560 children working in Awassa engaged in various kinds of jobs. One kind of job that A number of children work as assistants to the fisher Awassa. These children prepare fishing nets, unload fishes, and help the fishermen with other chores. There are also children on the shore

### Working on the Streets of Awassa

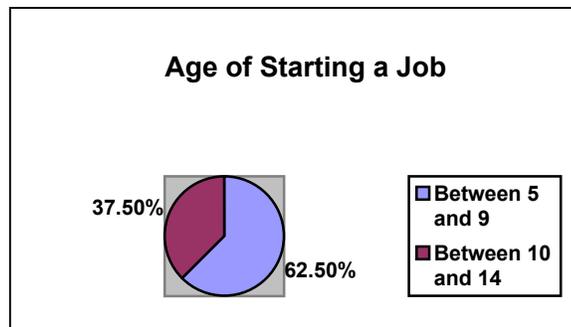
Seblework Gufa started working four years back at the age of seven. His father was laid off from the Sisal factory. "He purchased two jerry cans for me and my youngest brother to carry water and sell on market days. We sell one cup of water for five cents. We profit two - three birr a week. My father is works on an ass driven cart with my older brother. My mother cuts 'kocho' or banana, and my sister is a domestic. The youngest is disabled does not work. My two oldest brothers are soldiers."

Even with practically the entire family working

cleaning and preparing fish for market. Often, they are hired by restaurants to clean fish cooked for customers. The estimated number of these children is about 360. There are also other children at the shore shoe shining, petty trading, and running errands. The other children work in four other areas shoe shining, selling fruits, sugar cane, and plastic bags, washing cars, and carrying goods. The estimated number of these children is about 1000.

The other categories of working children are those working as domestics, most of them girls. There are those working in mechanical workshops and wood processing plants, at construction sites, and weeding on the Awassa Agricultural College farmlands. These children are estimated to be between 560 and 700.

In order to understand the day-to-day lives of working children, interviews were conducted with 8 children found in different areas. These children work as assistants to the fishermen and fish cleaners, sell sugar cane and plastic bags, and transport good by carrying on their shoulders or using carts. Five children started working when they were between the age of 5 and 9. The rest started taking up jobs when they were between 10 and 14.

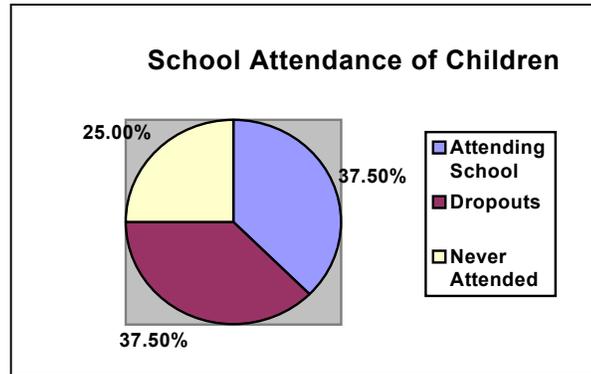


The children started working at an early age for different reasons; poverty, death of parents, and following the footsteps of elder siblings were mentioned as pull factors.

Except one all the interviewed children live with family members and 5 of them eat at home though their meals are far from being balanced diet. Just like their counterparts in other towns their housing condition is not desirable. Most of the mothers cook for others, sell maize flour, and work on the nearby farms, while fathers work as

guards, janitors and transport goods on donkey-drawn carts. Many of the siblings are also engaged in selling sugar cane, fishing and cleaning fish, and domestic work.

Six of the children have completed a primary level of education and two have dropped out. The rest of the children have never had any kind of schooling.



All the children currently going to school attend half-day schools.

### Bahir Dar

A survey method was used to collect data from street children in Bahir Dar. A total of 440 children, 320 males and 120 females, filled out the questionnaire. More than half of the children (55.9%) included in the assessment were below the age of 14. About 20% of the children are migrants. They came to Bahir Dar from nearby towns and far away villages in search of opportunities; some migrated by themselves and others moved with their parents.

The children are engaged in various types of jobs including carrying goods, street vending, shoe shining, washing cars and brokerage.

**Migrants**

Fantahun is a 14 year old boy. He came from Merawi, a small town about 40 km away from Bhir Dar. His mother pushed him to the streets to beg and support himself. When he came out to the streets begging for the first time he was half naked showing his deformed body; he has a hatch back. It was after begging on the streets for 6 months that he started his current job, washing cars. He earns about Birr 5.00 a day and helps our his mother.

### Sample Survey of Street Children

**in Bahir Dar by type of work**

No	Occupation	Sex		Total	%
		M	F		
1	Street vendor	100	99	199	45.2
2	Daily Laborer	104	2	106	24.1
3	Shoe-shiner	84	-	84	19.1
4	Domestic Worker	1	8	9	2.0
5	Messenger	8	-	8	1.8

Most of the children, about 45.2% are engaged in street vending followed by daily labor (24.1%) and shoe shining (19.1%).

After spending a number of hours working on the streets the children earn very little. Majority of them (73.5%) earn from Birr 2 to 5 a day. The number of working hours ranges from 4 to 10 hours. Those children who go to school half a day work for a total about 6 hours, before and after school. About 19% of the children work from 7 to 10 hours a day. Peddlers and street vendors who sell cigarettes and snacks work until 11:00 p.m..

352 or 80% of the surveyed children has had some kind of education.

**Sample Survey of Street Children  
In Bahir Dar by attendance of School**

Grade	Sex			Discontinued			%
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	
1	15	7	22	2	-	2	9.1
2	14	12	26	4	1	5	19.2
3	25	20	45	10	2	12	26.7
4	48	6	54	14	-	14	25.9
5	41	18	59	10	2	12	20.3
6	26	16	42	6	-	6	14.3
7	38	10	48	3	3	6	12.5
8	20	2	22	4	-	4	18.2
9	19	1	20	2	1	3	15
10	4	4	8	-	1	1	12.5
11	3	1	4	-	-	-	-
12	2	-	2	-	-	-	-
Total Attendants.	255	97	352	55	10	65	18.5

No Attendance	65	23	88	-	-	-	-
Total	320	120	440	-	-	-	-
Present Status							
	Sex		Total	%			
	M	F					
Attendance	200	87	287	65.2			
No Attendance	120	33	153	34.8			
Total	320	120	440	100			

Among these 97 or 27.6% are girls. Many of these children are in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. However, among these children some have dropped out. As a result, the current attendance rate stands at 65.2%. The girls constitute about 30.3% of the children currently attending school.

