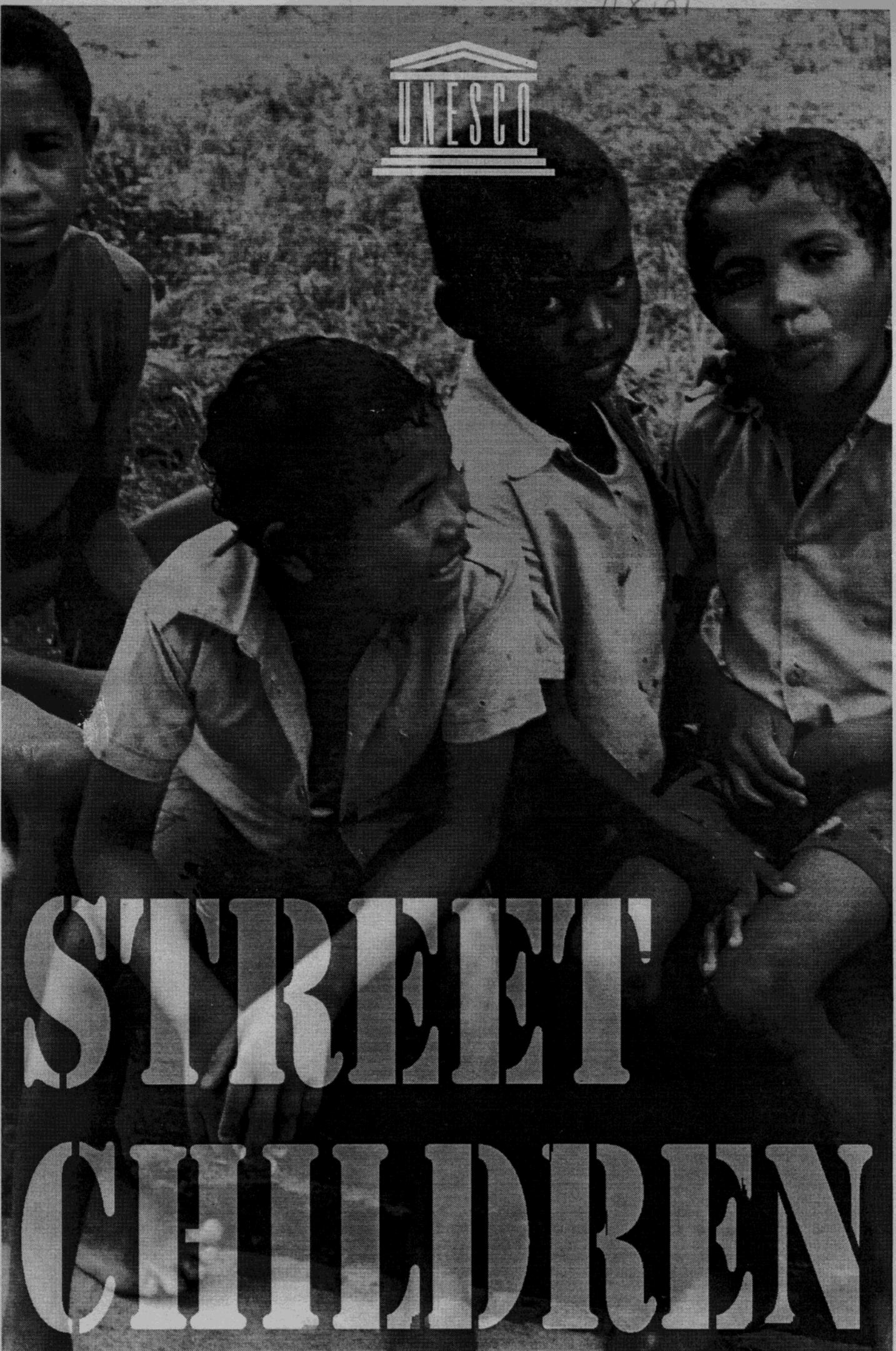


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STREET CHILDREN



**Programme
for the Education of
Children in Difficult
Circumstances**

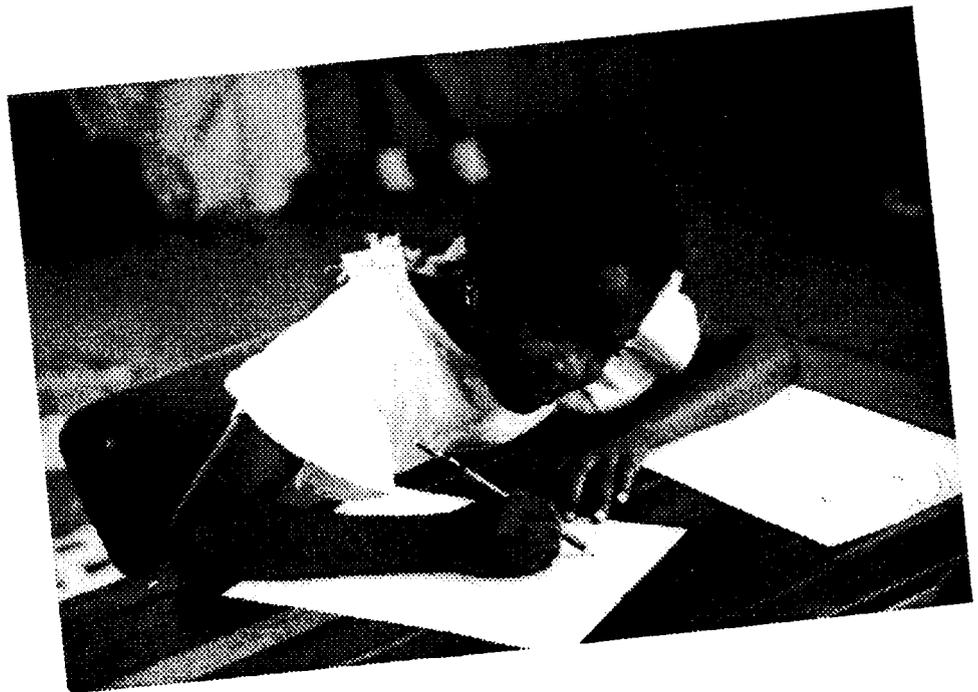
Street Children, Working children...

Access to education,
even for the most destitute

June 1999



Let us give them back hope...



Shattered childhood



And yet,

- * *Over 100 million children are struggling for their survival in destitution and distress*
- * *At least 120 million children (5-14 year olds) are being exploited at work. Many of them are doing difficult and dangerous jobs exposed to serious accidents*
- * *Thousands of children participate in, are victims of, or suffer the consequences of armed conflict*
- * *Many others are subject to sexual abuse and corrupt or illegal practices*
- * *Even more are victims of illegal drug traffic*

Children excluded from education

Childhood is synonymous with parental love, family protection, the joy of discovering things, play activities, initiation into a harmonious social life. Unfortunately for thousands of children all over the world, this time of life is, or will be no more than a sad and dark souvenir that they should try to forget, which may prove to be in vain, once these children have become adults.

Street and working children often live in dreadful conditions and are victims of all sorts of abuse. Many of them suffer from various diseases due to these deplorable conditions. Many of them have hardly been to school or no longer go to school. If these children survive hunger, thirst, dangerous and badly paid jobs, prostitution, sexual abuse, diseases, exclusion, police harassment, problems with the law, imprisonment, drugs that are destructive and cheap, and household jobs little more than slavery, they will grow up to be either unalphabet or illiterate adults.

They do not know the joys of childhood and youth. Almost always left out of government budgets, only social welfare organisations, religious institutions and individuals cater to the urgent survival needs: food, shelter, clothing, health care, legal assistance, sanitation, protection against violence, undeserved repression, and the various abuses practiced in the name of the law. A bigger problem for their future is that they do not have easy access to school.

