A SITUATIONER OF STREET CHILDREN IN THE PHILIPPINES
(Presented at the Civil Society Forum on Promoting and Protecting the
Rights of Street Children in Southeast Asia)
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1. Background

A. Brief Overview of the Philippines

The Philippines is an archipelago with a population of 76,498,735, and a population density of 255 per sq. km, as of the year 2000. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of this population is urbanized (1999)[1], with an average annual urban population growth rate of 4.2% (1990 - 1995)[2]. Its capital, Manila, has a population of 1,654,761 (2000)[3].

It is culturally diverse with over 111 cultural and racial groups, each with its own language or dialect. Eighty-four percent (84%) are Roman Catholic, the rest are made up mostly of Moslems (5%)[4], Protestants and other Christian denominations, Buddhists, and Taoists.[5]

Unfortunately, this country has a high rate of poverty. Unemployment is high. As of April 2001, the unemployment rate reached 13.3%, or around 4.5 million Filipinos without jobs[6]. The prices of basic commodities have also increased by 6.7%. Using 1994 as the base year, the peso has lost 37% of its value in early 2001 due to increased prices of goods. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew only by 3.3%, compared to a 3.8% growth in the same period in 2000.[7]

Also, official figures show an increase in the poverty incidence or the proportion of families with income below the poverty line, from 31.8% in 1997 to 34.2% in 2000.[8]

Poverty Threshold, 2000[9]			
	Poverty Incidence (families)	Annual per capita Poverty threshold	Daily per capita poverty threshold
Philippines	34.2%	P13,916.00	P38.13
NCR	9.7%	P18,001.00	P49.32
Outside NCR	38.3%	P13,239.00	P36.27
Source of basic data: National Statistics Coordination Board			

At present, Ibon Facts and Figures estimate that 89% of the population live below decent living standards. Based on recent government estimates, the bottom 40% of the income strata accounts for only 11% of the total income while the top 20% accounts for 57% of total income.[10]

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[1] UNICEF Philippine Counrty Office. "Philippines Country Profile," 1.

[2] United Nations World Urbanization Prospect: 1995 Revision.

[3] http://www.travel-guide.com/data/phl/phl010.asp

[4] http://www.geocities.com/yelor103/phil.html

[5] Ibid.

[6] xxx. **"Laws on Children."** Ibon Facts & Figures, June 30, 2001, Vol. 24, No. 11, 8.

[7] xxx. **"Reeling from the Crisis."** Ibon Facts & Figures, June 30, 2001, Vol. 24, No. 11, 12.

[8] xxx. **"Laws on Children."** Ibon Facts & Figures, June 30, 2001, Vol. 24, No. 11, 7.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

Two out of every five Filipino families are now living in poverty, the National Statistics Coordination Board reported. IBON estimates that a family of six needs PhP 420.00 on the average to meet its daily necessities. In Metro Manila, where the legislated daily minimum wage is pegged at PhP 250.00, a minimum wage earner needs an additional PhP 255.81 to meet his or her family's food and non-food requirements. This simply means that the minimum wage fulfills less than half of the family's estimated cost of living.[11]

The brunt of this suffering is felt most by the children. Following the UN definition of a child ("every human being below the age of 18 years or less unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier"), there are 34.7 million children in the country out of the total population of 75.5 million as of the year 2000. Majority of these children are in difficult circumstances and are not able to meet basic needs adequately. According to UNICEF, the Philippines is among the top 10 countries with malnourished children aged below five years.[12]

B. Definition of and statistics on street children

Street children are children who either live or work on the streets, spending a significant amount of time engaged in different occupations, with or without the care and protection of responsible adults.

With ages ranging from five to 18 years old, these children ply the sidewalks in a desperate attempt to eke out whatever meager amount they can earn for their survival. An estimated 25% live on the streets.

Different countries describe street children in different ways. However, three general categories have been frequently used to identify them[13]:

- ⇒ children who maintain regular contacts with their families, but spend a majority of their time working on the streets;

- ⇒ children who actually live and work on the streets and are abandoned and neglected or have run away from their families; and

- ⇒ children of families living on the streets.

In 1998, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) "Ahon sa Lansangan" (Rescue Operation/Program of DSWD) document reported an estimate of 222,417 street children in 65 major cities in the country.[14] Action International Ministries approximates that there are 50,000 to 70,000 street children in Manila[15]. The highest number of highly visible children in the streets are in the following cities: Manila (3,266), Quezon (2,867), Kalookan (1,530), and Pasay (1,420).[16]

Studies conducted also prove the high incidence of street children in four other cities of the

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[11] Ibid., 6.

[12] xxx. **"Children in Distress."** Ibon Facts & Figures, June 30, 2001, Vol. 24, No. 11, 3.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Lamberte., 45.