In the survey, children were asked about their immediate needs. Food ranked first mentioned by 31.4% of the children, followed by education, which was a priority for about 25.9% of the children. Clothes were mentioned as a top need by a similar number of children, i.e. 25.4%. Shelter was listed last in the list; only 9.1% of the children mentioned shelter as a serious problem.

The living condition and arrangement of many of the children is far from desirable.

### **Sample Survey of Street Children In Bahir Dar by Condition of Living**

No	Live with	Sex		Total	%
		M	F		
1	Parent (s)	153	71	224	50.9
2	Alone (Homeless)	132	21	153	34.8
3	Relatives	42	21	63	14.3
	Total	327	113	440	100

A significant number (34.8%) of the children are homeless and sleep on street sides and verandahs. These children are exposed to rough weather during all the seasons. 224 or 50.9% the children live with their parents. However, even this group is not in a favorable

situation since majority of the family lives in very old and shabby small houses, usually one room for the whole family for all purposes. The areas are poor in sanitation and some of them even without common toilets. The rest, 14.3%, live with close and distant relatives, living in situations no better than those living with their parents.

### Dessie

A two-day survey was conducted in four major areas of Dessie where working children are concentrated. 339 children responded to the survey. Among these 33.9% are girls. The majority of these children (60.2%) is between the ages of 14 and 18 and 39.8% are below the age of 14.

Many street children in Dessie are migrants from rural areas and smaller towns around Dessie. The migration is caused by the belief that there is a better opportunity in Dessie since it is a sit for many NGO's and government offices. The fact that Dessie is close to the areas that have been frequently attacked by famine and drought might have contributed to the constant influx of children to Dessie. According to this assessment, 187 or 44.8% of the children are migrants from other places. Among these 66 of them are girls.

Like their counterparts in other towns, the street children in Dessie are engaged in various types of jobs; street vending (30.7%), daily labor (20.4%), and shoe shinning (19.5) are the 3 jobs in which most of the children are engaged.

**Sample Survey of Street Children  
In Dessie by type of work**

No	Occupation	Sex		Total	%
		M	F		
1	Street Vendor	31	73	104	30.7
2	Daily labourer	66	3	69	20.4
3	Shoe-shiner	66	-	66	19.5
4	Broker	22	-	22	6.5
5	Prostitute	-	19	19	5.6
6	Messenger	16	-	16	4.7
7	Domestic Worker	1	10	11	3.2
8	Unspecified or Begging	22	10	32	9.4
	Total	224	115	339	100

The other jobs include brokerage, domestic work, and prostitution.

The working hours of the children ranges from 3 to 12 hours. More than half (54.8%) of the children work between 10 and 12 hours; 15.3% of them work between 6 and 9 hours; and 28.9% work between 3 and 6 hours. However, those children who work for long hours have breaks in

**Prostitution**

Semira aged 16 is a prostitute. She was a grade 9 student in Assat. However, she dropped out of school because of lack of support; her parents are dead. Six months ago Semira started roaming around the streets of Dessie. After a while she found a job in a small bar as a waitress and she also works as a prostitute. Her average income ranges between Birr 20 to 40.

between depending on the types of jobs they are engaged in. After toiling for these long hours the income earned by the children is very minimal, not even enough to feed them properly. About 64% of the children explained that they earn between Birr 2 and 5 a day.

The housing situation of the children reflects that 191 or 56.3% of the children live either with their parents, relatives or friends.

**Sample Survey of Street Children  
In Dessie by Condition of Living**

No	Live with	Sex		Total	%
		M	F		
1	Alone (Homeless)	112	28	140	41.3
2	Parent (s)	74	60	134	39.5
3	Relatives	29	18	47	13.9
4	Friends	1	9	10	2.9

Their houses may have cracked walls and leaking roofs. They may also have poor sanitation. However, they are better off than the homeless. The homeless children (41.3%) sleep on verandahs exposed to harsh weather of all season. Besides the heat and cold, their clothes are rarely changed or washed.

As for schooling, only 120 children are currently attending schools. Among these 52.5% are girls. Three of these children have even reached grade 11.

**Sample Survey of Street Children  
In Dessie by attendance of Scholl**

Grade	Sex			Discontinued			%
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	
1	1	2	3	-	1	1	
2	11	6	17	11	6	17	
3	21	6	27	19	6	25	
4	47	22	69	36	6	42	
5	22	19	41	15	7	22	
6	39	22	61	33	9	42	
7	21	8	29	12	3	15	
8	16	14	30	9	8	17	
9	13	9	22	6	3	9	
10	7	7	14	2	3	5	
11	3	-	3	1	-	1	
Total	201	115	316	144	52	196	
No Attendance	23	-	23	-	-	-	
Total	224	115	339	-	-	-	

Present Status				
	Sex		Total	%
	M	F		
Attendance	57	63	120	35.4
No Attendance	167	42	219	64.6
Total	224	115	339	100

Of those who are not currently enrolled, 23 children, all boys have never had any kind of education.

Indicating their immediate needs or serious problems, 94% of the children list food, shelter, education, and clothes, in descending order as top priorities.

### **Kombolcha**

A two-day survey, in 4 areas where street children are predominantly working, was carried out in Kombolcha. The survey covered 312 children of whom 85 were girls. 75% of the surveyed children were below the age of 14.

Among the children surveyed in Komobolcha, 53.5% are migrants coming from different places.

**Sample Survey of Street Children  
In Kombolcha by Place of Origin**

No	Place	Sex		Total	%
		M	F		
1	Kombolcha	89	56	145	46.5
2	Other Places	138	29	167	53.5
	Total	227	85	312	100

The relatively increasing industrialization of the town and its hot climate, especially during the rainy season, are two of the attractions for street children as well as adults. It is believed that especially during the rainy season the number of street children increases as a result of their movement from Dessie, a much colder climate.

