# UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

## Faculty of Humanities: Education



**An investigation into policy around street children with specific reference to street child interventions and policy in practice: the case of Ons Plek Projects for Female Street Children, Cape Town.**

**A minor dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of**

**Masters in Educational Administration, Planning and Social Policy**

**By**

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# Ethical issues

I would like to declare up-front that I was given full permission to use the case files at Ons Plek, which were relevant to my sample. Ons Plek acts *in loco parentis* on behalf of the children in their care. It was impossible to get the children themselves to give me permission to access their files, as those in my sample were no longer based at Ons Plek but had already been rehabilitated back into the community. Furthermore, all the children concerned were given other names so as to protect their identities and right to privacy. At all times I maintained a professional identity as researcher, and was mindful of these ethical issues. Ethical issues are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.



This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

signature removed

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# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

Everyone is aware of the problem of street children in South Africa. Street children begging for money accost us at traffic lights, outside shops and on sidewalks. Their desperate anguished faces stimulate in us mixed emotions of guilt and sympathy, while raising rational questions like, what can be done for these children? Are they provided for?

Being fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to teach in England (1999-2000), I found myself in an educational project based in social services. The project was based on the findings that "looked after" children or children in public care were the lowest academic achievers of any group in the UK. The aim of the project in which I worked (forming part of a wider national strategy), was to address this inequality by offering academic assistance to such children. I was amazed by the size of the welfare state, the amount of government machinery used and the unimaginable amount of tax-payers' money spent on sustaining such a system and bureaucracy. Thinking back to South Africa, I realised we neither have the infrastructure, nor the tax base for such expansive state interventions, and yet our needs were of a greater intensity, wider diversity and spread across more sectors of society.

Upon returning to South Africa, I was motivated to inquire into these issues, wondering what the government and society were doing, for what is arguably the most vulnerable of any sector in our society, the street children. I was also interested in understanding the causes of the street children phenomenon and the issues they face.

I visited various projects that attempt to rehabilitate street children in the Western Cape. Some of these included: Learn to Live, The Silesian Institute, The Homestead, POLP (Planned Open Learning Pathway), School of Hope and Ons Plek (OP). I conducted informal interviews, finding out what they were doing, what their aims were, what their projects consisted of and what kind of programmes they were running. I also began to familiarise myself with the body of literature, reading as widely as possible.

## The research question

To date, the South African government has not yet put in place a policy that deals specifically with street children. There is no government legislation that aims to pull together existing government departments and infrastructures in a coherent unified manner so as to close the policy gaps. The question that needs to be raised is, "if there is no official government, provincial or national policy in place that addresses or governs street child interventions[1], then what are the street child interventions doing in practice?" If they are dealing with street children and their issues on a daily basis, then surely what policies they have developed in practice could prove highly informative to shape and eventually codify and formulate a national policy. If national policy should be based on best practice, then it is worthwhile to look around at practices on the ground and begin selecting and composing such a piece of legislation. This minor dissertation is an attempt to answer these questions. Due to time and space constraints, I have focused on one street child intervention, Ons Plek (OP).[2]

In order to review policy in practice as a possibility towards formulating a national policy, the following series or sequence of questions needs to be asked. How serious is the street child problem in South Africa? What are the characteristics and causes for street children? What are other interventions doing on the African continent? What does the existing South African policy/legislation look like and is it sufficient to cope with the street child phenomenon? Is there a consensus about the nature of 'rehabilitation' work? What is OP's policy? How does it work itself out in practice? Could OP's programmes and policies contribute towards an official policy document on street children?

## The structure of the dissertation

Chapter One is the Introduction. Here the topic, motivation and rationale of the dissertation are introduced. The main research questions are raised. Finally I describe the structure and content of the dissertation as a whole.



[1] Acts do exist which govern children's homes and shelters. But these are generic policies that are problematic in and of themselves. No policy exists specific to street children (see Chapter Two).
[2] I visited several projects. Some of the better-known projects, like The Homestead, advised me to use another project for data collection, as they are inundated with students (local and international). POLP, were in transition, with a possibility that they could close down. While, OP were open to me and even invited me to conduct a study at their shelter.

Chapter Two is divided into three sections. In all sections there is an attempt to go from the general to the specific, from the international phenomenon to the African, to the South African.

In Part One, I review the literature, define what is meant by street children, and look at causes and characteristics common to street children. Due to OP being a street shelter for girls, it was necessary to look at gender issues specific to street children.

Part Two raises the question, "What is being done for these children?" By focusing on Africa, it touches on interventions in practice. It concludes by pointing out that there is no consensus on best practice.

Part Three deals with the complexities around our current national (and provincial) policies that deal with children in need of care. I also had to look historically to show the shifts in thinking from our previous to our current government. This section concludes that policy as stated intent[3], as it now stands, is too broad to deal with the street child phenomenon and in addition it fails to fully engage with, rehabilitate and respect the place of the family. From here I move from the macro to the micro, reviewing issues on the ground and 'policies in practice'[4] that attempt to deal with these concerns.

Chapter Three is a description of the methodology used in completing this study. It grapples with important ethical issues and the limitations of the study.

In Chapter Four I discuss the analysis and findings. For the sake of clarity, I first introduce OP, giving background and historical details, and then introduce the work that they do. I then use the discussion in Chapter Two as a framework to review how OP and their basic structure addresses the broader (macro) policy lacunas.

I then give a broad overview of the findings specific to the children, their backgrounds and behaviour. The purpose of this is two-fold: one is to give an idea of the 'clientele' OP is dealing with, the other is to substantiate findings and additional needs. These needs can be seen as localised (micro) policy gaps.



[3] I define 'policy as stated intent' as it exists at 'the top', as it is formulated as text, but include how it plays itself out through the system.
[4] 'Policy in practice' is defined as how national policy is interpreted and adapted to suit conditions on the ground. But it also importantly includes policy that is developed in practice.

Having raised the needs and issues facing the children in OP, I discuss the programmes and policies developed in practice by OP. These are evaluated to see if and how they are applied in practice, with reference to outcomes. After this I review some of the general 'un-codified' practices of OP. This deals with the daily running of OP. I also look at some of the broader networking and options practised by OP. Keeping in mind that interventions of this nature are substitutes for the child's family, I argue that these broader options could assist in the formulation of policy.

Towards the end of this chapter, I review the value of OP, what it means to the street children and how it adds to their lives. I then discuss my attempt to follow-up as many of the children as I could who have since left OP. I tried to find out what impression OP left on their lives. This supports the question of what value OP added to these children's lives.

Finally in Chapter Five, I conclude with a brief summary of the key findings and possible recommendations of what OP practices could inform an official national policy document. In closing I return to the issue of prevention as well as the need for treatment. I raise areas of
personal concern noting that policies do not occur in a vacuum, and that policies and Acts of Parliament can contradict each other. This is one possibility for additional research.

# CHAPTER 2

# LITERATURE AND POLICY REVIEW

## PART ONE

### A Look at our sociological space

Castells (1998 & 1999) leads us into the globalisation debate primarily from an economic perspective. He argues that the collapse of the Soviet Union has led to the collapse of socialism. His argument becomes more complex as he calls the market place "late capitalism" (the new economy). This "late capitalism" and the 'free market' came about by nation-states allowing and opening up the space for it (i.e. through the adoption of smaller governments and deregulation). Now "late capitalism" is driven by forces beyond the control of the nation-states and this comes about primarily through technology and electronic media. This kind of economy remains capitalistic in nature because it is competitive. Castells argues that the world wide market has broken all 'rules' precisely because there are so many role players, and that information plays a huge role in this set-up and can determine the flow of markets. The result of all this is that billions of United States dollars can be transferred, across geographic boundaries, in seconds. Through technology there is greater access to the global market, but the primary role players are the large multinational and transnational corporations. These corporations will only invest money where money can be made, as Castells argues the prime objective of the market is productivity, i.e. money gets invested in developed and emerging markets with the sole aim of making a profit. However, he also points out that there is a volatility to emerging markets because there is no longer the guarantee that the IMF (International Monetary Fund), World Bank and such organisations will bail these multinationals out in case of a difficulty, thereby making these emerging markets all the more volatile. The result is that the market does not go to countries (nation-states) where there is uncertainty and where it cannot make a profit. He calls this the "asymmetry of the global market." Furthermore, the capitalistic and technological dimension of the global economy removes the notion of loyalty and long-term commitment. It is within these gaps that the poor fall. He calls these the Fourth World, as they do not even have the education to access the technology to participate in the global economy. Furthermore, the global economy's main commodity is information and the days when the developed countries needed the raw materials of the developing countries are fast disappearing (old economy based on production), and the Fourth

World is therefore made completely redundant. Castells argues that the fate of the poor is made that much more fatal with the death of socialism and communism and the decline of the welfare state. This leaves some very pertinent questions: who will take care of the Fourth World? Who will address world poverty?

Given this very summarised world backdrop, I will now go into the world of the street child. The phenomenon of street children is a world-wide issue, but for none more so than the so-called Fourth World (or South). Castells raises the question, who will take care of those in poverty (street children form a sub-group thereof)? Street children, it can be argued, are amongst the most vulnerable of those in poverty. The questions around the street child interventions become crucial, as do policy issues, as does the future of welfare and the welfare state.

**Street children. Who are they? A definition**

The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) defined street children as:

> A street child is a boy or a girl who is under the age of eighteen and who left his/her home environment part time or permanently (because of problems at home and/or in school, or to try to alleviate those problems) and who spends most of his/her time unsupervised on the street as part of a subculture of children who live an unprotected communal life and who depend on themselves and each other, and not on an adult, for the provision of physical and emotional needs such as food, clothing, nurturance, direction and socialisation (HSRC, 1993: 5).

Cockburn (1990: 12) defines street children as "those who have abandoned (or have been abandoned) by their homes, schools and immediate communities before they are 16 years of age, and have drifted into nomadic street life."

Giles (1988) defines a street child as being under 16, and who has had to care for him/herself for at least two months.

They are further categorised as:

- Street children who live and work and survive on the street. This is also known as children "of the street."
- Street children, who work on the street, supplement their family income, but return home in the evenings to be with their families. They are also known as children "on the street" (Le Roux, 1998: 684; Bernstein & Gray, 1990; Ennew, 1986; Richter, 1988; Zelizer, 1985).

The street child cannot be identified by any scientific criteria, being classified into different categories, such as juvenile delinquents, working children, children in especially difficult circumstances or abandoned children (Dunford, 1996: 4).

> Street children are just one of the categories of Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (CEDC), which incorporates abandoned and neglected children; orphans; handicapped children; working children; children with AIDS; children of imprisoned mothers; child mothers; drug addicts and refugees (UNICEF and Government of Kenya, May 1992: 1, cited in Dunford: 7).

**International phenomenon**

In a 1992 publication, UNICEF (cited in Epstein, 1996) estimated the number of street children worldwide to be 100 million, a statistic confirmed by Agnelli (1986, cited in Pretorius & Le Roux, 1998). This is a global issue! According to this report, 40 - 50 million are estimated to live in Latin America and 44 million are working on the streets in India.

However there is a contradiction in the literature. Cockburn (1990) quotes UNICEF, and claims there are only 30 million street children throughout the world and under a tighter definition, there are only about 8 million (Ennew, 1987) (perhaps this definition is children "of the street"). And yet still Cerrans (UNESCO), 1992) estimates the worldwide numbers to be 300 million!

Nevertheless, of the 100 million street children worldwide, 75-90% are there as additional breadwinners for their poverty-stricken families and are there as victims of dire economic factors, i.e. the vast majority are children "on the street."

There also seems to be a distinction between street children from developed and developing countries. Those from developed countries often suffer from mental illness, and are older (Epstein, 1996: 295). In the US there are 2.5 million homeless people of whom one third are single mothers and young children (Ibid: 290).

Richter (1990: 5) points out that in poor third world countries street children are called "street"/vagrant children; they are both children "on" and "of" the street; they are almost exclusively male; they are "working" children; they are younger than their first world counterparts (11-16 years); they are independent on the streets; half of them are on the streets for one year; they are arrested for vagrancy.

In terms of the above distinctions, it becomes clear from the literature that South Africa falls under the third world/developing country bracket.