And yet, education is an individual right that all nations recognize. At the World Conference on Education for All, the international community recalled this fundamental right: "More than 40 years ago, the nations of the world, speaking through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, asserted that everyone has a right to education" (...). (Therefore), "Basic education should be provided to all children, youth and adults. An active commitment must be made to removing educational disparities which may exist towards certain groups. The poor, street and working children (...) should not suffer any discrimination in access to learning opportunities". (Article 3)

Education is the only way to help these children break out of the infernal cycle of poverty, struggle for survival in the street or servile jobs and ignorance.

UNESCO's commitment to children excluded from education

At the Jomtien Conference (Thailand, 1990), UNESCO was entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that its Member States took steps to eliminate disparities in education that may exist to the detriment of certain groups: the poor, street and working children.

Following this Conference and in response to the wish expressed by the international community concerning Education for All, UNESCO, in collaboration with UNICEF, elaborated and set up in 1992, an Education Programme on behalf of these children.

This Programme aims to meet, as directly and concretely as possible, children's educational needs, as well as the professional needs of partners in the field: street educators, the law and order authorities, psychologists specializing in helping children in difficult circumstances, and social workers in general. Among the various services organized for the children by the civil society, education and vocational training appear to be the most difficult to set up, manage and finance within rehabilitation projects. In fact, the issue is,

How to durably integrate a child in despair and who is at odds with society into the education and training process?