The street children in Kombolcha are engaged in different kinds of jobs. Daily labor (25.6%), shoe shinning (18.3%), messenger (4.5%), street vending (2.9%), and brokerage (1.3%) were the types of jobs the children were distributed over.

**An Errand Girl**

A 9-year old girl, Zeitu, started roaming on the streets of Kombolcha recently. She is from a poor family. She earns an average of Birr 1.00 per day either begging or taking an errand in exchange for money. Whatever she earns she gives it to the family. She aspires to go to school if she gets some kind of assistance.

Similar to the children in Dessie, the working hours of the children surveyed in Kombolcha ranges from 4 to 12 hours. Many of the children (65.9%) indicated that they work for about 11 hours. Working for these many hours does not pay off; they barely

feed themselves. In many case meals constitute bread and daily laborers resort to begging when they do not earn enough for their food.

More than half of the children (65.2%) had attended schools at some point.

**Sample Survey of Street Children  
In Kombolcha by attendance of School**

Grade Attendance	Sex			Discontinued			%
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	
1	13	3	16	10	1	11	68.8
2	20	6	26	14	1	15	57.7
3	17	5	22	11	2	13	59.1
4	1	17	18	-	14	14	77.8
5	13	-	13	6	-	6	46.2
6	18	-	18	15	-	15	83.3
7	9	2	11	4	2	6	54.5
8	8	-	8	6	-	6	75. -
9	8	-	8	6	-	6	75. -
10							
Deacon (Church School)	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Total Attendance	108	33	141	72	20	92	65.2
No Attendance	119	52	171	-	-	-	-
Total	227	85	312	-	-	-	-

Present Status	Sex		Total	%
	M	F		
Attendance	191	72	263	84.3
No Attendance	36	13	49	15.7
Total	227	85	312	100

Since many of the children covered in the survey came from other places the number of homeless children is quite significant. One hundred seven children live on verandahs, make shift homes made of card boxes and plastic, and some in the open air. Among these children 5 are females. The rest of the children live either with parents (61.2%), friends (3.8%), and relatives (0.6%). Though these children have roofs over their heads, their homes are not in desirable condition. More than half of the children (52.9%) faced serious problems getting food, shelter, clothes, and education.

## Nazareth

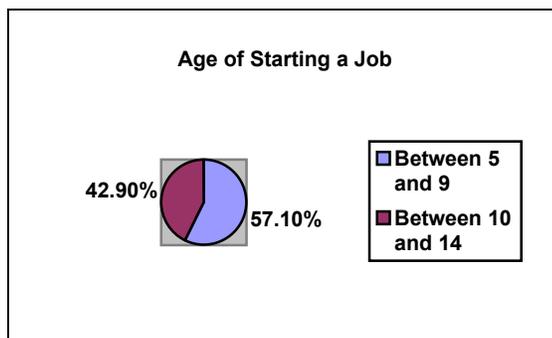
Nazareth, one of Ethiopia's busiest areas along the major route that leads to many other cities and towns, has quite a significant number of working children. Estimates of the number of working children are provided by Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and other NGO's. According to these estimates, the number of working children would be between 2000 and 6000. Many of these are engaged in chaffing and sorting haricot beans and wild gums in the warehouses found in the city. There are also quite significant number of street vendors, daily laborers, shoe shiners, car washers and watchers, and those who work in mechanical workshops, restaurants and as domestic workers.

**Working on the Streets in Nazareth**

Semer Geremew is 13 years of age. She was born in Asmara, Eritrea. Her mother, like many other families, came to Nazareth following the fall of the 'Derg' government in 1993. When the family reached Nazareth, they were assisted by government with food, clothing and shelter. Semer's mother, two sisters, and younger brother still live in the house provided.

Life has since become harder. Semer and her sisters had to stop going to school and assist their mother in a warehouse sorting soybeans. After one year, Semer grew ill in the warehouse and began working on the streets. She carries goods, runs errands. Lately Semer has started spending her nights on the streets, "I am more attracted to the street life now. My sisters and brother come to visit me. I work, eat and live here, on this street."

Fourteen children from 7 kebeles where working children are highly prevalent were interviewed. These children are mainly engaged in making charcoal stove and horse shoe, shoe shining, chaffing and sorting haricot bean, working on horse-drawn carts, and running errands. The children started work early in their lives; 6 of the children started working when they were between 5 and 9 and the rest took up jobs when they were between 10 and 14.

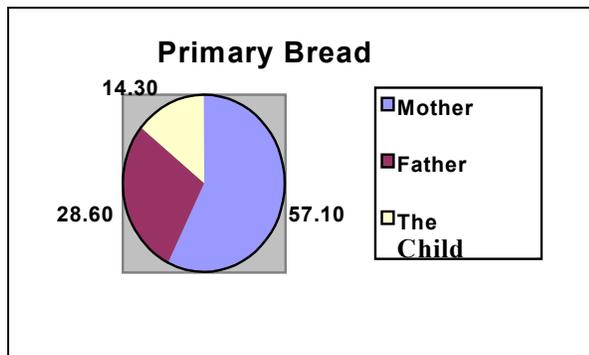


The children engaged themselves in various types of jobs for different reasons: some have deceased fathers, some to supplement family income, others to support themselves, and still others follow in their friend's footsteps.

Besides working long hours for minimal pay and the physical exertions some of the jobs can cause, they can not satisfy some of their basic needs. They have worries

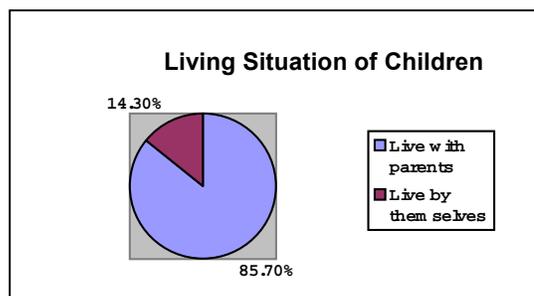
about certain things in their lives. Some of the immediate needs mentioned include, food, clothing, footwear, and school fees and supplies, and time to study and relax. The children are also worried about their family's poverty, some about the health of a parent (parents), and some complain about their own health.

