



# **Economic Livelihoods for Street Children**

## **A Review**

**HIV/AIDS Response Team**

**By Ms. Yoko Kobayashi**

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**Development *Alternatives*, Inc.**

7250 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 200, Bethesda, Maryland 20814  
Tel: (301) 718-8699 Fax: (301) 718-7968 Email: info@dai.com



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## **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ON THE AUTHOR**

Yoko Kobayashi is currently working as a consultant in Social Protection Team at World Bank Institute. Before becoming a consultant, she spent two years in Thailand working for the regional center of Community Development Department of Thai governments. In this role, she supported rural women's income generating activities (IGAs) with a special attention to participatory aspects of occupation groups, and co-wrote a case study on key elements for successful IGAs for rural women. She has also worked in Vietnam writing a project proposal for street children's livelihood programs. Yoko has a master's degree in International Affairs with a focus on Social Change and Development from School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), Johns Hopkins University, and B.A. degrees in Economics and International Relations from Boston University.



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today, more and more children and youth around the world find themselves with no choice but to make a living for their own survival and often that of their families, thereby assuming roles traditionally played by their parents. Various factors have been contributing to the increase in their numbers. The most important is the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In Sub-Saharan Africa, where the epidemic is having a critical impact, more than 3.5 million children under the age of 15 have lost both parents to AIDS and 13 million have lost at least one (Wax, 2003). In these heavily affected countries, HIV/AIDS orphans are expected to number 25 million by 2010 (USAID, 2002). In addition, HIV/AIDS has made more children vulnerable, as they care for sick parents, take on adult responsibilities, and live in weakened families and communities.

The HIV/AIDS Response Team of Development Alternatives Inc. decided to review the lessons learned from economic livelihood programs aimed at improving the economic future of participating street children and youth around the world: programs like vocational training, production workshops, apprenticeship programs, entrepreneurship development training, and microcredit schemes. This report presents those lessons—both positive and negative.

### Lessons Learned

#### *General*

1. Success in helping street-involved children and youth to attain safer, more sustainable livelihoods depends on a range of interdependent factors. Of course, ensuring appropriate methodologies and incorporating essential activities is critical. However, one of the central lessons learned in this review is the importance of taking into account human aspects, from both the demand side (participating children and youth) and the supply side (institutions and program staff).

2. On the demand side, there are the factors of will and maturity. Participants must *want* to build different livelihoods for themselves. They also need to be emotionally and physically ready to take part in program activities. For children and youth who are not ready, programs could also include activities specifically intended to help them prepare to participate meaningfully. Most programs that have succeeded not only in linking participants with economic opportunities but also in helping them maintain sustainable livelihoods address various interdependent developmental needs of participants. Life skills training that deals with issues such as self-awareness, self-esteem, personal development, goal setting, reproductive health, and ways to budget one's own money are often crucial parts of these successful programs. Gaining parental and guardian support will encourage participation. It is possible for a successful program to focus solely on providing economic activities if it arranges for external organizations to provide other services.

3. On the supply side, program staff must have the skills to design and implement economic livelihood activities in ways that effectively take into account the needs and capabilities of the targeted children and youth. Livelihood programs also require staff with economic and business skills. The combination of these two capabilities—social and business—is critical for success: staff must be able both to enhance participation among children and youth and to ensure links with feasible economic opportunities.

4. A trusting relationship between participants and staff is essential. Because, after their difficult experiences, it takes time for most street-involved children and youth to be able to trust an adult, livelihood programs need to maintain program staff who can work with children and youth over the long term. Thus, organizations need to maintain high retention of staff, along with recruiting and training people who are skilled in both facilitation and business. And so while it may not be as immediately obvious as other issues, providing opportunities for professional development and good incentives for staff are critical for the success of economic livelihood programs.

5. Various factors beyond the control of the programs can play a part in the effectiveness of their activities. While programs may prepare children and youth to be *ready* and *willing* to make use of marketable economic skills, it is another matter for them to prepare children and youth who are really able to *maintain* healthier and safer livelihoods. External factors come into play here and include political and security conditions (for example, the local authority's attitude toward street children and their activities, the general safety level on the street), economic conditions (the macroeconomic situation, local market opportunities, and so on), and socio-cultural conditions (such as the stigma attached to children, the existence of a saving culture, the existence of role models in the society). While an economic livelihood program does not have direct control over the external environment, it does need to pay careful attention to it in order to prevent or mitigate any negative effects it could have on program outcomes.

### *Training*

- Vocational training needs to reflect the demands of participating children and youth and their skill levels, as well as the demand of the market.
- Attaining a high skill level is critical in obtaining employment.
- Combining theoretical training and practical training increases participants' employment opportunities.

### *Work Experience/Internship Programs*

- Ties with local business or local government are important in expanding work experience programs and economic opportunities for participating children and youth. They could also be useful in reducing the stigmatization of street-involved children and youth.
- Follow-up supports during work experience programs are critical in helping children and youth to adjust to real work environments.

### *Production Workshop*

- Products must match the interests of participating children and youth, their skill levels, and the demands of the market.
- The quality of products is key to ensuring successful marketing.
- A self-selected natural group building on children and youth support groups works better than an artificially created group.
- Differentiation between training and production activities is required.
- Establishing a real world arrangement through time management and agreement on common guidelines is important for ensuring the quality of products and the productive capacity of trainees.
- Adjusting the means of payment to the immediate income needs of participants could yield better results, preventing some from dropping out for financial reasons.

### *Entrepreneurship Development Training and Microcredit Scheme*

- It is important to make sure that participating youth understand that what they are learning through business development training is not a promise of money; the program is more about self-improvement.
- It may be better to determine the interest rate and repayment cycle for microcredit schemes by consulting with participants, so that the arrangement is appropriate to a participant's economic activities and ensures a sense of ownership. An appropriate interest rate and repayment cycle, as well as a sense of ownership, are critical for sustaining microcredit schemes.
- Base the group-lending methodology on self-selected natural groups rather than artificially selected groups imposed by program officers. Artificial groups tend to lack cohesion and break up after a while.
- Providing uniform basic business development training and microcredit schemes could lead to high competition among participants, which in turn causes saturation of the local market. It is therefore critical to promote and encourage diverse activities among participants by providing various production-oriented trainings in conjunction with business development training and by varying the size of loans provided to participants according to their business plans.
- Promote a culture of saving among participants to ensure the long-term success of their microenterprises.

### *Important Crosscutting Issues*

- Whatever the type of economic activity, taking a holistic approach in addressing children's various welfare and developmental needs is important, especially in the case of youngsters who are completely detached from their own families and any institutional support systems. Often programs are unable to address all basic material, health, emotional, and psychological needs. But a program does need to pay serious attention to these needs and find ways of coordinating necessary services for participants through institutional networking or some other means.
- Providing life skills training, especially in areas of personal development such as self-esteem and goal setting, health, reproductive education, and ways to budget money is critical not only in linking participating children and youth with economic opportunities but also in supporting them to achieve safer, more sustainable livelihoods.
- Maximize the participation of children and youth and learn from them at every stage of the program. Program staff should assume the role of facilitator.
- Good definition and categorization of street-involved children and youth helps sharpen the strategy and makes it possible to differentiate activities for participant subgroups. It helps create group dynamics appropriate for the objective of the program and gives a clearer understanding of costs for different types of children. Note that differentiating among street-involved children and youth depends on local context and the objective of each program. It is also just as important to identify the stage at which each participant is in his or her life and to sequence activities accordingly.
- Overcoming traditional gender-stereotyped training requires special strategies. While there are more street boys than street girls, and female children and youth are often not as visible as their male counterparts, staff designing livelihood programs for girls must take into account gender-specific vulnerability and risk. In general, girls tend to face more extreme difficulties at home, such as abuse, before deciding to leave for the streets. They are also more vulnerable to various types of exploitation on the streets. In addition, in many societies, vocational earning potentials and options for girls are less flexible and more limited than for boys. Livelihood programs need to make conscious efforts to overcome stereotyped training by incorporating the aspirations of girls and by assessing potential opportunities realistically.

### *Organization*

- Organizations need to diversify their funding sources in order to increase their autonomy and sustainability.
- Organizations need to pay attention to institutional development. Professional development is an area which often lacks support from donors and which deserves more attention.

### *Institutional Networking/Coordination*

Economic livelihood programs should enhance networks with other children's organizations. This will increase services available for participants and avoid duplication; it will encourage the local business sector to develop more internship/employment opportunities and reduce stigmas attached to them; and it will impel government agencies and local authorities to create enabling environments for their livelihood activities.

### **A Visual Summary of Key Lessons Learned**

The following table summarizes the key lessons learned from this review and highlights essential factors that affect *outputs*, *outcome* and *impact* of economic livelihood programs with street-involved children and youth. *Outputs* of economic livelihood programs are divided into three categories: (1) activities addressing various developmental needs of children and youth, (2) economic activities, and (3) follow up services with graduates. Economic livelihood programs should take a holistic approach addressing, although not necessarily providing, services for the range of developmental needs of children and youth.

In the table, essential factors affecting the quality of *outputs* and some of the important factors that affect both outcome and impact are listed. *Outcome* of any single economic livelihood program (*outcome* is defined in this review as children and youth who are ready and willing to make use of marketable economic skills) varies, of course, for each participant. Achieving *impact* (defined in this review as children and youth who are able to make and maintain a healthy, safe, and productive livelihood) is also contingent upon child-specific factors as well as external factors.

The list of factors is not comprehensive but reflects those highlighted by interviewees and other studies.

**Livelihoods Program**

**EXTERNAL FACTORS**  
Political/Security condition  
 - Local authority's attitude toward activities  
 - General safety  
 - Abuse of street children  
Economic condition  
 - Macroeconomic factors  
 - Local market opportunity  
Socio-cultural factors  
 - Stigma problem  
 - Saving culture  
 - The existence of role model in the society

**OUTPUT I**  
 Activities addressing various developmental needs of children/youth

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**OUTPUT II**  
 Economic activities based on both marketability and demand and skill level of children/youth

**OUTCOME**  
 Children and youth ready and willing to make use of marketable economic skills and life skills

**OUTPUT III**  
 - Follow-up services with graduates (consultation/trainings/provision of credits to start up microenterprise)  
 - Continuous efforts to cope/mitigate negative influences of external factors

**IMPACT**  
 Children and youth in reality able to make and maintain healthy, safe and productive livelihood

Important factors that will affect quality of outcome I, II, and III

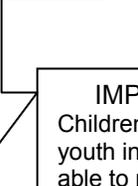
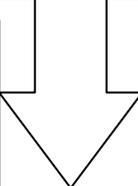
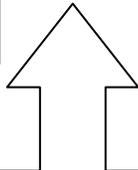
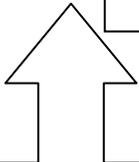
- (1) Intervention
  - Appropriate component and sequencing
  - Key methodology (participatory methods, holistic approach, use of locally appropriate typology of street involved children/youth, overcoming gender stereotyped training, provision of trainings based on marketability and demand/skills of participating children/youth etc)
- (2) Supply-side factors
  - Program staff (high retention of staff, staff with facilitation skills and understanding of needs of children/youth, staff with economic skills to ensure market links and quality of products)
  - Organization
  - Institutional networking/coordination
- (3) Demand-side factors
  - Factors that affect their *will* and *capacities* to participate in programs and attain better livelihoods (awareness/realization of the importance of leaving the street, peer support systems, right dynamics among participants, certain level of stability, readiness to express their demands etc)
- (4) INTERFACE between supply and demand sides
  - TRST relationship between program staff and children to ensure participation of participants, to enhance their self-confidence and sense of ownership

**Child-specific Factors**

- Age
- Gender
- A level of self-confidence
- Relation of children to street and to family (street living, street working, etc.)
- A pre-program experiences/skill

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## INTRODUCTION

Today, more and more children and youth around the world find themselves with no choice but to make a living for their own survival and often that of their families, thereby assuming roles traditionally played by their parents. Various factors have been contributing to the increase in their numbers. The most important is the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In Sub-Saharan Africa, where the epidemic is having a critical impact, more than 3.5 million children under the age of 15 have lost both parents to AIDS and 13 million have lost at least one (Wax, 2003). In these heavily affected countries, HIV/AIDS orphans are expected to number 25 million by 2010 (USAID, 2002). In addition, HIV/AIDS has made more children vulnerable, as they care for sick parents, take on adult responsibilities, and live in weakened families and communities. The number of children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS is expected to increase until 2020 or 2030 (IFRC, 2002). The latest version of the USAID report *Children on the Brink* also points out that children orphaned from other causes deserve equal attention, since the impact of a parent's death is always devastating. By 2010, 106 million children under the age of 15 are expected to have lost at least one parent worldwide (USAID, UNAID, UNICEF, 2002).

In the face of this unprecedented challenge, it is imperative that serious attention be paid to the economic livelihood of vulnerable children and youth. Past experiences have taught the international development community that various developmental needs of children and youth are interdependent and that dealing with one need in isolation from others is not effective. In reality, for example, an economic livelihood is often inseparable from access to safety and physical health. It is also true for children and youth that their current welfare is a critical determinant of future welfare.

Given the daunting challenges that many children and youth have been and will be facing because of the epidemic and other causes, the HIV/AIDS Response Team of Development Alternatives Inc. decided to review the lessons learned from economic livelihoods programs aimed at improving the economic future of participating street children and youth around the world, programs like vocational training, production workshops, apprenticeship programs, entrepreneurship development training, and microcredit schemes. This report presents those lessons—both positive and negative. We hope that some of these lessons will be useful for future programming.

Street-involved children and youth are only the tip of the iceberg of young people at risk; there are a greater number of less visible, vulnerable youngsters such as bonded laborers, domestic workers, and those who are living in families and communities at risk. There is no clear demarcation among these categories of vulnerable children. In fact, an increasing number of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS are living and/or working on the street. In Zimbabwe, for example, according to a recent study, half of street children are orphans, the majority of them because of AIDS (UNAID, USAID, UNICEF 2002).

Building livelihoods for children and youth is a sensitive issue also because of the ways that the work inevitably affects an individual's physical, intellectual, and cognitive development—with lifelong effects. Many countries, based on Minimum Age Convention

No. 138, designate the minimum legal working age according to the type of work and the level of development of economic and educational facilities (ILO and IPU, 2002). But it is important to note, “most street children only survive thanks to small but lengthy and tiring jobs” (UNESCO, 1995). For those children and youth facing immediate needs for survival on their own, there is a clear link between poverty, safety, and development outcomes. While it is true that material deprivation imposes serious threats not only to their health and survival, but also to their education, personal development, and social inclusion, the distinction between their work and the opportunity for human development is not clear-cut. In fact, “many children are able to go to school precisely because they work, and it is problematic to divide the child population into two false categories, children who work and do not go to school and children who go to school and do not work” (Ennew and Milne, 1998).

Clearly, the objective of economic livelihood programs is not to encourage children and youth to work in place of studying or playing. Programs need to pay close attention to those who have a strong influence on the youngsters, including family members, neighbors, peers, and other adults who come into close contact with them, in order to identify the potential positive and negative roles the adults could play. The ultimate goal of programs is to facilitate the process whereby children and youth can build safer and healthier livelihoods in order to circumvent irreversible negative effects on their development and to avoid any lifelong effect of deprivation. Livelihood programs should aim to meet both immediate and long-term needs of participants, as well as their day-to-day needs for survival.

### DEFINITION OF STREET CHILDREN

The most common definition of *street children* used today is “boys and girls for whom ‘the street’ (including unoccupied dwelling, wasteland, etc.) has become their home and/or source of livelihood, and who are inadequately protected or supervised by responsible adults,” as defined by the United Nations (cited in Volpi, 2002). *Street children* is a very broad term that has been used to describe children and youth whose lives and work are closely associated with the street. However, their conditions and needs are not always homogeneous. Efforts were made to further categorize *street children* in the late 1980s. UNICEF recommended making a distinction between *children of the streets* who live and work on the street without family support, and *children on the streets* who are compelled to work on the street mainly for the survival of their families but who return home to their families most nights. A further distinction has occasionally been made between *abandoned children* who have been deserted by their families or have left home completely, and thus are without any family ties, and *other children of the streets* who still maintain some contacts with their families, no matter how weak and sporadic these may be (Blanc, 1994). However, the aforementioned categories still do not adequately reflect the realities of all children and youth who are living and/or working on the street. Biggar argues that many youth are in fact “a blend” between these two categories as they “spend some nights sleeping on the street and return home after a few days, weeks or even months” (1999).

In reality, the condition of any *street children* cannot be understood apart from such factors as their individual characteristics; living conditions; life choices and backgrounds; families;

communities of origin; and the broader political, economic, and social conditions of the society in which they live. Any attempt to categorize them into subgroups can be meaningful only when applied to a specific local context, since the type of young person involved in the streets varies depending on local situations. Differentiating among various types of *street children* is not only of theoretical interest. It is essential if one is to address their needs effectively. Individual children and youth are also often at different stages in their lives. Consequently, livelihood programs need to take a differentiated approach, not a blanket one.

Some practitioners have had problems with the term *street children* that go beyond its broad nature. Sarah Thomas de Benitez claims, “The label ‘street children’ is demeaning in itself. It depersonalizes each child—making him or her a ‘problem to be solved’” (2001). Ennew and Milne point out that it is misleading to “focus on the work or street context rather than on other aspects of a child’s life,” while many researchers with street-involved children and youth are “trapped in the ethnographic present and provide unconnected, ‘snap shot’ descriptions of children’s working activities” (1998). Kilbride, based on his study of street-involved children in Kenya confirming the individual variety among them, also cautions, “the public too often essentializes the concept of street child in terms of a small number of traits thought to apply to all street children in all situations.” Kilbride also emphasizes, “being a street child is “an event,” one with a beginning and for most an end that culminates in a transition into some adult status” (2000). Riccardo Lucchini underscores that “the street is only one domain among others, such as family homes, schools and welfare programmes, through which individual children pass at different times, and with which they have ‘a constellation of relationships’ and ‘being a street child corresponds neither to a clearly delimited social category nor to a perfectly homogeneous psychological unity’”(cited in Connolly and Ennew, 1996).

Recognizing that any particular terminology is unsatisfactory, this report uses the word *street-involved children and youth* to describe the aforementioned UN’s definition of *street children*.

## **TYPES OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMS**

A livelihood is often defined as a combination of factors that one utilizes in order to make a living. Grierson for example defines a livelihood to comprise “the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living” (2003). Family Health International also states, “a livelihood is everything people know, have, and do to make a living” (2004).<sup>1</sup>

The aim of all economic livelihood programs is to help participating children and youth to build safer and more sustainable livelihoods. To achieve this goal, a livelihood program ideally comprises two distinctive sets of activities: (1) activities addressing various needs of children and youth, and (2) activities aimed at linking children with economic opportunities. As for the latter, Livelihood programs have been using various types of economic activities:

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fhi.org/en/index.htm>)

vocational training, work experience/internship programs, production workshops, and microcredit schemes.

## **Categories of Economic Activities in Livelihood Programs**

### *Vocational Training*

Training is often implemented in conjunction with other services, so as to provide participants with opportunities to use newly learned skills and knowledge.

- **Production-oriented training** focuses on technical skills needed to produce goods and services.
- **Service-oriented training** focuses on skills needed to provide specific services such as those needed in the hospitality business.
- **Entrepreneurship development training** targets potential entrepreneurs, encouraging them to start up a business by developing the personal, organizational, and administrative skills needed.
- **Management-oriented training** transfers financial and administrative skills, and can include marketing techniques as well.
- **Credit-oriented training** often accompanies the granting of loans to small and microentrepreneurs.