How to ensure they remain within the formal or non-formal education system?

What form of education and what curricula should be proposed?

How - through education - to prevent children who grow up in risky surroundings from taking to the streets?

How to help children integrate society at the end of the education process?

How to prevent them from falling back into despair?

These are some of the questions that preoccupy those concerned by the problems of these children, and around which UNESCO organizes its action.

The Programme's main lines of action

Awakening public awareness

- ✓ *to the rights of these children and to their particular educational needs*

Through the production and distribution of various information materials

Technical collaboration with professionals in the field

- ✓ *to develop or reinforce their professional competence in order to facilitate access to basic education and quality training to as many children and adolescents as possible*

Collaboration with the educators of street children and adolescents, social workers and experts in the fight against the social exclusion and marginalization of children and youth

Developing partnerships and mobilizing public and private financial resources

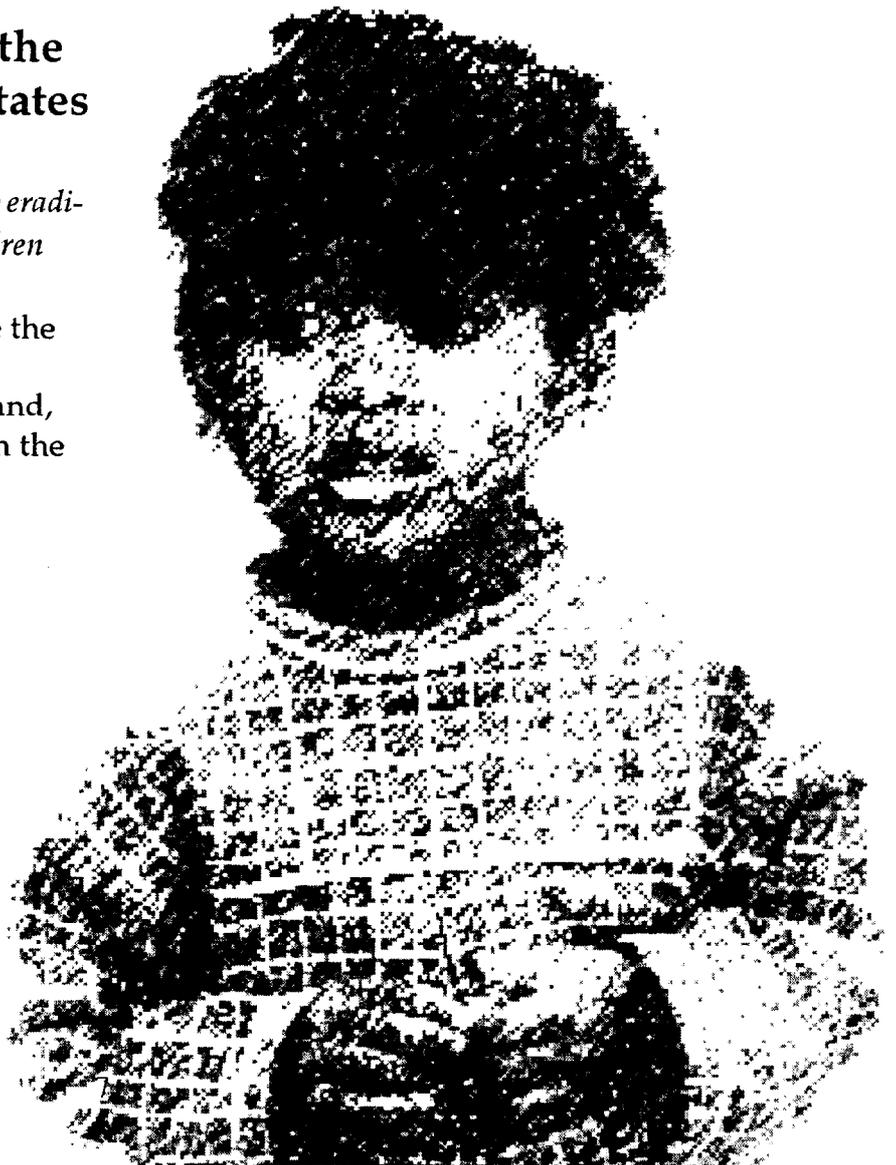
- ✓ *for a greater efficiency of action to be taken, and to meet the urgent educational needs of these children*

Private and public, national and international institutions / United Nations system: UNICEF, WFP, ILO, UNFPA, UNAIDS

Mobilization to transform the political will of Member States into concrete action

- ✓ *to undertake durable measures and help eradicate the root causes of the street children phenomenon...*

Setting up pilot projects which require the collaboration of the ministries and the public sector institutions on the one hand, and the private sector organizations on the other.