The family situations for 8 of the 14 children include mothers that are the primary breadwinners. Four children are supported by fathers and the remaining 2 support themselves. Seven children's fathers and 4 children's mothers are dead.



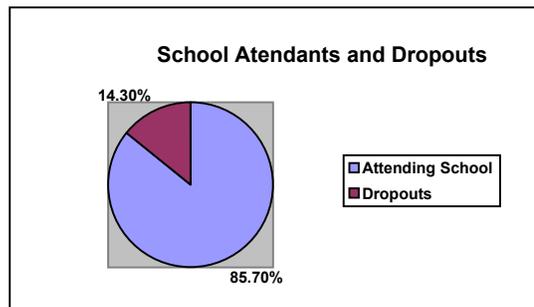
Five of the children come from broken families. Visiting families of working children showed that the families have an average of 7 children and in more than half of the visited homes there were at least 2 working children. About a quarter of the family members are illiterate and there were more illiterate females than males. Mothers are engaged in selling home brewed drinks, giving domestic services, petty trading, and work in warehouses chaffing and sorting haricot beans. The fathers are daily laborers, porters, and some are guards.

Most of the children (12) live with their parents and the rest live by themselves.



Many live in rented houses that have poor conditions; all of them have mud floors and some are even without pit latrines. Just like their counterparts in Addis, they do not get nutritious food; for many, breakfast is bread and a cup of tea and lunch and dinner are *injera* with *shiro*.

About 12 of the children attended and completed primary level of education. Among these 2 children have dropped out 2 years ago.



Further discussion with some children working in warehouses revealed that more than 25% of the children drop out. All the drop outs and half of those who never attended school want to go to school if circumstances are favorable for them. Of those attending schools 8 children attend a half day school while the remaining go to schools full day.

### Shashemene

Shashemene, a business areas located along the main route, connects other business towns and areas producing cash crops. According to key informants from Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Women’s Association, and groups discussions held with working children, there are an estimated 1107 children working in the town. There are four areas where these children are found: the bus station, the entrance from Addis Ababa, the market place, and a place locally called *Abusto*.

The types of work children are engaged in varies based on the place where they are working. For example, those working at the entrance from Addis mainly work on street vending, shoe shining, selling snacks, carrying goods, and as cashiers on taxi vans. At the bus

#### Working on the Streets of Shashemene

Mamush Yohannes is a child of 14 years working in the bus station terminal . He was born in Yirgalem town where he lived with his parents and attended school. Three years ago his mother died. His father, a carpenter, remarried in Yirgalem. Mamush and his three siblings moved to Shashemene to find work on the streets. His older brother is a 'woyalla' or taxi conductor, and his sister a domestic.

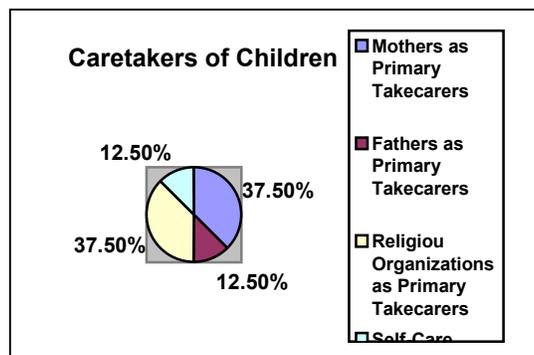
Mamush carries bags and other goods. "I clean in a 'hemesbat' where you pay fifty

stations many of the children carry luggage, sell snacks, and shoe shine. In the market place many children sell different items like plastic bags and vegetables. In addition to children working on streets and different corners, there are others referred to as invisibles. These are the girls brewing and selling local drinks, domestic workers, prostitutes, and the boys working in different automechanical shops.

A total of 8 children were interviewed to find more information about the living and working conditions of the working children. The interviewed children are engaged in selling snacks, fruits, and sugar cane, running errands, carrying goods, and work in mechanical workshops and wood processing plants. However, most of the interviewed children combine two jobs. Shoe shiners also carry goods when they do not have customers. Half of these children started working when they were between 5 and 9 and they have been on the job for more than 3 years. Different situations pushed these children to work at an early age. Some started working when the parent or parents who bring the money home died. Some simply imitated their working friends, and others were requested and encouraged by parents or relatives to take up jobs.

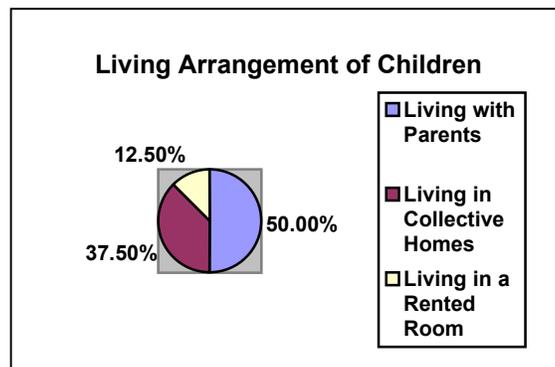
Aside from working at an early age and, some, shouldering responsibilities to support families, the children have some worries or concerns. Some of the major problems mentioned by the children include dropping out of school, broken homes, lack of food, clothes, and school supplies.

Among the interviewed children, 3 are cared for by their mothers, another 3 are cared for by a religious organization, 1 is cared for by the father, and 1 supports himself.



Six of the children came from broken families, half of the children have their mothers dead, and 1 child's father is dead. The average number of siblings these children have is 5. The living mothers are engaged in brewing and selling local drinks, petty trading, and selling bread and other snacks. Fathers work as guards, carpenters, masons, and cart drivers.

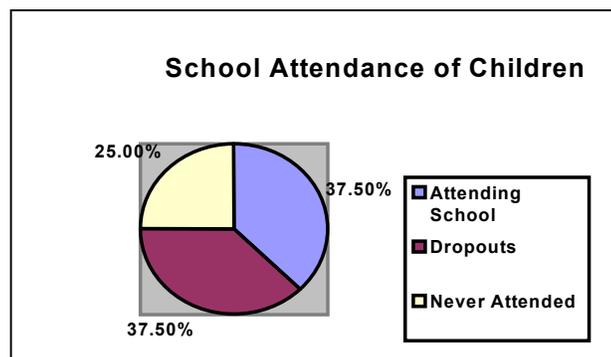
Half of the interviewed children live with their families. Observation during visits to families of working children revealed that the housing condition of the children is not good. They live in small houses that have mud walls and floors. The roofs are corrugated iron, some of them leaking. Most of these do not have even pit latrines.