### *Work Experience/Internship Programs*

Work experience and internship programs often refer to the coordinated activities through which participating children and youth are placed in real work environments in order to gain practical work experience and develop contacts with potential employers. These activities are often arranged in conjunction with production and/or service-oriented training.

### *Production Workshop*

Production workshop refers to the settings where participants produce goods and gain wages. They are often implemented in combination with production-oriented training and participating children and youth join the workshops upon acquiring the skills and knowledge necessary to produce goods.

### *Microcredit Scheme*

Microcredit scheme refers to programs that involve providing microcredit to participants. The interest rate, the repayment cycle, and other conditions vary, depending on the program. But in general, providing credits is aimed at helping participants start and/or expand their microenterprises and income-generating activities.

### **Looking to Specific Cases**

The twelve case studies presented in Appendix A show how different bundles of economic livelihood activities have been combined to work with street-involved children.

**Table 1: Case Studies Reviewed\***

Vietnam	KOTO (Know One Teach One)	Service-oriented Training and Work Experience Program
Trinidad and Tobago	Servol	Production/Service-oriented Training and Work Experience Program
Mexico	JUCONI	Production-oriented Training and Production Workshop
Brazil	The Lyceum of Arts and Trades	Production/Service-oriented Training and Workshop
Brazil	Projeto Axe	Production-oriented Training, Production Workshop, and Work Experience Program
Brazil	Passage House	Production-oriented Training and Income-Generating Activities
Ecuador	Me Chance	Production-oriented Training and Production Workshop
Uruguay	AFXB Uruguay	Production-oriented Training and Production Workshop
Indonesia	Save the Children	Production/Service-oriented Training, Production Workshop, Internship Program
Mali	Save the Children	Income Generating Activities and Microcredit Scheme
Zimbabwe	Street Ahead	Entrepreneurship Development Training
Sub-Saharan Africa	Anonymous	Entrepreneurship Development Training and Microcredit Scheme

\*Attached in Appendix A

Together these cases present examples of programming, but more importantly, provide lessons on critical elements of program challenges and successes. These lessons learned are presented in the next section.

## LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMS: KEY LESSONS LEARNED

### General Observations

Experiences in livelihood programs around the world reviewed for this report illustrate how complex is the challenge of helping street-involved children and youth to attain safer and more sustainable livelihoods. (See Appendix A for the complete case studies.) Ensuring the technical appropriateness of methodologies and incorporating essential components into the program is of course critical. But one of the central lessons learned in this review is how important it is to take into account the human aspects that affect the quality of the program, both from the demand side (participating children and youth), and the supply side (institutions and program staff).

On the demand side, street-involved children and youth need the will to build alternative livelihoods for themselves. They also need to be at a stage in their lives where they are both emotionally and physically ready to participate in program activities. Economic livelihood programs would thus be most effective when targeted at those individuals. Programs can offer preparatory training for youngsters who, because they lack either the will or the maturity, are not yet ready. Life skills training that deals with such issues as self-awareness, self-esteem, personal development, goal setting, reproductive health, and ways to budget one's own money are usually crucial elements of the programs. However, programs do not need to offer this type of training directly. They can choose to specialize in providing economic activities and to address the life skill needs of participants by arranging for external organizations to provide this type of training.

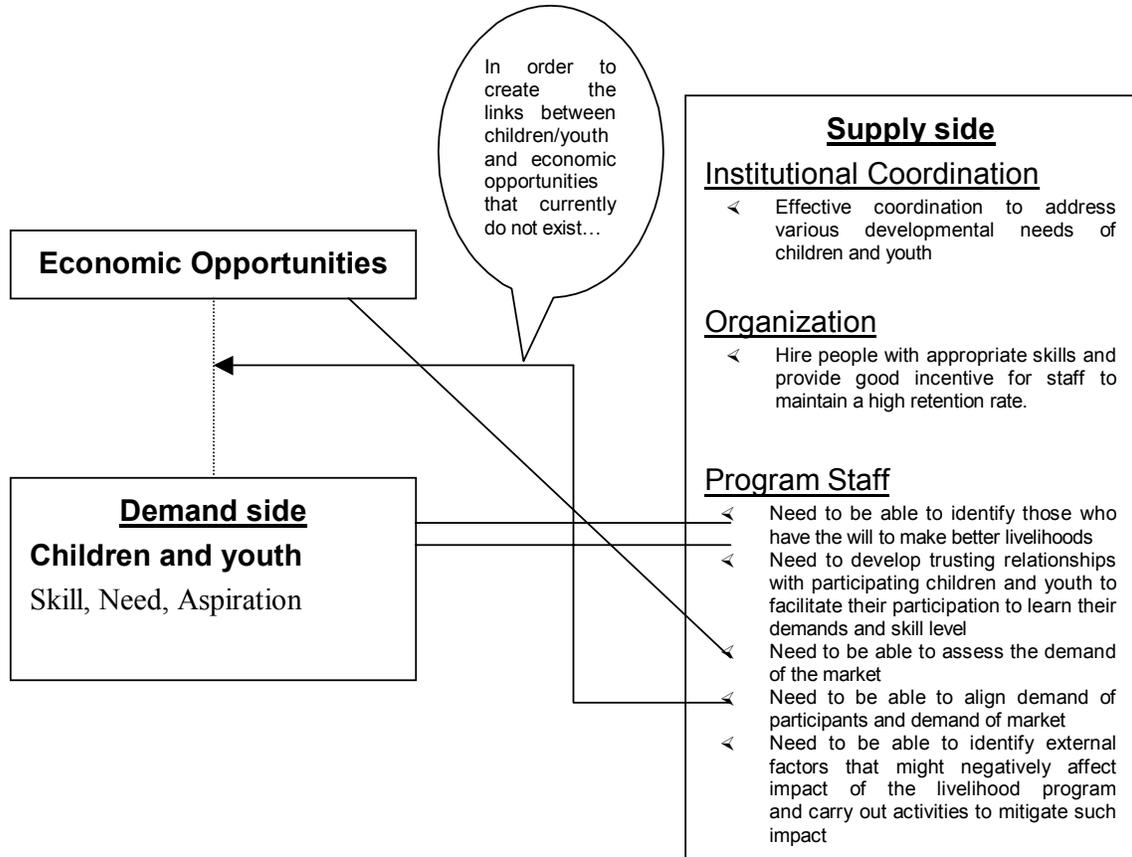
On the supply side, program staff need to have the skills to facilitate the participation of children and youth effectively. They also need economic and business skills in order to design and implement viable economic activities. Staff members need both kinds of skills if the program is to succeed in aligning the demands and skills of participants with feasible economic opportunities.

What brings the demand and supply sides together is a trusting relationship. Without this, the program will not work. And because it takes time for most street-involved children and youth to be able to trust an adult after the difficult experiences they have had, livelihood programs need to be able to retain staff over the long term. So while it may be a less obvious issue, providing opportunities for professional development and good incentives in terms of salary and resources are critical elements for success.

Various factors beyond the control of the programs can play a part in the impact of their activities. While they may prepare children and youth to be ready and willing to make use of marketable economic skills, it is another matter for them to prepare children and youth who are really able to maintain healthier and safer livelihoods. External factors come into play here and include political and security conditions (for example, the local authority's attitude toward street children and their activities, the general safety level on the street), economic conditions (the macroeconomic situation, local market opportunities, and so on), and socio-

cultural conditions (such things as the stigma attached to children, the existence of a saving culture, the existence of role models in the society). While an economic livelihood program does not have direct control over the external environment, it does need to pay careful attention to it in order to prevent or mitigate any negative effects it could have on program outcomes.

**Interface Between the Demand Side and the Supply Side:  
What Does the Supply Side Need to Link Economic Opportunities and Children/Youth?**



Source: Author

## Interventions

### *Training*

- 1. The key is vocational training that matches the demands of participants, the skill levels of participants, and the demand of the market.**

Successful programs have consciously designed activities that are based on the demands of participants, their skill levels, and the marketability of those skills.

The founder of KOTO in Vietnam had developed a trusting relationship with street-involved children over the years and learned of their wishes to work in the hospitality business. He then assessed the marketability of hospitality skills in the growing Vietnamese tourist industry, and the marketability of disadvantaged youth, before launching the program. The experience of the Lyceum in Brazil also demonstrates that vocational training should be based on the demands of the market. It is also important to analyze the market in alignment with the skill level and demands of participants, and to do this in a participatory way in order to give participants a sense of ownership in the process; this strengthens their wish to participate in the training. Essential is the presence of an individual who can link all these factors in determining the content of the activities.

## **2. Offering high quality services is critical.**

Success rests, too, on services of high quality. KOTO in Vietnam has earned a good reputation as a training program in the hospitality business circle in Hanoi. This reputation helps it place graduates with top international hotels and restaurants.

## **3. To link children and youth with employment opportunities, combine theoretical training and practical training.**

Vocational training, whether production-oriented or service-oriented, is more effective when there are both theoretical and practical offerings. For example, in Vietnam, trainees gain theoretical knowledge on specific areas of the hospitality business at the KOTO training center and get practical experience by working in the KOTO restaurant. KOTO then implements six-month work experience programs for those trainees who have completed one and half years training at KOTO. Servol in Trinidad and Tobago combines one year of vocational training with three months of on-the-job training. The Lyceum in Brazil is also convinced that it is essential to place youth in a real work setting. Youth with practical experience in a real world setting will be more competitive in seeking employment.

### *Work Experience/Internship Program*

## **4. Ties with local businesses and/or local government are important in expanding economic opportunities for participating children and youth.**

Institutional networking is key to expanding economic opportunities for street-involved children and youth. Organizations working with street-involved children and youth should strive to build ties with local businesses/entrepreneurs to broaden internship and employment opportunities for program participants. Street-involved children and youth face a stigma when they seek economic opportunities. Some employers are reluctant to hire them because they fear violence and theft. Many programs have been trying to overcome this obstacle by establishing ties with local businesses. The director of Projeto Axe in Brazil holds frequent meetings with the local business sector and presents the activities and results of the program to them in order to promote employment opportunities. The Child Welfare Organization in

Vietnam decided to assume responsibility for any damages youth caused during their internships, in order to reduce the perceived risk of accepting them. Currently, Save the Children, Inc., in Indonesia is starting to support local NGOs in implementing internship programs by subsidizing half of the stipends that local entrepreneurs would provide.

Some organizations also strive to work with relevant governmental agencies at various levels. Servol in Trinidad and Tobago worked in partnership with the Ministry of Education to get official recognition for their certificates and thereby increase the chances of employment for graduates. Projeto Axe in Brazil found that a close working relationship with the government helps various service providers avoid duplication and competition.

**5. Follow-up support during internship/work experience programs is essential in helping participating children and youths through a difficult transition.**

When a program places participants in a real work environment, it is essential to provide continuous support and follow-up service. KOTO in Vietnam provides professional and personal support to graduates who enter the work experience program, especially during the first six months. KOTO considers this follow-up phase a critical part of the training since the future of the participants' livelihoods hinges on successful transitions during this period. Continuous support through follow-up services should be an integral part of any work experience program with street-involved children and youth.

*Production Workshop*

**6. Choose products that meet the demands of participants, the skill levels of participants, and the demand of the market.** (See above, #1, under Training.)

As for any vocational training, it is critical for production-oriented training and production workshops to choose products that meet both the demand and the skill levels of participants and the demand of the market. Me Chance in Ecuador promoted products that do this. The program founder of Me Chance, who had built a trusting relationship with participating youth over a year, was familiar with their demands and skill levels, and was also able to assess the demand and supply of the product. Many production workshops with street-involved children and youth find that marketing their finished products can be their greatest problem. As important as achieving participation may be, products based solely on participant preferences will not lead to economic success.

**7. Product quality is essential in marketing the products.**

The quality of products is critical not only for successful sales but also in making the skills gained through production-oriented training useful to participants afterwards. Projeto Axe in Brazil emphasizes producing quality goods to be sold at competitive, nonsubsidized prices. Case studies of several local NGOs in Indonesia also illustrate that the key factor in successful marketing is the quality of the products.

### **8. Self-selected natural group work better than artificially created groups.**

Several case studies indicate that self-selected natural groups work better than groups that are artificially put together. JUCONI in Mexico found that members of the artificial group created for the program did not work well together, since they had no common causes outside the workshop. On the contrary, Me Chance in Ecuador found that youth who were considered *hard-core* worked well together, cooperating and sharing the work, because they were a natural, self-selected group, with experiences and friendship in common.

### **9. Differentiate between the education component and the production workshop.**

When programs offer both production-oriented training and production workshops, it is important to differentiate between the two components. AFXB Uruguay initially found it hard to do this. As part of the solution, it created different group dynamics and established different times and places for the two activities. The differentiation was important in creating discipline and a professional environment for the production workshop.

### **10. Establish real world time management and agree on common guidelines in the production workshop.**

One of the key lessons that AFXB Uruguay has learned is that it is essential to establish a production schedule that corresponds to the real world. Participating youth need to understand how important it is to manage time. It is just as essential that there be common guidelines for production agreements dealing with tangible deliverables, like desired quality and yield. Agreements need to be clear, so that participants can understand them easily; they should leave no place for subjective interpretations.

### **11. Adjusting the payment system to participant needs yields better results.**

It is important to pay attention to participating youth's immediate needs for money and to establish a payment system that corresponds to their needs. AFXB Uruguay found that this yielded optimal results. In the first years, it paid youth at the end of the productive process, when the sales were finalized. Currently each participant can choose either to receive full or partial payment at the end of the day, or wait for it to accumulate.

### *Entrepreneurship Development Training and Microcredit Scheme*

### **12. Participants need to understand that what they learn in business development training is not a promise.**

Bookkeeping and Basic Business training in Zimbabwe learned that business development trainers have to be very careful to make no promises to participating children and youth. Providers must make sure that participants do not perceive anything they are told as a promise. If participants do, they risk feeling deceived. This care needs to be taken throughout the training in order to make very clear that the training is more about self-improvement.

**13. It may be better to determine interest rate and repayment cycle in consultation with participants.**

An anonymous program in Africa found that participants felt that they should be able to contribute to the decision on interest rate and repayment period, since the appropriateness of these rules are critical determinants of the success of their businesses. Consultation with participants is important for two reasons: it makes the microcredit scheme more appropriate for their economic activities and it promotes a sense of ownership among participants. Both elements are crucial to the success of their microenterprises. A successful example is the program with adolescent girls in Dansa Village in Mopti, Mali, aimed at preventing or minimizing their migration to cities to become domestic workers. The participating girls themselves have decided the mechanisms for reimbursement and to date all participants have respected the regulations and the repayment schedules.

**14. Base the group-lending methodology for microcredit on self-selected natural groups rather than artificially selected groups by program officers. (See above, #8.)**

An anonymous program in Africa found that after six months, most of the solidarity groups became dysfunctional because they lacked cohesion. This was partly because the program officers had selected the peer groups and some participants resented the fact that because some group members were not successful in their business or ran away, they themselves had difficulty getting the second loan. The more natural the group, the more cohesive it is and the greater its sense of solidarity. It is thus important to find and use natural groups rather than to form artificial ones for the sake of a program.

**15. Diversify participants' activities to avoid creating unnecessary competition among them and saturating the local market.**

An anonymous program in Africa found that providing uniform basic business development training and microcredit led to a high concentration of the same activities among participants, creating unnecessary competition among participating youth, and in turn, causing saturation of the local market. The knowledge and skills with which participating children and youth came into the program involved small trade; after training, most went into vending and did not diversify what they sold. This created a high concentration of similar businesses and eventually led to the collapse of most of them because the market was saturated. Programs can encourage diversity by providing varied production-oriented training and/or by varying the size of loans provided to participants according to their business plans.

**16. Promote a culture of saving among participants to ensure the long-term success of their microenterprises.**

An anonymous program in Africa found that some participating children and youth who did well in the business initially did not succeed in the long run because they did not have the habit of saving. Some participants spent most of their income as soon as they earned it. Participants were dealing with a relatively large amount of money for the first time in their

lives. Especially in societies where there is no strong saving culture, it is critical to design a program that will promote an understanding of how important it is to save and to keep business finances apart from personal finances. Such training is essential if participants are to succeed in building sustainable livelihoods.

## **Crosscutting Issues**

### **1. Use a holistic approach in working with street-involved children and youth.**

Whatever the type of economic activity, taking a holistic approach in addressing children's various welfare and developmental needs is important, especially in the case of youngsters who are completely detached from their own families and any institutional support systems. Often programs are unable to address all basic material, health, emotional, and psychological needs. But a program does need to pay serious attention to these needs and find ways of coordinating necessary services for participants through institutional networking or some other means. Many successful economic livelihood programs, such as KOTO in Vietnam, Me Chance in Ecuador, and Projeto Axe in Brazil, have recognized how important it is to take a holistic approach to addressing participants' needs.

The interdependent nature of various developmental needs of street-involved children and youth is today well recognized. Just as health-related knowledge and skills affect livelihood, economic opportunity can be a very important determinant of safety and health status. John Grierson points out this link between the health and livelihood of street-involved children and youth: "We have concentrated on their health challenges for many years (*Street Health*), and gradually realized that the mental and physical health of street kids is inextricably tied to the choices they are able to make regarding livelihood (*Street Work*). Dealing with the health and livelihood challenges of street kids in isolation did not reflect their reality and their potential engagement in high-risk conduct like the sex trade, drug trading and petty theft to survive their economic situation." This interdependent nature of various developmental needs makes it imperative for professionals working in many areas (including health, education, and economic-strengthening activities) to take a holistic approach and to address needs through collaboration.

### **2. Life skills are as critical as technical skills for children and youth, not only for their economic prospects but also for healthier lives and more sustainable livelihoods.**

Programs successful in linking participating children and youth with economic opportunities and also in supporting them to achieve safer, more sustainable livelihoods have all addressed various aspects of their developmental needs. They provide life skills training, especially in areas of personal development such as self-esteem and goal setting, health, reproductive education, and ways to budget money.

The Lyceum in Brazil provides vocational training in conjunction with life skills training, where youth spend one day per week in cultural and life planning activities—activities related to self-esteem, self-awareness, and health education. The philosophy behind this

combination is that adolescents are at a stage where they need space to reflect about their future and the meaning of work. This reflection helps them decide what they want to do in the future and thus helps them become more fulfilled and productive employers. Servol in Trinidad and Tobago also implements an Adolescent Development Program (ADP). It consists of both life skills and vocational training. The life skills training includes sessions in such issues as self-awareness, parenting, nutrition, adolescent reproductive health, substance abuse, basic literacy, social studies, community services, and sports. The design of the two-tiered program reflects Servol's realization that positive work habits and life skills are as important as vocational or technical skills for the ability of at-risk youth to find a job. KOTO in Vietnam also considers life skills training to be an integral part of its offerings. Its health education includes issues such as adolescent reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and drug use. KOTO has also learned that in dealing with sensitive issues such as adolescent reproductive health and HIV/AIDS, training can be more effective if it incorporates interactive games aimed at making the subjects more interesting and understandable for participants.

### **3. Maximize the participation of children and youth and learn from them. Program staff should assume the role of facilitator.**

Several successful project implementers learned the importance of promoting the participation of children and youth at every stage of the program. Participants should become part of the decision-making process about content as well as method of implementation. One of the most important pieces of advice that the founders of KOTO in Vietnam and Me Chance in Ecuador offer program staff is to remember that they should always assume the role of facilitator. They need to support the process whereby children and youth gain better livelihoods as equal partners; they must not impose changes. A program officer from Africa maintains, "Local youth workers should not impose their ideas upon children; they should encourage children themselves to come up with their ideas. Their role is to see whether the plan is workable and feasible when children come up with the ideas. Their role is then to see if the ideas were viable through feasibility study and market survey." Practitioners all underscore the importance of training program staff to become effective facilitators. Bookkeeping and Basic Business training always promotes interaction and participation of students at the classroom and also adjusts the class schedule according to the needs of the participants.