Objectives of the Programme

The Programme aims to meet three kinds of educational needs:

1. The priority educational needs of children

- Socialisation, basic education, vocational training;
- Stationery, teaching and learning materials;
- Conditions conducive to the success of education and training - physical security, liberty and tranquility (protection from the harassments inflicted in the name of law and order);
- Premises and methods specially adapted to the needs of teaching and training, as well as the protection of stationery and teaching and learning material..

Possible Actions

- ✓ Identify on-going projects in the field, that cater to the educational needs of children, collaborate with them and give them appropriate support;
- ✓ Facilitate the production and/or acquisition of teaching and learning material;
- ✓ Support the elaboration of programmes and methods of education;
- ✓ Promote and facilitate cooperation between educators, social workers and law and order authorities by organizing training workshops;
- ✓ Heighten public awareness.

2. The needs of street educators

- Basic or in-service training (psychology and pedagogy for street and working children);
- Instructional material;
- Exchange of experiences between educators from other countries or regions;
- Quantitative and qualitative knowledge of national situations;
- Recognition by the State and local authorities.

Possible Actions

- ✓ Study national situations in cooperation with partners in the field;
- ✓ Take a census of street and working children in the country;
- ✓ Organize or support regional teacher-training workshops;
- ✓ Produce or support the production of teaching material;
- ✓ Print and distribute, at the national and international level, professional information documents;
- ✓ Organize meetings between educators, social workers and legal personnel (lawyers, judges) and law and order authorities (police).



The educational needs of *field* projects

- Recognition by the Government, donors and the public;
- Sufficient financial provisions (ensure that the total expenditure of the education programme is covered);
- Training or further training for personnel in rehabilitation centres (prevent children escaping from the centres and returning to the streets);
- Training of community educators (prevent children living in poor areas from becoming street children);
- Training in the management of the centres;
- Training or further training for social workers (contact with the families to prevent children from taking to the streets);
- Collaboration between educators and other intervention groups (social workers, magistrates, lawyers, magistrates dealing with minors' affairs, police, etc.).

Possible Actions

- ✓ Inform the public through the mass media, publications and films;
- ✓ Incite the creation of collaborative mechanisms between the projects, NGOs and the Government; establish regional information exchange networks;
- ✓ Encourage countries to organize special events for children;
- ✓ Make Governments and donors aware of the problem;
- ✓ Organize training workshops or seminars for project managers;
- ✓ Support the construction of buildings suited to the needs of the children and the educators.

A major challenge: eradicating the exclusion of children through the political will of States

Since 1993, UNESCO's activities in Member States for street children have consisted in financing the educational needs of children in rehabilitation and education projects set up by non-governmental organizations in the field.

