Guide

United Nations Human Rights Council

Topic 1: Gender parity: a right of adolescents to self-identification

Topic 2: Orphans and abandoned children: steps to protect and remove children from streets

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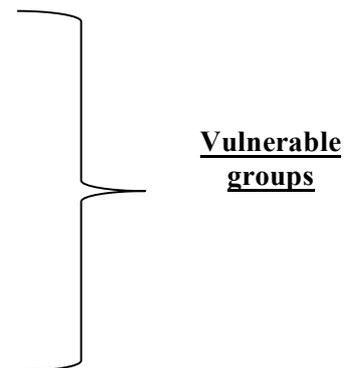# Topic 2: Orphans and abandoned children: steps to protect and remove children from streets

Introduction.

The topic, ***"Orphans and abandoned children: steps to protect and remove children from streets,"*** is another pressing issue that can be witnessed even today developed and developing states.it is caused by various factors, such as families at social risk, lack of interest from the part of substitute families, low-income families, conflict with the law, stress and crisis situations, etc. The UNHRC has a responsibility to protect the rights of children.

Vulnerable groups are direct way to become a street children.

Everyday around the world, millions of children face neglect, abuse and poverty that force them to live in the streets. There, children face more threats: violence, sexual abuse and in extreme cases even murder. They find themselves on the street for various reasons:

- families at social risk
- one-parent families and families with many children
- low-income families
- women with early pregnancy
- migrant, refugee families
- orphans
- abandoned children
- etc.

Vulnerable groups

Unfortunately, orphans and abandoned children the most vulnerable groups. Apart from challenges directly related to the nature of vulnerability, they are facing a huge number of problems: lack of basic skills, which we need for successful post-institution socialization, problems with law, HIV/AIDS, lack of family care, drugs, street violence, etc.

Definition of Key Terms

- **A child** - is a human being between the stages of birth and puberty. The legal definition of child generally refers to a minor, otherwise known as a person younger than the age of majority.

- **Child abandonment** - the practice of relinquishing interests and claims over one's offspring in an extralegal way with the intent of never again resuming or reasserting them. Causes include many social and cultural factors as well as mental illness.

- **An orphan** – is a child whose parents are dead, unknown, or have permanently abandoned him or her.

Background information

Legal abandonment is a persistent issue that has received increasing attention since the 1970s. It refers to non-custodial parents who do not fulfill court-ordered financial responsibilities to their children, regardless of their involvement in their children's lives in other ways. Lack of such support is blamed for substantial poverty among single-parent families. In 2002, it was estimated that up to 30 percent (19.8 millions) of children in the United States, representing 11.9 million families, lived in single-parent households. While the number of single mothers has remained constant in recent years at 9.9 million, the number of single fathers has grown from 1.7 million in 1995 to 2 million in 2002, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau. In 2002, some 19.8 million children lived with one parent. Of these, 16.5 million lived with their mother and 3.3 million with their father[1].

Abandonment can take on a broader form than just legal abandonment. The term is used to refer to the abandonment of a child by one or both parents, either through desertion, divorce, or death. Although death is not legally abandonment, many children experience feelings and fear of abandonment following the death of one or both parents. Abandonment is about the loss of love and a loss of connectedness. To the abandoned adolescent, it involves feelings of betrayal, guilt, loneliness, and lack of self-esteem. Abandonment is a core fear in humans, and this fear is intensified in adolescents[1].

The abandonment of children is an extreme form of child neglect stemming from many causes. Some include family breakdown, irresponsible fatherhood or motherhood, premature motherhood, birth out of wedlock, or the death of one or both parents.

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1- http://www.healthofchildren.com/A/Abandonment.html

Countries and Organizations involved

Caminul Felix

Caminul Felix is an organization that "gives families to the children of the world" by developing family-style orphan villages. Each orphan is given a mother and a father. Assist International has partnered with Caminul Felix in Romania, Thailand, and Africa.[2]

AOET

AOET (Action for Empowerment) is an organization that cares for nearly 4000 children in Africa. The village houses orphans and widows who have been impacted by the AIDS epidemic. Over the years, Assist International has provided 18 homes, a high school, and an elementary school to AOET.[2]

UNICEF

UNICEF published an article "Estimating the number of children in formal alternative care: challenges and results" [3]. What is more, it actively works on the Africa and the post USSR continents.