**African phenomenon**

Cerrans (UNESCO, 1992) claims there are 5 million street children in Africa. It was believed that: "village and family solidarity kept the problem of street children to a minimum. In Africa there are few orphanages and hostels: the family clan or village is supposed to look after their most valuable members - the children and the aged" (Ibid: 11). The recent increase in the number of street children is pinned on external factors such as: economic recession, high interest rates, crushing foreign debt, little foreign investment, in short, "accelerated impoverishment" (Ibid: 12). The World Bank claims that in Sub-Saharan Africa, cities are doubling their inhabitants every nine years. The presence of street children is seen as an indicator of "moral degradation, the end of our traditional values"; "African culture has disappeared from our big cities which, in addition, lack the social services available to city dwellers in the industrialised countries" (Ibid: 12). In Africa, 50% of the urban population is now under 19 years of age, and urbanisation rates are three times that of Europe (Boyden, 1991: 1, cited in Dunford: 12).

Street children are a sub-set of working children (agricultural, domestic and industrial work). 17% of the total work-force in Africa are children (Daily Nation, May 3rd, 1995, cited in Dunford: 6). Richter (1990: 9), points out that "children in agricultural societies have always worked and have always carried responsibility for part of the household economy." (Therefore the logical deduction is that should that culture be transported into the context of a city, the child will still be expected to work, but in a different context. i.e. they are thus children "on the street").[1] Richter blames urbanisation for uprooting families from their traditional homes and means of economic survival. Urbanisation introduces new pressures resulting in the breakdown of traditional social organisation. Richter points out two groups (which are subjected to the same external circumstances).

1. Adaptive: the family "pulls together", increases creativity and finds new ways of making money and involves innovation. This includes sending children to work in order to survive economically, so that both the needs of the child and the family are met. Work could include being sent out to beg on the streets, i.e. children "on the streets."
2. Maladaptive: this involves a shift from social to individual needs orientation, i.e. blatant selfishness. People become obsessed with their own needs, survival and

[1] According to "Masculinities in Southern Africa" (a paper presented for the 'Masculinities' Colloquium, University of natal, Durban 2-4 July 1997: 5) young Xhosa boys (intutu) were required to perform home chores such as cattle herding. Dunford (p. 6) cites UNICEF, July 1991: 8, claiming that Africa has the world's largest population of working children – 52 million to 145 million children, depending on how 'work' is defined. In African culture, children form part of the economy.

neglecting others, including "young, old, sick, or otherwise vulnerable members of the society" (Ibid: 8). This results in the breakdown of family ties and parental bonds of responsibility towards children. It includes antisocial behaviours such as theft and violence and other pathologies such as alcoholism, child abuse and neglect. Richter concludes this discussion, noting that, 'maladaptive' typifies many of the social contexts surrounding street children in South Africa (those 'of' the street). (In both views there is a modification of traditional culture).

Richter cites Kayonga-Male & Onyango (1984) who claim that all households in Africa are estimated to be headed by women, without men (although I personally dispute "all", although it may be true that women in a practical, day-to-day sense head the majority of African homes). Richter alludes to society's failure to help single mothers care for their children[2]. Richter herself is against the institutionalisation of these children, but rather favours rehabilitation into their own and foster families.



## Street Children in South Africa

> . . . the exploitation of street children by street youth and adult criminal elements has created a situation where street children are increasingly becoming associated with crime (Richie, 1999: 1).

The average age of street children in South Africa is approximately 13 years (Le Roux, 1996: 423). In the Third World, the average street child age is 11 to 16 years. If we use "age" as a means of classification, then South Africa is typical of the Third World Street Child category.

Ross (1991, cited in Le Roux, 1996: 425) found that there were only 9,000 estimated street children in South Africa. Here again the literature varies, with Cockburn (1992, cited in Donald et. al, 1997) quoting UNICEF estimates at 12,500 street children in South Africa.[3]

Most of the literature approaches the issue of street children in South Africa from an economic and political perspective, claiming South Africa's uniqueness, particularly its apartheid history (Richter, 1990). Ross (1991, cited in Le Roux, 1996: 425) blames the

[2] Our human compassion may reach out to single mothers, which is wonderful if it leads to positive action on a 'civil-society sphere of government'. But whenever state welfare has supported single mothers with legislation, the consequences have been counter-productive (see Citizen: February, 2001: 24-25, for an excellent modern-day example). We should not assume that all welfare is state welfare; there are also faith-based and private welfare initiatives.

[3] The average in the literature is about 9,000 to 10,000. However, these figures are only of those in towns and city centres and ignores street children living in townships. This number could well be much higher (Treanor, 1994: 887).

street child phenomenon in South Africa almost exclusively on "the political system of racial segregation that has been in place since the 1940s." Of the 9,000 street children in South Africa, nearly all are black. Authors such as Hickson & Gaydon (1989) and Swart (1988) agree that apartheid is to blame for the street child phenomenon. Peacock (1993:29(2), p. 173) refers to the Group Areas Act of 1950 which stipulated that a black child was not allowed to stay with his parents when they were working and living in a so called 'white' residential area. In many cases the child was placed under the supervision of a relative, acquaintance or even a stranger who lived in a township. Peacock cites his previous study (1990) and Swart (1988), saying that this situation could lead to an acceptance of street lifestyles. Peacock also refers to the policy of homelands, which forced the black man to leave his family in search of employment, thus disrupting the family. However, when this law was abolished in 1986, floods of black people poured into major cities. With such rapid urbanisation came poverty and housing shortages. The plight of Blacks was further complicated by separate welfare services for different racial groups, and educational discrimination (Bantu education). Peacock also refers to political violence and those that came to the cities to receive a formal education after 'comrades' burnt their schools down. Le Roux & Smith (1998), claim that political factors have played a role, with black youth leaving home during the 1980s to participate in the struggle to end apartheid.

Le Roux however, claims that ascribing the problem of street children to apartheid is an over-simplification, and the problem should rather be explained and addressed holistically (cites Van Niekerk, 1990), considering all social, economic, political, cultural, and educational realities. This is supported by Helen Starke (former director of Child Welfare): "street children have been a problem in Cape Town for many years and were mentioned in the Child Welfare Society's first annual report in 1909" (Cockburn, 1987: 14), a date predating apartheid legislation by some years.

Now that we have considered the International, African and South African context, we will now consider general characteristics and issues that affect street children.

**General characteristics of street children**

According to Le Roux (1998: 684), a common denominator amongst street children is their poor family background. Increasingly with urban, economic and globalisation pressures, more and more street children come from single-parent families headed by a

mother. This leads to no father figure and consequently a spirit of rejection. Therefore these children don't trust adults and find authority and control difficult. There appears to be a contemporary trend of further breakdown of extended families into smaller more vulnerable nuclear families.

Richter (1990) estimates that street children in South Africa consist of a third who are "of the street", and about two thirds who are "on the street." Richter points out that most have some contact with one or more family members, though many are functionally homeless; i.e. problems prevent the family exercising its care and responsibility for the child - cruel and disinterested step-parents, alcoholism, cruelty, and eviction.

The street child, in general, has a poor self-image, is anxious, mistrusts others, and exhibits fear of all authority (Smit, 1997-98).

Another characteristic of street children is the issue of substance abuse.

**Substance abuse**

Glue sniffing is the most common and widespread form of substance abuse (Smit, 1997-98). About a third of street children abuse drugs on a regular basis (Richter, 1990).

Street children often abuse substances to cope with the harsh conditions on the street. As one could imagine, conditions on the street are conducive to poor health.

**Health**

Those on the street suffer from poor health, malnutrition, dental problems, poor hygiene, respiratory problems, neglect, abuse and drug involvement. AIDS is spreading at an alarming rate amongst street children (Le Roux, 1998: 685). Lovesque (1999, cited in Barnes-September, et al. 2000) notes that in comparison to adults involved in prostitution, children have higher rates of HIV infection.

Donald, et al. (1997) reference research that shows that street children have blasé attitudes to AIDS and other deadly diseases. This suggests that street children have a fatalistic attitude towards life.

Here again the literature manifests a degree of disagreement. Research done in Cape Town by Boynton & Nicole Cockburn, doing anonymous AIDS tests revealed no HIV positive results among the children surveyed (Cerrans (UNESCO), 1992: 7). Cockburn

(1990) refers to the work of Dr Paul Geber amongst 150 street children, both in and out of shelters in Cape Town, which found that there were no HIV positive results. Unfortunately it was disclosed in a radio interview on Cape Talk, by Molo Shongololo, a Cape Town project working with sexually exploited youth, that it is this perception of children and street children as being 'safer' and less likely to be HIV infected that has caused them to be additionally 'attractive' to perverts, paedophiles and the like, thus encouraging prostitution (both amongst girls and boys). Unfortunately, this is also cultural: "there is a growing belief that sex with very young children will cure a man of HIV/AIDS because the child's blood is perceived to be pure with the ability to cleanse the man's blood of the disease" (Lovesque, 1999, cited in Barnes-September, et al. 2000: 16). Also children are given a lower status than adults, therefore it is not a 'serious' moral problem to pass AIDS on to them. The South African (SA) Law Commission's review of the customary laws (1998: 95), reports that women (never mind young girls) are never given full adult status within the Xhosa traditional legal framework, but remain perpetual minors. Boys are only given status once they marry and establish their own family household.

**Gender Issues**

There are fewer females on the street than males because females are more likely to be taken in within the community. This is because females help out around the house and look after smaller children (Le Roux, 1996). Dunford (1996: 9) claims that girls are also preferred to stay at home because they demand less inheritance. "African women perform the bulk of the continent's work, but receive perhaps one tenth of its income, and have title to perhaps one hundredth of its property" (UNICEF, July 1991: 51, cited in Dunford: 18). Indeed under traditional Xhosa culture, it was the woman that did most of the farming/economic sustainable work and females could bring their family additional wealth by being 'sold' for labola (Mills, 1992: 6).

"Geber's study has shown street children to be 81.1% male and only 18.9% female, while Scharf (1988) found that only 10% of street children in Cape Town were females" (Le Roux, 1996: 426). Richter (1990) and Cockburn (1990) agree, that of the 9,000 street children in South Africa, 10% are girls. The same ratio holds true for Cape Town (Scharf et al. 1986: 262).

Keen also refers to the work of Matilda Smith, who spent three months in 1987/88 talking to the girls on the streets of Cape Town. Smith found that there were about 100 girls strolling[4], some part-time, some full-time. They ranged in age from nine to twenty-one with the majority between 13 and 17. This indicates that girls start strolling later than boys.

It is fairly common for those females on the street to turn to prostitution and accommodation is 'provided' by their pimps (Keen, 1989). Keen goes on to quote a NGO official as saying: "You can't work with 'street girls', they're prostitutes who can make plenty of money on their own." What is alarming is the degree of female street children's acceptance of male violence (Le Roux, 1998). Dunford (1996: 34) claims that prostitution earns five times more than begging, thus there is a need for skills training and income generating opportunities to prevent them returning to prostitution. Dunford goes on to cite UNICEF and Government of Kenya, May 1992: 16, claiming that the stigma of falling pregnant or prostituting makes it difficult for a girl to be rehabilitated back into the community and school. It is these young mothers who often abandon their children, hence 'generational' street children.

Lewis is quoted as saying: girls "tend to be older, and tend not to look like street children, because they dress very tidily and keep themselves very clean" (Cerrans (UNESCO), 1992: 8).

At some stage the question needs to be asked, how long do street children stay on the street. The following quote gives an idea of the length of time.



**How long do street children stay on the street?**

> Richter's profile on South African street children shows that about a third of the children return home within a short period of time. Another third stay on the streets for periods of 6 to 18 months, while the remaining third remain on the streets for more than two years (Le Roux, 1996: 426-427).

Now that we have considered the general characterises and gender issues associated with street children, we need to give greater thought to possible causes of the street child phenomenon.

**Causes of the street child phenomenon**

These can be categorised into two primary causes:

[4] Street children are given different names throughout the world, e.g. "parking boys" (Kenya). In Cape Town they are known as "strollers", children who roam the streets. It carries connotations of 'freedom'.