#### *Some Determinants of the Quality of Participation*

Among other things, the quality of participation depends on:

- a trusting relationship between children and program implementer
- the capacity of a program implementer to facilitate participation
- participants' level of self-confidence, self-awareness, and ability to identify needs.

Economic strengthening programs need to consider these three factors seriously in order to improve the quality of participation of children and youth throughout the process.

### *What Can Be Done?*

Building a trusting relationship with street-involved children and youth takes not only patience but time. That is why it is important for organizations to hire staff or project implementers with appropriate backgrounds, individuals who have the necessary commitment and who will stay with the organization for the long term. Implementing activities that enhance the self-confidence and self-awareness of street-involved children before they join economic strengthening programs could be effective. Designing group activities and making the most of existing solidarity among street-involved children and youth could also enhance their participation.

#### **4. Differentiating among target groups makes the program more effective.**

While *street-involved children* or *street-involved youth* are broad terms that include a wide range of living and working street children, categorizing this large group into subgroups is often useful.

It helps a program to:

- sharpen the strategy to address particular developmental needs and major risks of subgroups
- create the right group dynamics among program participants
- assess the cost of working with different subgroups.

Note that there is no single way to categorize a target group into subgroups. The appropriate or useful category depends on the local contexts and the objective of the program.

#### **5. Use strategies to overcome traditional gender-stereotyped training.**

Many vocational training programs have a tendency to train males in the higher skilled (and higher paying) technical trades and to train females in lower skilled (and lower paying) service trades. Overcoming these gender stereotypes requires specific strategies on the part of the organization. Servol in Trinidad and Tobago tries to accept an equal number of males and females into the training program. To reinforce this policy, Servol also tries to hire female instructors to serve as role models in traditionally male-dominated trades such as plumbing. KOTO in Vietnam also tries to achieve gender balance by taking the same number of male and female trainees. Most of the management staff at KOTO is female, providing moral support for female trainees who can look up to them. KOTO aims to set as the standard for youth in Vietnam that they can be what they want to be, regardless of socioeconomic class and gender. Without specific organizational strategies, it is easy to fall into stereotypical patterns of vocational training, which might be biased against girl participants.

## **Demand Side: Children and Youth**

This section summarizes key lessons learned about street-involved children and youth. They are, of course, among the most disadvantaged populations, with various welfare and developmental needs of both a material and nonmaterial nature. Any economic strengthening activity working with this population cannot, therefore, ignore the noneconomical aspects of their needs. Programs also need to pay careful attention to the stage at which the youngsters are in their lives. Most programs working with street-involved children and youth recognize this and therefore have multistaged activities.

### *Factors That Affect Their Will to Participate in Programs and Attain Better Livelihoods*

#### **1. The will of participants to get off the street is critical, so the program needs to identify those who are motivated to build an alternative livelihood.**

Economic-strengthening activities can be most effective when they target those youngsters who are at a point in their lives when they are ready to leave the street or want to find alternative livelihoods for themselves. Determinants of such junctures could be the maturity that comes with age or the result of life skills training in self-confidence, self-awareness, awareness, and an enhanced sense of the future. Passage House in Brazil found it had to address fundamental issues like self-esteem for some girls before it was possible to offer successful vocational training. Save the Children, Inc. in Indonesia is now trying to identify the age range when a natural transition occurs and street-involved children and youth realize that their lives on the street are not sustainable into adulthood. This is especially relevant in areas where younger children tend to garner greater sympathy on the street and thus have better earning capacity than older youth. Me Chance in Ecuador successfully targeted older youth who saw the program as their last chance to build an alternative livelihood.

#### **2. The peer support system among street-involved children and youth is strong.**

Because solidarity among street-involved children and youth is very strong in general, and they tend to enjoy interacting among themselves, many programs have incorporated group activities and promoted interaction to maximize the positive effect of peer groups. Passage House in Brazil found that while individually the girls tend not to believe they are able to change the course of their lives, the solidarity of the group helps them believe in themselves again. KOTO in Vietnam found the interaction among participants was helpful in their personal development. KOTO is now incorporating a session where graduates visit KOTO and talk with new trainees about their experience at KOTO and their current work in the real world; this gives them moral support and a sense of what they could be in the future.

**3. When program staff members change frequently, children and youth tend to have difficulties trusting them.**

Children and youth find it hard to trust new staff, therefore staff turnover has a negative effect on the effectiveness of the programs. This is discussed in greater depth as a “supply-side” issue of staff retention.

*Factors That Affect the Capacity of Children and Youth to Participate in Programs and Attain Better Livelihoods*

**4. Until programs address basic needs and self-esteem, vocational training is usually not successful.**

Bookkeeping and Basic Business in Zimbabwe found that street-involved children and youth have very basic needs, for example for places to keep their belongings and places to wash themselves. If these needs are not met, they will have trouble getting better economic opportunities. Passage House in Brazil also found that until the program finds a way to address psychosocial and mental health issues, participating youth cannot effectively participate in vocational training.

**5. Self-confidence is critical for street-involved children and youth to build and maintain better and safer livelihoods.**

Not only does self-confidence increase children’s and youths’ willingness to participate as discussed above, it also is a key determinant to their ability to participate. JUCONI found that low self-confidence could be serious obstacles for genuine participation in activities. Lack of self-confidence also poses serious impediments to success in gaining better economic opportunities. This is especially true for children and youth who wish to start their own microenterprises or to find employment in the real world, rather than in protected production workshops. Bookkeeping and Basic Business program in Zimbabwe found that the most important difference between those youth who started their own microenterprises and those who could not do so, after completing the same business development-training program, was the individual’s level of self-confidence. An anonymous program also found that having self-confidence and resilience were critical attributes of the successful young microentrepreneur. KOTO in Vietnam had the same experience in evaluating how successfully children and youth adjust to a real work environment, where they still face discrimination and stigmatization.

Most street-involved children and youth have been abused, either in their home or on the street, and suffer from very low self-esteem following such traumatic experiences. Regaining self-confidence and understanding that they could be out doing something for themselves is a critical first step in achieving better livelihoods. Self-confidence of participants can be enhanced through trusting relationships with program implementers and interactions among the participants themselves. Many programs address this issue by combining economic-

strengthening activities with life skills training that includes much interaction among participating youth. Economic strengthening programs can also incorporate components aimed at enhancing self-confidence. For example, Bookkeeping and Basic Business training promotes participation and interaction by encouraging participants to do small assignments that they can complete without staff assistance.

**6. High dropout rates may result from the immediate need participants have to support themselves and their families. Compensating participants during training helps meet this need.**

Servol in Trinidad and Tobago found that some participants drop out of its program because they have an immediate need to earn money to support their families. Projeto Axe in Brazil compensates participants for four hours of work per day, as well as for transportation and meals, recognizing that most participants are forgoing work in the streets, and hence income, to participate in the program. As part of a holistic approach, KOTO also provides participant youth with 500,000 don (about US\$35) for a month, the equivalent of the average income per person. Providing these stipends gives many participant youth the motivation to stay in the program and concentrate on the training while they support themselves and their families.

**7. Gaining parental/guardian consent helps promote their support of the businesses of children and youth.**

An anonymous program in Africa found that obtaining parental or guardian consent is critical in gaining their understanding and support for the potential businesses of children and youth. The adults were encouraged not to feel threatened by these businesses but rather to be supportive, since success of the business could increase household income. Because most of the children and youth are under parental control, this was a necessary process and it contributed to the success of participants' businesses.

## **Supply Side: Institutions and Program Staff**

### *Program Staff*

**1. Staff members who come with social-work backgrounds rather than business backgrounds often lack the skills to design and implement economic-strengthening activities.**

One of the common problems organizations implementing economic-strengthening activities with street-involved children and youth face is the lack of program implementers with skills in such fields as market analysis, credit management, and business management. Most program officers have social-work backgrounds, but not business backgrounds. Passage House in Brazil, Street Ahead in Zimbabwe, several local NGOs in Indonesia, and an anonymous program in Africa all found this to be one of the most difficult obstacles to success in implementing effective programs. Thus, it is critical to enhance the economic and

business capacity of those who work closely with street-involved children and youth by providing either business training or technical support.

## **2. A high turnover rate among staff poses problems.**

Organizations frequently have difficulty retaining their program officers. The work causes burnout and staff members often receive poor incentives to stay. This is a serious threat to the continuity of a program and to its effectiveness. High staff turnover also makes it hard for participating children to build trusting relationships with program officers. An anonymous program in Africa found that when there was high turnover rate among project implementers, participating children became suspicious and the program suffered. Me Chance in Ecuador was terminated when it could not meet the needs of the local program officer. Recognizing this problem, Projeto Axe in Brazil incorporated a strategy to invest in staff training and personal and professional staff development. Projeto Axe seeks to encourage staff to become a long-term part of the process by investing heavily in their professional development and by paying higher than average salaries.

### *Organization*

## **3. Funding should be diversified, to make the organization more autonomous and sustainable.**

JUCONI in Mexico has learned that the diversity of funding sources is key to NGO autonomy, making it possible for organizations to focus on meeting children's needs rather than responding to donor priorities. JUCONI Mexico today attracts significant national and local funding, with supporters from business, schools, clubs, and individuals, to federal and municipal agencies. Other organizations working with street-involved children and youth also recognize the importance of diversifying funding sources. With the reduction of international funding, Passage House in Brazil found itself vulnerable, as it lacks ties to the local community. Based on participatory assessments that identified the need to diversify funding sources, Save the Children, Inc. in Indonesia has been providing its local NGO partners with a series of training sessions on fund raising that focuses more on nongrants and covers a range of different fund raising strategies for smaller amounts of locally raised fund.

## **4. Supporting institutional development is as important as supporting individual programs.**

Donors have a strong tendency to focus solely on the outcome of the grant, but programs and services depend on organizations working with them for their sustainability, continuous improvement, and professional staff development. Save the Children, Inc. in Indonesia has been providing technical assistance to local NGO partners in order to build their institutional capacity to remain effective and sustainable beyond the end of their programs. In the process, it uses the participatory institutional assessment tool called Institutional Development Framework (IDF) developed by Management System International (MSI). Each NGO bought everyone, from its board down to staff, to assess its organizational performance against key

elements of the IDF tool, including organizational mission, management body structure, autonomy, leadership style, planning, staff skill and development, financial sustainability, and partnership and public relations. Upon completing the appraisal, each NGO developed an action plan to improve its capacity. The response of local NGO partners to IDF has been positive.

### *Institutional Networking/Coordination*

#### **5. Having an institutional network enhances the capacity to serve children and youth.**

While some organizations provide a wide range of services to street-involved children and youth, others specialize in particular services, recognizing their limitations. It is not possible for any one organization to provide all services needed by participating children and youth. Consequently, institutional networking at various levels is critical. Types of institutional networking especially relevant to economic-strengthening programs are those with other children's organizations, the local business sector, and with governmental agencies/local authorities.

### **Interface Between Demand and Supply Sides**

#### **1. A trusting relationship between participants and program implementers is critical.**

One of the most important lessons learned about the dynamics between participating youth and program staff is how important it is to build a trusting relationship between them. Successful programs such as KOTO in Vietnam, and Me Chance in Ecuador had program officers who were determined to be patient and who had established a trusting relationship with the youngsters before launching their programs. Without such a relationship, it is not feasible to promote participation in any program. Such a relationship is critical in helping youngsters gain the self-confidence and self-esteem that are essential for business success. Passage House in Brazil learned how important it is to establish a trusting relationship between a staff person and the street girl. It learned that many girls have great difficulty trusting someone, because they have had traumatic experiences damaging to their self-esteem. Building a trusting relationship with street-involved children and youth evidently takes time.

### **External Factors**

The situation of street-involved children and youth cannot really be understood in isolation from the external environment. The main determinant of their own welfare is the welfare of their families and their communities. While economic-strengthening activities in general have little control over these factors, they need to recognize and identify ways of possibly mitigating the negative effects of the environment.

### *Political/Security Concern*

#### **1. Consider the attitude of local authorities toward the activities of street-involved children and youth.**

An anonymous program in Africa experienced serious threats to the economic activities of participants because local authorities confiscated the business assets of some of the youth, punishing them for operating their businesses illegally on the street. As a result, most of those businesses collapsed. Most of the participants then could not repay the loan they had received via the program and ended up running away. This experience illustrates that a program cannot operate in isolation from the environment in which it finds itself. An organization working with street-involved children and youth should try to establish a working relationship with local authorities so they come to understand and support their activities.

#### **2. The abuse of children is a serious problem.**

Abuse of street-involved children and youth by adults such as police and older youth is a problem and can have a negative effect on the outcome of economic-strengthening activities. This is especially true when youngsters continue to live or work on the streets, operating such small businesses such as vending.

### *Economic Conditions*

#### **3. In assessing activities, consider the macroeconomic situation.**

In assessing any economic-strengthening activity, try to separate the effect of internal factors at the program level from that of external factors caused by the macroeconomic situation. Obviously, program activities are most effective in a favorable economical environment. Unfortunately this is rarely the case, since one of the major causes for children and youth to be living or working on the streets is the poverty that comes from unfavorable and difficult macroeconomic conditions. When the unemployment rate is excessively high and many educated people are looking for jobs, the reality is that street-involved children and youth have few chances of getting work in the formal sector. High inflation rates are also a major obstacle to economic opportunity. However, no matter how difficult the macroeconomic situation, economic-strengthening activities need to find ways to promote safer and healthier livelihoods for those who are at risk. As Dr. Micael Bourdillon of the University of Zimbabwe states “Our response must be more in the line of trying to help them to cope with a bad economic situation—trying to help them develop further their strategies for survival....” (2002)

### *Socio-cultural Factors*

#### **4. The stigmatization of children is a complicating factor.**

The stigma attached to street-involved children and youth often makes it difficult for them to gain better economic opportunities. It especially affects their chances of getting internships and employment with local enterprises. Stigmatization can also give the products they produce a negative image. Ways of mitigating the negative effects of stigmatization will differ according to local conditions. Any economic-strengthening activity needs to pay attention to the possible effects of stigmatization and form appropriate strategies to lessen their force.

#### **5. The lack of a saving culture is an obstacle to success.**

Programs identified the lack of a saving culture as one of the obstacles for entrepreneurship development since even those who succeed in starting microenterprises quickly fail after using up all their earnings. To avoid this, programs should provide training on saving, if such a culture does not exist in the society.

#### **6. The absence of public role models can be an impediment to success.**

A program identified the absence of positive role models for participants as an impediment to successful microcredit schemes in one country in Africa; children there see government officials consuming government resources for their personal uses.

#### **7. Paradoxically, a culture of giving can make things more difficult.**

A culture of giving, which increases the potential for earning on the street—especially for younger children—can keep youth from deciding to leave the street and seek sustainable livelihoods.

## **OPTIONS IN PROGRAMMING**

### **Level of Interventions: Direct Versus Mediate**

Economic livelihoods programs working with street-involved children and youth can implement their activities at different levels. They can provide training

- directly to street-involved children and youth
- to organizations/youth workers working with street-involved children and youth
- to organizations that provide training to organizations/youth workers.

While most such economic livelihoods programs focus on providing services directly, it is just as important to enhance the capacity of organizations and youth workers working with

them. Street Kids International, a NGO working with street-involved children and youth in various developing countries, emphasizes the importance of “building the skills and abilities of those whom street kids know and trust” and making the program “culturally appropriate” by collaborating with local partners.

Working with local organizations and front-line youth workers dramatically increases the effectiveness, sustainability, and reach of their efforts. Through this collaboration, their programs become more culturally appropriate; they are enhanced by local experiences and knowledge. Organizations with which they develop their materials join them in training youth workers in the skills they wish to attain. These youth workers already know how to connect with the street youth in their community and can therefore affect the lives of many more children over a longer period of time.

Interventions can also take the form of coordination or facilitation of training and market linkages at different levels. Understanding the options at different levels, and their advantages and disadvantages, is critical. Direct training for street-involved children and youth has the advantage of allowing for quality control; but the number of beneficiaries per program will be limited. On the other hand, while providing training to training organizations can potentially reach many more people, this method will allow for less quality control at the individual level.

### **Integrated Versus Specialized Approach**

We have seen that it is essential for economic livelihoods programs to take a holistic approach and consider the various interdependent welfare and developmental needs of participating children and youth. Such an approach is especially important for those children and youth who are completely detached from their own families and from institutional support systems and those whose basic needs are not yet met. At the same time, it is important to recognize the pros and cons of both the integrated and the specialized approach.

Taking an **integrated approach**, that is, providing most of the services needed to address participants’ various developmental needs (such as basic material, psychological, educational, and health needs), has the advantage of providing participants with a family-like environment. However, it can be very costly and it is able to reach only a limited number of youth. The quality of the individual services may suffer, depending on the capacity of an institution. In addition, if such a program is not carefully designed, poor households can view it an alternative way of coping with poverty (by sending children into the program to gain access to food, safety, education, etc.). If the program creates an incentive for families to push children into the street, the overall situation for children and youth may actually worsen.

Taking a **specialized approach**, that is, providing only services that are directly related to economic opportunities, is often the most realistic strategy in view of the program’s capacities. With such a strategy, the program can be more efficient if it addresses the other needs of participants through outsourcing. It is essential, however, to pay attention to the broad range of participants’ needs, and to coordinate the necessary services through

institutional networking with other organizations. The types of institutional networking relevant to economic livelihoods programs are:

- **Networking with other children’s organizations.** Institutional networking increases the range of services available for participating children and youth. Bookkeeping and Basic Business training in Zimbabwe, which specializes in providing business-development training, has created an institutional network with other organizations that provide production-oriented training for street-involved children. It then outsources whenever participating children and youth wish to take other training. Outsourcing can make the overall efforts more cost-effective by avoiding duplication of services.
- **Networking with the local business sector.** Because most economic opportunities are in local businesses, in either the formal or informal sector, ties with local entrepreneurs are essential. As mentioned, establishing good relations with local businesses will help mitigate the stigma attached to the youth. Organizations need to establish a working relationship with the local business sector to increase internship and employment opportunities. Some organizations have been doing this through lobbying, frequent meetings, and fundraising events, and by demonstrating the results of their training programs. Others have taken insurance to cover any damage caused by youth when local enterprises accept them as interns.
- **Networking with government agencies/local authorities.** Working relationships with local governments and authorities is also important. Servol in Trinidad and Tobago developed a partnership with the Trinidad Ministry of Education and worked to gain official recognition for its certificate, thereby increasing employment opportunities for its graduates. Projeto Axe has been working closely with the city government to avoid duplication and competition among services provided to street-involved children and youth. There is a case in Africa where the lack of a working relationship with local authorities caused a serious threat to the success of the program: local authorities confiscated the business assets of participating children and youth, claiming that their activities were illegal. Even when it is not possible to get *cooperation* from relevant local government agencies, livelihood programs must strive to get their *understanding* of what activities participating children and youth will be undertaking through the program.

### **Tailored Approach: Categorizing the Target Group and Sequencing Interventions**

*Street-involved children* or *street-involved youth* are broad terms that include a wide range of living and working street children. There is no single way to categorize a broad target group into subgroups. Doing so appropriately depends on the local context and the program’s objectives.

### Reasons to establish subgroups:

- **Sharpens strategy to address needs and risks.** Participant needs and risks depend on various factors, such as living conditions (street living, street working, the extent of contact with families, and the like), personal backgrounds (age, gender, physical, and psychological conditions), and the underlying reasons for being on the street. JUCONI in Mexico and Ecuador learned that “some groups will respond well to a certain set of strategies, while others require another kind of help to reach the same goal of full participation in society” (Thomas de Benitez, 2001). For example, a specialized approach, which focuses solely on economic activities, might not work well for those children and youth who are living on the street and are completely detached not only from their own families but also from any institutional support system. The same approach, however, might work well with those who work on the street while maintaining regular contacts with their own families. Only when a program identifies the distinctive needs of children and youth with different characteristics and effectively categorizes them into meaningful subgroups, can it provide differentiated services to each group. A blanket approach will not help address the needs of any subgroup of the broader target group.

