



## **The Situation of Orphan and other vulnerable children in Ethiopia- Salient discussion points at the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Workshop On Orphan and Vulnerable Children Zambia/Lusaka-Nov. 5-8, 2000**

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### **I. Situational analysis:**

#### **a. Statistical Indicators:**

- Total Population- Appr.62 Million
- Annual population growth rate- 3%
- Adult literacy rate- Male 46% and Female 25%
- Infant mortality Rate (Per 1000 live birth)- 113
- Access to safe drinking water- 25%

#### **b. Magnitude of the problem**

##### **◆ Street and Orphan Children:**

- Estimated number of street children 150,000-200,000
- 1,000,000 urban poor children were at high risk of becoming street children (the 1991 study by UNICEF)
- The same study suggested the number of orphaned, abandoned and destitute children in Ethiopia to be 500,000 - Given other factors like the recent draught, the poverty situation and HIV/AIDS, the current figure can extremely go high up.

##### **◆ Children with Disabilities:**

- 2.7 Million children are estimated to have some sort of impairments

##### **◆ Abused and Neglected Children**

- Physical punishment
- Child labor
- Sexual exploitation

- Harmful traditional practices

\*Children in conflict with the law

Although it is evident that there is high prevalence of the problem, there is no as such reliable data that show the magnitude.

◆ Children affected by AIDS

- 9% of age b/n 15-49 years are HIV positive (3.2 million people infected-10% of the world's total)
- Estimated AIDS orphans as at end of 2000 is 620,000 and increases to 1.8 by 2009

◆ Children Affected by armed conflict

- The internal war that ravaged the country for three decades has left thousands displaced, abandoned and orphaned.
- Out of the 1991- 200,000 displaced Ethiopians from Eritrea, 120, 000 were children
- An estimated 120, 000 children are displaced as the result of the recent Ethio-Eritrea border conflict.
- Of the 491,502 returnees from the Sudan, Djibouti and Somalia in the early 90's, 211,346 (43%) were children

◆ Children affected by the recurrent draught

- 1984/85 draught and famine left 36,339 unaccompanied children
- 1987/88 draught and famine left 37,000 children left orphaned
- Data showing magnitude of the displacement during the current draught is not available.

## II. Available Services for orphan and other vulnerable children

Generally available services don't tally with the sharply increasing problem.

### Street Children

There are 18 well-established organizations providing services for street/working children in the country. Services include:

- Advocacy work
- Child protection program
- Saving and credit program
- Formal and informal education
- Health program
- Skill training
- Counseling service
- Other preventive and rehabilitative services such as: Play and recreation, Drop-in services, etc.

◆ Children with disability:

- Only 1860 (0.07 %) have access to special education programs, where as few integrated to normal schools

◆ Orphan children:

Service provision for orphans in the past can be categorized in to different phases:

**Phase I. Traditional (as well as present to a limited extent)**

Traditionally:

- Extended families
- Communities and
- Churches provide services for the needy, the sick and orphaned

**Phase II. Institutional care**

- Provision of services through institutional care orphanages and other alternative support programs at latter stages like Child Family Reunification and family support programs.

**Phase III. Alternative approach (current)**

- De-institutionalization
- Family and community based care
- Institutional care as a last resort (With clearer strategy and guidelines)

◆ **Current Services for orphan children:**

- Most of the 120 orphanages are involved in de-institutionalization process E.g. Ethiopian Orthodox Church reduced the orphanage nearly by half. Children's Amba, which was the largest orphanage run by government, has re-integrated its former 5000 in-mates in to the society. and Jerusalem Association Children's' Homes has re-integrated nearly 900 orphans and remained with nearly 100 children.
- 400-600 orphan and unaccompanied children are given for adoption every year. MOLSA regulates the process.
- Government has also issued a guideline for institutional care to be adhered to by all. Other guidelines for Foster Care, Adoption, Child Family Reunification and Community Based Child Support Programs are promulgated.

◆ **Abused and Neglected Children:**

- ANNPCAN-Ethiopia chapter is playing an advocacy role in sensitizing families, schoolteachers and empowering children to assert their rights and know also their responsibilities.

- NCTPE's efforts of sensitizing the entire society against the harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, early marriage, etc.

◆ **AIDS Orphans:**

Generally, response to the needs of AIDS orphans is minimal due to stigma attached. Meager response provided that includes:

- Institutional Care- Missionaries of Charity
- Family and community based response is getting emerged - MMM and JACH are to be cited as an example.

**III. Policy environment**

◆ **Favorable:** the issuance of different policies and guidelines such as

- Developmental Social Welfare Policy
- Population Policy
- National Guidelines on Alternative Child Support Programs.
- AIDS policy and subsequent measures taken
- Taking the CRC as a law of the land, though it has its own implementation problem

◆ **Unfavorable:** Absence of supportive NGO legislation is considered to be as a major drawback from the NGOs side. As the result, no incentive for private donations for NGOs (donations are not free of taxation). NGOs banned from getting involved in income generation activities.

#### **IV. Innovative Programs for Orphan and Street Children**

- ◆ Government NGO collaborative projects/efforts in the areas of
  - Child protection service (The Police Commission and Forum on Street Children joint efforts)
  - Advocacy work
  - The creation of orphanage networking
  - Juvenile justice
- ◆ **Providing out of school children access to education through NFBE**
  - Development of NFBE curricula jointly organized by government and NGOs in Oromia Region
- ◆ **JACH's Community Empowerment, Pilot Project in Bahirdar**
  - Helped community members to become a legal entity to support AIDS orphans and sensitize communities on the needs and problems of AIDS orphans
- ◆ **Forum on Street Children Ethiopia's various initiatives, such as,**
  - Providing police training programs and opening child protection units in the existing police stations – Training manual developed
  - The initiation of Child Information Resource Center
  - Training street educators including government staff
- ◆ **Pact's innovative approach to build capacities of NGOs the impact of which is:**
  - Drastic budget increment of partner local organizations.
  - Service coverage escalated
  - Improved working relationship with government offices created/better enabling environment created
  - Forum created to share information
- ◆ The role being played by national, international, Bi-lateral and UN organization through providing funds, training programs and exposure visit has paramount importance.
  - UNICEF – MOLSA and NGOs are jointly implementing programs that respond to the needs of street children.
  - MOLSA is implementing a street children preventive program together with the Italian co-operation, etc.

An overview of problems encountered

- Scarcity of resources
- Lack of keeping adequate records and situational analysis through surveys and

researches

- Reluctance to share resources and information (scramble to get the meager resources)
- Absence of strong linkages with organizations that have similar objectives/networking- Both at national as well as regional level
- Small coverage
- Very limited service to the hard-core street children-only Irish Goal is involved in such services.
- Lack of innovative programmes- there is a tendency of replicating existing ones eg. leather work skill training.
- Limited community awareness of the problem.

*for more information on these and other related issues visit:*

[www.repsi.org](http://www.repsi.org)