**1. Poverty**

Poverty is believed by many to be the root cause. Poverty often 'forces' the child to become an additional breadwinner for the family, i.e. children 'on' the street. Neglect, unlike abuse, may occur through no fault of the adult caregivers, but rather has its roots in poverty (Boyden, 1991: 23, cited in Dunford: 21). Poverty is a notoriously hard cycle to break, since:

> Poverty causes malnutrition, increased susceptibility to disease, and so reduces work capacity. Reduced income increases the importance of child labour, which rules out education. With no education the youth can get no proper job, and so with no money, he cannot give his own children education (Agnelli, 1986: 54, cited in Dunford: 24).

A study carried out in 1991, predicted that by the year 2000, Sub-Saharan Africa would have 30% of the world's poor, with the situation set to deteriorate further (UNICEF, July 1991: 19, cited in Dunford: 24).

**2. Family breakdown/Family disintegration**

Family pathology is a factor, examples include alcoholism and other substance addictions, abuse and neglect. In African urban areas, some believe that, "formal marriage is becoming a thing of the past," a new form of family is evolving, characterised by an increase in informal affairs (Dunford, 1996: 15). Unfortunately, often after the birth of a child, the father drifts away, leaving a single mother, who may already have other offspring (Ibid: 15).

> Abuse can be described as any physical, sexual, or emotional behaviour that departs from what is culturally acceptable[5]. This includes beatings, burnings, defilement or rape. Abuse has been linked to urban life in that these families suffer over-crowding, stress, social isolation, alcohol or drug abuse, unemployment and marriage break-up (Ibid: 21).

Family disintegration can also be linked to young, immature parents, lack of social and extended family support, parental psychiatric problems and domestic violence (Kenya's Medical Women's Association, 1989: 12, cited in Dunford: 22).



[5] "Cultural" cannot however always be a measure of what is acceptable. It was 'cultural' to practice *sutre* in India, the burning alive of the widow at her husband's funeral (the practice was challenged and outlawed through the efforts of William Carey, missionary to India). Furthermore, child-temple prostitution was also religious and 'cultural' (the practice was challenged and outlawed through the efforts of Amy Carmichael, missionary to India). In traditional Xhosa practices it was not uncommon for the girl to be thrashed should she refuse to accept the marriage arranged with labola (Mills, 1992: 6) *Isondlo* is a practice that denotes the giving of a beast to compensate the recipient for the rearing of a child. If a person pays the *isondlo* he is entitled to custody. Some have said that this amounts to the buying of children (SA Law Commission, 1998: 104). Such a 'cultural' framework therefore becomes problematic. In fact such practices are currently under debate through their inclusion in customary law. The SA Law Commission questions the validity of these practices in the light of the constitution and the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is deemed a 'higher court of law'.

**3. Other causes**

Others run-away to escape the boredom, humiliation and failure they experience in school.

Others leave for the attraction of a better, more exciting and adventurous life, or a more economically stable life by living on the streets. This includes notions of freedom and lack of restrictions or discipline, although group dynamics and survival on the streets do demand certain 'house' rules and 'discipline' (Smit, 1997-98).

Peer pressure is causative as about half of street children leave home in the company of a friend (Richter, 1990).

Environmental factors, which include conditions related to urban environments such as, over-crowding, social deprivation, child-rearing practices, communal/social pressures (Kenya's Medical Women's Association, 1989: 12, cited in Dunford: 22), and in South Africa a culture of violence.

Finally there are factors particular to the child. These include: failing to bond with family, temperament/disobedience (rebelliousness), physical abnormality, mental retardation, poor school performance, and conduct/neurotic problems (Kenya's Medical Women's Association, 1989: 12, cited in Dunford: 22).

**Summary of causes**

Fall (1986, cited in Le Roux, 1996: 429) summarised these as "push" and "pull" factors. Pull factors include the notions of financial independence and adventure. Push factors are the negative factors that result in children turning to street life to seek a 'safer' place than that of their home. Other reasons include: fear of punishment for actual or accused misdemeanours and accidental disconnection from family. About one half of the children are second-order runaways from reform or industrial schools, and other closed institutions (thus raising serious questions about the present system and model of state welfare and institutionalisation of these children).

Peacock (1993:29(2), p. 173) summarises the causes of the street child phenomenon as: "the disintegration of the family." This cannot be stressed enough. Donald et al (1997) found "half of the group stated that they did not know who their father was and only one father was reported to be employed." Single-parent families and illegitimacy are

key causes of the street child phenomenon: "One mother in 20 was married, and three-quarters of families were reconstituted, often on a rather temporary basis" (Giles 1988: 140).

In what is perhaps one of the more substantial sample sizes in the body of literature (97), Richter (1996: 218) writes:

> Half the sample spoke of hurt, pain, anger, rejection and aggression in family relationships. In the majority of cases these events and experiences were attributed to the moral laxity of parents – they drank, they didn't care, they abandoned children, they punished unfairly, and so on. *No child* mentioned *economic hardship* or other social problems attributable to the political order in apartheid South Africa as playing a part in their family difficulties or their present "homeless" conditions. (Emphasis mine).

One can begin to make a distinction in the literature, although not neat, depending on what worldview the researcher holds, i.e. either a leaning towards internal or external factors. Internal includes, factors related to the family and the child, viewing the family unit as the root cause, which if damaged leads to poverty, economic issues and abuse. External includes, civil government and civil society, which if dysfunctional leads to general poverty and in South Africa includes the legacy of Apartheid, this climate of poverty gives rise to family breakdown, followed by the phenomenon of street children.

Smit (1997-98) attempts to pull these together under the broad bracket of "socio-economic factors."

**Two schools of viewing/classifying street children**

In order to theorise and introduce an analytical framework in which to grapple with these issues, it is important to consider the work of Richter (1990). Richter makes the distinction between Realistic and Romantic. Using this analytical tool, I have taken it further than Richter who uses it to show the way the identity of the street child is constructed, to show and explain the possible actions taken and the interventions themselves. The school of thought adopted will inform the interpretation of any research; will inform the approach to any intervention adopted and for that matter will inform any policy formulated. I have chosen to classify the two schools as: "Realist" and "Romantic."[6]

[6] It must be acknowledged that this is only an analytical framework and is not absolute, nor can it account for every detail or complexity. I do not wish to place any author in such a box, although some may tend towards either one of these dichotomies.

**Romantic:**

"The capacity of children to determine their own destinies and to evaluate their own experiences has throughout history been underrated and undermined" (Cockburn, 1998).

"Unlike gangs, groups of street children are not aggressive. They are always more likely to flee than to fight" (Cockburn, cited in Cerrans (UNESCO), 1992: 6); they are not "naughty" - "I have never heard of a child leaving home simply to be on the streets. They leave to escape violence or difficult school situations..." (Cockburn). Likewise, so do parents escape any blame or responsibility: "they are benumbed by circumstances - they love their children but have very little opportunity to care for them. They are casualties of the proliferating informal settlement in our cities" (Cockburn). Le Roux quotes Swart (1988) as saying: "harsh or neglectful treatment of children by their families frequently derives from parental depression, anger, anxiety and frustration at life circumstances."

There is a tendency in this section of the literature to look at factors surrounding the family and the child rather than at the family itself (although, other authors like, Richter, 1990, and Giles, 1988, clearly document that the children themselves blame the families for their lack of care). Perhaps this is because such factors fit the economic and political lenses through which many authors and researchers approach the problem. "Contrary to popular belief, street children are not necessarily society's dropouts, but rather victims of unfortunate circumstances. Most come from the lower socio-economic strata" (Le Roux, 1998: 684). Hence the child and the family are painted as victims, unfortunate and largely innocent. This explanation does not account for the large numbers of children who grow up in families of equal or worse external circumstances, yet do not turn to the street, nor does the family turn to pathological behaviour. Certainly poverty, overcrowding and the like will aggravate the cause of street children, but to blame these external factors alone is an over-simplification of the causes. Another valuable comment about this system of thought, is that it dis-empowers the person, placing them under and explaining their condition by their prevailing external circumstances. The power centre does lie with the person, but rather with the external circumstance, thereby decreasing their chances to change. The romantic school of thought does not require a child to take responsibility for his/her past, yet attempts to empower the child for the future by empowering them with adult decisions about their own lives (while the adult intervention

shifts responsibility onto the child). The result is a strange juggling of responsibility and power.

**Realistic:**

Under this category, we have factors such as social, family and individual pathology (Richter, 1990). This accounts for the neglect, sexual, physical, emotional abuse; theft, prostitution and pimping. Here Richter's model of Maladaptive and Adaptive becomes useful. Giles cites repetitive "non-aggressive" conduct as: "truancy, absconding, gross deceptiveness, substance abuse, group sex, prostitution, habitual stealing, tale-telling, selfishness, tantrums, and sulking" (1988: 141). A case study of the shelter Khaya Lethu in Durban by Bernstein & Gray (1990) revealed that: "the children themselves are difficult to control. Deviants (older children) exploit children in need of protection and have a negative influence on them." However the authors do not call for punitive measures, but for "greater understanding" (Romantic approach). Admittedly, the failure of Khaya Lethu was equally a management problem, with staff having/taking a lack of ownership and responsibility. Smit (1997-98) gives us a useful insight:

> They have of necessity to be creative and resourceful in order to survive, and the result is a group of children who have survival skills, but not life-skills. They are children who lead adult lives, but who are essentially still children with a need for love, acknowledgement and emotional security.

The realistic school of thought, expects responsibility from the child, but at the same time acknowledges that he/she is still a child, and in need of responsible adult care and guidance. The realistic school of thought attempts to empower the individual through mutual responsibility (child and adult intervention responsibility).

**Summary:**

| **Realistic** | **Romantic** |
|---|---|
| Deviant | Survivor |
| Aggressive | Passive |
| Maladaptive | Adaptive |
| Vulnerable | Resilient |
| Victim | Survivor |
| Social, family and individual Pathology | Victim (society is responsible) |
| Criminal | Entrepreneur |
| Developmentally at Risk | Resourcefulness, adaptability, coping |
| Victim | Victor |
| Dependence | Autonomous |
| Children in need | Functional adults |
| Conduct disorder/delinquency | Non-aggressive |

Richter (1991: 6) summarises the two schools of thought aptly:
Romantic: "children who have bravely fled unbearable conditions; who conduct noble and altruistic relationships with other children on the street; who want nothing more than an opportunity to show their worth."
Realistic: "delinquent children, ungrateful for the best efforts of their impoverished parents; sly, manipulative and deceitful troublemakers; children without any basic morality who will end up as drug addicts, murderers or chronic criminals."

Richter concludes: "Like all stereotypes, these cameos contain a little bit of truth, often enough to reinforce and maintain the stereotype."

**Thoughts lead to action**

The view one takes of street children will be reflected in the policies formulated, e.g. if one adopts the 'Romantic School', the implications thereof of would probably be:

- Voluntary intake, self-referral style shelters
- Child centred approach. "Solutions must be arrived at together with the children and must not be orchestrated for them, they often know best what they want and when they need it" (Cockburn, 1998).

If one adopts the 'Realistic School', the outworking might well reflect:

- A containment approach, e.g. School of Industry
- Recognising that the child needs guidance, the child is encouraged to take responsibility with 'parental' oversight.

**Other useful theoretical tools**

Cockburn (1988) goes beyond this dualistic way of thinking by adding what might be termed a scale or gradient way of thinking. She argues that there are those that can go back to mainstream schooling (are capable of, desire to or are disciplined enough); those suitable for skills training through the Department of Manpower programmes such as ABET (skills which will equip the child to be employable), and the final group is the "never school" group, this group in particular requires non-formal education. Richter (1989) has a similar way of thinking: i.e. differing degrees of connectedness to family or kin.

Smit (http://services.canberra.edu.au/uc/educ/crie/1998-1999/ieej7/ie7-smit.html), calls for a consensus:

> Although there is a homogeneity of these children due to the fact that they are all street children and as a result they form a kind of sub-culture, the dynamics and motivation for being on the street and the levels of functioning are diverse. For these reasons it is therefore important to approach street children as a heterogeneous, rather than a homogeneous, group and to establish each child's problems and potential on an *individual basis.* (Emphasis mine).