JUCONI Mexico categorized participating street-involved children as *street-living children*, *street-working children*, and *market-working children*. JUCONI Mexico then developed separate strategies and programs for each of these subgroups (Thomas de Benitez, 2001). Save the Children, Inc. in Indonesia also finds that efforts to better define street-involved children and youth helped them to evaluate key characteristics and identify the needs of two subgroups. The first group they identified is *the vulnerable group* and the second subgroup is *older and high risk adolescents*. Local NGO partners then contemplated the special needs of each group and established distinctive objectives for programs for these two subgroups. As a result, a prevention strategy was formed for *the vulnerable group* and a *positive pathways off the street* strategy was developed for *older and high risk adolescents*. While JUCONI Mexico differentiated according to living and working condition, Save the Children, Inc. in Indonesia did so according to the age of street-involved children and youth. Again, appropriate classification depends on the local context, participating children and youth, and the objective of the program.

- **Creates the right group dynamics among participants.** JUCONI Mexico has Halfway House for street-living children. The House has 25 available places and aims to create a good balance between *hard-core street-dwellers* and *youngsters new to the street* by limiting the number of *hard-core* at any one time. JUCONI explains: “the limit on numbers of hard-core street-dwellers reflects both the large investment of time, energy, and skills needed to help these adolescents effectively and also the negative impact these youth can have on younger children if they do not receive very personalized attention” (Thomas de Benitez, 2001). KOTO in Vietnam also aims to create the right group dynamics, by making a distinction between *street youth* and *disadvantaged youth*. *Street youth* refers to those who are working on the street full-time. *Disadvantaged youth* refers to those who are forced to work on the street yet maintain regular ties with their families. KOTO aims to strike a balance among the number of trainees from each group. While

*street youth* tend to be emotionally unstable after being excluded from society and families for so long, *disadvantaged youth* are usually much calmer, with a sense of direction. KOTO needed the right dynamics both to ensure the commercial viability of its restaurant and meet its objective of supporting most disadvantaged street youth.

- **Helps assess the cost of working with different subgroups.** JUCONI Mexico compared the average cost of each service per child for *street-living children*, *street-working children*, and *market-working children*. The per-child cost was highest for *street-living children* and lowest for *market-working children*. JUCONI analyzes this difference as reflecting “the magnitude of problems faced by a street-living child trying to access his or her rights, compared to a market-working child who, in JUCONI programs, is generally, although not always, less disadvantaged” (Thomas de Benitez, 2001). While the assessing the cost effectiveness of any economic strengthening program is essential, it can be dangerously misleading if it does not take into account the different types of street-involved children and youth. Focusing only on cost efficiency is likely to create a bias against working with the most disadvantaged groups.

The following are important points to keep in mind in classifying street children and youth:

#### **Ways to establish subgroups:**

- **Consider the local context.** While JUCONI Mexico made a typology according to the living and working conditions of street-involved children and youth, Save the Children, Inc. in Indonesia did so according to the age of street-involved children and youth and the respective risks they face. Again, there is no single way to categorize the subgroups. Thomas de Benitez, speaking from the experience of JUCONI, points out that the category of street children would have been different if the program had been set up in another area. The important point is that each program needs to spend time to understand the target population in its particular working area.
- **Assess the stage at which children and youth are in their lives and sequence the interventions.** Economic livelihood programs are not necessarily appropriate interventions for all the children and youth categorized in the same subgroup. Members of that group may be at different stages in their lives and a program needs to identify such differences in order to provide appropriate services. Age is a factor, as is psychological and emotional status. Passage House in Brazil points out: “Helping young women change from negative survival strategies to positive ones is time-consuming and staff-intensive. However, it is a fundamental step if young women are to leave the street and establish productive lives” (cited in Barker and Fontes, 1996). Recognizing this, many programs working with street-involved children and youth provide services in sequence, in order to allow participants to move from one stage to the next. Many programs also provide life skills training either before or with economic activities.

The life cycle concept applied mainly in the area of health can shed light on work with street-involved children and youth. Health interventions are known to “have a cumulative impact—the benefit, nature, and the cost of intervention at a later age is particularly dependent on

earlier intervention” (Simon et al., 2001). In JUCONI Mexico’s Halfway House “services are linked so that the final *output* of one service is explicitly the *input* of the subsequent services” (Thomas de Benitez, 2001). Outcomes of economic livelihood programs with street-involved children and youth also depend on earlier interventions. In fact, activities that promote children’s self-confidence, participation, and sense of purpose in life could be considered as the *output* of life skills training as well as an important *input* for subsequent activities. Taking a life cycle approach rather than a snapshot approach can help in designing effective programs.

The following matrix could help in forming different strategies based on the needs of youngsters in various categories and at different developmental stages.

**Life Cycle Matrix**

	Category I	Category II	Category III
Stage I	<p><i>Sequential stages of programming.</i></p> <p><i>Livelihood programs emphasis and content will vary by stage.</i></p>	<p><i>Categories are defined locally around level of risk, opportunities, living condition, age, gender, psychological development, etc.</i></p>	
Stage II			
Stage III			

**Table 2: A Completed Sample Matrix from JUCONI (Mexico)  
Services for Street Children**

<b>Street-Living Children and Their Younger Brothers and Sisters (5 year maximum)</b>	<b>Street-Working Children and Their Younger Brothers and Sisters (4 year maximum)</b>	<b>Open-Air-Market Children and Their Younger Brothers and Sisters (3 year maximum)</b>
<p>(1) Operation Friendship TYPE: preparation LOCATION: in the street and juvenile prison DURATION: from 1 to 6 months <i>Intensive contact with children; recreational activities; emergency medical services; child counseling; preparing for life away from the street.</i></p>	<p>(1) Operation Friendship TYPE: preparation LOCATION: in the street and in the family home DURATION: from 1 to 6 months <i>Regular contact with children; recreational activities; complementary schooling in the street; family visits in the home; child counseling; preparing for life away from the street; provide new options away from street-life.</i></p>	<p>(1) Operation Friendship TYPE: preparation LOCATION: in open air markets and in the family home DURATION: from 1 to 6 months <i>Intensive contact with children and parents; visits in the family home.</i></p>
<p>(2) Halfway home TYPE: intensive change LOCATION: residential house DURATION: from 12 to 18 months <i>Round the clock attention; holistic education; self expression, recreation, life skills; formal schooling; regular home visits and activities within the family; individual counseling; work training and placements.</i></p>	<p>(2) Families TYPE: intensive change LOCATION: in the family home DURATION: from 12 to 18 months <i>Complementary schooling; school and work visits; family counseling; complementary schooling for younger siblings; small contributions to the family economy; introduction to community services.</i></p>	<p>(2) Day Center TYPE: intensive change DURATION: daily services from 12 to 18 months <i>Formal schooling (registered primary school); holistic education (including corporal expression, recreational activities, life skills); pre-school activities (Montessori) for younger siblings; counseling for parents; parental participation in running of center.</i></p>
<p>(3) Follow-On TYPE: continuity LOCATION: in their own home or in the youth house DURATION: 3 years <i>Help graduates from the halfway house to integrate into society by: home visits (with the family, substitute homes or in a youth house); school and work visits; small contributions to the family economy; education for younger siblings; family counseling.</i></p>	<p>(3) Follow-On TYPE: continuity LOCATION: in their family DURATION: 2 years <i>Help ex-street-working children to adapt into society by: home, school, and work visits; schooling for younger siblings; family counseling.</i></p>	<p>(3) Follow-On TYPE: continuity LOCATION: in the Day Center and in the family home DURATION: 1 years <i>Help Day Center graduates adapt into society, through home visits; encouraging younger siblings to attend school and parents to use local services; continue counseling for parents and their participation in the center.</i></p>

## Assessing Impact in Relation to Cost-Effectiveness

### *Impact Assessment*

Although street-involved children and youth are hard to assess because of their high mobility, it is important that an organization evaluate program impact. The information is needed for making programmatic adjustments and improvements, as well as for disseminating successful approaches so they reach more beneficiaries.

### *Measuring Cost-Effectiveness*

Comparing cost-effectiveness and impact of two programs that use the same activities but target different types of youth does not yield meaningful information. As we saw, JUCONI Mexico learned that the per-child cost is highest for *street-living children*. Sarah Thomas de Benitez points out: “Developing a cost analysis per child is particularly useful to help supporters and governments recognize program limits and understand our need for more resources.” She explains how JUCONI in Mexico and Ecuador analyze their cost in two ways as the following:

First, we look at the average cost of each service per participating child. By adding the cost of the relevant outreach plus intensive change plus follow-on services, we find the average cost for a child in each program for any specified time period, usually a year. We can also average the management and administrative costs over the programs, to find out the average cost of any one child in terms of the entire organization’s costs. In JUCONI Mexico’s case, this averaged out in the year 2000 at just under US\$800 per child per year, and in JUCONI Ecuador’s case under US\$400 per child per year. A comparison across programs shows the difference between the costs of running services for *street-living children*, *street-working children* and *market-working children*, per child. Second, the JUCONIs assess their cost-effectiveness in terms of the number of children who successfully graduate from their programs (outreach plus intensive change). This is not a standardized measurement, because children enter the JUCONI programs from a wide range of starting points, but it does give an idea of the percentage of children who manage to reach the goals that they and their educators set out together to achieve (with progress towards those goals monitored during participation).

### *Assessing Impact in Relation to Cost-Effectiveness*

Sarah Thomas de Benitez (JUCONI) emphasizes the importance of developing “commonly accepted standards, assessment tools, and cost measurements in the field of work with street children,” adding that it would be “extremely difficult to analyze the effectiveness or efficiency or an organization’s programs for street children without in-depth knowledge of the organization itself.” She says “it is important for service delivery, program management, and public policy-making, to be able to show accurately the costs per child serviced, and to

assess the *cost-effectiveness* of any program in terms of children's outcomes" (Thomas de Benitez 2001).

Future research to develop standards and tools for impact assessment and measuring cost-effectiveness in relation to impact would certainly be valuable for increasing the effectiveness of economic livelihood programs.

## OTHER SERIOUS DESIGN ISSUES

### **Holistic Approach: Supply-Driven Demand and Trade-off Between Quality Versus Outreach**

Programs need to take a holistic approach in addressing participants' needs, but they should be aware that this approach may have paradoxical, and undesired, consequences. For example, a program report in Mali points out that "supporting NGOs to develop foster care and provide housing options to children is not a sustainable solution, and could even result in more poor children leaving their families, enticed by the freedom of NGO programs."

Some families might leave their children on the street as a way of coping with poverty, hoping that the children will have better opportunities through the programs. Available programs may also undermine the community's sense of responsibility for vulnerable children and youth. The more holistic and integrated the services, the stronger the incentives for various stakeholders. There is no single way to address this potential dilemma; the ways it plays itself out depends on local conditions.

Some professionals interviewed in this review expressed concern that the greater supply of programs has actually increased the number of children and youth on the street in some cities: with greater supply there is more demand. Others make similar observations, observing that programs for street-involved children and youth often make life on the street more bearable, thereby contributing to an increase rather than a decrease in the number of children on the street (Lewis, 1998). Kilbride, referring to the programs with street-involved children and youth studied in Kenya, claims, "indeed, a good case can be made that all current programs collectively serve to perpetuate the problem rather than to reduce the number of street children and improve the quality of their life" (2000). Factors that could possibly mitigate these incentive effects include: choosing an appropriate location for the program, choosing appropriate targeting mechanism, and having an overall package of programs for vulnerable children and youth that focuses on preventive efforts.

**Local location.** Locating support systems in urban settings, where there are some of the most visible street children, could provide negative incentives for those who are on the verge of migrating to cities. Especially with the many children and youth made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS or other causes, supporting them in urban areas in a holistic manner would not be sustainable. Whenever possible, therefore, organizations should initiate economic livelihood programs in the local community, aiming to enhance the capacities of households and

communities to cope where they are and to prevent children and youth's migration to the cities. Even for those who are found on urban streets in urban settings, it would be better to try to locate the livelihood programs closer to their communities of origin.

**Care with targeting mechanism.** In choosing the targeting mechanism, try not to increase the supply-driven demand. While most programs either use certain criteria of their choosing or the self-selection method for admission, careful assessment of targeting mechanisms is critical. For example, KOTO in Vietnam chooses participants from among many applicants by assessing their family background, among other factors, in order to distinguish those who are more disadvantaged from those who are not in such great need.

**Focus on prevention.** At the national level, the overall mix of programs for vulnerable children and youth should focus on preventive measures. This is important from both the point of view of child welfare and the economic impossibility of sustaining coping programs. It is often said that “once children are initiated to street life, it is much more difficult to reintegrate them in their community of origin as they have become assimilated by the community of the street.” Kilbride also emphasizes the importance of emphasizing prevention rather than rehabilitation in order to avoid “the complexities associated with rehabilitation” (2000). From her experiences in working with street-involved children and youth in Cape Town, South Africa, Lewis also underscores the importance of coordinated efforts in prevention:

There are no quick solutions for a problem that has developed over many years. But it is clear the existing welfare philosophy demands careful reassessment. The present fragment, problem-oriented approach needs to be replaced by a coordinated effort focusing primarily on prevention. Programmes are needed in the areas where the problem originates. Parenting skills can be taught and support systems introduced. Increasing employment opportunities and decreasing the level of alcohol abuse would certainly help. Money should be channeled into school facilities, after-care programmes and early identification of street children. The parents of the street children must be held accountable and encouraged to become involved (1998).

### **Summary Note**

While providing support for the most disadvantaged street-involved children and youth today remains important, preventive efforts should be at the core of the overall package. Offering alternative livelihoods in local areas teaches us that it is possible to prevent child migration to the streets.

Holistic approaches can prompt a trade-off between program quality and the scope of its reach. Building a relationship between staff members and each participant is a key determinant of the quality of any program, but this approach inevitably takes time, commitment, and resources, limiting the ability to reach a wider group of beneficiaries. Success in dealing with this trade-off depends on local conditions, the target group, and the objective of each economic livelihood program.

The problem of creating negative incentives and that of having limited resources to reach a wider group of beneficiaries underscores the importance of locating the program carefully, choosing a good targeting mechanism, and having preventive programs at the core of the overall effort.

### **Leaving Youth Unsupported: Bias Toward Younger Children**

Several interviewees indicated that there are not as many programs for older youth as for younger children, despite the fact that older youngsters, realizing that they cannot sustain life on the streets, have the will to build alternative livelihoods.

One of the reasons for the bias against working with older youth is the perception that it could be costly and difficult to work with those who have spent years living or working on the streets. Some organizations also prefer to take a preventative approach, focusing on younger children to keep them from becoming *hard-core* street youth. Younger children also tend to evoke more compelling emotions; they garner more sympathy, making it easier for NGOs to raise funds to support programs for them. Similarly, society in general tends to give more charitable support to younger children, ironically making their potential earning capacity on the streets relatively high. However, as children grow older and become youth, the same society begins to perceive them as a public menace.

This greater support for younger children, from both the development community and the society in general, could leave older youth with few support systems at the very time when they face both real opportunities and major risks. With appropriate support, youth could develop their will to build alternative livelihoods; but without such support, they could—as their earning capacity on the streets declines—become engaged in more hazardous, even criminal activities. Kibride notes that many street-involved youth in Kenya between the ages of 18 and 20 are having difficulty making the transition to building a livelihood and that support for those who are going through this transitional period should be one of the top priorities, in addition to preventive efforts (2000).

So, while working on prevention with younger children is very important, it is essential for economic livelihood programs also to pay close attention to older youth who are in a transitional period of their lives and have the will to build alternative livelihoods for themselves.

## **Making It Happen: Institutional Investment**

### *Importance of Staff Training*

It should never be forgotten that the quality of programs ultimately depends on the relationship between a youngster and a staff member. As mentioned, a trusting relationship is necessary for program success and it has a strong effect on the level of self-confidence that children and youth can achieve during and after a program. Good staff not only influences program effectiveness, it is also key to program continuity and sustainability.

In light of this, focusing only on methodology is a mistake. Sarah Thomas de Benitez points out: “staff selection and training are among the most problematic issues when it comes to the quality of programs for street children today” (Thomas de Benitez, 2001).

### *Importance of Retaining Staff*

It is important that staff work with children and youth for a relatively long time. The challenge of working with disadvantaged children and youth often leads to staff burnout among staff, and poor incentives (salary and resources) cause a high turnover among them. This makes it difficult for participating children. As a result, both the quality and the continuity of programs suffer. And nevertheless, it is often pointed out that current development aids do not pay adequate attention to the needs of staff and their professional development.

### *Importance of Institutional Development*

Institutional development of organizations working directly with children and youth is just as important. It is organizations that provide staff incentives and professional development. Organizations need to be able to survive beyond the duration of an individual project if they are to be effective in their mission.

Save the Children, Inc. in Indonesia has been providing technical assistance to local NGO partners in order to build their institutional capacity. In the process, it uses the participatory institutional assessment tool called Institutional Development Framework (IDF) developed by Management System International (MSI). In IDF, an organization assesses its organizational performance against such key components as organizational mission, management body structure, autonomy, leadership style, planning, staff skills and development, financial sustainability, and partnerships and public relations. Upon completing the appraisal, an organization develops an action plan to improve its capacity. This area of technical assistance merits consideration for enhancing the organizational capacity of institutions working with street-involved children and youth.

## **NEXT STEPS FOR ACTION AND RESEARCH**

### **1. Share information and build coalitions among those who work to improve livelihoods for different types of vulnerable children and youth.**

Important next steps would be to share lessons learned on economic livelihood programs with street-involved children and youth among those professionals currently working to improve or develop alternative economic livelihoods for various types of disadvantaged children and youth (such as domestic workers, prostitutes, bonded laborers, children affected by HIV/AIDS, and those who are living in families and communities at risk). As mentioned, these categories are not discrete and lessons learned could be useful for various types of disadvantaged youngsters. Such information-sharing would also promote institutional networking and deepen the understanding of the main elements of success as well as how to apply lessons to different local conditions.

### **2. Share information among those who work with vulnerable children and youth and those who specialize in improving economic opportunities and business development.**

It is just as important to build institutional networks among professionals who provide technical assistance on economic activities directly to children; among organizations working with them; and among professionals who specialize in various economic interventions, such as microcredit schemes or microenterprise development in developing countries. Sharing information deepens an understanding of how to implement viable economic interventions in a way suitable to youngsters' welfare and developmental needs. This requires that professionals from social-work backgrounds (who have direct working experience with disadvantaged children and youth) and professionals from economic and business backgrounds work together to test the best ways of integrating the program so it can address the interdependent needs for children and youth and help them build safer and more sustainable livelihoods.

Using the same channel of information will allow them, together, to identify the major differences in working with various groups and to analyze and identify the most effective methodologies for reaching them. Collaboratively, they will be able to determine how best to modify existing methodologies.

### **3. Share information and build multisectoral coalitions among professionals with different backgrounds.**

It will also be useful to develop multisectoral coalitions among professionals who work in various areas relevant to building livelihood for vulnerable children and youth. These include basic material needs, primary health, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, psychology, education, life skills, and economic skills. As the case studies illustrate, youngsters' various developmental needs are interdependent and addressing any of them in isolation is not effective. Multisectoral coalitions will also help for studying and examining how the concept

of an integrated approach or a holistic approach can best be implemented at the practical program level.