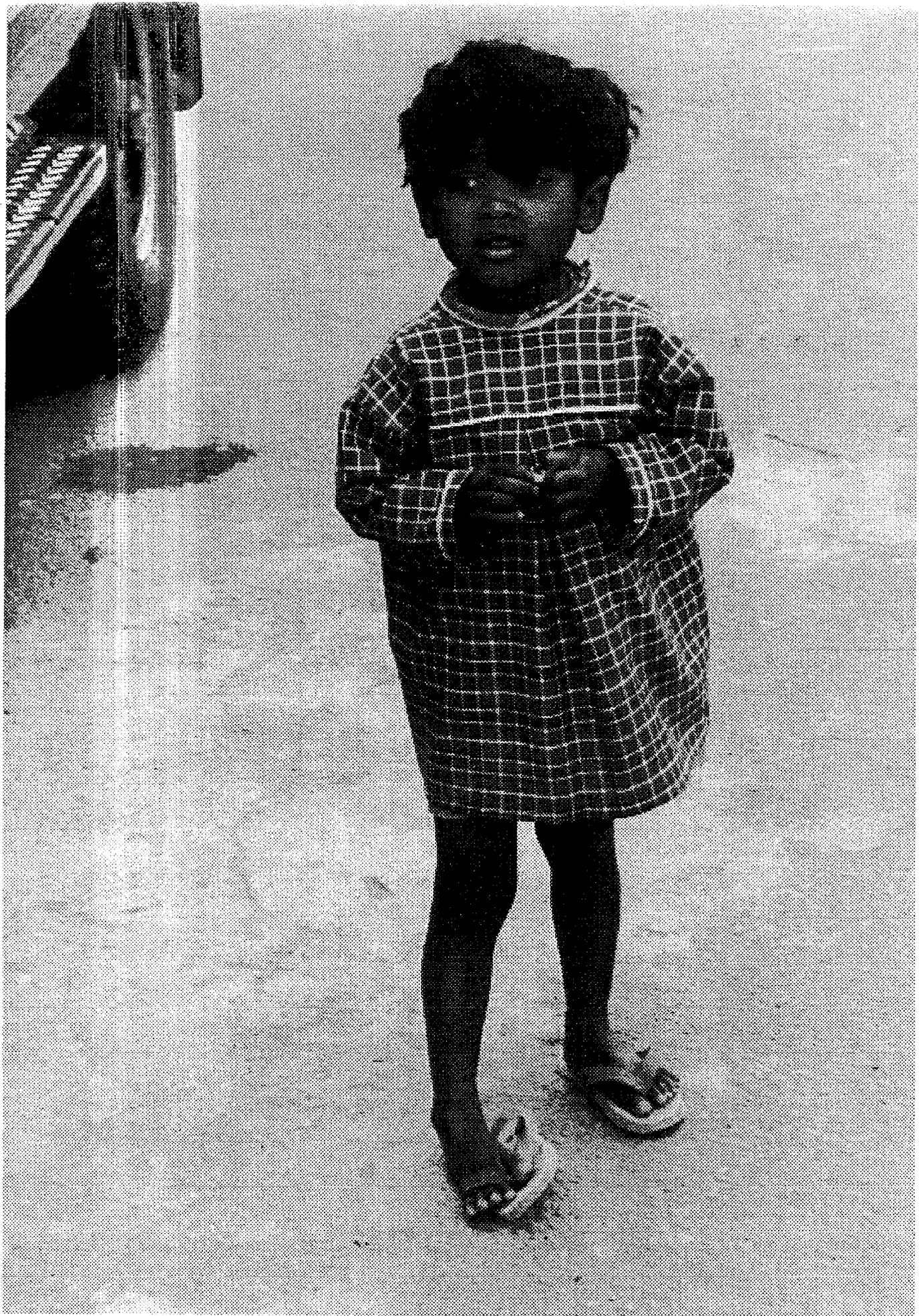
These organizations, committed to helping street children, are doing essential and remarkable work. But, faced with the ever-increasing phenomenon of social exclusion and the exploitation of children all over the world, there is no doubt that without the political will of governments, this problem cannot be resolved since it is an integral part of the fabric of society. The radical cure to the problem of social exclusion of children therefore lies with the State.

For this reason, since 1995, UNESCO is trying to encourage the political will of its Member States into making an active commitment, through education, in the fight against the social exclusion of children and youth. Hence, the launching of pilot projects capable of creating synergy between individual efforts and political will.

The objectives of these projects are, on the one hand, to take into account as many basic - educational and vital - needs of children as possible, and on the other, promote national partnerships through local working groups in which the government holds the highest responsibility. This alliance takes form within a national work group acting under the responsibility of a government institution, namely the National Commission for UNESCO or a municipal or regional authority. To date, pilot projects have been launched in Namibia, Mali, Brazil, Romania, Russia and Guinea.

Preparation and launching of a pilot project: the different stages

- 1** *Within the framework of this Programme, UNESCO proposes the creation of a pilot project, in collaboration with the National Commission or with the Municipality concerned, whose aim is to meet the educational priorities of children and youth in difficult circumstances, in particular the street and working children.*
- 2** *UNESCO, in close collaboration with the National Commission, organizes a seminar to establish a local working group in the town that will be in charge of carrying out the project under the responsibility of a public authority. This group will be made up of representatives of the town council concerned, ministries and other public institutions responsible for basic education, teacher-training, social and health concerns, public security, justice..., as well as representatives from non-governmental organizations and other private bodies concerned.*
- 3** *During the seminar, the group thus formed, will identify (in collaboration with UNESCO), the priorities of the children and youth of the town. This will serve as the basis for formulating the pilot project.*
- 4** *The local group will identify the human, material and financial resources available in the country which will durably support the project. It will, in collaboration with UNESCO, define the criteria, means and methods of evaluation of the project.*
- 5** *The group will submit interim reports to UNESCO and the public authority concerned and a final completion report at the end of the pilot phase.*
- 6** *The government or public authority, UNESCO's partner, then becomes responsible for the project and its future.*



Examples of projects

→ Namibia

In 1991, the Namibian Government launched in its capital city, Windhoek, a programme for the re-integration of street children into the school and the community. This programme is addressed both to children in difficult circumstances, and their parents.