**Who should be responsible?**

Although the literature is clear that through public awareness, the phenomenon is everyone's problem, in the final analysis there are two schools of thought. Authors like Keen (1990) believe it is the role of the state to address the issues directly, and this through policy, local authorities, councils, state funding, government education and state welfare departments. This approach can be further analysed to reveal another belief that would tend to lean towards the family (nuclear or extended), who should be supported and 'rehabilitated' and encouraged to take responsibility. This belief bases much of its convictions on research that has revealed the poor effects on children who have been institutionalised by civil government (see Richter, 1990). However it is still conceived within the framework of the state.

The second model is decentralised, encouraging concerned community members and communities (churches, voluntary organisations and NGOs) to take ownership of the problem, being flexible enough to empower families to take responsibility and at the same time developing the individual's capacity to govern him/herself.

PART TWO

In PART ONE, I reviewed our contemporary Macro sociological space in which street children find themselves, I then defined street children. This was followed by looking at the International, African and South African street child phenomena. From here I reviewed the general characteristics and issues street children face, which led to asking the question, "what are the causes of street child phenomenon?" To sum-up PART ONE, and in a sense to take some generalisable theoretical tools from the literature review, I reviewed two schools of thought around the construction of the identities of street child and considered the possible implications of these schools of thought.

Considering all the above, the question needs to be raised, what is being done to assist, alleviate and rehabilitate the street child? I will briefly review some of the street child intervention models located on the African continent.

**African examples**

Most African interventions tend towards a 'Learn and Earn' strategy, aiming to train and skill children, mothers and families to work and survive in the informal sector of the economy. "Kenyan children were willing to work. South African children dream of surviving without work" (Roussouw, Disengaged Youth, http://www.districtsix.co.za/samp/rene_roussouw.htm). Some focus on family reunification, but few interventions have been evaluated (Cockburn, 1998 http://www.pretext.co.za/naccw/jour0898.html#street).

Many interventions favour reinsertion back into society through education. Education is perhaps the most traditional way of doing this. Education is empowering, opening up opportunities and hope. Formal schools are often seen as being too rigid for street children. Street child interventions include informal school or attempts to mould the child so that they can re-enter the state education system. The Undugu Society of Kenya[7] (UNESCO Publishing & International Catholic Child Bureau (ICCB), 1995) is one such example.

A Dutch Catholic missionary started the Undugu Society in 1972. With time, it has changed shape and developed in stages. Today it has 'The School for Life', which focuses on vocational skills and basic literacy and numeracy. It attempts to do in three years what the state schools do in seven. The fourth year of schooling is dedicated to practical work and learning a trade. The Undugu Society is structured into four departments. Their functions include: community mobilisation and leadership development; responsibility for the Basic Education Programme, vocational training and apprenticeship schemes; developing new industrial design products, testing their marketability, producing and marketing them; and oversight, research and development of the project. The Kenyan Government has now accepted their basic education programme as a non-formal educational alternative to the formal state-school system.

Unlike the Undugu Society, which focuses on reinsertion through education, the Boys Society of Freetown, Sierra Leone, a project for street boys, focuses on reinsertion through work. Formal schooling is often problematic for the street child who is used to

[7] Like South Africa, Kenya has no official policy on street children (see Dunford, 1994). The Kenyan government takes the stance that it is the families' and communities' responsibility to care for children, therefore leaving most of welfare up to the church and NGO sector. The same could be said for most of Africa's countries (see Epstein, 1996: 297).

the chaos and freedom of street life. Education is yet another laborious task with no immediate gain. Therefore work is seen as an alternative way to introduce the child to society and its rules. Work produces immediate results and satisfaction, plus the possibility of earning a small but psychologically significant income. The philosophy is that through work, the child develops into an active member of society.

The Boys' Society's primary objective is to train boys (age 14-22; 45 at a time), who have either dropped out of school or never attended school, to do metalwork, car-body work, car mechanics, car electric's, lathe operation, carpentry, agriculture and tailoring. The only entry requirement is a willingness to learn. The training period is usually three years. The skills centre is self-financing. Jobs are accepted on a commercial basis and profits are put back in to subsidise outside funding. They also have an agricultural centre 12 kilometres from the centre of Freetown. Here they grow Christmas trees, vegetable gardens, a medium-sized rice paddy, a small plantation of fuel-wood trees and a small animal husbandry unit.

The Society tries to include the family of the boy where possible, drawing them alongside, encouraging them to give their child moral support. (Many of these boys are additional breadwinners for their families. Families are encouraged to see the long-term benefits of having a trade).

A compulsory savings scheme is set-up for trainees; this goes towards (hopefully) buying tools for self-employment one day.

It does have remedial classes for their vocational skills curriculum. However formal schooling is not offered, although they do support boys who go back to school.

Another alternative is to use the child's context on the street to the child's advantage by playing into their survival skills, practical intelligence and determination, trying to change perceptions around the 'street' from a place of negative influence to a place of positive influence.

The Centre for domestic servants in the HLM (low-rent housing) Montagne quarter of Dakar, Senegal, is one such example. Girls from the surrounding villages came to Dakar to seek domestic work. They live in groups within the city's low-rent housing areas.

A centre (a shack) was opened to which they could come. This was set-up by the ENDA Jeunesse-Action. Together, the instructors and the girls set-up courses in crochet-work, dressmaking and knitting with a view to training the girls for their future duties as mothers and housewives as well as earning an additional income by selling items to their employees. Afternoon classes are given daily, Monday to Friday for school drop-outs (aged 14-18). Other courses include: Health related – AIDS; the health of mother and child; the nutritional follow-up of children from birth to five years; food and hygiene where they learn about nutrition, recipes and European recipes (for a greater chance of employment in European's houses).

These projects are beginning to be set-up in rural villages to try and stem the influx into the city and keep families united.

**Conclusion**

The discussion around street children is often under-theorised, with too narrow a definition or a limited understanding of their identities, circumstances and needs. This leads many on the ground to favour the approach of viewing the child as an individual and not as a category. This approach is a form of policy in practice as policy as stated intent tends to view street children in broad categories. The result of this, as seen in the above examples, is that there is no one solution, there is no consensus. If anything, the consensus is that there is no fixed solution.

Other findings include:

- Large-scale interventions have been ruled out because the children themselves need lots of individualised attention. A formal school can have a large teacher to pupil ratio but an informal street child project cannot, making it labour intensive. This pushes costs up. These interventions are primarily financed by overseas private charities and donations. Furthermore, shelters and informal schools battle to prevent these children dropping out. Once in a shelter, many of them return back home on their own.
- Street children remain the symptom of underlying causes that need to be addressed on a wider and broader scale. Effectively, these interventions are only dealing with symptoms.

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- In many countries in Africa there is a lack of national policy and oversight. This has led to local efforts, an increase in NGO activity, and individual and church interventions. This is primarily policy in practice trying to fill the gap.
- Most interventions can handle around several hundred children. However, this is fractional when one considers that there are roughly 100 million street children worldwide. Furthermore, the programmes are unable to cope with the large numbers of young people wanting training.
- Very few of these interventions are able to deal with the children who are drug-abusers. Therefore these children fall through the system. Many lack counselling facilities. Few interventions in Africa focus on dealing with the psychological well being of the child and his/her need for security. It is more a case of basic equipping for survival.
- There is little or no safety net for those who drop out of the programme. In other words, the 'policy' or system is very thin.
- In Africa, rehabilitating children back to their families is not a strong component, nor the emphasis, of these programmes.
- The programmes work on a self-referral basis and thereby only take in those street children who are aware of them and submit themselves to their programme. Their 'success' can be attributed to the fact that they are getting the 'better' street children while they admit that there are many more hidden and even more vulnerable street children in the slums around the city who they are not reaching. This is a problem associated with the self-referral approach.
- In Africa, unlike South Africa, the emphasis appears to be on education and vocational training so as to equip the child for work, survival and to be a productive member of society. By contrast, in South Africa, the policy tends to focus on the well being of the child and to an extent his/her place in and rehabilitation back into his/her family. The emphasis is more on social welfare than on education and industry.

## PART THREE

I will now attempt to make sense of the policy in South Africa, specific to street children.

### Policy addressing street children in South Africa

Policies may occur in layers, may overlap and may be hidden inside one another (Czerniewicz, 1998: 11). This leads to the 'weighing of laws' – weighing one law against

another. This is a useful way of thinking about this section, as the policies and practices addressing street children in South Africa are fraught with contradictions and complexities around the identity and rehabilitation of street children. There are differing and conflicting philosophies underpinning both the approaches and the various role players' interventions on multiple levels, thus producing complex tensions. This is an attempt to make sense of what the policy is about. Therefore the tensions and relationships described are to be seen as analytical tools to help understand reality.

**Introduction**

Child Welfare falls under the Department of Welfare. Today welfare is seen as a legitimate role of the state. However, state welfare is beginning to be questioned, as the outcomes are not quite what would be hoped for. Indeed state welfare can be problematised.

"Throughout the world evidence has been found for the negative effects on children of being reared in institutional environments" (Richter, 1991: 8). In fact Levett (1989: 9) has even suggested that the trauma displayed by sexually abused children can be ascribed to the abuse itself as much as to social services (an arm of the welfare state) forcibly removing the child from his or her familiar environment, treating them as other, stigmatising them, being placed in a foreign setting, being sent to a different school and hence having their worlds torn apart, dehumanised and disrupted (yes, the family abuse may have stopped, but it is certainly not dealt with).

Grant (1995) traces the United States welfare system back to England's original Poor Laws, enacted in 1589, which was a careful balance between discipline and responsibility. This consensus became the American view as seen in the following quotes:

> The federal government must and shall quit this business of relief. To dole out relief is to administer a narcotic, a subtle destroyer of the human spirit (Franklin D. Roosevelt, cited in Grant: 27).
> Give a hand, not a handout (John F. Kennedy, cited in Grant: 31).

However, this shifted substantially when in 1964, President Johnson declared "war on poverty'. This new consensus declared the old consensus as "harsh", "unrealistic', "insensitive", and "discriminatory." "Rejecting the notion that poverty was in any way connected with individual or familial irresponsibility, the new consensus adamantly asserted that poverty was the fault of the system. Environment was the problem.

Oppression, discrimination, materialism, and injustice were the cause. And society was to blame" (Grant: 32).

The results? Prior to this about 13 percent of Americans were poor and the employment rate was less than four percent. Twenty years into the new consensus, 15 percent of Americans were poor (using the same definition of poverty) and unemployment rates fluctuated between five and 11 percent. This despite the fact that government welfare spending had increased more than twenty times to become the third largest budget in the world, employing one in every hundred Americans, bringing in the finest consultants, sponsoring research and launching pilot programmes. Some of the unforeseen problems associated with state welfare include[8]:

1. Instead of empowering the poor to control their lives and rise from poverty, the social welfare programmes rendered them dependent on the state. Actual numbers of poor rose (Grant: 33)
2. "The welfare system subsidises idleness, provides institutional disincentives to family life, and reduces faith to a blind trust in the paternalism of the state. Fatherless homes are rewarded with extra benefits and welfare perks, while intact homes are penalised and impoverished. Illegitimate pregnancies are generously gratiated while moral purity is snubbed" (Ibid: 34).[9]
3. Welfare provides incentives to avoid work, e.g. In New York State $6.82/hour is what one earns by way of welfare benefits, while working at McDonald's pays $5.25/hour. People take the path of least resistance. This particularly affects the poorly trained and educated peoples.
4. State bureaucracy means that only 30 cents of every welfare dollar actually goes to help the poor alleviate their plight. This equates to government waste.



[8] Dunford (1996: 27-28) points out additional outcomes: often the staff are unmotivated, facilities lack finances and human warmth, children are often removed far from family and sent to schools far from family. This has brought a shift towards NGOs, which have proved more successful in that they are more flexible and closer to the needs of the 'client' (child) (Ibid. 29-30). However, NGOs also lack finances and therefore are often not able to provide long-term solutions. In some cases they have even caused the rift between child and family to widen. Generally they deal with symptoms not causes. Sometimes a cycle is created where the child goes to the NGO, is sent home, runs away to the street, back to the NGO. Sometimes the child's survival skills are eroded and they become dependent on the NGO instead of gaining independence. Often the NGOs clash, are competitive for limited funds and fail to co-operate and co-ordinate with each other. They have even been known to lie / exaggerate achievements for the sake of fund raising (Ibid. 31-36).