#### **4. Develop tools and methods for assessing impact and cost-effectiveness.**

Apparently not many programs assess their impact in relation to cost per participant, for such data were hard to come by. Future research on how to develop standards and tools for impact assessment and on how to measure cost-effectiveness in relation to impact would be valuable.

## **CONCLUSION**

Lessons learned from a review of the literature and from interviews with practitioners working with street-involved children and youth are numerous. At each level, economic livelihood programs should aim to link street-involved children and youth and economic opportunities by considering factors regarding methodology, the children and youth themselves, and the staff and institutions doing the work. They must take a holistic approach to addressing various interdependent developmental needs of children and youth. They must promote the participation of children and youth—from the design to the implementation of a program. Human relationships are critical in determining the quality of livelihood programs.

Equally important is work at the policy level. At the national level, there is a need to focus on efforts addressing underlying causes—such as lack of parenting skills, abusive parents, lack of income-earning opportunities for poor working families in both urban and rural areas, lack of educational opportunities, and the like—in order to prevent an increase in the number of children and youth having to live and work on the streets.

Lessons learned about external factors, while not comprehensive, also give us a glimpse of the complexity of trying to help vulnerable children and youth build solid livelihoods. It suggests the need to work at the policy level to achieve legal reform (to enhance the rights of children); improve public education (to reduce the stigma attached to them); stabilize the macroeconomic environment; and control various shocks, such as natural disasters, HIV/AIDS, and conflicts that make poor children and their households more vulnerable.

Lessons suggesting the complexity of the enterprise are not surprising: economic prospects for any individual depend on organizations and societal factors at various levels—from household, community, state, and market to socio-cultural, economic, and political conditions. This reality, while irrefutable, should not discourage important efforts to help one of the most vulnerable groups in society. As some successful programs studied in this review illustrate, careful and realistic attention to these various factors does enhance the possibility of greater effectiveness.

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## APPENDIX A: CASE STUDIES: WHAT WORKED AND WHAT DID NOT

The following twelve case studies describe economic livelihood programs implemented with street-involved children and youth and other disadvantaged youth in various countries around the world, and lessons learned.

<p><b>Implementing Agency:</b> KOTO (Know One Teach One)  <b>Location:</b> Hanoi, Vietnam  <b>Type of Program:</b> Service-oriented Training &amp; Work Experience Program  <b>Date:</b> September 2000–present</p> <p><b>OBJECTIVE</b></p> <p>To provide working opportunities for former street and disadvantaged youth, aged between 16 and 22.</p> <p><b>CONTENT</b></p> <p>KOTO is a restaurant and also a school that provides former street and disadvantaged youth with training and working opportunities. A training curriculum has been developed in the areas of cookery, front-of-house bar, service operations, and English language for the hospitality industry. Trainees complete 36 hours per week of combined practical training at the KOTO restaurant and theoretical training at the KOTO's dedicated training center, which is situated a short distance from the KOTO restaurant. Toward the end of their training, KOTO trainees take part in a work experience program. For a short time KOTO trainees gain experience at restaurants and hotels in Hanoi, where they can hone their skills and develop confidence. This facilitates the trainees' transition from KOTO to the workforce and wider community. One of the central strategies of KOTO is to take a holistic approach. Along with the technical training, the life skills training and other training in areas such as adolescent reproductive health, tobacco and smoking policies, HIV/AIDS, drugs, vaccination, and youth and laws are provided to all trainees.</p> <p><b>RESULT</b></p> <p>2000: 18 trainees started the training at KOTO; in 2002: 17 trainees from 2000 class graduated and found full-time employment in various international hotels such as Hilton Hotel, and restaurants in Hanoi  2001: 13 started the training at KOTO (expected to graduate in 2002)  2002: 17 trainees started the training at KOTO (expected to graduate in 2003)</p> <p><b>KEY LESSONS LEARNED</b></p> <p><u>Interventions</u></p> <p><b>A. Project implementers need to assume the role of facilitator and take a participatory approach.</b> The most important advice that KOTO would offer program implementers is always to keep in mind that the role of a project implementer is to facilitate ways for youth to gain a better future and not to change them. One must always listen to what youth need and want in terms of economic opportunities. KOTO recognizes the importance of participants contributing to the process of building training from the start and of constantly adjusting to meet their needs. KOTO considers participating youth to be the core of its success since improvements to its training curriculum have come from interactions with them.</p> <p><b>B. Choose activities that meet both demands and skills of participating youth and demands of market.</b> KOTO has chosen to provide training in the hospitality business based on the following three factors: (1) participant youth's demands, (2) attainability of a career path in the industry, (3) marketability of</p>
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the skills (high demand and low supply). When the founder of KOTO, Jimmy, decided to formalize the training program, he asked many street-involved youth and children about the type of occupation they would like. Most of them indicated the hospitality business. In terms of marketability of skills, not only was there a high demand, since the tourism industry was growing in Vietnam, but there was also a short supply, since only two schools at the time were providing hospitality training. The hospitality industry was also the most easily and realistically attainable career for former street-involved youth. These three factors were critical in ensuring the success of KOTO's training program in linking participant youth with real work opportunities.

**C. Combine the theoretical training with practical training. Develop ties with local employers and provide work experience.** KOTO provides both theoretical training and practical training in the areas of cookery, front-of-house bar, service operations, and English language for the hospitality industry. KOTO has also developed connections with local employers and provides participant youth with work experience programs upon completion of the training programs. KOTO also strives to provide trainees with the best possible exposure to information about job opportunities to help them make a good decision in their job search.

**D. Attain a high level of skills among trainees, and earn a good reputation as a training organization to help link graduates with work opportunities.** One of the key elements of KOTO's success in linking graduates with work opportunities is that KOTO has earned a good reputation among local employers for the quality of its training. KOTO uses professional specialists to convey knowledge and skills.

**E. Follow-up is absolutely necessary after graduates are placed in positions.** The work experience program that follows training can be very challenging for participating youth. Especially during the first six months, KOTO supports graduates both professionally and personally in order to help them adjust to the real work environment. KOTO considers the follow-up to be an integral part of its training since the future of graduates often hinges on their ability to overcome great struggles during this transition period. The family atmosphere created at KOTO and the trusting relationship between youth and program officers also help; trainees know that wherever they go after graduation, they can always come back to KOTO. Knowing this gives them the confidence they need to succeed in a society that often has a stereotypical view of former street-involved youth and often continues to stigmatize them.

**F. It is important to identify subgroups of youth to create the right dynamics to ensure both developmental objectives and commercial viability.** KOTO aims to strike a balance between the number of trainees from *disadvantaged youth* and the number from *street youth*. Professionals working in KOTO try to identify the characteristics of these two groups after long and intensive discussions. *Disadvantaged youth* refers to those who come from very poor families and are forced to work on the street to support them. They still maintain ties with their families. *Street youth* refers to youth who are working on the street full-time, having lost all contact with their families, and having risk elements in their lives. Differentiation between these two types of youth is not clear-cut or easy, but creating the right dynamics is necessary to ensure the commercial viability of the KOTO restaurant and to meet its mission of supporting truly disadvantaged youth. While *street youth* tend to be much more emotionally unstable and need a family structure environment, after exclusion, *disadvantaged youth* are usually much calmer and have a greater sense of direction from the outset. *Street youth* go through much self-discovery and transformation during the training at KOTO. Both groups benefit from each other through the interaction and exchange among them. KOTO also tries to achieve a gender balance by taking the same number of male and female trainees. Most of the management staff at KOTO are women, providing role models for female trainees. KOTO aims to set a standard for youth in Vietnam that they can be what they want to be, regardless of socioeconomic class and gender.

**G. Project implementers need to take a holistic approach, realizing the various developmental needs of disadvantaged youth.** KOTO considers it essential to keep in mind that former street-involved youth come with a lot of baggage from their past, including the loss of childhood and emotional instability. KOTO believes it important to see participating youth as whole individuals and recognize all aspects of their developmental needs. One cannot provide vocational training alone. Here are some methods that KOTO uses as a part of its holistic approach:

- **Training has to be friendly.** Trainers really have to care about trainees and need to be able to explain things well.
- **Health and life skills training is critical and is most effective when provided with participatory and interactive components.** KOTO considers the health of participant youth to be a very important part of its holistic training. It includes a health checkup, vaccinations, and insurance, but also training on adolescent reproductive health, tobacco and smoking policies, HIV/AIDS, and substance abuses. KOTO has learned that in dealing with sensitive issues such as adolescent reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and drug use, training need to incorporate interactive games so that participatory youth will find the subject more interesting and also understand the issues better. KOTO also found that the participatory approach in life skills training helps bring a sense of confidence, belonging, and ownership among participant youth.

Demand side: children and youth

**Providing a stipend helps participant youth survive during the training.** As part of the holistic approach, KOTO provides participant youth with 500,000 don (about US\$35) for a month, which is the equivalent of an average income. The stipend provides participant youth with motivation so they can concentrate on the training while supporting themselves and their families.

Interface between supply and demand side.

**A. Trust is vital to the success of the program.** When street-involved youth first enter the program, they cannot believe it, since it seems too good to be true. KOTO then needs to gain their trust. Building a trusting relationship with former street-involved youth takes time, patience, and hard work; most of them do not trust people easily because of their past experiences. However, once the trusting relationship is established, participant youth start opening their hearts, can speak about their hopes, and can genuinely participate in the training program. KOTO learned that unless participant youth trust the project implementers, nothing they do will work.

**B. A family environment at KOTO helps youth build self-confidence, which is key to the success of participant youth.** KOTO consciously maintains the small size of its operation in order to create a family environment. The average number of trainees each year is less than 20.

Source: Interview with the Director of KOTO  
See [www.streetvoices.com.au](http://www.streetvoices.com.au) for more information on KOTO.

**Implementing Agency:** Servol  
**Location:** Trinidad and Tobago  
**Type of Program:** Production/Service-oriented Training and Work Experience Program  
**Date:**

### **OBJECTIVE**

To assist low-income children and youth nationwide.

### **CONTENT**

Servol implements the Adolescent Development Programme (ADP) which consists of two stages: the first is a three-month personal development program and the second is one year of vocational training, including three months of on-the-job training, and literacy training for those youth who need it. The first stage (the three-month life skills program) includes training, activities, and discussion sessions in self-awareness, parenting, nutrition, health, sex education, drug abuse prevention, sports and recreation, basic literacy, social studies, and community service. All students must complete the life skills course before proceeding to the vocational training.

Approximately 40 percent of the youth who enter the ADP go on to the second stage of the youth training, the nine-month vocational training course with a three-month job placement. Students choose from a range of possible trades, including early childhood education, masonry, electrical installation, auto mechanics, and nursing. Students spend short periods in different vocational training departments to make an informed decision about the field that most interests them. Recognizing the volatility of the job market in Trinidad, each youth must participate in training courses in more than one trade. In addition, youth receive training in money management, starting their own businesses and applying for jobs.

Graduates get certificates of achievement, the majority of which are approved by the government. For youth who wish to start their own businesses, small loans are offered through a sister NGO that provides loans of up to about US\$1000 at bank interest rates.

### **RESULTS**

It is reported that a high percent of youth find jobs after training and a growing number start their own business; however, specific outcome indicators were not available.

### **KEY LESSONS LEARNED**

#### Intervention

**A: For youth at risk, positive work habits and life skills are as important in finding a job as vocational and technical skills.** Servol's central strategy is to combine its vocational training with the personal development program in two stages. Servol has found that the life skills portion of the program is the key element that leads to the high rates of success in training and employment. Many of the participating youth grow up with negative attitudes towards life because of the violent, impoverished environment in which they live. Most of them, particularly males, spend several years *liming* (loitering with no particular purpose, a term usually applied to groups of unemployed youth in Trinidad) after primary school and have a negative work ethic, which makes them unemployable even if they have technical skills. The life skills program was established as a strategy to help youth develop the personal skills they need to function successfully in society and the workplace. In reality, the firms that employ Servol graduates maintain that they do not view vocational training as a requirement for employment in their companies. Rather, they are seeking youth who are punctual, hard working, and able to interact positively with fellow workers.

**B. Vocational training programs working with youth must strive to overcome traditional gender stereotyped training.** Many vocational training programs train males in higher skilled (and higher paying) technical trades and train females in lower skilled (and lower paying) service trades. Overcoming these gender stereotypes requires specific strategies on the part of the organization. Servol seeks to accept an equal number of males and females in the training program. In addition, priority is given to those who wish to train in those trades that are traditionally relegated to the opposite sex. Thus, young women have graduated as carpenters, plumbers, electricians, masons, auto mechanics, painters; however, only a handful of young men have graduated in traditional female fields, such as nursing or child care. This emphasis on nontraditional employment for young women helps to diminish sex-role stereotypes and debunks the myth that a women's place is in the home. To reinforce this policy, Servol also tries to hire female instructors to serve as role models in such traditionally male-dominated trades as plumbing.

Demand side: children and youth

**A. High drop-out among youth resulted from participants' immediate need to support their families and the fact that some could not adapt to a structured life.** Servol faces high drop-out among youth. Some youth need immediate employment to help their families, while others are not able to adapt to the schedule or to an organized regimen after having spent several years *liming*. Servol has perceived that youth in Trinidad are dropping out of school at earlier ages, around 12, many times after completing only primary school. When these youth spend a number of years *liming*, it becomes more difficult for them to return to a structured environment. In light of this problem, Servol developed its Junior Life Programme, targeted at youth ages 13-15, who have recently dropped out of school.

Supply side: staff and organizational issues

**A. NGO working in vocational training should seek to register their training programs with the government and engage the government as a partner.** Since the late 1980s, Servol has worked in partnership with the Trinidad Ministry of Education to expand its program nationwide. This partnership has meant receiving some government funding and official recognition for the majority of certificates that Servol issues. This has been helping youth acquire employment opportunities, as many employers require government-certified diplomas.

Source: Barker, Gary and Miguel Fontes. 1996 *Review and Analysis of International Experience with Programs Targeted At-risk Youth* Human and Social Development Group Latin America and the Caribbean Region. The World Bank.

**Implementing Agency:** The Lyceum of Arts and Trades  
**Location:** Brazil  
**Type of Program:** Production/Service-oriented Training and Workshop  
**Date:** 1990–

### **OBJECTIVE**

To educate and help young persons realize their potential through work.

### **CONTENT**

The Lyceum provides vocational training, life skills and health education for low-income (mainly in-school) youth, ages 14-17. The Lyceum has four vocational training workshops: (1) a video production workshop which produces educational and promotional videos for a variety of clients, including the city government; (2) a furniture factory which manufactures desks for the state education department and a line of home and office furniture; (3) a service unit for maintenance and repair of water meters; and (4) a building maintenance training program. Adolescents enter the program by application and recommendation from public schools in Salvador, and are required to continue studying while involved in the program. Youth are enrolled in the program for two years and work four hours per day, receiving half of one minimum salary (about US\$50 per month). In addition to vocational training skills, youth spend one day per week in cultural and life planning activities—activities related to self-esteem, self-awareness and health education.

### **RESULTS**

As of 1994, there were 12 youth in the video program and a total of 68 in the other three workshops. Between 1990 and 1994, the number of youth who had graduated was still small.

### **KEY LESSONS LEARNED**

#### Interventions

#### **A. The combination of vocational training plus life skills and life planning education is fundamental.**

The Lyceum provides vocational training in conjunction with life skills training, where youth spend one day per week in cultural and life planning activities—activities related to self-esteem, self-awareness, and health education. The philosophy behind this combination is that adolescents are in the stage of personal development during which they need a space to reflect about their future and about the meaning of work. This reflection helps them decide what they want to do in the future and thus helps them become more fulfilled and productive employees. Some of the youth decide to continue working in the areas in which they received training, while others decide to go on to other professions. The Lyceum believes it is crucial for youth to have this opportunity to experiment and decide for themselves the profession that interests them.

**B. It is important to place youth directly in a real work setting.** The Lyceum found that it is essential to place youth directly in a real work setting rather than in an artificial or sheltered vocational training workshop. In all of its vocational training workshops, youth work alongside professional staff and craftspeople. Through direct participation, youth learn how a real business works and develop their skills at a level which makes them competitive for seeking employment.

**C. Choice of vocational training needs to be based on analysis of market demands.** The Lyceum learned that the choice of vocational training offered to youth should be based on the demands of the marketplace. The Lyceum selects the products and services it provides to participant children and youth by surveying the marketplace to make sure that its production units are competitive and meet market demands. This helps avoid the tendency of some vocational training programs that continue to train youth in trades for which there may be limited or no demand.

Demand side: children and youth

**It is important to promote participation of youth in programming and enhance peer assistance.** In the Lyceum, youth are involved in the management decisions of each production workshop and participate throughout the process. The Lyceum also encourages the system of peer assistance. Youth who are in the second year of their training assist in the training of youth who are entering the program.

Source: Barker, Gary and Miguel Fontes. 1996 *Review and Analysis of International Experience with Programs Targeted At-risk Youth* Human and Social Development Group Latin America and the Caribbean Region. The World Bank.

<b>Implementing Agency:</b>	Projeto Axe
<b>Location:</b>	Salvador, Brazil
<b>Type of Program:</b>	Production-oriented Training Program, Production Workshop and Work Experience
<b>Date:</b>	1990–

### **OBJECTIVE**

To provide high quality and low cost service to children and youth who live on the streets and to the larger number of youth who work on the streets in Salvador.

### **CONTENT**

Projeto Axe focuses on the following areas: (1) street education (initial contact with children in the streets); (2) literacy and informal education as a bridge between the street and the formal school system; (3) educational businesses (vocational training programs in paper recycling, furniture-making, silk screening, and fashion design); (4) a cultural program for young children which includes *capoiera* (a traditional African dance combining dance with martial arts), educational games, and a circus school; (5) a work insertion program in partnership with the private sector in Salvador to place youth in jobs; and (6) a health program, which includes health education and primary health care and referrals to the public health system, when necessary.

### **RESULT**

As of 1993, the city and the federal university hired 70 youth for maintenance and gardening, and local businesses hired a total of 417 youth between 1990 and 1993.

### **KEY LESSONS LEARNED**

#### Interventions

##### *Production Workshop*

**A. It is important to produce goods of high quality.** In its vocational training activities, Projeto Axe's educational businesses or cooperatives emphasize the production of high quality goods sold at competitive, nonsubsidized prices. Axe tries to break the traditional charity model of street children's projects. It is opening two stores (one for recycled paper products and the other for women's clothing) to sell their products in a tourist area in downtown Salvador.

##### *Work Experience Program*

**B. It is important to lobby the private sector and local businesses to mitigate the stigma attached to street-involved children and youth and to improve their employment opportunities.** One of the problems the work insertion program faced was the stigma attached to street children. When Projeto Axe tries to help participating youth obtain jobs in the formal private sector, many firms are reluctant to hire them because they fear violence and theft. The program's director of Projeto Axe holds frequent meetings with the local business sector and presents the program's results and activities. This lobbying has helped facilitate the hiring of low-income youth and former street-involved youth in local businesses which otherwise would not hire the youth.

#### Demand side: children and youth

**A. It is important to promote a sense of purpose among participants.** Projeto Axe's main strategy is a methodology it calls the *pedagogy of desire*. Specifically, Projeto Axe works with street and working youth to

help them develop a sense of purpose in their lives. Since most youth have been forced to work for survival and most work in occupations that they did not choose, the program seeks to transmit the notion that they have the right to choose what they want to do. Thus, street educators (outreach workers) and other staff work with the youth to rediscover or discover their personal interests and desires. Projeto Axe does not believe that most young children who work on the streets should be working, thus the focus for them is on recreation and basic education.