Three children live in a collective home arranged by a religious organization, 1 pays 50 cents every evening to get a sleeping area in a room that is shared by several other children.

One of the complaints the children had was the minimal earning they get from long hours of, sometimes, backbreaking jobs. Their earning does not get them proper or nutritious food. More than half of the children have bread and a cup of tea for breakfast and lunch and dinner are *injera* with *shiro*. One child indicated that he usually does not get three meals.

As for schooling, only 5 children have some kind of education. Among these 2 have dropped out. The rest have never been to school at all.



More than half of the children who are currently attending school are going to a half day schools and the rest go to evening classes. Among those who have dropped out more that half want to go back to school if circumstances allow them.

### **The Invisibles**

#### **Prostitutes**

The most inaccessible group of the working children were the child prostitutes. Fifteen prostitutes who were found working on the street late at night were interviewed. The drop-in center at Hope Enterprise was visited and two social workers interviewed and observations made. The following table gives background information about the prostitutes included in this study.

### Interviewed Child Prostitutes in Addis Ababa

Background Information	Number	Percentage	Remark
<b>Age</b>			It was indicated that we could find prostitutes as young as 9 years old.
15	2	13.3	
16	6	40	
17	4	26.7	
18	-	-	
19	3	20	
<b>Place of Birth and Growing up</b>			
Addis Ababa	9	60	
Out of Addis Ababa	6	40	
<b>Educational Level</b>			
6-8	7	46.7	
5-3	6	40	
1-2			
Never attended a school	2	13.3	
<b>Reasons for Engaging in Prostitution</b>			Early marriage, especially in the rural Ethiopia is a very widely prevalent experience with lots of social repercussions.
Poverty	9	60	
Broken Family	2	13.3	
Search for Independence	3	20	
Early Marriage	1	6.6	
<b>Supporting Families</b>			
Occasionally	3	20	
Regularly	7	46.7	
Never	5	33.3	
<b>Living Condition</b>			Most of the girls who live in rented houses come from rural areas.
Living with the Families	5	33.3	
Living in Rented Houses	10	66.3	

The findings indicate that there were many children who were engaged in prostitution. At the drop-in center there were between 15 and 20 child prostitutes whose age ranges from 12 to 14. According to the interview conducted with the social workers one can find prostitutes as young as 9 year olds.

As shown in the above table children are drawn into prostitution for a number of reasons; the five reasons were:

1. poverty,
2. broken family,

#### Poverty/Unemployment

After I finished high school I could not find any decent job. My father had died when I was a little girl and my mother's health condition is not good; I had to help my family. However, I did not want to be a housemaid. So I went into prostitution. It is difficult, there are a lot of

3. child rearing practices; it was explained that parents who deprive their children some degree of freedom would end up having rebellious children who go against their value systems,
4. early marriage
5. desire to pamper and make boyfriends happy by buying them expensive clothes and cover other expenses (interviews with social workers in Hope Enterprise).

The girls have various kinds of living arrangements. Many of the child prostitutes whose parents are in Addis Ababa live with their parents. Some of them engage in the trade with the knowledge of parents. In such cases the children support their families financially. Some sneak out of their houses after parents and other family members went to bed and sneak in before family members get up in the morning; the family is unaware of their children's engagement in prostitution. The case of a 17 year old girl from a middle class family was discussed by the social workers as an evidence for this kind of problem.

**Getting into Prostitution**

I came to Addis Ababa with a guy I used to live with. After coming to Addis we broke up and I started prostitution. Now I live by myself paying Birr 50.00 a month. I sleep most of the morning since I am either with a client or waiting for one on the streets for most part of the night.

Those child prostitutes who migrated from other regions live in rented rooms either by themselves or sharing with roommates. Some of the prostitutes who were interviewed explained that they had rented a room. They pay between 50 and 70 Ethiopian Birr per month (approximately 6.25 and 8.75 USD), which they found exorbitant.

Many who came from the regions worked as domestics first. This is true for the girls who are engaged in the other jobs on the street. Two female peddlers also explained that they worked as domestics before starting their peddling. The reasons given for quitting domestic work include lack of freedom, mistreatment by employers, physical abuse such as beating, disagreement with children in the family, and salary reduction with the pretext that they had broken household items.

**Transition**

Right after I came from my village I was hired as a housemaid. It was hard; I did not have any freedom to plan even my daily life. Besides, I was driven to work day and night like a slave. On top of that, when something went wrong, it was hell to see her (her employer's) sulking face. I quitted and go into

Those girls who did not work as house maids were met at the bus station by

agents who lead the children to the life of prostitution. They work for these men by prostituting themselves and giving the money to the men or they will be given to bar ladies who would give the agents

some kind of commission. This group of child prostitutes are the most challenging in terms of being convinced that there could be other avenues to a relatively better life.

The daily income of prostitutes varies from nil to hundreds. When they do not find clients they will not have income for the day since they are engaged exclusively in prostitution. The daily income also varies depending on the location where the girls stand looking for clients. The girls who

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Income</b></p> <p>It is not always that I get clients though I stay out on the street until very late in the evening. If I am lucky I will have clients 3 or 4 days a week and that means I do not have income for the other days of the week.</p>
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occupy middle and upper class areas like Bole charge their clients more. On the other hand those who stay in Merkato, Kutchra, and on some streets in Kazanchis area charge less. These are usually from other regions and are more needy.

Many of the girls are school dropouts and the maximum level of education they attained is grade 8. It was indicated that among those known by Hope Enterprise it was only one girl who goes to evening classes. However, all of them express the desire to go back to school if they have a stable income and a secured home.

The number of meals the girls get in a day depends on the daily income they earn. When they have money they will have three meals, coffee and other snacks while on the days they do not get clients they might go to bed with empty stomach. Many of the girls do not have the idea of saving for tomorrow. The money they earn is usually shared with friends and used to enjoy themselves.