[9] South Africa has a similar set-up with CSGs (Child Support Grants); this was introduced to replace the SMGs (State Maintenance Grants) that became unaffordable for the State Welfare Department (SA Law Commission, 1998: 40).

5. Welfare measures have resulted in higher taxes, which has led to a decrease in job creation especially at the lower levels of society and a decrease in entrepreneurial activity.
6. Massive State interference has proved too 'static' for the economy, resulting in a lack of progress and over-reliance on outdated skills.

This has led some critics to conclude that the "war on poverty" is in fact a "war on the poor" (Grant: 36).

Although Grant's research may not be mainstream and in some circles could even be censored, the purpose of referring to it is that as a society (policy makers included) we are so engrossed with the concept of the "paternal state" structuring, regulating and ordering our lives, society and welfare that we are unable to question its success (or failure or even involvement). The street child phenomenon is a welfare issue, but is the state the vehicle through which to drive rehabilitation? Considering its apparent failure, more objective, open thought and debate is needed.

What we see from the above findings is that policies can have unintended consequences. We need to ask the question, what exactly is policy and how does it work?



**What is policy? A brief introduction**

De Clercq (1997) argues that policy is often conceptualised as a top-down affair, but is in reality far more complex. Both De Clercq and Samoff (1996) contend that stated policy or policy in formulation and policy in practice (as it works itself out on the ground) are not the same thing. Levin (1997, cited in Czerniewicz, 1998: 8) says this differently, policy as stated intention is not the same as policy in practice. Ball (1994: 15) claims that policy is more than a "thing", it is also actual processes and outcomes. Christie (1996) argues that policies are best understood in terms of practice on the ground. De Clercq reasons that as policy works itself through the system it gets altered, changed and re-interpreted by state bureaucrats. Even on the micro level, different forms of the same policy are reproduced in differing localised contexts. De Clercq points out that these inevitably favour the middle class[10]. De Clercq contends that policy is a continuum, consisting of 'backward and forward mapping'. The policy is initiated, formulated, implemented and

[10] Ironically, although street children are at the bottom of the social strata, it was the middle class who intervened on a private and voluntary welfare basis.

evaluated (Muller, 1998); this is similar to what Samoff describes as a circular process, as research and human elements feed-back to the policy formulators. De Clercq focuses on the human element to the point that she claims that policy does not exist outside of the human context, as it is people who carry and implement policy and thereby shape it and form part of the policy process and the policy itself[11]. Policy is also shaped by research, knowledge and international political and ideological bodies such as the UN. Therefore the nature of this knowledge and research becomes crucial and political.

**Relevant Acts and Policies**

Prior to the 1994 elections street children were regulated by the Child Care Act (Act No 74 of 1983), the Child Care Amendment Act (Act No 86 of 1991), and the Children's Status Act (Act No 82 of 1987), as well as by certain sections of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (Act no 3 of 1983), the Criminal Procedure Act (Act No 51 of 1977), the Correctional Services Act (Act 122 of 1991) and the Probation Services Act (Act no 116 of 1991). Schurink et al. (1993) included the above but added: the Prisons Act of 1959, the Abuse of Dependence-producing Substances and Rehabilitation Act of 1971 and the National Family Programme (1989). None of these Acts, which are still in force today, include any definition of street children (Swart-Kruger, 1996: 234)[12]. Instead as Schurink et al. (p. 36) point out, they fall under: "child in need of care", "trespasser", "vagrant", "working child", "drug peddler", "drug user", "absconder", "juvenile delinquent" and "gangster". This means that under such Acts, street children have different identities or are even identified by behaviour (as opposed to status) and are not seen any differently from other children in need of care.

To understand how the above policies as 'stated intentions' worked themselves out in practice, the Fordham Law Review (Teanor, 1994) is a good place to begin.

**A Brief Look at the Past**

Treanor (1994) bases his analysis on the two primary Acts that affect street children; these are the Child Care Act and the Criminal Procedure Act. This is a dual system set-up by government to protect children. The `arm of mercy' is the child welfare system

[11] This is evident in the Child Care Act (Act No 74 of 1983) by the role played by police officers and magistrates in shaping how this Act / policy played itself out on street children. Popkewitz (1995: 416-7, cited in Czerniewicz, 1998: 10) claims that policy and policing are epistemologically related.

[12] Most of the racial / apartheid Acts were scrapped even prior to the 1994 elections, however, all these Acts mentioned, that deal with the welfare of street children, are still in force today. Amendments have taken place and 'street children' were included for the first time as a special group under the category "children in especially difficult circumstances" (The Child Care Amendment Act, 1995).

(established under the Child Care Act), which addresses the right to an adequate standard of living by providing residential services to children in need of care. The `arm of justice' is the juvenile justice system, which is established under the Criminal procedure Act. It addresses the right to be free from arbitrary detention by providing safeguards to these children who are charged with committing offences (Ibid. p. 903-904). I will now review these two primary Acts.

**The Child Care Act**

The Child Care Act empowers the child welfare system by establishing the children's court, where issues of child welfare are adjudicated. The Child Care Act also authorises the government to found and maintain residential facilities for needy children. Under this Act, every magistrate's court is a children's court for the area of its jurisdiction and every magistrate is a commissioner of child welfare for the purposes of presiding over the children's court. Street children obtain access to court through `authorised' persons; these include police officers and licensed social workers. A warrant is not needed provided that the child is believed to be in need of care. Need of care is defined as:

1. The child has no parents or guardian;
2. A parent or guardian cannot be traced;
3. The child is in the custody of a person who is unfit to care for the child.[13]

The Act requires the inquiry to be held in camera and outside the courtroom so as not to intimidate the child. If in need of care, the child is placed in one of several residential options:

1. Foster care;
2. Children's home;
3. School of industries.

If no place is available, the child must be assigned to a `place of safety' until such time as proper placement comes available. Under the Act, the government is obligated to establish additional facilities as needed.

It is important to note that the 'intention' of the Child Care Act (1983) is the underlying philosophy that 'family is best'. This is implied by the Act because it makes provision for services to families (although it fails to give any guidelines as to how and what (Schurink: 56)).

[13] Notice for all three scenarios that the responsibility and grounds for removing a child rest with the parents / family. The system was therefore said to be family-focused.

**The Criminal Procedure Act**

This Act authorises the establishment of the juvenile justice court, where issues of juvenile delinquency are adjudicated. The same is true as above, with the magistrate's court becoming a juvenile court. If arrested, a child must be brought before a juvenile court within 48 hours or be released. Within such time:

1. Bail is to be set;
2. The child is to be released into the custody of parent, guardian, probation or correctional officer, with a warning and instructions to appear before a court within a specific time;
3. The child is sent to a "place of safety" (Child Care Act) to await trial. The police are to notify the parents or guardian to attend the court proceedings.

The Act requires the proceedings to be held in camera. The Act allows the magistrate to convert the case to one under the Child Care Act, if the child is deemed to be in need of care. This action automatically waives any criminal charges against the child. Furthermore the Act forbids a child under seven to be tried, they are said to be *idoli incapax*, or incapable of forming criminal intent; children between seven and 14 are also presumed to be *idoli incapax*, but this may be rebutted by the State. Children over 14 are presumed to be fully capable of forming criminal intent. Sentences include:

1. Paying restitution or performing community service;
2. Ordered to submit to treatment;
3. Imprisoned (if under 18 they were sent to reform schools and could not be sentenced to death, but males could receive corporal punishment).

See Appendix 1 for a diagrammatic expression of the Child Care Act.

**How were these Acts applied in practice?**

In South Africa, street children were never a category under either of these Acts. In fact there is much evidence to suggest street children fared badly as implementation of such Acts are dependent on the judiciary and the executive and are subject to abuse (due to the human element).[14] These include:

- "Because escapes are common, many judges prefer that arrested children await their court dates in adult prisons" (Kraft, supra note 199, at A8, cited in Treanor, 1994: 908).

[14] According to De Clercq (1997), it is people who carry, interpret and implement policy.

- As many as 12,000 children were held in adult prisons during 1992, most were street children and only five percent were arrested for serious crimes (L.A. Times, Dec. 18, 1992, cited in Treanor: 908).[15]
- Police could arrest street children, `clear the streets' and to an extent prevent a further downward cycle on the basis of municipal ordinances which prohibited loitering, begging, molesting, obstructing or even washing or parking cars in public.[16]
- Within the adult prisons, the children were given limited exercise, no recreational, educational or social work programmes. The violation of the official policy of keeping adults and children separate meant that children were beaten up, sodomised and had their food stolen by adult inmates (International Community of Jurists, supra note 143, at 105, cited in Treanor: 910).

**The Child Care Act largely proved inadequate because:**

- Although the Act allowed for police and social workers to access child welfare on behalf of the street child, only police were employed in this capacity, therefore even concerned citizens were limited in their capacity to assist. This often left the police to exercise two options, leave the child on the street or deal with him/her through the juvenile justice system.
- The Act required private organisations to register their residential facilities, however government frequently denied registrations. Also these organisations were denied registration of fundraising numbers as required by law (International Community of Jurists, supra note 143, at 147, cited in Treanor: 912).
- Due to apartheid inequalities, between 1991 and 1993, over 14,000 white children were placed in proper institutions or foster care under the Child Care Act, while only 3,300 African children received such services (UNICEF, Situation Analysis, supra note 31, at 76, cited in Treanor: 912). This was because it was believed that street children "were considered too far gone to rehabilitate" (Treanor: 913).
- A "place of safety" was so vague, that it could even be interpreted as a prison.
- Under the Act, decisions could not be appealed (with the exception of adoption).



[15] Although the Consolidated Prison Regulation 137 (Schurink: 47), stipulated that as far as possible juveniles must be kept separate from hardened prisoners.
[16] It must be pointed out that the longer these children spent time on the streets, the worse the outcomes, including damage to cognitive development / abilities (see Richter, 1996: 215).

**The Criminal Procedure Act had shortcomings because:**

- Due to their lack of maturity and education, street children require assistance both to help them understand criminal charges against them and to help them articulate their defence. Unfortunately under apartheid, street children often faced trained prosecutors without the assistance of counsel.
- Although Legal Aid was available, magistrates often failed to advise children of these services.
- The Act required police to notify the child's parent or guardian at the time of the arrest, so as to allow such a person to assist the child during a criminal trial. However this notification was only required "if such a parent or guardian is known to be within the magisterial district in question and can be traced without undue delay" (Criminal Procedure Act 74(20)). Therefore for many police officers this became optional. Because many street children do not know the whereabouts of their parents, police rarely attempted to notify their parents.
- Magistrates received no special training to handle juvenile prosecutions.
- The conversion from a juvenile justice case to a child welfare case, happened in only 2,6% of cases (Treanor: 915).

See Appendix 2 for a diagrammatic expression of how the Acts were applied in practice.

**Other Acts affecting street children included:**

- The Abuse of Dependence-producing Substances and Rehabilitation Act (Act No. 41 of 1971); this Act allowed a person under the age of 18 to be detained in a place of safety, where such a place is deemed a rehabilitation centre for the purposes of this Act, however the abuse of inhalants ("glue sniffing") is not prohibited under this law (Schurink: 48).
- The Children's Status Act of 1987 (Act No. 82 of 1987) dealt with parenthood and guardianship and therefore the child under 21 who has to support himself and his family is unprotected, this includes the status and situation of the street child (Ibid: 48).
- Including other Apartheid Acts already mentioned earlier, such as the Population Amendment Act of 1949; Group Areas Amendment Act of 1957; Bantu Education Act of 1953; Bantu Investment Corporation Act of 1959; Natives (Urban Areas) Amendment Act of 1956, etc., under which, particularly the black street child, would have been discriminated against (Ibid: 48-49).