**B. Compensation for participant youth helps.** Recognizing that most of the youth are forgoing work in the streets and hence income to participate in Projeto Axe activities, all of the youth, whether in literacy or vocational training programs, are paid for four hours of work per day and receive transportation and meals. This helps participating youth continue stay with the program.

Supply side: staff and organizational issues

**A. It is critical to encourage staff to become a long-term part of the program by paying higher than average salaries and providing training for their professional development.** Projeto Axe has a strategy of investing in staff training and staff personal and professional development. Many programs that assist street-involved youth have high turnover rates, creating difficulties for the participants and the stability of the program; Projeto Axe tried to avoid this by investing heavily in professional staff development and by paying higher than average salaries.

**B. It is important to keep the program finances open to the public.** Because many NGOs assisting street children have been criticized for poor administration of their funds and a lack of transparency in their budgets, Projeto Axe has made a point of keeping its finances open to the public and has widely publicized its low cost of US\$576 per year per child.

**C. It is important to work closely with the local government.** The program has worked closely with the city government of Salvador and as a result was able to avoid the duplication and competition among services for street-involved children that has occurred in some cities in Brazil. For example, other projects, which focus on primary prevention, collaborate with Projeto Axe and refer youth who need services in secondary prevention and tertiary attention to Projeto Axe.

Source: Barker, Gary and Miguel Fontes. 1996 *Review and Analysis of International Experience with Programs Targeted At-risk Youth* Human and Social Development Group Latin America and the Caribbean Region. The World Bank.

**Name of the Program:** Me Chance  
**Location:** Kum Baya, Quito, Ecuador  
**Type of Program:** Production-oriented Training & Production Workshop  
**Date:** 1992–1995

### **OBJECTIVE**

To provide the way for street-involved youth to live independent of the street. To find the way for youth not to have to return to the street permanently.

### **CONTENT**

Me Chance targeted a self-selected group of five street-involved youth aged between 14 and 18, who were considered to be the hardest core street youth and the most delinquent, having spent most of their time in jail. The reason for targeting such youth was that they were in need of services in spite of the fact that they were often the most difficult to reach because they had no adult accompaniment or supervision. Participant youth were facing both immediate needs (such as shelter, food, and clothing) and strategic needs (such as basic education, social skills, and information about reproductive health). Drug abuse was also a challenge.

The program was set up in 1992 on the initiative of one international program officer who raised funds for the program in partnership with a local Ecuadorian microentrepreneur. The program had two components, which were implemented in parallel. The first was the productive one: the program established a carpentry workshop which sold wood products (educational puzzles). The income was then used to maintain the microenterprise and pay wages to the participant youth. One program officer taught participant youth carpentry skills such as cutting and painting, while the other program officer, a local microentrepreneur, taught them business development skills. The second component was life skills training. Through the life skills training, participating youth learned important new skills in the areas of budgeting money, health and reproductive issues, and gender issues.

### **RESULT**

Participant youth were able to earn income to buy food and pay rent to live in a flat, which made their lives more stable. As a result, substance abuse among them declined.

### **KEY LESSONS LEARNED**

#### Interventions

**A. Choose the activities that meet both the demand and supply of the market, and the demand and skill level of participating youth.** The design of Me Chance was based on a careful analysis of the demand and the supply of the products, as well as of participating youth's demands and skills. A carpentry activity was chosen because of its potential profitability, participating youth's demands, and its feasibility and appropriateness, given the youth's existing skills. While there was a high demand for educational puzzles in the local market, the supply was virtually zero. Participant youth all liked the idea, and had excellent manual skills. One of the key lessons Me Chance learned is that it is important for any economic strengthening program to plan the activity well and to align the activity with the ability of the youth. Me Chance is an example of a successful production workshop based on careful market analysis and participating youth's initiative. It met both the immediate and the strategic needs of participants.

**B. Life skills training is critical in making sure that the income earned through the economic strengthening program will help youth achieve sustainable and healthier livelihoods.** The following experience of Me Chance illustrates the importance of life skills training. After receiving their first checks from the microenterprise, all participating youth showed up the next morning with new shoes. They had spent all the earned money on shoes and had no money to buy food for two weeks. In the life skills training,

the program officers and youth discussed how to budget money and what portions of the money needed to be saved for rent and food if they wanted to deal with these necessities. Thus, an important lesson is that it is not enough to help street-involved youth to earn more money. In order for them to use their income to build healthier and more sustainable livelihoods, they need to know how to budget their money.

Demand side: children and youth

**A. Participant youth's will to leave the street is critical to the success of the economic strengthening program.** Participant youth were becoming adults and knew that their soft options were disappearing. They knew that they needed to look at alternatives and saw the program as their last opportunity to build a future. When participating youth were really ready to take an opportunity to leave the street and gain skills to make better livelihoods for themselves, the economic strengthening program could be most effective.

**B. Natural self-selected groups work well together.** The group of five youth was self-selected and worked well together, dividing their labors and helping each other throughout the program. Giving youth an option to self-select a natural group was one of the elements that made the program successful.

**C. Substance abuse declined after the lives of participating youth became stable.** Me Chance made it possible for participating youth to earn income to buy food, pay rent to live in a flat, and meet other basic needs, making their lives more stable. As a result, substance abuse declined among them. Substance abuse such as sniffing concrete is generally, for street-involved youth, a method to survive the cold, fear, and loneliness. Me Chance learned that when the lives of youth become safer and more stable, they had less need to depend on substance abuse for survival.

Supply side: staff and organizational Issues

**A. It is important to consider and address the needs of staff personnel carefully in order to ensure program continuity.** The program began on the initiative of one international program officer, working in partnership with a local Ecuadorian microentrepreneur. It was agreed that the international program officer would run the program for a year and that thereafter, the local partner would take over the program. However the program failed to address the needs and requirements of the local partner, leading to the suspension of the program. A major lesson is that it is vital to consider and address the needs and requirements of the program officers carefully and to incorporate them into the design of the program in order to ensure program continuity.

Interface between supply and demand side

**A. Building a trusting relationship with participating youth takes time, but is vital in working with them.** The founder of Me Chance knew participant youth for about a year through the experience of working with them in a different project, and playing football with them almost every day. He had built a trusting relationship with them by the time that Me Chance began. An important lesson is that any projects that aim to work with street-involved children and youth need to count on youth's trust. This takes time; staff need to listen to them, trust them, and be willing to take risks with them.

**B.** Participatory processes are important to ensure youth's engagement in the project and the appropriateness of the project for their needs. The program officers' ability to facilitate and to build a trusting relationship with them determines the quality of participation. Me Chance always made room for adjustment according to the psychosocial needs of participating youth. Regular focus group discussions helped in understanding their ideas. An important lesson learned from this process is that facilitation is needed to promote youth participation. This requires an individual who has both their trust and the ability to listen to them and help them articulate their needs by asking the right questions and guiding them through the process. Program officers must be facilitators and partners. Paternalistic approaches will not work.

Source: Interview with a founder of the program

**Implementing Agency:** JUCONI  
**Location:** Mexico  
**Type of Program:** Production-oriented Training & Production Workshop  
**Date:** 1990–1992

### **OBJECTIVE**

To respond to street-working children's needs to produce an income for their families.

### **CONTENT**

The workshop was for youngsters between 11 and 15 years of age. JUCONI educators facilitated it and involved other family members as participants. JUCONI directors and educators envisioned the workshop as a space where families could work together in a protected environment, learn to set up and administer their own home-based workshops, and build on sales techniques already acquired by street-working children. Market and production analysis by a group of children and a JUCONI educator resulted in a joint decision to make and market mops and cleaning clothes. This seemed to satisfy various concerns—it built on the children's existing competences and involved some parts of production suitable for children, others for youths, and others for parents. There was also an existing market with many potential buyers, from individuals to chains of shops, in which the workshop and potential family-based enterprises seemed able to compete. Participating children and families would carry *credentials*, explaining the purpose of the workshop, to encourage individuals to buy the products. JUCONI provided the installations and made the initial investments in equipment and raw materials. JUCONI educators helped participating children and their families to calculate costs, margins, and prices. A local craftsman showed them how to make the products.

### **RESULTS**

The workshop was closed 18 months later, as JUCONI Mexico concluded that it was not meeting the goals of children, or of their families, or of JUCONI.

### **KEY LESSONS LEARNED**

#### Interventions

**A. One program cannot meet too many objectives (both social and economical) and the demands of too many stakeholders at the same time.** The program expected too much of one service. JUCONI wanted it to meet its economic and training objectives at the same time, hoping it would fulfill both practical and immediate needs, as well as longer-term developmental needs. It also wanted the production workshop to belong to children and families and JUCONI. Some of these ambitions were contradictory. To be genuinely productive, the workshop would need to compete with other local producers geared to producing as much as possible, as efficiently as possible. Large-scale producers were using economies of scale and paying very low wages, while small producers were working long hours and producing at a high speed. This was not compatible with the sort of workshop street-working children and their families could run, or that JUCONI wanted to manage. In addition, there were too many stakeholders. JUCONI should either have let the children or their families run the show, or leave that to JUCONI. But a single workshop could not meet the needs of all these constituents.

#### Demand side: children and youth

**A. Artificial groups of street working children without a common cause do not work well together.** The street-working children JUCONI had brought together were not a natural group. They worked different street corners and had been brought together by JUCONI. Similarly, their families came from different communities and had no real common cause. Neither of these groups showed any desire to work together outside the protected workshop environment provided by JUCONI.

Supply side: staff and organizational issues

**A. A diversity of funding sources helps an organization's autonomy.** JUCONI has learned that diversity of funding sources is key to NGO autonomy. For an organization to be able to focus on meeting children's needs instead of responding to donor priorities, it is critical for it to diversify its sources of support. JUCONI attracts significant national and local funding, having supporters from business, schools, clubs, and individuals to federal and municipal agencies.

Source: Thomas de Benitez, Sarah. 2001. *What Works in Street Children Programming: The JUCONI Model*. International Youth Foundation.

**Implementing Agency:** Passage House  
**Location:** Recife, Brazil  
**Type of Program:** Production-oriented Training & Income-generating Activities  
**Date:** 1988–

### **OBJECTIVE**

To improve the welfare of street girls and other low-income young women by providing health services, income generation activities, counseling, and shelter.

### **CONTENT**

The main target population of Passage House is the estimated 1,000 to 1,200 women ages 6-20 living on the streets or in brothels in Recife, and secondarily, 130,000 young women between the ages of 15 and 19 who live in low-income communities in Recife.

Vocational training is a part of Passage House's multiphased program, which includes:

(1) street outreach for young women involved in prostitution and living on the streets; (2) drop-in counseling, literacy, and health services; (3) residential group homes; (4) vocational training; (5) outreach projects in low income communities in the areas of AIDS prevention, health promotion and prevention of sexual abuse; and (6) research projects on the situation of street girls and young women in prostitution.

### **RESULT**

The result of the vocational training is not available. As for income-generating activities, as of 1995, Passage House maintained a booth in a shopping center where it sold products made by the street girls. The project earned about US\$1600 per month, which covered the cost of the booth and provided a small salary for the girls.

### **KEY LESSONS LEARNED**

Demand side: children and youth

#### **A. Until fundamental issues of self-esteem and healthy primary relationships are addressed, a program cannot help resolve other needs, such as vocational training and returning to school.**

Passage House's main strategy has been to focus on the psychosocial and mental health factors affecting young women involved in prostitution. The program has learned that until fundamental issues of self-esteem, and healthy primary relationships are addressed, it cannot resolve other needs—such as vocational training and returning to school. Passage House first offers drop-in counseling to help girls living on the streets or involved in prostitution to discuss these psychological problems. Once the young women are ready to progress to the next stage, they are invited to participate in vocational training programs and/or residential group homes.

**B. Group therapy and group activities work.** Because the girls do not believe in their own ability to change the course of their lives, the solidarity of the group helps them believe they can leave the streets and find alternatives. Passage House often tries to take advantage of groups of friends, which already exist in the streets. Since the girls often form groups as protection in the streets, Passage House invites all members of these groups to enter the program at the same time.

Passage House also offers counseling in which each young woman has the opportunity to discuss her situation and needs in an unthreatening group environment. The girls are then invited to start a process that helps them establish a positive relationship with a staff member and leave the streets and prostitution when they are ready to do so. As the third stage of this process, young women who cannot return home are offered the opportunity to live in community group homes.

**C. Educating former street-involved girls as researchers for the program is effective.** Passage House found it effective to train former street-involved girls as researchers. Street-involved girls are often distrustful and young women involved in prostitution are often hard to communicate with. This has led to misleading results when trying to count the number of these girls and assess their needs. Passage House has learned to train former street-involved girls to interview girls currently working on the street. These trained researchers also serve as outreach staff by inviting street-involved girls into the program.

Supply side: staff, organizations, institutional networking

**A. Staff with social service backgrounds who lack experience in the business sector face difficulties in promoting economic activities.** Because the staff comes from the social service fields, they have not had experience in the business sector and Passage House had difficulty producing high quality goods (handicrafts and frozen foods) to compete in the marketplace.

**B. High staff turnover poses the main problem to the program.** Because it is hard to work with street-involved girls and staff members experience much stress, the program had constantly to recruit and train new staff; this posed a problem for the program.

**C. It is important to develop ties with local businesses and local government.** Passage House lacks ties to the local community and found itself extremely vulnerable if its international funding were to be reduced. This is now happening because of international trends in development aid. As a result, the program is now beginning to pay attention to seeing more Brazilian and local funding.

Interface between supply and demand side

**A. A trusting relationship between the program staff and girls who had lost their self-esteem is vital in supporting them to leave the street and establish productive lives.** The central lesson that Passage House has learned is the importance of establishing a strong relationship between a staff person and the street girl. Passage House has concluded that most girls end up on the streets and in prostitution because of family problems like sexual abuse. Caught in this situation, girls lose the ability to trust and undergo tremendous damage to their self-esteem. Street girls adopt a variety of self-defeating survival strategies to mitigate the suffering they face on the streets. These survival strategies include drug abuse, pregnancy, and establishing harmful relationships with men. Helping young women change from negative survival strategies to positive ones is time consuming and staff intensive. However, it is an indispensable step if young women are to leave the street and establish productive lives. A program working with street girls or girls involved in prostitution also must defend the young women in all their potential needs. Pimps and others have sometimes threatened program staff and the girls with violence. If the young women are to leave the streets, they must trust the program staff and believe that they can defend them from these threats.

Source: Barker, Gary and Miguel Fontes. 1996 *Review and Analysis of International Experience with Programs Targeted At-risk Youth* Human and Social Development Group Latin America and the Caribbean Region. The World Bank.

<b>Implementing Agency:</b>	Association Francois-Xavier Bagnoud (AFXB)
<b>Name of the Program:</b>	AFXB Uruguay
<b>Location:</b>	Montevideo, Uruguay
<b>Type of Program:</b>	Production-oriented Training and Production Workshop
<b>Date:</b>	1993–present

### **OBJECTIVES**

To help adolescents become familiar with such aspects of the world of work as schedules, yield, and quality of products. To train participant youth so that they can enter the labor market with appropriate skills. To generate income through manual productive activity of quality.

### **CONTENT**

In conjunction with other activities, such as educational programs, AFXB Uruguay implements Production Activities for those who are at least 14 years old. The annual process is first to call for participation of adolescents involved in the project of AFXB, and others outside of it. General competency is provided through training in all aspects of wood production (for example, in producing rustic folding chairs from wood, the training includes the different phases of handling wood, then fabric, and also painting). Along with general production training, two hours per week are assigned for complementary competency training, which is mandatory for all participants. There, participating youth learn how to calculate the cost of products, how to determine the value of sales, how to look for work, and how to be presentable for work. They are also introduced to the concept of markets and labor rights. In addition to the training component, participants receive an actual productive component where they produce finished products for sale. At the start of the training, they do not receive pay; however, participants later receive full payment for their productive work. The present group has eight members (five girls and three boys, aged between 14 and 18 years).

### **RESULTS**

In last 10 years, approximately 100 youths have participated in Production Activities of AFXB Uruguay. Approximately 60 percent of participants found alternative income-generating activities as a result of the project. Twenty-two (22) participants found work through the dependency relations of the program, and 36 on their own.

### **KEY LESSONS LEARNED**

#### Intervention

**A. Differentiating the educational part from the productive part of the project is critical.** Differentiating the educational part of the project from the productive one was one of the greatest challenges facing both participating youth and program implementers. As a part of solution, the program opened the productive part of activities to nonparticipating adolescents of the educational part of the project. This helped give a more professional character to the productive part of Production Activities. Another strategy was to separate productive activities from educational ones in both time and place.

**B. Management of time is critical.** One of the key lessons that AFXB Uruguay has learned is the importance of managing time for production. Production Activities now succeeds in establishing a schedule that coincides with the real world. The fanciful notion that everything could wait until the end has been overcome. Because payment is offered per finished piece, the adolescents now understand that time management is what makes greater gain possible.

**C. It is important to agree on common guidelines for production.** Another important lesson that AXFB Uruguay has learned is that it is critical to make sure there is production agreement on guidelines for tangible deliverables such as desired quality and yield. The agreement needs to be clear, for adolescent understanding; it should leave no place for subjective interpretations.

**D. Finding a market for finished products poses the greatest problem.** AXFB Uruguay found its greatest problem to be finding a market for its finished products. It is in sales where the activities see the greatest difficulty. The prices are not competitive on the outside and the products can only reach the local market at a particular moment.

Demand side: children and youth

**A. Adjustment in the methods of payment to participant youth has yielded optimal results.** In the first years, payment to youth was made at the end of the productive process, when the sales were finalized. Now, each participant can choose to receive full payment or partial payment at the end of the day, or to wait for it to accumulate.

Source: interview with a project officer and their website, <http://www.fxb.org/action/uruguay/index.html>.

**Funding Agencies:** Save the Children Federation, Inc. (SC)  
**Implementing Agencies:** Eight Indonesian Local NGOs  
**Locations:** Surabaya, Bandung , Indonesia  
**Type of Program:** Production/Sales-oriented Training, Production Workshop, Internship Program

**Date:** –

### **OBJECTIVES**

To develop economic opportunities for street-involved children as a way to support them from stopping work on the streets.

### **CONTENT**

Eight local NGOs (Abdi Asih, Al Muhajirin, Alang-alang, SPMAA, and Genta in Surabaya and YMS, Bahtera, and Bias Kriya Nusantara in Bandung) received funds from Save the Children, Inc. in Indonesia to implement vocational trainings programs.

### **RESULTS**

The results by type of vocational training

Type of course	Number of children trained	Number with alternative income as a result of course
Handicrafts	77	12
Music	92	20
Sewing and baking	82	9
Automotive repair	17	2
Printing	28	4
Small Business	24	4
No Training, Placed in Internships	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>53</b>

In sum, vocational training programs have produced alternative income for about 15 percent of children trained. Many NGOs admit that the alternative incomes produced are not enough actually to support children's living expenses. However, NGOs claim "vocational training programs have other benefits, such as developing self-confidence and concentration skills, and reducing the amount of time children spend on the street."

### **KEY LESSONS LEARNED**

#### Intervention

**A. The quality of the product is critical in the successful marketing of products.** Among eight local NGOs that obtain funding from Save the Children, only Alang-alang in Surabaya has developed successful programs that could market the products made by street-involved children and youth. Alang-alang produces decorated carved ducks made out of bamboo and decorated with eggshells. The carvings are made by prisoners, and then purchased by Alang-alang and decorated by street-involved children. Sales profits are shared between participant children and Alang-alang. In the last three months, Alang-alang has started to secure export orders, for example from Poland and France, after Save the Children supported them to promote their goods at an international trade fair organized by the Department of Industry and Trade in Jakarta.