The girls are exposed to various kinds of physical and psychological abuses including beating and biting. There are times when their money is stolen back by the customers. Observations of the girls who come to the drop-in center reveals that the girls look physically sick and emotionally depressed.

## Domestics

It was difficult to find domestics for interviews and observations while they were doing their jobs; employers did not allow the interviewers to conduct interviews with their domestics. Therefore, except three all of those included in this report were found in evening schools while attending their classes. The three were interviewed in small market places where they were sent for errands. The following table gives some general information about the interviewed domestics.

**Domestics Workers in Addis Ababa**

Background Information	Number	Percentage
<b>Age</b>		
4 - 8	1	2.1
9 - 13	20	43.5
14 - 18	25	54.3
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	7	
Female	39	
<b>Place of Birth and Growing Up</b>		
Addis Ababa	18	39.1
Out of Addis Ababa	28	60.9
<b>Type of Responsibilities</b>		
Nanny	6	13
Housemaid	35	76.1
Both	5	10.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	

More than half of the children are between the age range of 14 and 18. The next largest group came from the age range of 9 and 13. Close to 85% are female while the rest are male. The majority of them come from outside of Addis. Among these, 68.4% are from the Guraghe area.

### **Family Life**

I came from Wello, Erayana Kobo. When my aunt came for a visit I followed her to Addis. I stayed with her for some time and after a while she got me hired in this family's house. When I am given a day off once a month I visit my aunt and other relatives in Addis.

The children working as domestics came to Addis with relatives: some with

aunts, others with uncles, and some others with persons from their communities. All these children found jobs because of the

connections the relatives have. Four or about 17.8% of the children work for the relatives who brought them from home. Some got their jobs through a broker who takes money both from the employer and the employed.

All the domestics except three live with their employers. They are fed and given places to sleep. The three come in the morning and leave in the evening after they are done with their chores. All the three are from Addis and they live with their parents.

The monthly pay of female domestics varies from the range of 10-20 to 100-150. It appears that male domestics are less paid than their female counterparts. The following table shows the monthly salary of both male and female domestics.

**Monthly Salary of Domestic Workers (in Ethiopian Birr)**

<b>Amount</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
1 - 10	1	
11 - 20	2	3
21 - 30	1	8
31 - 40	3	14
41 - 50	-	11
51 - 100	-	1
101-150	-	2
<b>Total</b>	7	39

Those children working for relatives are not usually given monthly salaries. However, they are fed, clothed, their schools fees paid, and school supplies and other necessities provided. They do not visit their families in the village. They are usually told that adults would take them, but they rarely go. A 14-year old girl explained, “I am always told that they will take me, but so far they have not.” This particular girl has not seen her family in the last 4 years. Inability to visit families is a problem mentioned by other children as well. Many of them explained that lack of money for transportation or inability to find a person who will take them since they do not know exactly how to go back, they have not been able to visit families for a number of years.

There are three categories of domestic work for females:

1. Nannies: This involves taking care of kids, washing their clothes, preparing their food, cleaning their rooms, if there are school age children taking them back and forth to school, and sometimes doing errands.
2. Housemaids: Their responsibility includes cleaning the house, processing and cooking food, doing laundry (washing clothes), and anything that is done in the house.
3. Combining both categories: Those who take this kind of job undertake all the activities performed by nannies and housemaids.

The houseboys usually do cleaning, errands, and other chores than cooking and laundry. It was only one boy among the seven that indicated that he cooks. The other exception is the one who feeds cows and cleans their barn.

Compared to kids working on the street, especially those who are not living with their

parents, the life situation of domestics appears preferable. The majority of them (82%) explained that they always get three meals a day and they eat what the whole family eats. Except very few all have decent sleeping place with bed and the necessary clothing. Almost all indicated that they have more or less sufficient clothes.

Though it seems that domestics have relatively stable life, they have their own problems and complaints. One of the problems is that they are overworked. They usually get up before 4:00 a.m. and go to bed after 11:00 p.m. They keep on working until they go to school and continue working after school. For most, they have only one day off in a month; a time to go and visit relatives in Addis.

Domestic work also interferes with their education. They complained that they do not have time to do their homework and to study. They may be late or skip classes altogether if there are things to be done. If guests come unannounced, they are required

**Domestics Combining the Three Jobs**

I take care of the kids. There is also a 6 months old boy. I prepare his food and milk and I wash his clothes. I also clean the house, cook and clean the house.

**Sheleme, a 14 year old girl**

**Abuses**

A ten year old boy who used to work as a domestic and who is currently working as a street peddler explained that working as a domestic was really bad. All the children used to order him around. If he refused they would beat him up. Another girl who is now a prostitute also indicated that it was horrible to see her employers' sullen faces when she committed even the smallest mistake or even when they came home angry for some reason.

to make coffee or serve food. Some also complained that they do not have freedom to plan their days and do the things required for personal development. Abuses from employers and children of employers were another problem mentioned by many children.

### **The Full Picture**

Ideally childhood is a time for exploring, learning, and growing up. Children in early childhood explore and learn about their environments and themselves. Late childhood is a time when children develop physically, socially, and psychologically; it is a time for learning, play, and fun. In spite of these facts, a lot of children in the world are involved in economic activities, shouldering responsibilities to support themselves and their families at the expense of their education and health.

ILO estimates that in developing countries about 250 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 are engaged in economic activities. Among these 48% work full-time while the rest combine work with schooling. In Africa 46.0% of the boys and 36.7% of the girls participate in economic activities, which ranks the continent first on child labour indicators.

Ethiopia shares the problems of child labor with other developing and developed countries. The major factors for children working on the streets of Ethiopia are poverty and family instability. Children are engaged in various types of jobs such as carrying goods, shoe shinning, peddling, and newspaper selling. The problem of streetism is serious in big cities and towns due to migration and poverty. The number of working children continues to increase in proportion to the population size (MOLSA, 1995 & MOLSA, Radda Barnen, 1988).