It would, however, be unfair not to point out that during the apartheid era, efforts were made to assist street children, notably, for example, the one approved by Deputy Minister André Fouché in September 1990 (cited in Schurink: 52). Other efforts included the Social Welfare Policy and Structure (South Africa, 1988), which recognised the role played by private and voluntary organisations and actively incorporated them into the welfare structure. The state assumed the role of establishing norms and standards; the National Family Programme for the Republic of South Africa, (it was founded on the premise that most children taken into care are the result of family breakdown and therefore it is better to prevent breakdown in the first place); the Committee of Inquiry into Certain Aspects of Child Care (the De Meyer Report) (it looked at existing Acts, the need for new services and the adaptation and modification of existing services in order to ensure that the interests of street children are best served at all times (Schurink: 51)).

Due to space constraints, I am unable to review these, but generally they reflected an ethos that found its origins as far back as a policy in the 1930s. This claimed that government's role in welfare should be limited, and that responsibility should rest in the first place with the individual and then with the family and the community. This resulted in the implementation of social legislation being delegated to voluntary welfare organisations (South African (SA) Law Commission, 1998: 33).[17]

I have now reviewed the 'old' policies applicable to street children and how they were applied in the past. The question needs to be asked, have there been any positive policy changes in the New South Africa as regards street children?



**The New South Africa**

After the 1994 elections and the adoption of a new constitution, the advocates of the rights of street children were highly optimistic that this would usher in a new era of compassion for street children (Treanor: 918). This was primarily based on the premise that the new 'rights based' constitution would protect the individual against the state. Children were given special rights in section 28. One such influence in shaping the new constitution and resultant policy was the United Nations (U.N.) and its ideology:

- The Declaration of the Rights of the Child (G.A. Res. 1386, U.N. GAOR 14th Sess., Supp. No. 16, Agenda Item 64, at 19, U.N. Doc. A/4354 (1959), cited in Treanor: 899).

[17] Since then there has been a shift, the White Paper of Welfare claims that the government recognises its responsibility to fully fund statutory social services - but this has not yet been implemented (SA LAW Commission: 34).

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC), which broadened the human rights of the child under economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights (G.A. Res. 44/25, U.N. GAOR 44th Sess., Supp. No. 49, U.N. Doc. A/44/736, art. 3(2), (3) (1989), cited in Treanor: 899).[18]
- The UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (The JDL's), 1990. This means that a child may leave a public or private custodial setting at will (hence shelters have 'open door policies') (South African (SA) Law Commission: 18).
- Under such conventions, the child has the 'right' to an Adequate Standard of Living and the 'right' to be Free from Arbitrary Detention.

Basically the UN conventions were binding on all nations that ratified them (South Africa included, signed by the South African UN Ambassador on January 29, 1993). Therefore South Africa is obligated to comply. Over and above these 'treaties', South Africa is obligated anyhow to protect the 'right' of a child to an Adequate Standard of Living and the 'right' to be Free from Arbitrary Detention, under customary international law whether ratified or not (Treanor: 901). According to the UN it is the state's responsibility as opposed to the family, community, church or private charities' to provide street children with adequate food, clothing, shelter and health care services (Treanor: 903). Furthermore, the expressed optimism was that the South African Constitution decreed that the bill of rights, "shall bind all legislative, executive and judicial organs of the state at all levels of government" (No.200 of 1993, 4(1)).



**Reality on the ground**

Unfortunately, "this (the New South Africa, as defined above) hope has, so far, proved unfounded" (Swart-Kruger, 1996: 232). Street children's daily lives are much the same, despite the Bill of Rights, the National Department of Welfare having a Working Committee on Street Children, and the National Plan of Action for Children launched in June 1996 (the children themselves are absent from these forums) (see Ibid: 232). "There have been increased reports of the arrest and/or abuse of street children by law enforcement officers in South Africa in recent years (post-apartheid)" (Ibid: 234). Police have gone as far as to remove mattresses and blankets from all street children living in a CBD, saying they should go home. They would repeat this action until the children left the city (Ibid: 234).

[18] The SA Law Commission claims Section 28 of the constitution to be a restatement of these articles (p. 20).

In the New South Africa, amendments have been made to previously existing legislation. We need to consider some of these amendments.

**Amendments to legislation**

According to Swart-Kruger (1996), all Acts referring to street children remained intact after the 1994 elections, with three of them being amended:

- The Child Care Amendment Act (1995) now includes street children in the category "children in especially difficult circumstances" and also extends the grounds on which a court may find a child "in need of care." Furthermore, concerned citizens (anyone) may now state under oath to a commissioner of child welfare, that a child within the area of jurisdiction is in need of care, a warrant may be issued, authorising a policeman, social worker, or any other person, to search for the child and place him or her in a place of safety until he or she can be brought before a children's court. This is of course open to abuse as everything a street child is and does falls under "need of care" and therefore apprehension by police continues (Swart-Kruger, 1996: 232).
- The Correctional Services Act was amended to prohibit the placement of unconvicted juveniles under the age of 18 in prison and police cells. However, suitable alternatives were not available. Furthermore, a distinction and 'redefinition' of petty and serious crimes means that those who commit petty crimes should not have to be detained while awaiting trial. This means that fewer street children are detained.[19]
- The Amendments to the Correctional Services Act, means that corporal punishment (including of children) is now forbidden (Swart-Kruger, 1996: 233).

Another significant amendment was the grounds for deciding if a child was in need of care. This amendment is an expression of a larger global ideology.

**Grounds for removing the child - a substantial philosophical shift**

A profound and substantial philosophical shift came in in terms of the Child Care Amendment Act 96 of 1996, where the primary ground for removing a child is no longer that the parents be found 'unfit' or 'unable' to care for the child, but that the child be found 'in need of care.' The shift is from a parent-based and 'family government' approach, to a child-centred approach (enshrined in the UN CRC and Constitution section 28 (2)). Some have been concerned about this shift, saying that it may become a

[19] This has meant that some street children continue to do crime throughout their teens until they reach the age of 18 where they can be sentenced. Unfortunately, by this stage, many are doing serious crime (see Richie, 1999).

licence for parental irresponsibility, claiming that the previous 'unfit' or 'unable' (applicable to parent or guardian) clause would be best in confronting irresponsible parents not to harm or neglect their children, which would be "in the best interests of the child" (SA Law Commission: 81). Indeed this shift violates the 'chain of command' (including common law, custom and tradition that parents are first and foremost responsible for their children). It attempts to go over parents' heads.

This shift comes on the back of the UN CRC, which proclaims that: acting in "the best interests of the child as paramount consideration" and ushered in the shift from parental rights to the 'modern' concept of parental responsibility (SA Law Commission: 119).

In sections of our society, family government has so broken down, that while the Child Care Act (1983) called for the "parent" or "guardian" of the child to be involved, the Interim Policy Recommendations by the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) for the Transformation of the Child and Youth Care System calls for the involvement of "significant others"[20] in the child's life (SA Law Commission: 38). The SA Law Commission - The Review of the Child Care Act (1998), has begun to reflect this thinking and philosophy around child welfare. Family is still an important site for the socialisation of the child, but now it is replaced by the State as the key 'enabler' role player. However, definitions of 'family' have been extended to include 'Alternative Families'. These include "adoptions by same sex couples, and other models of alternative family life" (ibid: 8). While everything is meant to be done "in the best interests of the child", these 'alternative families' have come in without scientific research on what the possible outcomes might be for an adopted child. Ignoring research that shows the negative effects of single-parent and fatherless homes,[21] they argue that, by implication, there is no ideal or norm for the interpretation of the "in the best interest of the child" clause,



[20] This term "significant others" is so broad that in some bills proposing domestic partnerships for homosexuals, the partner is termed the "significant other" (ILGA bulletin, Issue 2/98-April-May-June).

[21] 63% of youth suicides are from fatherless homes (U.S. D.H.H.S., Bureau of the Census). 85% of all children that exhibit behavioural disorders come from fatherless homes (U.S. Center for Disease Control). 80% of rapists motivated with displaced anger come from fatherless homes (National Principals Association Report on the State of High Schools).
71% of all high school dropouts come from fatherless homes (National Principals Association Report on the State of High Schools). 75% of all adolescent patients in chemical abuse centres come from fatherless homes (Rainbows for all God's Children). 85% of all youths sitting in prisons grew up in a fatherless home (Fulton Co. Georgia jail populations, Texas Dept. of Corrections 1992). Sarantakos, found that primary school children from cohabiting heterosexual couples do worse at languages, mathematics, Social Studies, sport, class work, sociability and popularity, support with homework, etc. than those children from married heterosexual couples. Sarantakos's study showed that those from homosexual couples performed the poorest of all three groups in his study (see Sarantakos, 1996: 23-31). Although these studies are American and Australian respectively, there is no reason to suggest why the same would not be true in South Africa.

claiming that it "varies from case to case, country to country, or culture to culture" (Ibid: 13). In short, the court, not the parent or family will decide what is in the best interests of the child. Furthermore, whatever ideology the courts embrace will determine the best interests of the child. Indeed the swing of the pendulum, in terms of child welfare, from the conservative 'family focussed'/'family rights' former government (not overlooking its racial discrimination) to our present liberal, child-centred, 'alternative families' government is substantial.[22]

However, to make the claim that the swing of the pendulum is complete or absolute would be an oversimplification, as the residue of 'family first' and the respect for family and the child's place therein is still evident to a certain degree. The SA Law Commission claims there is still an emphasis on families and the role of parents stating that professionals and service providers should not take over their roles (Ibid: 14), but the legal door has been opened for the institution of state to overrule the institution of marriage and the family.[23]

Other amendments that affect street children include changes to Education Legislation for children with special needs.

**Report on Special Needs in Education**

The Minister and Department of Education appointed the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS). Their recommendations focussed on mainstreaming - infusing "special needs and support services" throughout the system, a flexible curriculum to ensure access for all learners, effective development programmes for educators, and redress and access to education for all learners. This is important for street children as a third suffer from physical disabilities (Richter, 1996). Another identity



[22] The Department of Welfare's White Paper definition of the family: "Individuals who either by contract or agreement choose to live together intimately and function as a unit in a social and economic system. The family is the primary social unit that ideally provides care, nurturing and socialisation for its members. It seeks to provide them with physical, economic, emotional, social, cultural and spiritual security." (Government Gazette No 16943, 2 February 1996). Any groups of individuals who 'contract' to live together can now be defined as a family! Robert H. Knight of the Family Research Council is concerned that these definitions of family and partnerships are so vague that, "multiple-partner unions are not excluded, nor any imaginable combination of persons, including a fishing boat crew." He says, "The whole point is to demote marriage to a level with all other conceivable relationships."

[23] The notion of "child's rights" needs to be questioned, the child's rights are now interpreted and awarded by the court (state) and no longer by the family. In the final analysis, "child's rights" puts more power in the hands of the state, not the child and not the family. The locus of power is positioned in the state through the courts, because they interpret and act upon the clause, "in the best interests of the child."

given to street children under legislation, is a sub-group of 'learners at risk' and 'children out of school'. The mainstreaming model has however been criticised as an attempt to save money by applying a first world model to the problems of a third world country.[24]

The NCSNET was superseded by the White Paper of Special Needs Education (July 2001). The White Paper negotiates differences between 'mainstreaming' and 'inclusion'. Mainstreaming is defined as the learner having to 'fit' the system, while inclusion is defined as having respect for learner differences, with support given to learners, educators and the system as a whole. The tension at play lies between the poles of a 'statist' mainstreaming model (the 'system') and an anarchistic child centred model (inclusion), characterised by a flexible system.

In keeping with this vision of 'inclusion', learners with 'severe' disabilities will remain in special schools, while those with "mild" to "moderate" disabilities will remain in 'ordinary' schools. To equip the already over-burdened teachers with the necessary skills to deal with this, existing special schools will be converted to resource centres that provide professional support to neighbourhood schools and are to be integrated into district-based support teams (White Paper, p.7). "District support teams will provide the full range of education support services, such as professional development in curriculum and assessment, to these institutional-level support teams" (Ibid. p.29). There is also an emphasis on integration into the broader society and in keeping with this vision, "the Ministry believes that these programmes should provide a comprehensive education, and should provide life skills and programme-to-work linkages" (Ibid. p.32). This link to the 'real world' is a positive development.

