



## **Social Issues**

### **Street Children**



#### **Definition:**

A street child is either someone who does not have a home or any place to go at night other than the street pavements and street shop verandas (children of the streets) or a child who sleeps at home in the evening but lives on the streets during the day, perhaps to make money for their families (children on the streets).

#### **Examples:**

The UN estimate that there are 150 million street children world-wide with the number increasing daily. Street children can be found on the streets of many cities in all continents. It is estimated that there are around 60,000 street children in Nairobi, 300,000 in Calcutta and over 500,000 in São Pao.

#### **Why the situation occurs?**

Children can be forced to live on the streets for a variety of reasons. Poverty, domestic violence, death of one or both parents - for example due to AIDS, economic migration to cities, can all be reasons why children end up living on the streets.

Whatever the reason, society has failed to keep families together and failed to protect these children. Society therefore has a responsibility to help them to reintegrate into the community. In ten years time the problem will not be children living on the streets but whole families who exist like this.

The street children may survive by scavenging for food in waste bins and rubbish dumps, sometimes by begging and stealing and other petty crimes. They may sniff glue and take drugs and are often dirty. Many children, girls and boys, are forced to turn to prostitution to survive.

#### **How you can make a difference:**

Tackle the issue - learn about the issue and recognise how children end up on the streets. How is everyday life for them? What difficulties do they face? How can they reintegrate themselves into society? and how can Scouting help? What can you learn from the street children and what can they learn from you?

Use the materials and tools provided to follow the process of:

1. Identifying the problem
2. Developing Awareness and Empathy
3. Taking action
4. Measuring the change

### **Resources and Links:**

Information on the World Organizations of the Scout Movement's Strategic Priority 4: Reaching Out:

<http://www.scout.org/strat/sp4en.shtml> (English)

<http://worldnet.scout.org/stratcd/frsp4/> (French)

WOSM Strategy Promising Practice Documents (English and French) on the Extension Scouting Programme in Kenya for young people who are street children or living in difficult circumstances: <http://www.scout.org/strat/pplist.shtml>

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) website (English, French and Spanish) contains a great deal of information on the situation of street children throughout the world: <http://www.unicef.org>

The United Nations CyberSchoolBus website provides a briefing paper on Child Labour, a situation which can be linked to Street Children:

<http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/briefing/labour/index.htm>

World Scout Conference Resolution 16/90 on the Convention of the Rights of the Child

<http://www.scout.org>

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