The current assessment concurs with the findings of previous studies. This assessment covers in both survey and interviews, a total of 1357 children: 953 boys and 404 girls. Many of the children work as shoe shiners, street vendors/peddlers, and goods carriers. The exceptions are some children who live in Awassa working as assistants to fishermen and fish cleaners and those in Nazareth chaffing and sorting haricot beans and wild gums in warehouses.

The reasons that pushed children to work on the streets are similar in all the assessed areas: poverty, divorce and separation of parents, unstable homes, death of parents, and unemployment in the family are some of them.

### **Poverty**

A 12 year old girl who sells *injera* explains: “I sell 20 *injera* for Birr 15 and give the money to my mother. She owes the grinding mill owner a lot of money. Some people take *injera* on credit and postpone giving her the money. So when she does not have money to buy the grain she in turn takes credit from the owner of the grinding mill. That is why we are in so much debt”.

### **Broken Homes**

One child explained: “After the death of my mother, my stepfather forced me to sell sugar cane everyday. When he was laid-off from his factory work he bought me and my brother two containers so that we could sell water in the market”.

Broken homes and death of a parent (parents) push children to leave home for the streets. A 13-year-old boy who is a shoe shiner indicated, “After my mother died my father married another woman. I was in constant conflict with my stepmother; she thought that I was selling stuff taking them from out of our house. My father beat me up listening to what she said and I ran away.”

Though poverty is the reason for many children to work, there are individuals who encourage or force these children to work.

These could be parents, relatives, friends, or other. A child who sells paper bags said, “I saw the child next door making these paper bags for sell. He gave me the old newspapers and other old documents to make the bags and helped me in making the first batches.” Parents and relatives also advised their children to take up

**STARTING A JOB**

I am the only working child in the family. My elder brother can't work since he goes to school full-time. It was my mother who asked to work saying that I could help the family if I work instead of staying home after attending a half-day school. So my father gave me the money to buy a shoe shinning box. I worked as a shoe shiner for 3 years then shifter to washing and watching cars.

jobs and help the family out. They provide the money for starting these jobs.

The children come from poor families, female-headed households, and broken homes. Aside from the burden of work and shouldering responsibilities, they have other

problems. After working long hours in sometimes increment weather, the children eat meals lacking basic nutritional requirements. In all assessed areas, children indicated the usual meals are bread and a cup of tea for breakfast and *injera* with *shiro* for lunch and dinner. Many of the children, especially the boys share one meal between two and that is how they manage to eat three times a day. There are also several children who get only two or even one meal a day. A boy said, “I eat whenever I get food; it is not always that I eat thrice a day; a lot of times I skip breakfast”.

Some children have resorted to various coping mechanisms. Particularly those from Addis who work in areas where there are restaurants explained that they run errands or throw garbage for the restaurants two or three times and day and they would be given food left over from customers.

67% of the children complained of health problems. It is rare that these children go to hospitals or visit clinics even when they get into accidents. Some other complaints the children mentioned include dental problems, migraine headaches, kidney problems, and coughing.

Housing constitutes another serious problem. The housing situation is appalling for working children. There are three categories of children facing housing problems: children living with their parents or relatives, children renting rooms daily, and those children who sleep on the streets, verandahs, and makeshift homes.

**HEALTH COMPLAINTS**

An 11-year-old girl said, “While walking to the place where I sell bread, a broken glass got into my foot. I was in pain for two weeks but I did not go to hospital.” Another 13-year-old boy who migrated from Wellega explained, “ I have problems with my ears and eyes. Every morning when I get up I feel sick. But I do not go to hospital since my mother is dead”.

Comparatively the children who live with their parents or relatives are in a better position. The assessment found that in many cases the whole family shares a single room or two small rented rooms. Many of the children share beds with up to six siblings. Often the sharing includes a parent. A significant number of children, for example in the case of Addis- 59.8%, sleep either on foam mattresses or sacks and rags. Many have cracked walls and leaking roofs. Especially during the rainy season, after long hours of work in the cold and rain, a lot of them are not able to sleep.

There are times when I don't get good sleep. Especially difficult are the rainy seasons since the wall and the roof leak.  
A 12 year old female peddler

Our house is very small; it is a bit more spacious than a dog's house.  
A 7 year old female peddler

My problem is housing: the wall is splitted and broken, the roof leaks

The situation with those sleeping on the street or in makeshift homes is even worse. Aside from uncomfortable sleeping areas and rough weather, those who sleep on the streets get their money, goods, and shoe shining boxes stolen and they are abused, physically and sexually, by older street children.

Street children work to support their families and themselves at the expense of their education. In this assessment it is only 63.1% of the children that are currently attending school. More than three quarter of the remaining children have dropped out of school while the rest have never attended any kind of schooling. The interviews revealed that the children are aware their future is at stake because of dropping out, and most expressed the desire to go back to school if certain conditions are met. These include guarantees for some kind of constant income to cover the expenses for food, shelter, and clothing.

The dropouts discontinued their education due to various problems they encountered. These include poverty, broken homes, and the responsibility of caring for younger siblings.

How can I continue education without having enough to eat? A 12 year old male peddler
My younger siblings cry if I do not show up to feed them. A 13 year old male
My father and mother were constantly fighting and eventually when my mother left and I left home following her. It was my mother who used to pay my school fee. A 12 year old street boy

Unfortunately many very bright children drop out. An 11-year-old boy from a displaced family explained that he discontinued his education when he was in grade 2. He indicated that during the first semester of his last school year he ranked 5 in his class, and at the end of the second semester he stood 2<sup>nd</sup>. Currently he is selling lottery tickets full-

time along with his mother and younger sister. Some, especially domestic worker tolerate underpayment and, sometimes, abuses in order not to discontinue their education. A 14-year-old housemaid explained, “Though I do not live a good life where I am working now, I keep staying there. If I leave I might not find employers who would allow me to go to evening school.”

In addition to the stresses the children undergo because of their work and the responsibilities they shoulder, many of them often worry. Their worries or fears include lack of education and the prospect of unemployment, what they would eat tomorrow, and what to give to their families. They also worry when they do not earn what they consider enough.