Since 1995, UNESCO has contributed to the success of this programme by launching a pilot project in close cooperation with the Namibian National Commission for UNESCO. A national team consisting of representatives from various ministries (Social Affairs, Education and Culture, Home Affairs, etc.), the Municipality of Windhoek and NGOs was set up. This national working group has set up an Interim Night Shelter that provides basic survival needs to underprivileged children, and a Day Care Centre that provides educational and training activities.

Partners

National

- The Ministries:
 - Health and Social Affairs
 - Youth and Sports
 - Basic Education and Culture
 - Justice
- Vocational Training Institutions
- The Municipality of Windhoek
- Sports Associations
- The National Commission for UNESCO
- The University of Windhoek

International

- UNESCO (Education Programme for Children in Difficult Circumstances and the Section for Preventive Education)
- UNESCO-Namibia
- UNICEF- Namibia

Achievements

- The construction of two centres (one day and one night).
- Organization of sub-regional training workshop for social workers and educators for street children on the theme: "Promoting the access to basic education for street children and working children - the psychology of children in difficult situations".

Current situation of the project

The two centres are continuing to function

- The Interim Night Shelter (situated in the centre of Windhoek) is a transitional facility. Children picked up in the streets by night patrolmen are brought by the police to the centre and taken care of by a reception team made up of social workers and nurses. The children also have a medical check-up and are given treatment if needed.

They are then handed over to social workers who first take care of their survival needs (food, sanitation, etc.) before re-integrating them into their families or, if not, finding them an adoptive family and integrating them into a school structure or vocational training.

■ The Day Centre (situated in Katutura, a populous suburb of the capital) is a place for socialisation. Children from different backgrounds (street children or not) go there to learn how to live together and develop their creative talents in painting, carpentry, art...; they are trained by a team of educators and artists (theatre, choreography, music, dance...).

What remains to be done

- Production of a video film on street children in Namibia and on the two centres;
- Publication of a manual for educators and social workers of street children, based on the findings of the Windhoek training workshop on the psychology of a child in a difficult situation;
- Extend the project to other towns in Namibia as of the year 2000;
- Establishment by the Government at the University of Windhoek of a course on the psychology of children in difficult situations, for the basic or further training for social workers and educators in the country and in countries within the sub-region.

→ Mali

In 1995, UNESCO and the Malian Commission for UNESCO launched a project to strengthen education and the social reintegration of children in difficult circumstances in the urban and suburban areas of Bamako.

Partners

National:

- The Malian Commission for UNESCO
- The Ministries of Basic and Secondary Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research
- The National Working Group
- National and international NGOs (ENDA etc.)

International:

- UNESCO
- UNICEF-Mali
- UNDP-Mali

Achievements

- Production of a first version of training modules to train educators and social workers working with children living in difficult circumstances.
- A pluri-disciplinary national centre to develop the education of children in difficult circumstances (with a capacity of 100 children) is under construction and will be equipped.

Current situation

Construction work (which had been suspended due to administrative problems) was resumed in November 1998.

What remains to be done

- Finish the construction work and furnish the buildings;
- Get the educators and social workers in contact with children in difficult circumstances to test the training modules;
- Publish these modules in the form of a manual for the use of educators and social workers;
- Mobilize funds with the assistance of the government to solve financial problems;
- Undertake a study to identify the real causes of the phenomenon of exclusion in Mali so that strategies, other than curative or urgent, can be defined that would help to remedy the problems once they are already posed, but also and above all, prevent them from happening.

→Togo

The CFP/ABC - the Centre for Professional Training Atelier Bon Conseil was created in July 1980 in Agomé-Kpalimé by a young Swiss mechanic and a Togolais partner. The aim of this Centre is to give professional training to penniless young people who have abandoned school and to help them set up their own business. Training makes use of recuperation and recycling of used or nearly new tools from developed countries.

Training is provided in general mechanics and fitting; carpentry and roof-making; iron work and welding; car mechanics and electricity; steel-work and painting.

In 1996, the CFP/ABC received financial aid from UNESCO to consolidate its educational capacities. The Centre then undertook reconstruction work and fitted out the centre with equipment in order to respond to its new orientation of preparing future job creators.