The key success element of Alang-alang is its high product quality and production capacity. The director of Alang-alang is an artist who is very concerned about product quality and is very selective about what participating children are allowed to do in the production process. On the contrary, other NGOs are producing handicraft that are not of high quality and cannot compete with domestically produced handicraft. All the cases show that while marketing is critical in the sale of the products, the quality of the products is the key prerequisite for successful sales—of products made by street-involved children and youth, as for any other product.

**B. Vocational training based solely on children’s demands does not lead to economic opportunities.**

Many of the eight NGOs claim that they offer courses in topics such as handicrafts and music based on participating children’s interests and wishes. However, as the aforementioned result indicates, their vocational training programs have on average produced alternative income for about 15 percent of children trained. For example, YMS and Bahtera in Bandung both offered training programs in recycled paper and batik; however, none of them has produced work opportunities for participating children. SEMAK in Bandung supports children to make greeting cards from recycled paper; however, this program also was never designed to serve as a way for children to earn enough income to leave the streets. Save the Children, Inc. in Indonesia is now discussing with local NGOs partners the importance of conducting a market analysis in order to align the content of the vocational training with the demand and the skill level of participating children and youth. They are also developing internship programs with the recognition that providing vocational training with no link to practical work experience or internship opportunities is less likely to provide participants with employment opportunities after they complete the training.

**C. Better definition of beneficiaries makes it possible to form varying strategies to meet different needs of subgroups.** Save the Children, Inc. in Indonesia found that better-defined target groups makes it possible to sharpen strategies to meet different needs of subgroups of street-involved children and youth. Save the Children and its local NGO partners have identified two subgroups of street-involved children and youth and have formed varying strategies for both groups. The first subgroup is the *vulnerable group* and the second subgroup is *older and high risk adolescents*.

A key characteristic of the *vulnerable group* is that they are younger (6-12 years-old), living with parents or female-headed households, attending school, and working in streets during nonschool hours. The strategy seeks to (a) prevent family separation, (b) prevent dropping out of school, and (c) improve access to health and social services.

*Older and high risk adolescents* are at least 13 years old, spend little time with families or live alone; do not attend school; work full-time on the streets; and are engaged in high risk behaviors (sexual, drugs, crime). For them, a *positive pathways* off the street strategy aims to (a) increase alternative employment opportunities, (b) reduce risk behavior, and (c) improve access to health and social services.

Supply side: staff and organizational Issues

**A. Institutional development/capacity building of local NGOs to deliver assistance to street-involved children and youth is critical.** Save the Children, Inc. in Indonesia has been providing technical assistance to build institutional capacity of local partner organizations so that they could be strong and sustainable beyond the end of the program. Initially it focused on enhancing their financial capacity in the areas of bookkeeping, accounting, and financial reporting. Save the Children, Inc. in Indonesia also used a participatory institutional assessment tool called the Institutional Development Framework (IDF), developed by Management System International (MSI). Outside consultants facilitated two- or three-day sessions for every partner-NGO. Each NGO bought everyone, from its board down to staff, to assess its organizational performance against key elements of the IDF tool, including organizational mission, management body structure, autonomy, leadership style, planning, staff skill and development, financial sustainability, and partnership and public relations. Upon completion of appraisal, each NGO developed an action plan to improve its capacity. Common areas in which local NGO partners needed improvement were the upper-level management of board, and the ability to raise funds to achieve financial sustainability. Based on the results,

Save the Children, Inc. in Indonesia is now coordinating technical assistance in identified areas. For example, it started providing training on fund raising that focuses more on nongrants, and different fund raising strategies for smaller amounts of locally-raised funds. The response of local NGO partners to IDF has been positive. They also expressed appreciation that donors did not take interest in the institutional development of their organizations. Most donors simply wanted to know the results achieved through the projects, and were not concerned about the sustainability of the organizations beyond the end of the grant.

**B. Staff members with social-work backgrounds need to be empowered to gain business skills.**

Program officers of local NGOs have been aware of the importance of gaining economic and business skills to implement economic-strengthening activities with street-involved children and youth. However their backgrounds are mainly in social work and they do not have the business skills to conduct such an analysis. Providing technical assistances in areas such as business management and market analysis to local NGOs would be indispensable for economic strengthening programs with street-involved children and youth to be economically viable.

Demand side: children and youth

**A. It may be helpful to find out the age range when natural transitions occur in the lives of street-involved children and youth. Children and youth need to want to get off the street if economic strengthening programs for them are to be effective.** Based on their experience, Save the Children, Inc. in Indonesia is now trying to assess the age range when natural transitions occur in the lives of street-involved children and youth and they realize that life on the street is not sustainable. In Indonesia, the earning capacity of street-involved children, especially younger ones who garner sympathy, is larger than that of most unskilled adult laborers. As street-involved children move into their teens, however, the public tends to view them as a social menace, and their ability to earn income on the streets gradually decreases. It is during this transitional time that economic strengthening programs could be most effective, helping them build alternative livelihoods rather than take up hazardous or criminal activities. Assessing an important transitional period of street-involved children and youth could be an important way for economic strengthening programs to identify its target group.

External factors

**A. The relatively large earning potential of children on the street keeps them from deciding to leave the streets.** There is a certain cultural tradition in Indonesia to give money to orphans or poor children. Street-involved children usually make on average close to minimum wage, whereas many unskilled laborers or domestic servants do not. In other words, the children in general make more than what their parents can make working in any other positions. In addition, the kinds of work that street-involved children and youth are engaged in require no initial investment. Families can easily become dependent on the children's earnings for their income. This family dependence makes it harder for the children to leave the streets.

Source: Interview with a program officer and *Urban Street Children Empowerment & Support Quarterly Report*, July-September 2000. Save the Children, Inc.

**Implementing Agency:** Street Ahead  
**Name of the Program:** Bookkeeping and Basic Business  
**Location:** Harare, Zimbabwe  
**Type of Program:** Entrepreneurship Development Training  
**Date:** 2002–present

### **OBJECTIVE**

To help street-involved children and youth become financially independent so they can support themselves.

### **CONTENT**

Street Ahead in Harare, Zimbabwe offers the Bookkeeping and Basic Business Training as one of the educational training courses for which street-involved children and youth can sign up at the organization's drop-in center. Provided on a self-selection basis, the course is geared to those children who are working and earning money. The rationale behind the course was to complement traditional production-oriented vocational training to which street-involved children and youth already had access. Upon completing such production-oriented training, there was no course for them to learn issues such as budgeting money and starting a small business. The content of the program includes a 12-lesson course on subjects like Identifying Your Customer; Finding New Opportunities; Setting Personal Goals; How to Save Your Money; Working With People (cooperatives, group purchasing, and the like); Know Your Business Rights and Obligations (local laws and licenses); Your Money and Your Business (separating business and personal expenses, borrowing, banking, debt); How to Work Out a Selling Price (including overhead costs as well as direct costs); Customers and Employees; Recordkeeping and Financial Analysis (making good business decisions based on accurate accounting). The class size was kept to about eight students in order to enhance participation and discussion. At one point, microcredit, based on a group-lending methodology, was provided for those successfully graduated from the program. A loan was made to two members of a group of eight, on condition that they repay the loans so the next two members could have access to them. In this course given on a self-selection basis, the average age of the participants has been about 17 or 18.

### **RESULT**

From November 2000 to date, 40 street-involved children and youth (all of them children living on the street without family contacts) participated in the training.

While it is very difficult to keep track of graduates, as they are constantly on the move, at least 15 of the 40 started their own business and are now living in rental areas of the city. Some of them are still working on the street but sleeping off the street.

### **KEY LESSONS LEARNED**

#### Interventions

**A. It is extremely important to make sure that participating children and youth understand that what they are learning through business development training is not a promise.** One of the most important lessons that Bookkeeping and Basic Business training has learned is that the provider of the training must be extremely careful to make no promise to participants. The trainer must be sure that children and youth not perceive anything they are being told to be a promise. If they do, they will feel deceived. It must be emphasized that the training is about self-improvement. This is especially important in places where street-involved children and youth are used to perceiving organizations as providing them with materials like clothing and food. It is important to get participants out of the mindset of "what are you going to give me?" They need to move into the attitude of "what I can do for myself?"

**B. Microcredit based on a group-lending methodology did not work completely.** This may be the result of the lack of maturity and sense of responsibility of participants. The peer pressure worked to some extent, but not completely. Those who were responsible paid back their loans, but those who were not, did not. It is a big responsibility for a street-involved youngster to obtain a loan large enough to set up his or her own business; they are not used to handling such a large sum of money. Those who were not mature saw loans as an easy means of meeting their immediate needs. There was no way for the program to recoup the loan since street-involved children and youth have no fixed address, so the funds simply ran out. It is however important to note that some of children and youth were responsible and did pay back their loans after using them in productive ways.

**C. Differentiating between *older youth* and *younger children* sometimes makes the training program work better.** Bookkeeping and Basic Business training found that in some cases separating older youth from younger children by offering the same course at different times or on different dates helps. The main reason for this is to prevent the older participants from overwhelming the younger ones.

**D. Children and youth enjoy a participatory and tailored approach.** Bookkeeping and Basic Business training learned that promoting interactions and participation as well as tailoring content and schedule to the needs of participants have been effective. Bookkeeping and Basic Business training takes a very participatory approach, encouraging discussion and incorporating role plays throughout the training. The program added two sessions at the request of participants who wanted to assess their understanding of the materials. When participating youth and children enjoyed the class sessions and felt that they had learned something valuable, they advertised the class by talking about the class to their friends. In this way, the training course has created a self-generating demand.

Demand side: children and youth

**A. Lack of self-confidence and an attitude of dependency are major constraints on the success of business development for street-involved children and youth. Training needs to incorporate components that are aimed to enhance their self-confidence.** Bookkeeping and Basic Business Training has learned that one of the major differences between those who started their own businesses and those who could not, after completing the same training, was the level of the individual's self-confidence. Even when they have a certain education, lack of self-confidence prevents them from being able to understand that they could be out there and do something for themselves. Most of them have been abused either at their home or on the streets and suffer from very low self-esteem. Street-involved children and youth are also very concerned about supporting themselves on day-to-day basis and tend to hang on to what they have always done—activities like begging and helping park cars in the city center—even after the training. Some of them are not sure they could earn money by doing something slightly different from what they have been always done. Lack of self-confidence prevents them from taking the leap needed to make a change. Another large obstacle is an attitude of dependency, engendered by past experiences, that is, the mindset that they cannot do anything to get themselves out of the situation and need to wait for someone else to help them get out.

The Bookkeeping and Basic Business Training Program tries to address this issue during the training by promoting participation and interaction among participating children and youth; by discussing how they could do things for themselves; and by encouraging them to do small assignments, which they could complete on their own. One of the most positive lessons the training has learned is that such processes do help increase self-confidence as observed in the personal changes among some of the program's graduates.

**B. Street-living children and youth have very basic needs for such things as places to keep their belongings and places to wash themselves. This affects their chances of gaining better economic opportunities.** Street-living youngsters have no place they can keep their belongings. They have no place they can cover or lock their belongings, even their money. As a result, they have to keep whatever they have on themselves at all times. Another basic challenge is that they have very few opportunities to keep themselves clean and dress appropriately to go out and look for jobs. If somebody has not had a bath and has not washed for a week, regardless of how good their skills are, they are not going to be hired. Any

economic strengthening program inevitably needs to take these basic needs into consideration.

**C. Older youth tend to have the maturity and realization that they need to get off the street.**

Bookkeeping and Basic Business training found that as street-involved youth get older they tend to become more aware of the need to secure something for their future. Some younger street-involved children live hand to mouth, out of fear and/or out of the need to survive on daily basis. But older street-involved youth, who have been on the streets for a while, tend to know that they cannot spend the rest of their lives there and that they need to do something to change their lives. Such a realization often comes with maturity and becomes the motivation to build a secure livelihood. Any economic strengthening program could be effective if it could effectively identify and target this motivated subgroup of street-involved youth.

Supply side: staff and organizational issues

**A. Director/Staff have mainly a social-work background and do not have a business background.** The organization needs to strike a good balance between the social aspect and the business aspect to implement economic-strengthening activities effectively.

One of the major constraints has been weak management from academics with little control over organizational management. While academics have usually been very effective on the social side, they have not been very effective in running the organization. The organization is now trying to hire a new director who has sound business knowledge, as well as an understanding of and sensitivity to the particular needs of street-involved children and youth. Striking a good balance between these two aspects is critical to managing the programs.

**B. Institutional networking with other institutions is effective in expanding opportunities for children and youth.** While Street Ahead provides only Bookkeeping and Basic Business training, institutional networking with other organizations has been effective in making available to participating children and youth courses in such production-oriented vocational training areas as welding, carpentry, and brick making, according to their particular interests.

External factors

**A. Economic conditions pose extreme hardship on street-involved children and youth.** Zimbabwe has an unemployment rate of about 80 percent and many qualified people are looking for a job. Street-involved children and youth are, in a sense, at the very end of the line in competing for employment opportunities. If they are not self-employed, there is not much they can do to increase their economic livelihoods. A high inflation rate of about 400 % also imposes challenges on them: survival issues are always immediate, making it even more difficult to think about the importance of strategic goals and life in the long term.

**B. Stigmatization of children poses obstacles for their economic opportunities.** Bookkeeping and Basic Business training found that one of the main constraints facing street-involved children and youth is the stigma attached to them. Graduates receiving certificates upon completing the training later asked if the organization could remove its name from the certificate to prevent discrimination against *street kids* from potential employers.

As part of its efforts to address the issue of stigmatization, attempts are being made to get local communities and local businesses more involved in supporting Harare street-involved children and youth. A program officer is aiming to change the perception of street-involved children through fund raising and by seeking sponsorship from local businesses. As support has come mainly from foreign donors and NGOs in Zimbabwe, local businesses communities have distanced themselves. The organization now aims to increase a sense of ownership of these youngsters in the community among local businesses. While it may be a slow process, it needs to be worked out, since such changes will also improve employment opportunities for street-involved children and youth in the future.

Source: Interview with a founder/an instructor of Bookkeeping and Basic Business training.

**Name of the Program:** Anonymous program  
**Location:** Sub-Saharan Africa  
**Type of Program:** Entrepreneurship Development Training and Microcredit Scheme  
**Date:** From the middle of 1990s to present

### **OBJECTIVE**

To help street-involved youth get the opportunity to increase their income by providing them with business development training and microcredit.

### **CONTENT**

The program targets street-involved youth who are older than 14. It provides training on basic business and life skills. Upon completion of the training, the program provides microcredit tied to the purchase of business assets, using a group-lending methodology. If all members of a group pay back the loan, the group can receive up to three loans. Provision of the credit is conditional on parental/guardian consent, if a particular participant youth is under adult authority.

### **RESULT**

Between 1996 and 1998:

- A total of 183 children were trained in both business and life skills.
- Out of 183 children trained, 173 received loans, which were tied to the purchase of business assets. (Ten children were not able to get loans because they could not obtain parental consent or there was a high probability that the parents were going to take the loans for themselves.)
- Out of 173 youth who got loans, 136 youth were able to start their own business. (Some could not start their business, as local authorities confiscated their business assets, and some have just left the program with loans.)
- Out of 136 youth who received loans, 51 were able to maintain their business after six months. (The majority of the businesses collapsed because local authorities confiscated the business assets; the high concentration of marginalized activities among them led to unprecedented competition among youth and saturation of the local market; most of the peer group became dysfunctional from lack of cohesion.)
- While the first loan went to 173 youth, only 31 gained access to the second loan, and 9 to the third, because most of the solidarity group became dysfunctional after six months.
- The repayment rate was 57 percent on average between 1996 and 1998.

### **KEY LESSONS LEARNED**

#### Interventions

**A. Seeking parental/guardian consent helps to promote their support.** The program first assessed whether participating children and youth were in contact with their parents or guardians. Then program officers approached the parents or guardians to consult with them about not interfering with potential businesses that participating children and youth would be starting. The adults were encouraged not to feel threatened by these businesses but rather to be supportive, since success of the business could increase household income. Since most of the youngsters were under parental control, this was a necessary process. It proved to be useful and critical in gaining parental support. When participating children and youth had completely lost ties with their own families, the program tried to find adults who could act as mentors for their businesses from among local entrepreneurs. The program learned that any effort with street-involved children and youth cannot be designed without considering the environment in which these young people operate, as well as the major stakeholders, such as parents and guardians, who have a strong influence on their lives.

**B. Generic provision of business development training and microcredit loans led to high competition among participants and the saturation of the market, which in turn led to the collapse of most of their businesses.** Providing uniform basic business development training and microcredit led most participants to engage in marginalized activities such as trading and vending in the informal sector in the local areas. This, in turn, caused a high concentration of their activities and the saturation of the local market with similar products. This was one of the major underlying causes of the collapse of the majority of participants' businesses and the low retention rate of their businesses. Most youngsters had knowledge and skills about small trade before participating in the training. After the training, most of them went into vending without diversifying what they were selling. While it is important for any economic strengthening program to acknowledge the existing skills/knowledge that street-involved children and youth have, a program should be carefully designed to avoid promoting the same activities among participants, for this would cause high competition among their activities and the saturation of the local markets where they operate.

There are two ways to deal with this dilemma. The first way is by providing production-oriented training; the second is by differentiating the size of the microcredit loans according to participants' business needs. The program could combine business development training and production-oriented training if there are some production-oriented skills that meet both the demand and skill levels of the participants and the demand of local markets; this would diversify activities among participants by providing opportunities for some of them to gain skills in areas other than trading and vending. The program could also vary the size of the microcredit provided to participating children and youth, so that the larger loan would allow some of them to engage in more productive businesses.

**C. The group-lending methodology for microcredit should be based on self-selected natural groups rather than groups the program selects artificially.** Six months after the start of the program, most of the solidarity group of the microcredit scheme became dysfunctional because there was no cohesion among its members. This was in part because program officers had selected it according to criteria considered important in the success of business, such as the level of commitment, the level of education/skills, and willingness to listen to and learn from others. Some participating children and youth have become very resentful that those who were not successful in their business or have run away hampered their business development, because as a result they could not have access to the second loan. The same group-lending methodology might have worked better if it had been used in self-selected peer groups. In general, natural social networks among street-involved children and youth are very strong, since they know each other's backgrounds, strengths, and weaknesses and, most importantly, they are friends. If street-involved children and youth have a chance to self-select group members based on genuine feelings of closeness, a group-lending methodology is more likely to succeed.

**D. Microcredit tied to the purchase of the business assets has both pros and cons.** The program provides microcredit tied to the purchase of business assets in order to reduce the temptation to participants of spending the loans on immediate social and economical needs, as well as to reduce the risk of loans being stolen by family members or friends. While it offers some advantages, in some instances credit tied to the purchase of the business assets undermined the confidence of participants. The program officers did not give them the freedom to choose the business assets they felt were satisfactory for their businesses. Some participants wanted to use the loan according to their strategies. This case demonstrates how hard it is to strike a fine balance between enhancing a feeling of self-confidence and independence in participants on the one hand, and considering the whole situation and trying to reduce challenges on the other hand.

One possible way to deal with this case is to tie the first credit to the purchase of business assets while providing subsequent credits in cash, as participants would have more experience managing their business by the time they have access to the second loan. It is also critical to point out that when the organization treats participants as beneficiaries rather than clients, there is tendency for the program to take a blanket approach and to overlook individual participants' needs and demands.

**E. Interest rate and repayment cycle may be better determined in consultation with participating children and youth.** Some participants complained about the way the interest rate and the repayment period were determined. Program officers decided them, without consultation with participating children and

youth. Participants felt they should have input into the decisions, since appropriate rules are important determinants of the success of their businesses. Consultation with participants is critical not only in making the mechanism of microcredit scheme more appropriate to their economic activities but also in promoting a sense of ownership among participating children and youth.