[15] http://www.inministrytochildren.org/facts/stats.html

[16] Lamberte, 64.

country. The evaluation-study of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG)-AusAID program for the urban street and working children of Zamboanga City states that there are 897 urban street and working in Zamboanga. The respondents, majority of whom are male, were mostly community-based street children with families who work on the streets to earn money for food. In Cebu, the total number of street-based children living on the streets in 1999 is 1,160.[17] Below is a table, which gives a numerical description of street children in areas other than the National Capital Region[18]:

Region	Cluster Cities	Street Children Population 0-17 y. o.	Estimate of Highly Visible Children	Estimate of Population
LUZON	Baguio	92,144	833	18,340
	Naga	57,646	423	3,163
	Olongapo City	72,210	301	1,225
	Regional Total	**224,000**	**1,557**	**22,728**
VISAYAS	Cebu	768,686	2,867	23,061
	Lapu-Lapu	139,967	256	4,199
	Mandaue	150,381	1,420	4,511
	Bacolod	150,743	240	4,522
	Iloilo	152,245	508	4,567
	Regional Total	**1,362,022**	**5,291**	**40,860**
MINDANAO	Cagayan De Oro	188,350	1,070	5,651
	Davao	437,056	1,694	13,112
	General Santos	151,294	1,014	4,539
	Regional Total	**4,610,932**	**22,556**	**138,328**

The majority of children visible on the streets are boys (about 70%). Girls are fewer because, among other reasons, they are generally helping younger siblings, they are usually hired as domestic helpers within private households, they are lured or trafficked into prostitution and are housed in brothels. It is speculated that the male child is expected to do less work at home than the female child.[19]

In 1995, girls made up nearly half (50%) of the total child population of the Philippines. It is projected that their number will grow to 17.4 million by 2005.

Thirty percent (30%) of the total street children population are girls. Their gender and situation on the streets render them more vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse/ exploitation than boys, who are better able to protect themselves. As a result, teen-age pregnancy (among girls aged 15-17) and sexually-transmitted diseases are common among street girls. However, there are not enough services or facilities that respond to medical and health needs of street girls.

There are also more girl-children hired as domestic helpers, especially in Metro Manila where it has become commonplace to employ girls from the provinces as *yayas* (nannies) or store

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[17] Cebu City Task Force on Street Children. **"Comparative Highlights on Programs and Services," 1.**

[18] Abaigar, Bill, **"A Country Situational Analysis on Street Children"** 1.

[19] Silva, 2.

helpers. Needless to say, most of them are underpaid, over-worked, and even physically or sexually abused by their employer. There is also an apparent lack of awareness in handling girl-children involved in armed conflict.

Other than the above, girl-children are also discriminated against in terms of getting an education, receiving proper nutrition, and being portrayed in the media. There are still gender-stereotyped concepts that exist in some textbooks and reporting of cases involving girl children are often sensationalized. Such stereotyping is evident, for example, in Davao, where adolescent street girls are called "buntog," a Cebuano term for the quail. It is a derogatory term equated to mean girl-prostitutes, girls with loose morals/promiscuous or girls allegedly engaging in "free sex or sex for fun."[20]

The street children's ages range from six (6) to seventeen (17) years, but most of them are from the eleven (11) to fourteen (14) year-old bracket.

The children come from large families of at least 6 to seven 7 members. The majority of the children live with one or both of the parents. However, a considerable number of the parents - 15 to 65% - were separated and many appeared to be living with other partners who often maltreated the children.

C. Key factors pushing children onto the streets in the Philippines

Studies have consistently pointed to at least three major immediate factors that push children to stay or live on the streets. These are the poverty of the family, family relationship factors (child physical or sexual abuse), and peer-gang influence. Poverty and peer influence when compounded with problems and stresses in family life such as family break-up, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence by stepparents, under-employed parents, etc., altogether create undue pressure on the child to leave home and find solace, protection, and support from his peers on the street, eventually becoming susceptible to their influence and lifestyle.[21]

In Metro Manila, population growth, urbanization, and migration have increased through the years. Children are often forced by circumstances to help their family eke out a living or fend for themselves on the streets. Most of them are the children of poor parents who migrated from rural areas in the hope of finding better job opportunities in the city but whose lack of education rendered them ill-equipped to struggle for survival in the urban jungle and are thus confined to a life of abject poverty.[22]

For the street children, life on the streets is a constant struggle to overcome the various negative elements that threaten to overtake them and destroy their hope for survival. They work under the heat of the sun or in the dark of the night from six to 16 hours, seven days a week, often in a combination of "occupations," each considered a legitimate way to survive.[23]

Poverty and Lopsided Development as the Root Cause[24]

As the street child has become part of the urban landscape, so has its root cause, the

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[20] Tambayan Center Inc. "A Regional Civil Society Forum for South East Asia on Promoting and Protecting the Rights of Street Children, 1. Presented at Bangkok, Thailand, March 12-14, 2003.

[21] Silva, 2.

[22] Silva, 1.

[23] Silva, 2.

[24] Silva, 2-3.

inequitable socio-economic structure and poverty of majority of the population.

Socio-economic and political factors directly impinging on the physical, economic, and psychosocial dynamics and conditions within the family are all pervasive and constantly threaten the family's existence and survival. This crisis has its roots primarily in the overall economic arrangement, global as well as national, particularly globalization, and for which reason a growth-centered development paradigm has continued to dominate our socio-economic and political spheres of life for several decades; and secondly, on the consequent requirement of, and the need for, growth-centered adjustment policies imposed on the debtor nations which are unjustly disadvantageous to all the developing nations. Hence, the absence of strong political will in some cities to adopt and to implement poverty alleviation programs.