The current assessment shows that in Ethiopia, quite a number of children are working on the streets, in garages, and as domestics. Many of these children are underfed and with no proper clothing. More than a quarter of them have dropped out of school. Almost all those who go to school are attending half-day schools. Many have difficulties paying school fees, buying school supplies and uniforms. A lot of them have health problems for which they do not get treatment. More than half of them work for more than 5 hours a day out on the streets in all kinds of weather. After long hours of, sometimes, tiring jobs they do not get proper food and sleep. Their situation requires serious attention for two reasons: their rights should be protected and as individuals responsible for future survival and development of their countries, they should be given every opportunity to grow up to be responsible citizens.

## **Conclusion**

The limited and scanty studies so far done on street children show that the problem is increasing at an alarming rate. It is worsened by some factors such as economic crisis, displacement caused by war and political instability, and rapid and uncontrolled urbanization.

The current assessment shows that there are a large number of children working in the cities and major towns. A number of factors push these children to work on the streets: poverty, broken homes, and death of parents are some of them. This is similar to the findings of previous studies by MoLSA and MoLSA/Radda Barnen. It is also revealed that parents, relatives, and friends initiate most of the children to work.

Child labor is characterized by situations that hurt children's healthy growth and development. This study shows that many of the children work on the streets in all weather without proper shelter and clothing. Many suffer from different illnesses, and drop out of school or compromise their education. Furthermore, these children suffer from abuses by different people including employers and street gangs.

Due to poverty the children do not get proper food, and their housing condition is poor. As a result many have said that they do not get enough sleep. Aside from these, the children have worries and stresses. Two of the major reasons for their worries are explained to be uncertainty about the future emanating from unreliable sources of income and family responsibility. This supports MoLSA's 1995's findings on the problems of street children.

In general the study clearly suggests that the rights of the child as stipulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child are not protected and we find a significant number of children in harmful situations. In order to mitigate the problem, the society at large must be educated on the life of children working on the streets and accept it as one of the worst forms of child labour in Ethiopia.

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## Appendix I

### Interview Guide for Children Working on the Streets

#### 1. Personal Data

- Name (if not offensive or if it does not make the child defensive)
- Sex
- Migrant status
- hurts, sickness, accidents
- main needs, problems
- future plans, desires

#### 2. Family context

- parents alive, living together
- parents working, what
- who is the primary care giver or bread winner
- number and age of siblings
- good and bad things about family situation

#### 3. Present living condition

- living with family or others
- eating what times, where, how long, what conditions
- sleeping, what times, where, how long, what conditions
- good things and bad things about current condition

#### 4. Schooling

- ever attended school, if so where, for how long, when
- attending now, when
- if no longer attending, why stopped, whether wants to return, why
- good and bad things about school

#### 5. Background

- age at which child started work for the first time
- who asked the child to work
- how many jobs s/he has had so far
- doing how many jobs now
- length of stay at the current work, and age started
- common name of the job
- location
- specific tasks performed by the children
- description of each job performed by the children
- good and bad things about each job
- how the child started the job
- if applicable the employment process

- obligations
- freedom to leave
- terms and condition of work
  - number of working hours in a day
  - number of working days in a week
  - average earning of the child
  - mode of payment
  - timing of payment
  - how s/he uses the money earned if paid
  - shifts
  - good and bad things about the terms of and conditions

**6. Working environment**

- working alongside immediate family
- other people present
- ratio of children to adults
- drinking water, toilet facilities, lighting, if applicable
- freedom of movement and interaction, if applicable

**7. Risks (threatening condition)**

- physical risks
  - weight lifted/carried/
  - physical abuse or beating by other children or adults
  - opportunities for learning or advancement
- Emotional or mental risks
  - level of stress
  - fear or worrying situation

## Interview Guide for Child Prostitutes

### **1. Personal Data**

- Name (if not offensive or if it does not make the child defensive)
- Sex
- Migrant status
- Hurts, sickness, accidents
- Main needs, problems
- Future plans, desires

### **2. Family context**

- Parents alive, living together
- Parents working, what
- Who is the primary care giver or bread winner
- Number and age of siblings
- Good and bad things about family situation

### **3. Present living condition**

- Living with family or others
- Eating what times, where, how long, what conditions
- Sleeping, what times, where , how long, what conditions
- Good things and bad things about current condition

### **4. Schooling**

- Ever attended school, if so where, for how long, when
- Attending now, when
- If no longer attending, why stopped, whether wants to return, good and bad things about school

### **5. Job**

- How did you get into prostitution?
- Have you had another job before?
- If yes, what did you do and why did you quit the job?
- What do you want to do in the future?

### **6. Earning and Spending**

- Do you always get clients?
- How much is your average daily income?
- How do you spend your money?
- Do you have to support your family?

### **7. Problems and Prospects**

- What problems do you encounter when you stay out on the streets late in the evening?
- What problems do you encounter with your clients?
- What is your problem in terms of food, clothes, and housing?
- What is your future plan?

## **8. Health Issues**

- Do you take any precaution to protect yourself from STDs including HIV/AIDS?
- Do you have sufficient information about HIV/AIDS?
- Do clients cooperate with you in terms of using protection?

## Interview Guide for Child Domestic Worker

### **1. Background Information**

- age
- sex
- place of birth and growing up
- place of family residence
- relationship to the household

### **2. Recruitment**

- method of recruitment
- approximate date of recruitment
- any previous job
- degree of contact with parents or guardians
- any visit home

### **3. Terms and Condition of Employment**

- tasks performed
- working hours
- rest breaks
- activities for leisure, eg. TV
- payment issues

### **4. Boarding and Food**

- where the child sleeps
- sleeping conditions and hours
- meals, number of meals
- quantity and quality of food
- quality of living condition
- clothing

### **5. Education**

- whether the child goes to school
- if not when did s/he stop
- if the child never had gone to school why

### **6. Health**

- child's health status

## **Questions for Employers**

### **1. Condition of Child Domestic**

- level of satisfaction with the child domestic
- views and ideas about child domestic labor
- schooling of child domestic
- use of discipline
- modes and frequency of payment
- modes of recruitment
- contacts with parents

### **2. Knowledge of Child Rights**

- awareness of child's rights
- existence of organizations and associations that can help
- existence of laws for protection