However, there are limitations with this White paper as regards street children. "Many learners experience barriers to learning or drop out primarily because of the inability of the system to recognise and accommodate the diverse range of learning needs typically through inaccessible physical plants, curricula, assessment, learning materials and instructional methodologies. The approach advocated in this White Paper is fundamentally different from traditional ones that assume that barriers to learning reside

[24] For example in the UK, upon which this model is based, each child or learner at risk is given additional classroom support in the form of a class helper. This additional support is unaffordable in our country. "It should be emphasised that no real increase in the fiscal envelope is envisaged in this staffing strategy in the short to medium term. What is being proposed here is a much more cost-effective use of specialist educators than is currently the practice" (White Paper, p.41). However, without the support of dedicated helpers for children with special needs, there is serious concern about how they will cope with 'mainstreaming'.

primarily within the learner and accordingly, learner support should take the form of specialist, typically medical interventions." (Ibid. p.24). Unfortunately, because this model tends to focus on the system, it could require less responsibility from the child, thereby disempowering the child. It also fails to come to terms with or address other social and environmental factors (beyond the scope of the school) that would lead to (street) children dropping out of school.

Although the White paper does not recognise street children directly, it does recognise that out-of-school youth "represents one of the big challenges in the development of the inclusive education and training system." (Ibid. p.38). However, the report fails to find or suggest any positive solutions.

On a positive note, it is healthy that the family is included and empowered in this process: "At the institutional education level, partnerships will be established with parents so that they can, armed with information, counselling and skills, participate more effectively in the planning and implementation of inclusion activities, and so that they can play a more active role in the learning and teaching of their own children, despite limitations due to disabilities or chronic illnesses." (Ibid. p.50). This holistic approach to 'learners at risk' needs to be pursued and developed.

In conclusion, the Schools Act 84 of 1996 legitimates compulsory school education from seven to fifteen years. The duty to educate a child is a common law responsibility of a parent, which is reiterated in Section 3 of the Act. This would therefore require those interventions involved in the rehabilitation of street children (like Ons Plek) to see to their educational needs.

**Comment:**

The move to give more power to the state, to intervene on behalf of the child instead of the family, is not and cannot be sustainable. From a financial perspective, such actions will lead to a bankrupt state. From a human capacity perspective, if parents will not care for their own children, one wonders how many and how much social workers will care for someone else's children. How many more social workers can be drafted into the system? How large can their caseloads become until their efforts prove futile or even counter-productive? These limitations have become apparent perhaps through the AIDS crisis and the swamping of the state welfare system with AIDS casualties. Therefore this

has again brought on a shift, this time towards community and family empowerment. This shift can be witnessed in the Draft Policy Statements by the Department of Welfare and Population Development. This shift has impacted on the way state street children interventions are conceptualised – there is a shift towards rehabilitation within the community of origin.

**Draft policy statements by the Department of Welfare and Population Development**

Ironically, while a substantial shift occurred from a 'family focussed' to 'children's rights' approach in policy, thus positioning the State as the major role player, another shift is in the process of occurring. Our current government administration prefers interventions to take place within the community with support given to the family rather than outside the community. The emphasis is beginning to lie on rehabilitation within the community. This shift should be viewed as being primarily financial rather than ideologically driven. This is financially related as institutionalisation as a welfare practice would simply bankrupt the state. Such 'community' models are already widely used for AIDS patients and AIDS orphans.

The Department is aiming to ensure uniform national standards for services rendered to street children throughout South Africa. Although the importance of shelters is recognised, these should be used selectively as they are aiming for the de-institutionalisation of children and a move towards community-based programmes. 'One stop services' within the communities of origin is an attempt to reduce the numbers of street children in shelters/children's homes, as families will instead receive support within the communities.[25]



[25] These 'community prevention projects' are primarily aimed at woman and focus on income generating skills. Supporting the family has had the following outcomes:
a. Women have found alternative ways to provide for their families. They have been challenged to stop demanding a cash 'quota' everyday from the child (often the child cannot return home, lest he reaches the amount. Should he fail to reach the quota, he is beaten), thus relationships between the family improve.
b. However, the disadvantages have been that although the mother may have more money, there is no control over how she spends it. Often she spends more time away from home, neglecting her children, who are then not cared for and left vulnerable and unprotected within the community. The women are employed in the informal sector, which is strongly linked to fluctuations in the economy, leaving them vulnerable. Unfortunately, as many women gain financial security, their 'husbands' are threatened. This has often led to increases in domestic violence. Finally, with women being involved in skills training and work, they have been burdened with additional duties over and above their domestic duties. Something has to give, sadly, often it is the child who suffers (Dunford: 46-47).

To improve the current model, the IMC has proposed that when a child has been removed from his/her family, the reintegration process should be supported, rather than left to chance. The term 'reconstruction' should be replaced with 'family reunification', which is a process of a planned return of a child to the family or community of origin. Linked to this, are the limited options of residential placements and the lack of alternatives.

Moving from the general to the specific, it is important to consider what provincial government is doing for street children. Although provincial government falls under national government, much of State Welfare is administered under provincial administrations.

**Contributions from provincial legislation**

The Proposed Integrated Provisional Policy Framework for Services to Street Children in the Western Cape (1997: 13 - 14) lays out four 'policy' levels (Prevention, Early Intervention, Statutory and Post Statutory/Alternative). Generally, Provincial legislation adds nothing 'new' or innovative. Due to space constraints these will not be discussed, but please see Appendix 3 for a diagrammatic expression of this Proposed Integrated Provisional Policy Framework.

As much as it is important to consider the legislation itself, the policy process is not complete until it is implemented. Thought therefore needs to be given to implementation.

**Implementation**

Legislation will not in and of itself improve children's lives. It has been suggested in NGO circles that government spending on children has in fact decreased in real terms over the past four years (post-apartheid), with serious detrimental effects for poor children and those in marginal circumstances (SA Law Commission: 153). Some are even claiming that current amendments to legislation are too broad and therefore will prove ineffective (Ibid. 153). Let us consider some of these possible constraints.

**Possible constraints of legislation**

The SA Law Commission strongly suggests that legislation is a form of social engineering acting as a framework that ensures redress, equity, and support for children

in the most marginal situations[26]. However legislation is limited in that it cannot "single-handedly change social, religious and cultural attitudes towards children. Social and economic upliftment, too, are ultimately developments that occur outside of the usual domain of legislative drafters" (Ibid: 157). Therefore, policy is 'unable', or limited, in its ability to address poverty, the so-called root cause of the street child phenomenon. Ennew (cited by Cockburn, 1998: 148) has a point when he criticises the prevailing belief that poverty causes street children, as the consequences of such a belief are self-defeating, i.e. one cannot and does not attempt much as it is virtually impossible to eradicate poverty on a global scale.

Having reviewed all the above, from the legislation from the previous government, to the present, we need to ask, what exactly is the policy on street children?

**So what is the policy on street children?**

To date, no official policy is in place to deal with street children. This means that the care of street children continues to fall between and under state departments, which fail to be integrated and proactive (little networking and closing of the gaps under an official street child policy). There is no policy document in place that pulls the relevant departments together. The relevant departments would include the Departments of Welfare, Health, Education, Justice and Labour. This effectively means that NGOs[27] are caring for street children.

At this stage, I have reviewed the existing national and provincial policy relevant to street children. We can see that it is disparate and lacks cohesiveness and comprehensiveness. In the absence of clear national and provincial policy, street child initiatives, structures and processes have appeared on the ground. I will now review policy and interventions on this micro level. It is on this level that the intricacies of street child interventions take place.



[26] This is what Christie (1996) refers to as policies being about goal-directed courses of action taken by States.

[27] Unfortunately staff and volunteers have even physically, sexually and emotionally abused children within NGOs (Swart-Kruger: 234). Some shelters even failed to get the parents' consent for housing their children and did not have legal custody of the child (Schurink: 58). Those NGOs that were not registered with the Child Welfare Department were therefore not subsidised or inspected by government officials. Inspections comprise of, inspection of any books and of any children in the facility. To shut down NGOs would leave street children with few resources.

## THE MICRO LEVEL

### Broad approaches to interventions

There are five phases to a street child shelter (Treanor: 922-923):

1. Outreach programmes where workers provide essential services to children living on the streets, this includes regular meals, access to showers, clean clothes, and essential health services. The children are encouraged to come off the streets into the residential care facilities of their own volition.
2. Entering the residential care facilities, the child is exposed to a limited range of rules (including curfew times, household chores, and behavioural norms).
3. If steady commitment is displayed, the child enters a 'second-stage' home. Here the child receives a more comprehensive educational plan, individualised case planning, etc. The child is encouraged to behave or face losing his/her place and returning to the basic shelter.
4. The child is trained up for job and employment purposes. This is sometimes called "bridging programmes" and is aimed at making the child independent.
5. When the child is mature enough, he/she is returned to the community.

These five steps may appear straight forward, however, each phase is riddled with complexities and conflicts.

### A closer look at the complexities and conflicts

Tensions arise between law enforcement (Criminal Procedure Act) and child welfare (Child Care Act). Police argue that the removal of street children from the streets to the police station or places of shelter on the basis of bylaws and statutes such as sleeping in public places, are laws that take preference over individual rights (including the Bill of Rights?) (Swart-Kruger: 234-235). Swart-Kruger (p. 235) argues that this makes the current penal system equivalent to the apartheid one in that the framework of the law is used to violate the rights of the child. "Punitive juvenile justice measures are easier to implement *en masse* than are innovative and individually orientated programmes" (Ibid: 235).

Grant (1986: 175, 178) offers insights into understanding this debate, arguing that since Martin Luther published *Liber Vagatorum,* social relief has come to be seen as a right/entitlement and not as a charity administered by the church and private charities. Since social relief/welfare has become a benefit of citizenship dispensed

bureaucratically like any other government service, it loses the compassion and grace of charity, being susceptible to every wind of doctrine that blows across the political landscape. The magisterial oversight of the welfare state secures the State's domination of the 'welfare market'. This is because it is never questioned, leaving private charities little hope of wide public appeal. Furthermore, the law, unlike charities, is a very blunt instrument that should be applied equitably, thereby being unable to make a distinction between the truly needy and those who exploit the system (e.g. through laziness). For example the law (policy and Acts) does not make a distinction between children **on** and **of** the street (Schurink, et al., 1993: 36).

A tension arises between policy as stated intent and policy in practice[28] in that policy as stated intent is more structured, while policy in practice is more fluid. Policy as stated intent struggles to distinguish between the needs of the individual cases, while policy in practice claims flexibility to be able to deal with the various cases. Grant (1995) would argue, that it does not matter what ideology or philosophy the policy as stated intent is framed by, its nature, as an extension of the welfare state, is bureaucratic, rigid and inflexible. Policy as stated intent used to be more conservative (under-apartheid, but there is still an overhang of this legacy in our present child welfare laws) while the literature claims that those 'on the ground' are more liberal. Policy as stated intent claimed to be family focused (under-apartheid), but has since shifted dramatically to a 'child's rights', acting "in the best interests of the child", child centred approach (post-apartheid). This shift would appear to be more in line with many of the policy in practice claims of being child/individual focused, which happen outside the sphere of the family. Policy as stated intent, as it now stands (post-apartheid), tends to override the rights of the child deeming him/her to be "a child in need of care" and therefore adult intervention. Any member of the public can now act on behalf of the child, provided he/she gets permission. Plus policy as stated intent, as it now stands, overrides the rights of the parents, the family and the community by focusing on the child to the exclusion of his/her family (although family should be 'considered'), while policy in practice takes into account the will, desires, choices and rights of the child to the point that in some cases,



[28] For the purposes of this dissertation, I have defined 'policy as stated intent' to mean policy as a national or provincial piece of legislation or Act or policy, which is positioned at the 'top' and works its way 'down'. 'Policy in practice' is defined as what actually goes on at 'ground level', how the 'policy as stated intent' works itself out, and includes what the practitioners on the ground are 'adding' to the official policy as a means of dealing with the reality of street children.

these 'rights' are being placed above parental guidance and traditional wisdom (others still favour the traditional 'family focused' approach).

These relationships and tensions are highly complex and contradictions exist on all levels.

