



APPRENTIS  
D'AUTEUIL

INTERNATIONAL

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# LET'S TAKE ACTION FOR THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN IN STREET SITUATIONS!

Children in street situations live all over the world. They are more or less visible in different countries. These children are above all victims of a system that does not protect them. **Like all children, they have rights.**

The term “children in street situations” encompasses many different realities experienced by children:

- Sleeping on the street and having no contact with their family;
- Living on the street with their family;
- Alternating between the street and shelters;
- Working or spending most of the time on the street and going home at night.

For these girls and boys -each one different- the street plays a central role in their daily lives and shapes their identity.

According to UNICEF in 2005, there are **at least 100 million children** in street situations worldwide. However, because they move around frequently and are beyond the reach of social services, these children are **not included in official statistics.**

**160 MILLION**

CHILDREN ARE WORKING  
AROUND THE WORLD<sup>1</sup>

**258 MILLION**

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
ARE NOT IN SCHOOL<sup>2</sup>

## KEY POINTS

- Children living on the street do not have access to their basic rights and are victims of violence and discrimination.
- Child protection laws are often poorly enforced, financing for child protection measures and children's rights is often not easily accessible.

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# THE STREET SITUATION : FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS VIOLATED

INTERNATIONAL

## WHY DO CHILDREN END UP ON THE STREET?



*"On the street you don't sleep well, the police chase you. You have to change places all the time."*

17-year-old girl in a street situation.

Children in street situations **are denied access to their basic rights**, including **housing**, and **adequate free access to health and education**. Many of these children are not entitled to these rights because they do not have an official official identity documentation.

**51 MILLION**  
BIRTHS GLOBALLY  
ARE NOT REGISTERED  
EACH YEAR<sup>3</sup>

Children living on the streets, both boys and girls, are victims of **daily discrimination and violence**, from adults including law enforcement officials, civil servants, or other street-connected children. Girls in street situations are particularly vulnerable to **sexual violence and exploitation**. Rejected, excluded, abused, these children lose trust in others.

**IN**  
**ANTANARIVO,**  
**MADAGASCAR,**  
**41 %**  
OF CHILDREN IN  
STREET SITUATION  
HAVE BEEN  
SUBJECTED TO  
PHYSICAL VIOLENCE<sup>4</sup>

They are **victims of the legal systems that are supposed to protect them**: being **homeless**, adopting survival behaviours such as **begging** or **vagrancy**, are grounds for repression in many countries.

**INTERNATIONAL**

We are convinced that **children are the future of our societies**, that every child has resources and knowledge within him or her, whatever the difficulties. By accompanying children in street situations in a holistic way, we and our international partners insist that:

**PREVENTION** is crucial to keep children off the streets, both by **reaching out to them** and by **supporting their families**.

**MAKING COMMUNITIES AWARE** of the **rights of these children** and their realities helps to **reduce the violence and discrimination** to which they are subjected.

**LISTENING** to **children and young people** living on the street is central to **re-establishing trust**, re-establishing a link with them, **understanding their background**, their difficulties but also their hopes for the future.

**ADAPTING SCHOOL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING** by favouring **flexible systems, with no age limit** for access and adapted to the reality of these young people favours their **socio-professional integration**.

**DIVERSIFYING SERVICES**

such as outreach services, day and/or night shelter, boarding schools giving access to schooling or training are ways of supporting them **according to their needs**, as it often takes time to "get off the streets".

**MAINTAINING LINKS WITH FAMILIES**

and facilitating **family reintegration** is important, where possible, and does not put children at risk.



# OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

We are committed to giving a voice to children living on the streets, to protecting them and supporting them in their life projects. We advocate to ensure that their rights are respected and that other children do not one day experience the street.

In line with General Comment No. 21 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, we **recommend that States** adopt **comprehensive strategies for the prevention, protection, care and integration** of children in street situations and allocate the **necessary budgets**:

## RESPECT THEM, PROTECT THEM!

- **Fight against discrimination and violence** against children based on the fact of living on the street.
- **Raise awareness of the rights of children** living on the streets.

## LISTEN TO THEM AND ENSURE THEIR ACCESS TO RIGHTS!

- Ensure that children in street situations have **access to their rights**, including access to housing, adequate food, identity, free access to health and education, etc.
- Provide an enabling environment for children **to be heard and to participate fully in decisions** that affect them.

## SUPPORT FAMILIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY!

- **Help parents**, families to provide the necessary living conditions for the development of children in order **to prevent them finding themselves in a street situation** and as a condition for family reintegration when appropriate.
- **Collaborate with associations** to develop appropriate solutions and **support them in their mission** to protect and integrate these children.



Based in Geneva, the **Fondation Apprentis d'Auteuil International** (FAAI) is committed, in Switzerland and internationally, to the **education and integration of young people in difficulty**, in partnership with local actors who share the same ambition. The support of children in street situations is the central theme of our organisation. FAAI **advocates the UN organisations in Geneva to defend their rights**.