Causes of the street children phenomenon can be categorized in the following:

Immediate Causes (Factors which have to do with the children and family):

◎ Poor and large families
◎ Unemployed/underemployed parents/children
◎ Irresponsible parents
◎ Family values which are materialistic/consumerist
◎ Family conflict
◎ Family environment
◎ Vices of parents
◎ Child himself
◎ Degradation of morals, violent upbringing by parents
◎ Traditional family values which dictate that girls should merely stay at home
◎ Lack of knowledge and parenting skills
◎ Emerging social values conflict with traditional values

Underlying Causes (Factors which have to do with the community):

◎ Ineffective access to basic services
◎ Non-availability of adequate employment opportunities
◎ Inequitable distribution of resources and opportunity in the community (e.g. land ownership)
◎ Nature and conditions of work/employment: formal and informal sectors
◎ Congestion in slum areas
◎ Inadequate housing/poor housing facilities
◎ Poor law enforcement/exploitation by law enforcers
◎ Only one style of delivery of education exists
◎ Deterioration of values
◎ Central body provides no/few activities for children

Root Causes (Factors which have to do with society):

◎ Economic, political and ideological superstructure
◎ Structural roots of poverty and underdevelopment
◎ The unequal world order and the debt burden

2. **Achievements**

The rights of children in the Philippines have been highly promoted through a variety of channels, most notably *legislative measures*, *collective action (including programs and services for street children), national conferences*, and *helplines/hotlines* to report cases of child abuse.

The following laws on children have been enacted:

a. Republic Act 7610, "An Act Providing for Stronger Deterrence and Special Protection of Children against Child Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination Providing Penalties for its Violation, and for Other Purposes," was signed into law on February 2, 1992 signifying the government's commitment in providing special protection to children from all forms of abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation and discrimination, and other conditions prejudicial to their development. This provides a more comprehensive mechanism for child protection. However, implementation remains a problem as the chronic economic crisis drives children out of school and forces them to work on farms and plantations, sweatshops and the streets where they become prone to constant oppression and exploitation.[25]

b. Republic Act No. 7658, entitled "An Act Prohibiting the Employment of Children Below 15 Years of Age in Public and Private Undertakings", signed into law in October 1993, defines child labor as the "illegal employment of children below 15 years of age and the employment of those below 18 years in hazardous or deleterious work." It also differentiates between child labor and child work, the latter being defined as "acceptable vocation for children." RA 7658 also provides exemptions to child labor as long as parents consent that the child engages in labor. This provision validates the fact that economic status of a family decides whether or not the child is forced to work at an early age. Thus, poverty deprives the child of his or her basic right to make choices.[26]

c. Republic Act 8369 or the Family Courts Act of 1997 is an act establishing Family Courts, granting them exclusive original jurisdiction over child and family cases. The Family Courts have jurisdiction over criminal cases where one or more of the accused is below 18 years old but not less than 9 years of age. This is applicable to a child accused before the courts.

In relation to the courts, a Diversion Committee undertakes diversion proceedings before arraignment, in cases applicable, and makes its recommendations to the court. Diversion means the act of diverting from the courts. It is in the best interest of the child that he or she does not go through the formal criminal adjudication process, where even adults ultimately suffer.[27]

Executive Order No. 56 authorizes the Department of Social Welfare and Development to take protective custody of child victims of prostitution and sexually-exploited children. This is important, especially for those who are aware or informed about an abuse or victims of abuse so that they will know the proper department which can give full response to their concern.

The Philippine laws pertaining to children in conflict with the law, which antedate the international instruments involving children, are: the provisions on minor offenders under the

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[25] xxx. **"Laws on Children."** Ibon Facts & Figures, June 30, 2001, Vol. 24, No. 11, 6.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Guillerma, Atty. Gilda. **"The Child in Conflict with the Law and Possible Interventions under the Current Legal System."** Presented at the consultation-workshop entitled Diversion and Management of Children in Conflict with the Law: Issues, Realities and Imperatives," held on 19-20 March, 2002, Traders Hotel Manila, 3.

Revised Penal Code, and particular provisions of the Child and Youth Welfare Code or Presidential Decree No. 603 and its implementing rules and regulations.[28] The Revised Penal Code, effective in 1926, being a law defining criminal offenses and their penalties, treats children in a different manner from adults with respect to exemption from criminal liability for those below 9 years old, and those over 9 years old but under 15 years old, if not acted with discernment.

The Child and Youth Welfare Code as a whole has a framework where the child is a holder of rights, and a holistic view of the child. It has certain rules with regard to how children should be treated within the courts. However, with respect to a child in conflict with the law, the child is seen as a "youthful offender."[29]

The proposed Comprehensive Juvenile Justice System bill adopts the principle of restorative justice. This principle states the active involvement of the child-offender in bringing that state of society where he and his victim can live and deal with each other on the basis of mutual respect and reciprocal acknowledgment of their dignity and rights.[30]

Advocacy with the police and other law enforcement agencies for more humane treatment of the children was a major thrust in the early 1990's. As early as October 11, 1994, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to resume advocacy and training sessions among police officers on the situation of street children was signed. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the National Police Commission, the Commission on Human Rights, the Local Government Units, the Philippine National Police, and the non-governmental organizations agreed to cooperate in the institutionalization of the Child and Youth Relations Section, the designation of a Child and Youth Relations Officer, and the conduct of training of police officers in the management of cases of children in especially difficult circumstances.[31]

The Philippines also adopted specific goals for children under its Philippine Plan of Action for Children (PPAC) in the 1990s and Beyond, through Proclamation No. 855 in December 1991. The latest, the Philippine National Strategic Framework for Plan for Development for Children, 2000-2025 (Child 21), provides guidelines for the country plan of action for the Filipino child.[32]

In addition to this, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) are implementing the Street and Urban Working Children Program to enhance the effectiveness of services delivered by national and local governments and NGOs.

Lastly, there is a need to strengthen the regulatory functions for programs for street children. These include:

- The continuous strengthening of the capability of the DSWD to work closely with the law enforcing agencies, such as the Department of Justice and the police force so that laws protecting children are strictly enforced and followed.
- The DSWD's task of establishing institutional mechanisms/system so that services provided to the children by the centers and organizations are of desirable quality and

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[28] Ibid, 5.