Africa

So many children are living part or full-time on the streets driven by the loss of family, lack of financial support or intolerable living situations at home. Once on the street, normal childhood ends and going to school can be impossible.[4]

Asia and pacific

Asian Development Bank (ADB) has published a report "At the Margins: Street Children in Asia and the Pacific" on best practice concerning street children in the Asia-Pacific region.[5]

Europe

European Federation of National Organizations Working with the Homeless published a report about the full situation[6]

USA

The average age of a homeless person in the United States is nine, and there are many kids below the age of nine on the streets, some with their families but most trying to survive on their own. Currently there are 1.3 million homeless and runaway street kids in the United States, not counting children who were forced out of their homes, abandoned by the foster care system, or are part of a homeless family. [7]

2- https://www.assistinternational.org/mission/orphans/

3- https://www.unicef.org/eca/CHIABU_3264_2017_FINAL.pdf

4- https://africaeducationaltrust.org/street-children/

5- https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/29163/margins.pdf

6- http://www.feantsa.org/download/en_childrenhomeless-17128526693267845478.pdf

7- http://gvnet.com/streetchildren/USA.htm

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

The Senegalese government's initiative to remove children including those forced to beg by their Quranic teachers from the streets is an important step in reforming a deeply entrenched system of exploitation. On June 30, 2016, Senegalese President Macky Sall ordered that all street children should be removed, placed in transit centers, and returned to their parents. Anyone forcing them to beg would be fined or imprisoned, he wanted[8].

In April 2011, HRC adopted a resolution[9], which occurs all problems connected with street children.

In October 2011, UNICEF Headquarters published a report "Contribution to the OHCHR study on children working and /or living on the street"[10]

In January 2012, UN published the most significant report on street children[11], which characterizes the whole picture of this problem.

8- https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/07/28/senegal-new-steps-protect-talibes-street-children

9- http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/16session/A.HRC.RES.16.12_en.pdf

10- http://www.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/Documents/Issues/Children/Study/UNICEF.doc&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1

11- http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/A.HRC_.19.35_en.pdf

Possible Solutions

The lives of street children can only be improved in one way: get them off the street, and give them safe homes to live in, food to eat, and access to a basic education and learning a trade[12].

It's become obvious that efforts in this direction can barely make a dent in the number of homeless children in various parts of the world that are famous for this problem[12].

So we need to step back to the prior question of what can be done to reduce the number of street children. My solutions don't include shooting them for sport as police are rumored to do in the tough neighborhoods of Rio de Janeiro. But they may be seen by some as almost equally outrageous.

Immediately lift all religious restrictions on the use of medically approved contraceptive devices and birth control pills. Make these devices and pills freely available to everyone. Universally educate the public about the causes and impact of this problem. Make this education compulsory for everyone of reproductive age[12].

Legally restrict the freedom to bear children to people who can demonstrate their ability to provide adequate care for them now, and a commitment to raise them to adulthood. Ruthless sentencing for rape and related assault crimes, even spousal ones.

"Street children need specialized interventions that can respond to and address the complexity of the issues they face. They almost always struggle to integrate into 'standard' children's programs because they live transient lives and often need to work during times when support services are available.They also struggle with the attendance requirements, routine and discipline of formal education and become frustrated that the topics taught are irrelevant to their lives. They can experience discrimination in class for being behind their peers and having limited family support means that they fail to do homework or be presentable for school. As a result, they cannot simply enroll in formal education and benefit from it – the highest numbers of school drop-outs are street children".[13]

International adoption

International adoption provides alternative to maintain the proper balance of children in the world. The Hague Convention of 1993 proposed guidelines based on the protection of children and international cooperation, allowing an orphan to be legally placed with a family.

Many conditions must be met in order to protect the interests of the child. This transparent process helps to avoid the spread of child trafficking.

Still, it is difficult to rely on international adoption in many situations, especially when children have been separated from their family because of war or natural disasters. The primary objective in such cases is to find the child's family, before considering international adoption[14].

12- https://www.quora.com/What-could-be-the-possible-solutions-or-steps-taken-by-any-government-and-by-any-individual-for-improving-the-life-of-street-children

13- http://www.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/Documents/Issues/Housing/Homelessness/CSOs/26102015-Consortium_for_Street_Children.docx&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1

14- https://www.humanium.org/en/orphans/

Useful links:

1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sueY0O4gwWI
2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cr6RYUj34vI
3. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpaR_pTVeBk
4. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nEcl4E17S0
5. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01e0Qe6JZPo
6. https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=26&v=191EbG4easM
7. http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/fight-against-discrimination/education-of-children-in-need/street-children/
8. http://streetchildren.org
9. https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/Evaluation_report_RKLA1_2015-006_CEECIS.pdf
10. https://www.unicef.org/tdad/index_56502.html
11. https://www.un.org
12. https://www.unicef.org
13. http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/HRCIndex.aspx
14. http://www.universal-rights.org/human-rights/human-rights-resolutions-portal/
15. https://documents.un.org/prod/ods.nsf/home.xsp