Partners

National:

- Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training

International:

- The Swiss association APAA (Association for the Promotion of Handicrafts in Africa)
- German Association Hilfe Für Togo
- UNESCO

Achievements

- The restoration of CFP/ABC: construction of training workshops.
- Purchase of equipment.
- Purchase of photocopying machines.

Current state of the project

Today, the Centre is managed by the local people. Besides theoretical and practical instruction, discussions on hygiene, environment, home economy, drug addiction are organized.

What remains to be done

- Provide the CFP/ABC with more working tools in order to strengthen training;
- Provide other theoretical trainers;
- Foresee refresher courses or training for the instructors;
- Build a specialized scientific and technical library.

→ Romania

UNESCO gave financial and technical support to the "Association Equilibre Romania", which undertakes socio-educative work for the street children. UNESCO also contributed to the renovation of the Gavroche shelter in Bucarest. This centre, established in 1995, seeks to facilitate the integration of children into a family (their own or adoptive), in the school and society. The facilities of this centre are organized to help the child find himself again, know his rights and develop his independence.

The Romanian project also helped develop the professional capacities of the social workers and educators working in the streets, as well as the establishment of a network of professionals and partners working in this field. Public social work institutions who were badly in need of training and further training are largely represented.

Partners

National:

- Ministry of Employment and Social Services
- The organization «Salvati copii»
- The Commercial Bank of Romania

International:

- UNESCO
- Equilibre France Association
- UNICEF
- French Embassy

Achievements

- Restoration of Gavroche, the shelter for the street children of Bucarest.
- Publication of a guide in Romanian for street educators and social workers.
- Establishment of a network of partners working with street children.

Current state of the project

The Gavroche shelter is fully effective.

What remains to be done

- Publish and distribute, in English and in French, the guide for the street educators and social workers;
- Increase the number of shelters, based on the Gavroche model;
- Strengthen collaboration between social workers from Central and Eastern Europe;
- Continue further training for social workers and educators;
- Undertake a national study on the underlying causes of the social exclusion of children.

→ Brazil

The project was launched in 1997 in the town of Salvador de Bahia and aims at strengthening and continuing the "Conseils Tutélaires". These Councils were established by Federal Law in 1990 and their priority was the protection of the rights, lives and the access to education of children and adolescents in difficult circumstances. In 1997, there were only three "Conseils Tutélaires" (out of the 17 foreseen) in Salvador de Bahia, which is insufficient to cope with the extent of the phenomenon of children in difficult circumstances. UNESCO therefore decided to give financial and technical support to consolidate and extend these Councils with a view to changing them into instruments of reform and action for Education for All.

Partners

National:

- Municipality of Salvador de Bahia
- Foundation «Cidade Mae»
- Public Security Secretariat of the State of Bahia (Police)
- 16 Brazilian NGOs

International:

- UNESCO
- UNESCO-Brazil

Achievements

Restoration and equipment of three centres for "Conseils Tutélaires".

Current state of the project

To date, the three Councils are operational and the Municipality of Salvador de Bahia has taken over by financing five more.

What remains to be done

Consolidate the existing Councils (technical and financial support, supply of logistics and personnel) and increase the number of Councils in Salvador de Bahia.

→Guinea

Established in 1998 by UNESCO and the Guinean National Commission for UNESCO with financial support from UNAIDS, the aim of the project is to strengthen the professional capacities in prevention of drug abuse and Aids of social workers and educators of children in difficult circumstances.

Four major activities are foreseen: (1) restoration of premises in order to create a listening centre for children in difficulty and to train social workers and educators; (2) develop and publish teaching aids for the preventive education of street children; (3) undertake a qualitative and quantitative survey on drugs and aids among street children; (4) organize a sub-regional training workshop on preventive education (drugs and AIDS) for children in difficult circumstances.

Partners

National:

- Guinean National Commission UNESCO
- Ministry of pre-university education
- Guinean NGOs

International:

- UNESCO (Education Programme for Children in Difficult Circumstances and the Section for preventive education)
- UNAIDS
- UNESCO-Guinea

Achievements

- Sub-regional training workshop on preventive education, held in 1999 in which six countries participated: Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Senegal, Togo and Guinea.
- Each country developed a short-, medium- and long-term plan of action for proposal to their respective governments in order to set up or strengthen existing activities in the fight against AIDS and drug abuse among street children.

Current state of the project

Restoration of the training centre started in 1999. The national team is working on the development of teaching tools and on the survey.

What remains to be done?

- Publish and distribute teaching tools, as well as the survey;
- Continue sub-regional cooperation in preventive education;
- Develop activities at the sub-regional level to raise the awareness of the forces of law and order to the situation of street children.