[29] Ibid. 6.

[30] Council for the Welfare of Children, Republic of the Philippines. **"Second Country Implementation Report of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1995-2000**)," 114.

[31] Silva, 8.

[32] Ibid., 8.

within required standards.

Following are some strategies identified and applied in the Philippines and some other countries, which are aimed at addressing family and community issues toward promoting a caring society for children. A philosophy that recognizes and gives importance to the development of the child within the family unit should be the foundation for development strategies in working with families and children at risk. Resilience of children result from unconditional adult support and a sensitive balance between risk factors and protective factors.

Experience has shown that if preparatory activities such as conducting situation studies, advocacy/consciousness-raising, formation of networks among government and non-government organizations are undertaken and supported before the formal launching of projects and programs, wider interest in and concern for street children is generated. In the Philippines, a national project on behalf of street children was initiated in 1986 with UNICEF support to coordinate programs on behalf of street children on a national level.

a. Situation Analysis

Efforts to rationalize services for street children began with the network facilitating the process of conducting a situation analysis to determine their actual conditions and needs. Through this process, it was discovered that by involving various sectors of the community and, in some cities, the children themselves, as active participants in the situation study, greater community interest and action for and on behalf of street children could be generated. The participatory, conscientising, and action-oriented methodology in situation analysis emerged based on the assumptions that:

1. The phenomenon of street children is a structural problem and not an isolated phenomenon;
2. Ordinary people, not only professionals, are capable of doing situation analysis-research; and
3. Relevant understanding of social situations, particularly their own, can be arrived at with the active participation of the children themselves.

Because the situation study is aimed at generating critical awareness of the problem - its root causes and its relationship with the problems/issues - all parties concerned are enabled to translate into action whatever new insights and reflections emerge from the analysis.

b. Advocacy and Social Mobilization - Influencing Public Policy

Our collective experience has shown us that advocacy and social mobilization as strategies in raising public consciousness and political will are primary prerequisites for program development and the delivery of basic services. We are grateful to national and international partners for supporting these strategies even before direct assistance to projects.

Based on the findings of the situation analysis, advocacy for street children was, and continues to be, directed to various groups and audiences: we reached out, invited ourselves, and are now invited by community leaders, parish/religious groups, police, park wardens, some hotel owners, city government officials, city fiscals and judges, schools, universities, academe, mass media, and the general public.

Regular advocacy sessions are held to orient the different government and non-government

sectoral groups on the situation of street children and their roles to advocate and assist street children and their families in their local communities. Use of print media, radio, TV, as well as sound slides, and mobile theater groups, including street children theater groups have proven effective in raising public awareness and concern for their plight and in generating programs and services in support of street children.

The right of children to empowerment in effecting services and responses that affect their lives was and has been recognized through creative opportunities and events. Advocacy activities by the children themselves were intensified through regional and annual national conferences. In these conferences, the children had the opportunity to experience solidarity with other children, to develop their communication skills and to dialogue and advocate with government officials at the local and national levels. Several national street children's congresses have been conducted.

In 1986, when the situation analysis was first conducted, there were only three (3) known programs directly addressing the needs of street children in the Philippines. Today, there are approximately 350 programs for street children nationwide.

In addition, street educators, through their outreach work among street children, formed a core group of street-based street children who represented them in various street children congresses. The formation of similar street children groups would signify their resolve to wage a stronger campaign for wider support for themselves and their families.

c. Program Development

An important grassroots strategy in program development and in team building among NGOs and GOs is the process of clarifying philosophy, vision, mission, and goals to ensure a common understanding and direction among government, NGOs, and grassroots workers supporting street children. This common vision should them become the basis for program planning.

Program Categories

Current efforts in helping street children fall under three (3) broad types of programs/services that were developed in response to an analysis of three (3) major categories of street children and their specific needs and circumstances:

1. **Community-based Programs**. These programs target the children who maintain regular contacts with their families. Preventive in approach, community-based programs try to address the problem where it starts - the family and the community of the child. It addresses the problems in the family and community that, from the perspective of the residents, lead to the situations that force the children to go on the street. It is the goal of the community-based program to help communities identify their problems, mobilize their internal, as well as external resources, and involve themselves in their solutions.

   The community-based process focuses on the families of street children and other urban poor children and their community to enable them to make those changes within themselves that will lead to changes in opportunities for their children and to keep them off the streets. It has several main components: advocacy on child rights, protection and referral, community organization, livelihood development and social credit, educational assistance including value clarification, and skills training.

Peer counseling is also another important feature of the project. Volunteer peer counselors among the youth in target communities were trained to enable them to conduct counseling sessions among identified abused and exploited children and/or their parents. Youth volunteers also underwent a training workshop on value clarification/education.

Because of the positive feedback from the two cities, a similar project has been started in Manila.

2.   **Street-based programs.** The street-based program reaches out to children right on the street where they live and work, particularly to those children who are abandoned or have irregular contacts with their families. This strategy recognizes the child's need for survival, protection, and income, but ultimately, it aims to motivate and assist the child to go back to his family or to enter a temporary shelter. Street educators, field workers, and volunteers conduct informal dialogues and alternative education and value clarification sessions with the children, to know them and understand their situation or simply to offer friendship, protection, referral to temporary drop-in centers or residential care, and to humanize their environment.