Demand side: children and youth

**A. Youth who become successful in maintaining their enterprises have not only business vision and basic business skills, but also self-confidence and resilience.** The following characteristics are found to be common among street-involved children and youth who succeeded in maintaining their small enterprises:

- Have business vision and know what they would like to do.
- Can identify business opportunities in their local environment.
- Have basic business skills, and know how to separate business funding from personal funding, how to save, and how to reinvest in businesses so as to expand them.
- Have self-confidence and a sense of the future.
- Are resilient and do not give up after some failures, but rather learn from them.

**B. Business development training could be made most effective when it targets those who have a sense of future and commitment. Age could be one factor of assessing such characteristics although it should not be used as a discriminatory measure for slightly younger or older youth.** The program originally targeted youth who are under 20 years of age, as it perceived older youth as disobedient and difficult to work with. However over time, the program has learned that younger youth tend to lack a sense of the future and business visions while older youth tend to have ideas about their future and know what they want to do. The survey conducted in the area also shows that very few youth below the age of 20 were proprietors of their own enterprises, while a larger number of older youth had their own enterprises and ran more viable businesses. Now the program is considering distinguishing between the two age groups in order to shift its focus from younger to older youth. While age should not be the only criterion for assessing a participant's potential to start a business, it is critical to try to determine whether potential participants have a sense of commitment and a vision of what they would like to do, so that an economic strengthening program can target them. These are the important characteristics, regardless of age.

Supply side: staff and organizational Issues

**A. Poor incentives for program officers led to a high turnover rate, which in turn negatively affected both their ability to build a trusting relationship with participants and the outcome of the program.** Poor incentives also reduced the percentage of entrepreneurial success among participants. In the early period of the program, a relatively a higher percentage of children and youth started their businesses after completing the training program. But the percentage declined over time. One of the underlying reasons is thought to be poor retention of program officers. Program officers did not receive good performance incentives in the form of salary and resources. The high turnover rate had a negative effect on staff performance and on their relationship with participating children and youth. Participants became suspicious of the program officers in general.

**B. People running the program were not trained in business and credit management. It is important to help them gain business management skills.** For success, any economic strengthening program with street-involved children and youth will need to strike a fine balance between the social aspects of the program and its business aspects. Most program officers working for organizations servicing street children have backgrounds in social work. While social-work backgrounds are critical in understanding the particular needs of disadvantaged children and the importance of having a holistic view of children, a lack of understanding of business management, business development, and microcredit schemes will hinder the effective implementation of economic strengthening programs.

External factors

**A. The local authority imposed serious threats to businesses of participating children and youth. Economic strengthening programs need to pay attentions to the environments where participant children and youth conduct their businesses and should work closely with local authorities.** The local authorities imposed serious threats to the businesses of participants as they confiscated the business assets of some participants, punishing them for operating their businesses illegally on the street. As a result, most of these businesses collapsed. Then most of the participants could not repay the loan from the program and ended up running away. A program with street-involved children and youth cannot be designed in isolation from the local environments in which it operates.

**B. The program needs to promote a culture of saving among participants to ensure the long-term success of their microenterprises.** Some participating children and youth initially did well in their business but did not succeed in the long run because they spent most of their money as soon as they earned it. They were dealing with relatively large amounts of money for the first time in their lives. Especially in societies where there is no strong saving culture, it is critical to design the program to promote an understanding of the importance of saving and of the need to separate business finance from personal finance.

Source: Interview with an independent researcher who conducted a field study on the program.

**Implementing Agency:** Save the Children, UK  
**Location:** Mopti, Mali  
**Type of Program:** Income-generating Activities and Microcredit Scheme  
**Date:** January 2000 – present

### **OBJECTIVE**

To halt or reduce the migration of girls in Dansa Village in Mopti to towns in search of domestic work.

### **CONTENT**

Research on the situation of domestic girl workers has led to a better understanding that the major causes of their migration to urban areas are socioeconomic. The program thus supports two main economic activities that have been identified by participating girls as contributing to the cessation of reduction of this migration. It supports market gardening and petty trade activities for adolescent girls in Dansa village. A microcredit scheme was also introduced for those who become engaged in petty trade. The program also provides technical training and literacy development activities in local languages. In addition, in order to strengthen the capacities and skills of beneficiaries, the program helped the girls in Dansa set up an association called *Association des Filles de Dansa* (Dansa Girls' Association). This group provides girls with a framework to mobilize themselves around social, economic, and outreach activities. The association has its own statutes and is officially recognized by the local administration.

### **RESULTS**

- 37 girls were able to carry out market gardening activities.
- 32 girls were engaged in petty trade.
- 55 girls attended literacy development (initial and refresher) sessions in local languages.

The number of girls leaving Dansa Village for seasonal work in urban areas has sharply decreased following the start of the alternative economic activities of market gardening, petty trade, and educational activities such as literacy development. Participating girls are enthusiastic about the alternative income-generating activities. The market gardening activities carried out in Dansa Village have enabled the girls and their families to make substantial incomes. The petty trade activities have had a positive effect on the girls' situations as well as on their organization—they have opened a bank account into which they deposit individual reimbursements set by the management committee. These funds will be used to fund other girls who join the system.

### **KEY LESSONS LEARNED**

#### Intervention

**A. Participation of beneficiaries was critical for realizing economic activities.** One of the key strategies of the program is to involve the beneficiaries closely in the various stages of developing the activities. During implementation of the two main alternative economic activities (market gardening and petty trade), the girls have fully participated in the selection, management, and monitoring of the activities through their own management committee.

**B. When beneficiaries themselves decide the mechanism of reimbursement of the microcredit, they respect the rules.** The participating girls themselves have decided the mechanisms for reimbursing the small loans for petty trade and, to date, all the girls in the program respect the regulations and the installments of repayment. This is an example of participants tending to respect the rules when they are part of the process establishing the rules.

Source: Program Summary Children Working in Difficult and Dangerous Circumstances

## **APPENDIX B: DOCUMENTS ON LESSONS LEARNED FROM ECONOMIC LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMS WITH STREET CHILDREN**

### **B.1. What Street Kids International learned from Youth Enterprises Skills Initiatives in Zambia**

*Youth Enterprise Skills Initiative (YESI) is a Zambia-based project of Street Kids International (SKI), the YWCA, and the Zambia Red Cross. It aims to support youth in breaking out of the cycle of poverty by providing business management training and microcredit based on a group-lending methodology. SKI summarized the following lessons learned from YESI.*

#### *Saving and Credit Lessons*

Initially, youth workers would visit participants every day and collect all of their daily earnings. This money would be divided to contribute towards their loan repayment, savings, interest, and a predetermined daily wage. The youth workers would keep any remaining funds for reinvestment into the business. This approach provided regular interaction between youth workers and participants, and allowed for discussion of both business and personal issues on a daily basis. In addition, the participants' money was in safe keeping and could not be overspent, stolen, lost, or subject to family interference.

Unfortunately, there were two significant repercussions. First, the approach put unrealistic demands on the youth workers' time. Second, the participants felt little, if any, ownership for their business, and perceived themselves as working for the youth workers.

These consequences motivated the first shift in the lending philosophy. Youth workers began to collect funds on a weekly basis, keeping only the contributions to loan repayment, savings, and interest. Some individuals were helped to open a savings account at the local bank and to begin to build a formal banking relationship.

Under these circumstances, participants clearly understood that they were the owners and managers of their business. When, for logistical reasons, youth workers were not consistent in their loan collection, many participants would overspend their earnings or would lose money because of family interference. This happened especially when their business was just starting and they were still adjusting to their new income. At this time, youth workers also identified a treasurer from each peer-team who was responsible for collecting weekly contributions from all members, to be submitted at the same time. In some cases, treasurers proved to be unreliable.

In the end, it became evident that contributions should be made through one-to-one interactions between participant and youth worker. During the interaction, careful records would be taken to verify the participant's loan status. There was still a need for time for team

building in peer groups and additional training. This led youth workers to the idea of organizing the weekly meetings that are described in these guidelines. They also felt that, ideally, loan collections should occur two times a week during the beginning of the loan repayment period (first two or three weeks)—a critical start-up phase, when additional support and guidance are required and habits are being formed.

### *Precredit Process Lessons*

Discussing the experiences of past participants is invaluable to each new intake. It enables participants to explore the potential pitfalls of business during the training. This is the time to articulate and formulate strategies for dealing with adverse situations as they arise.

Partners identified the following as important:

1. Insist that mixing personal and business finances will lead to difficulties. Some participants opted to put themselves on a weekly wage.
2. Warn that selling on credit must be handled with care. Participants who have had successful experience with credit required a large deposit or collected small installments daily.
3. Indicate that a balance is needed between putting business income towards supporting basic family needs and reinvesting enough into the business itself.
4. Emphasize the importance of weekly group meetings organized by youth workers. During these meetings peer-teams meet and consult with each other about their business development, make the weekly contributions to their loan repayment and savings, consult the youth workers for support and guidance, and learn valuable life skills, as they acquire greater independence and increased responsibilities. All of these greatly influence business success and outcomes.
5. Stress that successful peer-teams maintain constant and thorough monitoring among group members, to provide positive feedback and encouragement, to offer advice and support as needed, and to resolve conflicts using effective communication skills.
6. Demonstrate that the strength of the peer-teams relates directly to individual business success.

### *Incorporating a Microcredit Programming Element*

There are broad management, administrative, and program implications for organizations that decide to incorporate a microcredit component into their programming stream. Our partners have noted that the best way to do this is to set up a separate project, with its own management and staff. Experience has indicated that such a project tends to expand rapidly

and the initial phase is very critical, requiring full-time involvement from staff. Some of our partners have been able to be more effective by:

- Running a needs assessment with street-involved youth in their communities
- Setting up a training program for staff in the area of microenterprise
- Making connections with organizations already running a microcredit program
- Promoting their work within the youth-serving sector and with funding agencies.

Furthermore, organizations have come to realize that microcredit services are but one of the many services they should be providing to street-involved youth. An integrated approach to this kind of programming builds success into the program beyond business success and impacts health, education, family stability and community acceptance.

With respect to administration, partners have indicated the following conditions for success:

- The coordinating team must involve, from the beginning, both youth workers and program managers
- The up-front investment of putting systems in place helps organize and keep the program on track
- No fewer than two youth workers are required, since one person cannot provide the time needed to run the project, give one-on-one support, and work with program managers.

In other cases, youth-serving organizations are partnering with microcredit providers to offset the costs involved in incorporating a credit component and to use the expertise already acquired.

### *Other Dimensions*

Much of our work with economic programming with street kids has parallels with the early days of entrepreneurship and credit with women. It is important that programming set realistic targets and goals for success and the timing for when success can be measured. It is important to fully appreciate that the *process* of engagement with street-involved youth is as important, if not more important, than the content of any economic programming.

It is also essential to acknowledge that while economic programming is about wealth-creation and building, street kids are truly the poorest of the poor and the most under-represented population in the world in terms of social-economic investment. Economic programming cannot be done in isolation from the health and rights issues that street-based working youth must confront.

Microenterprise and credit is our entry point to these children for other issues—reproductive health, parenting, literacy and numeracy, training, and other life-building skills. While arguments for economic efficiency are influential, *livelihood pathways* for these children will

necessarily be a performance blend of smart welfare programming and wealth programming. We should not apologize for this.

*Source: Livelihood Pathways: Chapter 5 Street Kids International Youth Enterprise Skills Initiatives, p19-22*

## **B.2. Important questions to ask in designing vocational training for street and working children and youth: Guide to Planning**

### *Vocational Training*

Vocational training is a common education option in projects for children over 14 years of age, although it is often accompanied by basic literacy and numeracy. Vocational training schemes are often run by government as well as by NGOs. As in institutions, they usually offer a restricted range of skills, such as carpentry and electrical wiring for boys and sewing and typing for girls. Quite apart from the low ceiling they place on children's opportunities and the way they stereotype boys and girls, they are seldom linked to the job market and many schemes do not either offer employment placements or follow up on students to see if they are able to find work.

Vocational training schemes are of variable quality and usefulness even though, like orphanages, they present the public with the image of the type of project they think street children need. They are a neat *solution* and usually find willing founders, often attracting money for decades, without evaluation, let alone adaptation. If you consider vocational training as an option for your project, or are thinking about placing children in your project in a scheme run by another agency, you should ask yourself the following:

1. Is the scheme based on market research? What skills are really needed in the local job market? Can the courses teach skills that can be adapted to meet changing employment opportunities?
2. What courses are already available in the local area? Can your students attend these? Would they need to upgrade their reading and writing skills first? If so, then this should be the priority in your project and you may not need a vocational training scheme of your own.
3. Will the course provide certificates that will help the students find work and give them a sense of achievement? Such certificates need to be meaningful to employers and probably linked to a government scheme, not just something handed out at the end of the course.
4. What literacy and numeracy skills do the children already possess? What does this imply for the balance between theory and practical work in the course?

5. Students may need to be supported while they follow the course. How will their lost earnings be supplemented? Where will they live? What can be done to prevent them dropping out if some sudden crisis in their lives means that they have to find extra money? Will they need to buy materials to use during the course? How can they afford this?
6. If another institution is running the course, will it accept street children as students? What will be the relationship of these children with other students? Will they need to be provided with clothing, tools, and materials?
7. What can be done to help children find employment once they have graduated from the course? In some cases they will need to be provided with basic tool kits, perhaps through a loan scheme, in order to become self-employed. In others, a pool of potential employers can be found who will agree to take a percentage of ex-street children on their staff.
8. Research to follow up on graduates of vocational training schemes is vital. If they are not finding work, you need to know why. Perhaps there are no openings for that kind of skill, in which case the course should be dropped in favor of another. Perhaps the skills are not appropriate for the particular market needs, so retraining may be necessary. Opportunities for upgrading skills should also be offered.
9. Will the course address individual differences in talent, motivation, and interests? Before placing any child in a course, find out what he or she wants to do and is capable of; street and working children have as much right to career guidance as any other child. Don't assume that these children only have the potential for semi-skilled work for the rest of their lives. Callescuola, in Asuncion, dreams of one day welcoming back its *own* doctors and lawyers.

*Source: Street and Working Children: A Guide to Planning, Save the Children, Inc., p.109*

### **B.3. Income generation and vocational training for girls and young women at risk: Challenges and Elements of Success from Urban Girl**

#### *Challenges*

Girls and young women face many obstacles to finding well-paid employment that offers opportunities for advancement. These include:

- Gender-role stereotypes that limit the kinds of jobs for which young women are considered appropriate
- Vocational training that tends to follow this stereotyping, such as training in cooking, sewing, and domestic chores
- The need for day-care for young women who have children

- The difficulty of combining school, work outside the home, domestic work at home and vocational training. (Many young women find it difficult, if not impossible, to take time off from domestic work—for example, to participate in a vocational training program.)

Even when programs succeed in training adolescent women in technical skills, these women often find it difficult to secure employment in economies with widespread under- and unemployment. Furthermore, young women may have technical skills, but lack the business skills to run their own enterprise. As a staff person with Tototo Industries, a vocational training program for young women in Mombasa, Kenya, says:

The hardest part we see is after the training. What do the girls do afterwards? We need an organization to help them just with setting up their businesses. It is too expensive for us to work with each one. We need a fund that would help them set up their own businesses and give them advice on how to manage their business.

### *Elements of Success*

In reviewing the cases highlighted—Youth Skills Enterprise Initiative (YSEI) by Street Kids International (SKI) in Zambia, Servol Life Centers in Trinidad and Tobago, Child Welfare Society in Kenya, and The SIMMA Vocational Training Institute by the WACAR Foundation in the Gambia—Urban Girls reaches a number of conclusions and identifies elements of success.

#### **Exploit the demands of the market**

Vocational training for girls and young women is more likely to succeed if offered as a response to the demands of the job market.

#### **Use the media**

The media provide a powerful means of reaching a large audience and, when possible, should be used to attract girls and young women to programs and also to raise awareness on relevant issues.

#### **Instill a work ethic**

Girls and young women at risk often lack habits such as punctuality, a sense of pride in their work, self-presentation skills, or good personal hygiene, all of which are necessary for acquiring stable employment or being successful in self-employment.

### **Develop conflict-resolution skills**

Developing conflict-resolution skills is a critical part of any vocational training program that aims to prepare girls and young women to cope better with difficulties and to adapt to conditions of employment or self-employment.

### **Provide a sheltered environment**

Both vocational training and programs offering other areas of assistance to girls and young women at risk have found that it is crucial to offer them a place where they can meet and have time to learn new skills and develop a sense of self-confidence.

### **Promote nontraditional skills**

Many projects recognize the importance to overcoming sex-role stereotypes by hiring women instructors in traditionally male-dominated fields and offering vocational training to young women in the same fields.

### **Collaborate with the government**

Many programs recognize that if they can succeed in collaborating with the government they will be able to offer a wider variety of services or reach a larger audience.

### **Lending money to youth is different from lending money to adults**

When working with youth, staff needs to spend considerable time developing a relationship of trust with each child. The first loans will generally need to be small and the loan repayments may initially have to be collected each day.

*Source: Urban Girl: Empowerment in especially difficult circumstances, DFID, p29, pp42-43*

## **B.4. Essential Ingredients—The program to increase development opportunities for street children: Promising Practices and Approaches by Elena Volpi**

**Use trained professionals.** Goodwill alone cannot generate a sound program. The input of experts from different sectors is vital, and resources must go toward the training and retraining of their volunteers.

**Focus on integration into the family, school, and labor market.** Charity-oriented programs help perpetuate the street children problem by making street life easier and strengthening children's dependence on service providers. By contrast, development-oriented activities enable children to express their potential and to function effectively in both the family and the society.

**Reach children where they are.** Children cannot be forced to leave the street. Several established programs that have had a positive impact begin with a phased-in transition to allow children to change their lifestyle gradually, if they wish.

**Design individual attention and tailor-made services.** Time and multidisciplinary expertise need to be invested in assessing the situation of each participant and in designing tailor-made life plans and services.

**Get children's participation.** It is important to design program activities *with* children, and not only *for* them. Children can be involved as peer counselors and facilitators. Their special life experience makes them potential leaders and advocates of development in their communities.

**Provide physical and mental health care.** Programs must also pay close attention to physical and mental health needs. Public health staff need to be sensitized to the specific needs of street children.

**Involve family and community.** The situation of street children reflects the vulnerability of their social environment. It is therefore important to strengthen the capacity of the family and community (including the school) to receive and take care of their young members.

**Undertake lobbying and advocacy efforts.** By becoming involved in lobbying and advocacy, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) can instigate changes in the legal and political environment that affects children and thereby increase the impact of more typical services.

**Integrate services.** The health, education, survival, and emotional needs of street children should be addressed as an integrated system with the child's well-being at the center.

**Work on networking and develop institutional cooperation.** NGO programs alone are not enough to significantly reduce the number of children on the street, nor are they expected to do so. It is far more effective for NGOs to network and cooperate among themselves and with local governments if they hope to increase the long-term impact and sustainability of interventions in this area.

**Link to programs at the first and second level of risk.** When street children activities are integrated into community development programs, it becomes easier to tackle the multiple causes of child and youth distress, and to prepare a favorable environment for children who decide to leave the street.

Donor funding for street children activities is needed not only to sustain and expand existing services, but also to assist NGOs in the monitoring and evaluation of their interventions, and to allow them to train staff and continuously increase their professionalism. Support to lobbying, advocacy, and networking is a way to help NGOs overcome their isolation, and to give a stronger voice to street children themselves. Finally, donors can encourage

institutional cooperation by supporting municipal, multiagency development programs with street children as one of the components.

*Source:* Elena Volpi, *Street Children: Promising Practices and Approaches*, World Bank Institute.