→ Russia

UNESCO supports financially and technically the New Kortcheva Culture and Education Centre, established in 1989 at Konakovo (Population 45,000) in the province of Tver. The main aim of the programme is to maintain or to reintegrate the majority of the children and youth in difficult circumstances into vocational training given by the formal or non formal education system. Arts (music, fine arts) and sports are the means used to ensure the integration of children into the programme is long-lasting and the completion of their education a success. One of the priority activities is the fight against school drop-out. The Centre admits about 500 excluded children (boys and girls, 6 to 18 years-old). Preventive activities are also taken by the Centre: social services are offered to families where there is the risk of children taking to the streets. The Russian National Commission for UNESCO recognizes the Centre as a model that should be reproduced elsewhere in the country.

Partners

National:

- Municipality of Konakovo
- Orthodoxe Church of Konakovo
- Municipality of Tver
- University of Tver (Departement of Psychology)

International:

- UNESCO

Achievements

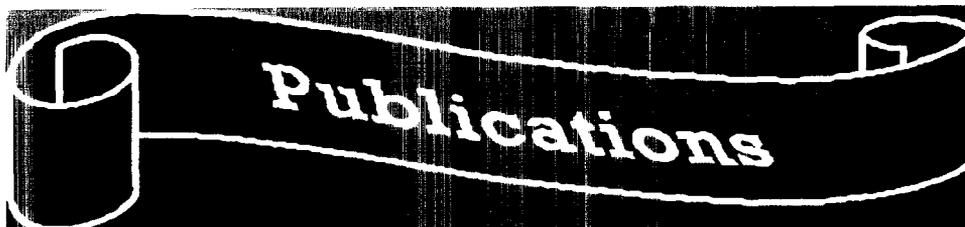
- Restoration of the Centre: classrooms, sports and artistic facilities; management tools.
- Considerable increase in the number of children admitted and improvement of the services rendered.

Current state of the project

Admissions have increased, education and training activities strengthened or enlarged.

What remains to be done

- Continue the work of restoration (repairs, purchase of supplies);
- Obtain instructional materials: musical instruments, costumes, paints;
- Establish a programme for international contacts and exchanges;
- Organize a workshop to draw up an education programme for social workers in the field of psychology for children in difficult circumstances;
- Establish the education programme for social workers at the University of Tver within the framework of the UNESCO's Inter-University Cooperation Programme (UNITWIN).



General publications on the Programme for the Education of Children in Difficult Circumstances

 Fleurs de poussière, Street Children in Africa, by Jean-Pierre Vélis, Editions UNESCO (English, French), 1993

 Working with street children, Programmes for reintegrating street children, UNESCO/ICCB (English, French, Spanish), 1995

 A la recherche des enfants des rues, sous la direction de Stéphane Tessier, Editions Karthala (French), 1998

Manuals / guides for educators and social workers (in preparation)

Philippines :

Non-Formal Basic Education among Street Children - Manual for Street Educators, Childhope Asia Philippines, Manila, 1996

Brazil :

Families, children and social exclusion - Street Children in Rio de Janeiro, UFF/UNESCO/IBECC, Brazil

La violence envers les enfants des rues au Brésil - quelques pistes de réflexion pour la police, 1997

Mali :

Les modules de formation pour les enfants en situation difficile, Mali, 1996

Romania :

Guide du travailleur social et de l'éducateur en Roumanie, 1997

Mexico :

Réhabilitation, éducation, méthodes de gestion de projet, Fondation Juconi, Mexique, 1996

Peru :

Attention et traitement des enfants et des adolescents - cours de formation de la police au Pérou, 1994

Conclusion...



*“We have just enough to live.
But abandon our sisters?
That’s impossible. They will be too disappointed.
We will hold on as long as we can; that helps them”*

Aminata Diallo and Maimouna Pou
Educators of young girls in difficult circumstances
District of Pikine, Dakar, Senegal, 1992



“One thing is for sure: I cannot disown my street friends. But where change is concerned, I am changing, because I noticed that ...”

Sahrify Lazare, 16 years
Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire

***For more information,
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this programme, please send your donation to the
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Education Programme for Children in Difficult Circumstances
Account n° 417/INT/10

***Take back the dignity
that was stolen from you***

***Excluded child, your condition fills
us with indignation***

Your sufferings are our's too

***Destitute, with neither roof nor hope,
We care about your safety***

***Know that you are not alone,
Reach out for the helping hands
that draw you towards hope***

***Fight to take back the dignity that
has been stolen from you***

***Get up and come back
to humanity !!***