The street education program was initiated in the Philippines in 1989 by both government and non-government agencies.
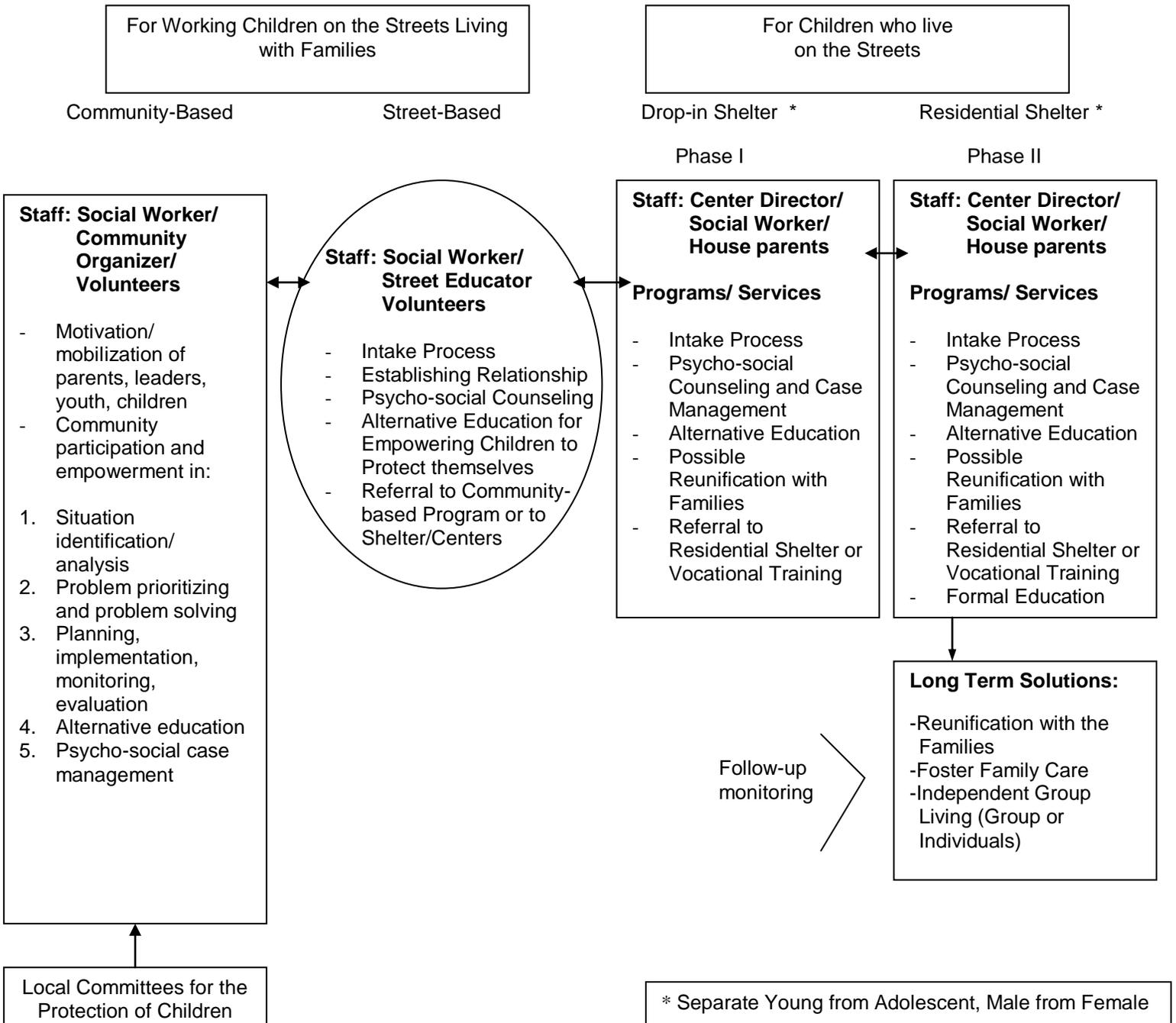
3.   **Center-based Programs.** The center-based program reaches out to children who have run way from home, totally orphaned, abandoned or have severed ties with their families. This program involves setting up a "home" where children can find support and help. Drop-in centers usually provide children with hot meals, a space for the night, clothing, first aid/health examination, counseling, case work, work with families where possible, and a supportive and caring environment.

An alternative to residential care is the foster family care and adoption program for street children and adoption. It is a novel concept in the Philippines and has not been tried by many street children programs. Childhope Asia and Norfil Foundation, with support from Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland (SKN), started a foster care program for street children in 1995. Its purpose is not only to find foster homes for street children but to train foster parents and strengthen the skills of social workers in foster care. The first year of project implementation proved that foster care of street children can be done - all selected 10 children were placed in foster homes. Families were available to receive them. Foster care is a promising alternative to the overburdened residential centers and group homes.

These various program categories aim to support street children and/or their families through non-formal and formal education, organization of parents and children, health services, counseling and case work with families, vocational and other skills training, value clarification, paralegal training, social credit/loan assistance to parents, and foster home care.

The framework for the existing comprehensive program is illustrated below:

COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM FOR STREET CHILDREN
(Collaboration between Government and NGOs)
Prepared by Childhope Asia Philippines

For Working Children on the Streets Living with Families		For Children who live on the Streets	
Community-Based	Street-Based	Drop-in Shelter *	Residential Shelter *
		Phase I	Phase II

Staff: Social Worker/ Community Organizer/ Volunteers

- Motivation/ mobilization of parents, leaders, youth, children
- Community participation and empowerment in:

1. Situation identification/ analysis
2. Problem prioritizing and problem solving
3. Planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation
4. Alternative education
5. Psycho-social case management

Staff: Social Worker/ Street Educator Volunteers

- Intake Process
- Establishing Relationship
- Psycho-social Counseling
- Alternative Education for Empowering Children to Protect themselves
- Referral to Community-based Program or to Shelter/Centers

Staff: Center Director/ Social Worker/ House parents

Programs/ Services

- Intake Process
- Psycho-social Counseling and Case Management
- Alternative Education
- Possible Reunification with Families
- Referral to Residential Shelter or Vocational Training

Staff: Center Director/ Social Worker/ House parents

Programs/ Services

- Intake Process
- Psycho-social Counseling and Case Management
- Alternative Education
- Possible Reunification with Families
- Referral to Residential Shelter or Vocational Training
- Formal Education

Local Committees for the Protection of Children

Follow-up monitoring

Long Term Solutions:

-Reunification with the Families
-Foster Family Care
-Independent Group Living (Group or Individuals)

* Separate Young from Adolescent, Male from Female

d. Human Resource Development

As programs expand and cover more ground, so should the capability of the people and organizations managing these. As a means to upgrade the capability of organizations in developing programs for street children, Asian regional, as well as country-level training workshops have been conducted by Childhope for community organization volunteers (COVs), street educators, social workers, counselors, house parents, and program managers.

e. Program Policy Formulation

As a result of lessons learned from initial experiences in managing programs among street children, policies and procedures were formulated based on experience by workers from NGOs and government agencies to guide program implementation. Guide policies were developed by NGOs in the network for interventions such as outreach, intake, street education, temporary shelter and residential care, alternative education, working with families, provision of skills training and income-generating opportunities, adoption and foster care.

f. Resource Mobilization

The role of inter-agency/community group networks in mobilization of local and external resources to generate support for programs and services. This may be viewed as one of the results of the continuing advocacy being done among the different sectors and groups. From three to six programs in 1984, the number of programs working among street children has increased to about 100 programs in Metro Manila and about 350 in the whole country.

g. Evaluation and Monitoring

This essential component, though not neglected, is still inadequate. Monitoring and evaluation of projects have been conducted, a directory of organizations working among street children in Asia has been published, and documentation of training workshops and seminars conducted have been consolidated. Indicators for monitoring programs and services were developed by the National Program Committee on Street Children, including the National Council of Social Development Foundation, Childhope Asia Philippines, and UNICEF. However, there is the inadequate effective commitment and resources for monitoring among the non-government organizations to systematically note down program results and impact on the children, families and communities. A new development is the setting up of a Management Information System (MIS) by the Consuelo Foundation Philippines, which aims to provide a systematic monitoring of program progress and results.

h. International Networking

As an evolving strategy, international networking aims to establish linkages with programs in other countries to provide a means of sharing individual and country experiences in working with street children. It also provides opportunities for coordination on global issues, i.e., the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and as a means to gain access to resources not locally available.

While the Government of the Philippines (GOP) has been actively promoting and protecting the rights of children through the enactment of the above laws, civil society has also done its share of advocating for the rights of children through the establishment of networks and coalitions - at the national, regional, and local levels - which have for their main agenda, lobbying for

legislation, advocacy, and technical assistance for the development and implementation of programs and services that uphold and protect the rights of children.

The **Philippine NGO Coalition for Monitoring the Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** includes twelve (12) NGO networks and alliances, like Childhope Asia Philippines (CHAP), End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT), the National Council of Social Development (NCSD), Philippine Action for Youth Offenders (PAYO), Salinlahi, The Christian Children's Fund-The Philippine Office (CCF-TPO), World Vision, Plan International, Educational Research and Development Assistance (ERDA), and the Institute for Church and Social Issues (ICSI).

The NGO Coalition has been in existence since 1994. Its aim is to monitor the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC), and to participate in the process of reporting to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. An NGO Supplementary Report to the Government Report was submitted in 1994. A second report of the government is expected.

Other major networks/coalitions that are active in response to street children are:

- the **National Council of Social Development** (NCSD);
- **End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism** (ECPAT);
- the **Philippine Action for Youth Offenders** (PAYO);
- the **National Project on Street Children** (NPSC), which coordinate networks of city task forces on street children and children in need of special protection;
- the **Philippine Inter-city Alliance for Children**, the members of which are Task Forces on Street Children in 22 cities in the Philippines (Olongapo-based);
- **The Cebu City Task Force on Street Children**
- **KABIBA Alliance for Children's Concerns in Mindanao -** involved in addressing children's issues in general through advocacy, research, and lobbying (Davao City-based); and
- **The Kabataan Consortium, Inc**. - composed of 9 child-focused organizations and organizations with programs for children which focus on organizing a federation of child and youth organizations at the city-level (Davao-based).

At the **local level**, there are **Barangay Councils for the Protection of Children** (BCPCs), the formation of which has been encouraged by the Child and Youth Welfare Code and mandated by the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) since August 2002. Its committees are: health, education, livelihood, advocacy and protection, youth, and early childhood development committees. One of the main responsibilities of the BCPCs is to advocate for the CRC and to monitor and report cases of child abuse and the incidence of street children in their local communities. Two or three city governments have also organized a City Council for the Protection of Children.

Childhope Asia Philippines was responsible for the formation of two (2) city-wide networks, namely: the **Pasay City Network for the Protection of Children** (PCNPC) **and the Kalookan Network of Advocates** (AdNet), as well as the Manila Districts V and VI **Inter-agency Committee on Child Rights** and the **Inter-agency Committee on Health.** These are district-level committees on Child Rights in Manila, in response to the growing need for collective action for child rights in Pasay, Kalookan, and Manila, and to provide access to health services on behalf of street and urban poor children in Districts V and VI in Manila.

Childhope Asia Philippines also focuses on the situation of the girl children on the streets and in the community. It provides training for girl children advocates. The main topics covered in the training for girl-children advocates are the following:

* The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
* The Girl-Child and CEDAW
* Sex and Gender (Difference between Boys and Girls)
* The Life Cycle of a Person (Pointing at the Vulnerability to Gender Bias at Certain Age, in School, and in the Community)
* Forms of Abuses and Exploitation against Children (especially girl-children)
* Adolescent Health and Sexuality (Focus on the Girl-child)
* What Can Girl-Children Do, Particularly Girl-Child Advocates, and What Can Be Done for Them to Improve their Current Situation?
* The Meaning, Purpose and Guide for Advocacy
* Criteria for Selecting Volunteer Advocates: Roles/ Functions and Qualities Necessary as Girl-Child Advocates
* Methods and Techniques in Conducting Girl-Child Advocacy Sessions

The main topics covered in the training among children on protective behavior against sexual abuse include the following:

- Definition and Types of Child Abuse
- Protective Behavior in Relation to Child Abuse
- The Concept of Feeling Safe
- Kinds of Touch (Safe and Unsafe)
- Early Warning Signs
- Personal Emergency
- Networking

To provide a venue for these stakeholders, both from Government and private sector, conferences/forums and training seminars on children's rights, issues, programs, and services are conducted at the national and regional levels. **In May 1989, the First Regional Conference on Street Children in Asia was held in Manila.** Four)4) national congresses were held among street children, and other national congresses of all children, from 1990 - 2000. The most recent conference (August 2002) was the **National Workshop on Street Children and Juvenile Justice** organized in Marikina City. The conference was attended by adult and children participants.

The most accessible and best-known child help-line is **Bantay Bata 163**, which receives, through telephone, reports of child abuse and coordinates with the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Philippine National Police in rescuing children from abusive situations. In Olongapo City, callers dial 169; in Davao City, a similar help-line is called **Sagop Bata Dabaw**.

3. Constraints and Challenges

From the experience of NGOs and GOs, the discussions during network and task force meetings and conferences, and from interviews with the children themselves, the following are the six (6) key issues that affect street children:

1. the inequitable socio-economic structure, i.e. 15-20% of the population control 75% of the resources
2. an unstable political system and increase in unemployment due to globalization as well as rapid technological advances and information
3. economic policies resulting from globalization and trade liberalization without safety nets
4. devolution to local governments of basic services
5. breakdown in the focus on the family as a basic unit of society, resulting in a breakdown in family values
6. increase in poverty population (from 30% to 40%) and urbanization, resulting in increased crime rates and substance abuse

4. Lessons Learned

The Consolidated Report of Four City Networks[33] (since 1987), prepared by the National Project on Street Children, lists down the following lessons learned vis-à-vis the different areas of NGO participation:

Areas of Intervention	Lessons Learned
Advocacy	• Youth advocates play a vital role in promoting the rights of children. • Children who are transformed become very powerful advocates themselves. • The success of advocacy involves a strong working relationship between NGO workers and community / barangay leaders. • Training of advocates (e.g. children, volunteers, child-care givers). • Children gain confidence and security upon knowing his/her rights. • Children's participation is not only concretized in the day-to-day implementation of the organization's programs, but most importantly in how children are involved in addressing their issues within their individual and collective realities.
Program Development / Implementation	• Drop-in interventions must be powerful and life-changing to encourage children to leave the streets. • Educational Assistance Programs (EAP) must be supported by livelihood projects for parents to work toward sustainability. • Street educators/workers must be well-trained in providing psychosocial interventions to facilitate case management. • Skills training for out-of-school/street children should be complemented with job placement or

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[33] [33] The National Council of Social Development's Assessment Conference, May 25, 2001, DLSU-College of St. Benilde, Manila, the Philippines

	• apprenticeship programs.
	• Livelihood programs among street families, if not sustained, will have very little impact.
Resource Mobilization / Sustainability	• Coordination with Local Government Units (LGUs) and among NGOs must be strengthened.
Networking / Alliance-building	• Strategic partnership is learning from each other's mistakes and sharing each other's victories.
Capacity-building / Training	• There is a need to continually upgrade knowledge, attitudes, and skills (KAS) of workers at all levels. • On-going training makes members more effective. It also upgrades their KAS on facilitation and enhances personal and interpersonal relationships.
Research and Documentation	• Proper documentation is necessary to effectively monitor the program and ensure program continuity.
Database	• The inventory of programs and services and the printing of a directory are crucial in partnership-building and coordination. • Establishing a database for proper utilization and program design.
Psychosocial	• Street children have enormous capacities for resiliency. • Counseling and psychosocial case management are vital and effective in facilitating recovery and mainstreaming.
Others	• More results can be achieved with the support of volunteers.

5. Recommendations

During the recently-concluded GO-NGO-Church Forum (Dec. 17, 2002), the following recommendations were made, based on issues/concerns raised at various international conferences on children and from frameworks drawn up to monitor children's welfare:

a. Planning and Implementation
- Identify strategies for monitoring the implementation and outcome of the World Fit for Children (WFC) and in ensuring that a National Plan of Action is developed and approved.
- Institutionalize systems of participation through the National Anti-poverty Commission (NAPC).

b. Programme Development
- Strengthen non-formal education; increase parent effectiveness and raise status, morale, and capabilities of teachers to address the issue of school drop-outs.
- Strengthen the family and its role in ensuring the welfare of the children.
- Families, in whatever form, should be involved in the work to provide the needed base of support for the children in their communities in terms of accessing concrete services and in influencing barangay structures to set up mechanisms to appropriately address the children's needs.
- In organizing peer support groups among street children, the natural structures that were

formed by the children, i.e. the gang, should be maximized instead of setting up parallel structures among the children.
- Staff/ volunteers should be trained in psychosocial interventions particularly in case management and counseling.

c. Child Participation
- The children themselves could become active in monitoring that the agreements in the UNGASS are taken into action.
- Multiply best practices and identify ways of increasing child participation (through training of the youth/girl-child to become advocates on a larger scale)
- Ensure the full and active participation of children and youth, as well as ensure continued implementation and monitoring of all provisions in all documents for children.

d. Juvenile Justice System
- Improve the rules of court as well as improving court facilities (youth court); to have a child-friendly and child-sensitive juvenile justice system.
- Ensure child protection (by mobilizing community structures at the local/ grassroots community level).

e. Networking
- Conduct consultation and dialogues with religious and church leaders and other members of the church hierarchies to include programs for children and to involve children.
- Establish NGO-Church-Government partnership, inter-faith fellowship, involve children, and identify ways of raising awareness, working together; establish partnership with the business sector.
- Intensify information dissemination campaign to raise awareness of church people about child rights and child participation.
- Strengthen collaboration with relevant government offices particularly with DILG in organizing Barangay Councils for the Protection of Children (BCPC)/MCPC.
- Expand the NGO Coalition for Monitoring the UN CRC to include other child-focused NGOs.

f. Data-banking/Information Systems
- Develop a comprehensive data collection system that will consolidate all initiatives concerning children and in identifying strategies for an effective sharing and maximum utilization of data, particularly in multiplying best practices on child participation.

6. Direct words or quotes from street children

Voices of the Filipino Street Children
(direct quotes / words from the children translated to English)

''My mother left me in the orphanage. I grew up with my foster parents. [But} they made me leave home because they got mad at me for stealing, you know, for liquor, cigarettes….they told me that I am old enough to find myself a job, but I know deep inside me that I am still a child. I left home and went with my friends; that is how I came to live on the streets….''

''I want to be referred to a [recovery] center. I am tired of this kind of life. I really want to change, I'm getting old already. I realized that if one is really determined to change for the better, it could be done. I've already decided to leave this place. I got envious of some of the other children

who are my wards, whom I was able to encourage to enter a [temporary] center. I feel happy every time I visit some of them in centers, their skin turned fair in color and they've all gotten fat. I'm thinking of just leaving them where they are right now, rather than take them back because I know that their life will be much better there than here outside on the streets. I told myself, 'wow! I'm getting left behind by them. I also want to be like them, that is why I want to go to a center…I want so much to help the children here. I always tell them that they are not supposed to be on the streets…but I want to help myself first before I help the others. How can they listen to me if my own life is a mess…..''

''I get embarrassed every time I beg for money from others, but I have no other recourse…I don't have a job, I was not able to finish school. I can do any type of work, but I don't have ….if I don't beg I will starve, so it is just okay to beg rather than steal as stealing is bad.''

''My life is better right now unlike before…there are now NGOs who give help, before there was none. I thought they were [members of] DSWD (Department of Social Welfare and Development) because they take the children away and put them in detention centers, but I was wrong. I realized that they exist to help children like me…I learned a lot from them and they've been a lot of help to me…it was only through them that I get to experience the love of a family, and the care. Although they are not my relatives they are the ones who are determined to make me change for the better. ''

''I don't think my dream of becoming a street educator will come true, but who knows? But my only dream really is to see my family…I want to see them not because I want to blame them [for what happened to me] …I just want to know where they are and how they are doing, if they're okay or not…to ask them why they left me, and if it is still possible for us to be together…''

-Joy Prudente, 15 (Gay Child)

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''…I never learned the rights of a child in school. I learned it only from the street educators…it was from them where I learned about all my rights..''

''As a Junior Health Worker (JHW), I have done a lot. I was able to help the children here [in my area]. I treat their wounds. The children call me if there is someone who needs to be given first aid…I like the feeling of being able to help others, it makes me feel good. I am happy because there are people to trusts me enough to give me responsibilities….it means a lot to me that there are people who trusts [someone like] me…''

''It is important for us to know our rights as children. Most of us do not know their rights, that's why they get abused physically, belittled….''

-Emily Porciuncula, 15, JHW

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''CRC, STD/HIV/AIDS are not taught in school. It was only from the street educators that we learned all about these….''

''… We will only be bullied and belittled by the adults if we don't know CRC. The parents should also know so they won't abuse their children. If we're the only ones who know CRC, we will not have the courage to tell them about our rights because we're only children. They might get mad at us if we tell them that they shouldn't hurt us because we also have our rights…''

''….I was sexually harassed by one of the guards at Padi's Point… I want to be a policewoman so there will be fewer abusers. I will not hurt them. I will only talk to them. I want to know why they do things like that to children…''

''Before I used to be a bully. I would hit children. When I met the street educators, of course, I could no longer do that. I learned that what I used to do was not good.''

-Lota Jane Ofianza, 15, JHW

''It is really a big help that I got to meet the street educators. They are more of like brothers and sisters. They help me as well as the other children….they helped my friend who was physically abused by the father; they filed a case of child abuse against him…..other than the sessions on CRC, I also learned how to respect elders….''

-Rhea Ocana, 15, Street Child

Fn: a: situationer(Bangkok forum)/revita/mar4