See Appendix 4 for a diagrammatic expression of these complexities.

I will now review some of the 'policy in practice' practices in more detail, looking at them as they occur at the different phases/stages of the street child intervention.

**Tensions around 'Intake'**

While some groups are critical of adult interventions in the form of police removing the child from the street and then through the children's courts placing the child in a shelter, there is a debate on the ground as to how the street child problem should be tackled. Either through outreach programmes or through self-referral programmes. Self-referral programmes assume that the child is aware of the shelter's existence and is willing to submit him/herself.

All strategies are under criticism. Should the outreach or self-referral system fail, and the police not take action, will the child remain on the street indefinitely? Do those street children who do not respond to self-referrals and outreach programs ever get rehabilitated? Is this a serious gap? Within the literature, much has been made of these street children who remain on the streets, albeit romanticised - they are wonderful survivors, therefore legislation should be built around them that creates a climate conducive for their survival, e.g. legalising child labour. The literature also views them through the realistic school of thought - the longer they are on the streets the worse off they become. Unfortunately, the realistic school of thought is backed up by hard research (see Richter, 1996). Richie (1999) even claims that the longer the child is on the street, the greater his/her chances are of the child becoming a hardened criminal. Let us pursue this logic further.

**Life on the street - acting in the child's best interest?**

'Liberal' advocates for policy on the ground include researchers like Swart-Kruger (1996) who argue that policy as stated intent creates no place for working children, whose reality is that they are on the street, out of a family and attempting to work. Therefore as

long as these conditions such as poverty remain, we should aim to make the child independent.

A Realist[29] would argue otherwise. The Child Care Act provides the guideline to "act in the best interests of the child." Children deemed in need of care are to be removed from the street and finally referred to a more permanent abode, cared for by the State and finally, hopefully reintegrated back into their family.[30] This removes the need for the child to work. The fact that the longer the child is on the street, the more damage is done (see Richter, 1996), warrants the police (and now the public with the Amendments to the Child Care Act) acting swiftly in removing the child from the streets. Furthermore, thinking long term, and not just in short term so-called 'realities' (which lack any sense of ideal), Bequele and Boyden (1988) point out that: child workers are paid nowhere near the minimum wage; because they are given unskilled, simple jobs, they seldom move forward to better paying skilled jobs (trapped); they lose out on educational opportunities thus limiting their chances of success in the labour market; because it is illegal to employ children in the formal sector they find work in the informal sector (where laws cannot be enforced); even if the child could legally be employed in the formal sector, the chances are he/she would not be as there is a greater degree of mechanised technologies therefore requiring skilled labour; finally even if child labour was 'legalised', thus giving the child the legal protection in case of exploitation, South Africa could never supply or finance sufficient inspectors to monitor such a vulnerable labour force. Long-term independence should be sought, but within the context of the family, community and the school (getting a proper education, thus widening the chances for independence). But the question remains, is keeping the child on the street "in the best interests of the child"? Perhaps more alternatives need to be sought.

"Working children" are illegal in South Africa, up to the age of 15. Nevertheless, Swart-Kruger (234) sees "begging, scavenging, gambling, "parking" and washing cars" as positive. She asks for legal space for child labour. This would ultimately entrench the child's life on the streets.



[29] Realist and Romantic are loose terms and are used primarily for analytical purposes.
[30] Conservative thinkers might argue that the State should only play a role as a final resort. The State should respect and encourage the family and community to take up their responsibility. The State should try and avoid citizens forming a dependant relationship on state welfare. Thinking long term, they hold that strong families equals a strong society equals a strong nation-state. Conservative thinkers would argue that return to the family is the ideal.

When children are removed (or self-referred) from the streets, most often it is into shelters catering for them. I will now give some attention to what shelters are all about.

**About shelters**

According to the Proposed Integrated Provisional Policy Framework for Services to Street Children in the Western Cape (1997: 16): shelters are residential facilities for street children and operate on an open door policy (it is not a lock up facility) and most children are self-referred. Shelters are generally located in close physical proximity to where the children are to be found and a variety of programmes aimed at developing a sense of identity, belonging and responsibility are offered, such as:

- Education and training; learning how to negotiate, make decisions and manage conflict constructively;
- Re-establishing contact with families and communities;
- The opportunity to live in a therapeutic environment; counselling and referral to specialist services e.g. health, substance abuse programmes, and psychological assessment and treatment.

Whilst shelters provide reconstruction services to street children and can prevent runaway children from becoming street children, they require voluntary participation and some children have been known to go through the system repeatedly.

**Life in a shelter - shirking reality?**

Shelters have been criticised because they remove the child's survival skills by which he/she fended for him/herself on the street and replace them with unrealisable aspirations and impractical skills; they apply a middle class intervention to a working class problem (see Cockburn, 1990: 12) and they attempt to apply a first world model (the Child Care Act) to a third world problem. Some have even gone as far as to argue that shelters add to the street child problem because they require prescribed behaviour and self-disclosure in return for service, arguing that most street children refuse to be 'subjected' to upliftment programmes within the context of an institution (Swart-Kruger: 232).

Interventions can be irrelevant: "every hour away from work means less money to survive" (Cerrans (UNESCO), 1992: 8). Both Agnelli (1986:75) and Dallape (1988: 39) are critical of shelters for making the children over-dependent on them, creating a

beggar mentality, "thus solving nothing" (Dunford: 33). Because 'rescue' centres have a tempting alternative, they are said to encourage children onto the streets, and not to return home.

"It is a contentious fiesta where there is freedom, adventure and spectacle (attractions/"pull" factors of the street). Any form of treatment or reform has to outshine these attractions," says Father de Nicolo of Bogota (cited in Cockburn, 1988: 146). The counter-argument as presented by black social workers at the Khaya Lethu shelter in Durban is the "concern that some children (are) merely using the shelter as a means of staying away from home and are attracted by superior conditions like the TV, videos and the general programme" (City Health Department's Social Work Report (April 1988:2)).

Police may battle to contain children who often run-away from places of safety, whereas the more liberal advocates insist that the autonomy of street children and their freedom on the streets is important to them (Swart-Kruger, 1996: 233). The derivative of this is that advocates of policy in practice are critical of the policy as stated intent which is said to be too tight and rigid, forcing children "to fit" the system (Ibid: 232).

There appears to be a case of everyone criticising each other. Nevertheless, the shelter system is likely to be the primary 'intervention tool' adopted by the state for many years to come, therefore there is a need to upgrade staff qualifications and skills to make them more effective.



**Challenges facing interventions – the need for specialised skills**

Richter (1990) claims that: many children show a habitual pattern of running away from problems, including those that occur in rehabilitation programmes (about half of street children are runaways from institutions); most children are underweight for their age and some show signs of specific vitamin deficiencies (health factors); about one third of children have some kind of physical disability, perceptual problem or manifest psychological disorder (e.g. enuresis – involuntary urination) (making interventions expensive if one is to acquire the specialised skills and knowledge necessary to address these needs/disorders); about one third of children show some kind of "acting out" behaviour, e.g. lying, stealing, fighting. This 'criminal' element complicates interventions, as many of these children bring the criminal element into the shelters and 'corrupt' their peers, e.g. Khaya Lethu, a shelter in Durban was burnt down by street children (see

Bernstein & Gray, 1990); about one third of children show manifest signs of anxiety and/or depression.

All this is further complicated by addictions ("about one third of the children become chronic users of solvents; the younger the child the more likely he is to become a chronic user" (Richter, 1990: 7)).

"Nomadic lifestyle" (Cockburn, 1990) and their "love of freedom" (Richter, 1990), make the rehabilitation of these children tricky as they are used to being independent, making their own decisions and not taking instruction, council or advice from adults. Donald et al. (1997) call this "Autonomy and control", which resists any hint of adult authoritarian control. This adds to their volatility. Furthermore, their nomadic lifestyle has a day-by-day, survival, do not plan for the future, fatalistic value system (Epstein, 1996). To break this is not easy. The children are used to obeying their own impulses and as a result are unable to delay gratification. This can be summarised as poor self-government and self-discipline. Hence a tension is created - to introduce external disciplines (intervention) into this, without the child reacting and returning to the free nomadic lifestyle requires a great deal of sensitivity. Therefore most interventions are on a voluntary, self-referral basis, where the street child's movements are not restricted in any way (Dunford, 1996: 29). I call this the soft approach.

Furthermore Richter (1990) claims that one third of street children are likely to be moderately educationally handicapped. Giles (1988: 142) refers to "mental or at least functional retardation" and "neurological impairments of varying severity, often as a result of accidents." These handicaps and poor and limited concentration impair their ability to learn. Not only does this require specialised intervention (raising costs to be effective), but also left as is, impairs the children's chances of learning and developing and therefore re-entering mainstream society. Peacock (1993:29(2)) cites Burman and Reynolds (1986) as well as Swart (1988b) who believe that most street children are not capable of concentrating for extended periods of time due to the negative effects of solvent abuse and bad health.

Given this vulnerable and volatile clientele, is it fair to expect fantastic results given the limited resources afforded to shelters? Most shelters' primary aim is to rehabilitate the child back to his/her family and community, yet even this process is not problem free.

**Tensions around returning the child to the home/community**

The tragedy is that because the Child Care Act fails to stipulate guidelines for the prevention of family breakdown, families themselves are neglected. Although social workers may have a mandate to provide some kind of family reconstruction, the family is largely neglected. Therefore it is not uncommon to find street children returning to the same conditions from which they fled, ending up on the streets again (Schurink: 57). Some have called this the inadequacies of using a First World model (Child Care Act) to fix a Third World problem (street children).

See Appendix 5 for a diagrammatic expression of these tensions around returning the child home.

**Conclusion**

What we see developing is a myriad of contradictions especially at policy in practice level, which results in a criticism of many approaches and interventions. This lack of consensus is a contributing factor for the lack of a clear guiding policy. This ultimately leads to the neglect of street children due to a lack of ability to tackle the street child problem, administer justice, discipline and compassionate rehabilitation, proactively acting in the child's best interests.

We can conclude that philosophically speaking, despite the shift from a more conservative to a more liberal welfare system, the basic problems of inflexibility and cold bureaucracy remain (or perhaps have even increased, since the policy has been broadened, granting more power to the state). The literature claims that policy on the ground is more liberal preferring the child centred approach, yet at the same time calling for the 'slippage' of laws as they recognise children on the street as a reality and therefore legal frameworks should accommodate them. Therefore, instead of confronting, redressing and rehabilitating the child back to his/her family, they accommodate and legitimise the child outside of his/her family yet under the state's 'protection', seeking to rehabilitate the child from his/her current position (on the street, outside the family).

## Summary of policies and tensions

**Comparison of Previous and current administrations**

| Previous administration | Current administration |
|---|---|
| Old – Family focussed | New – child-centred |
| Long term vision | Short term realities |
| Framed in terms of ideals | Tending towards reality |
| Child **on** street, falls outside definition of family | Street child categorised under 'children in especially difficult circumstances' |
| Child labour forbidden under Basic Conditions of Employment Act (1983) | Calls (from some quarters) to legalise child labour to provide legal protection for working children in their attempt to survive |
| Lacked guidelines on how to rehabilitate family | Focus on child outside of family, therefore rehabilitation = problematic |

**Amendments to 'old' Acts affecting street children**

| | |
|---|---|
| Child Care Act (1983) | Residential care is sought for children deemed "in need of care" (Amendment Act 96 of 1996) |
| | Public can now act on behalf of child |
| Criminal Procedure Act | Deals with juvenile justice. Amendments disallow unconvicted children under 18 to be placed in adult prisons |
| UN Convention on Rights of the Child; SA Constitution, Section 28 | Endorses children's rights. Redefines parental rights to parental responsibility. Endorses the State as the key 'enabling agent' in child welfare |
| Children's Status Act (Act No 82 of 1987), | Still recognises 'old' mode of thinking – family focused, child 'not' recognised. Contradicts new amendments |

Concrete efforts to recognise and assist street children were started towards the end of the apartheid government. However, still no official street child policy exists. There are contradictory claims of more police arrests, while juvenile offenders escape the system. Government spending on children is down in real terms (post-apartheid).

There are many contradictions on the ground. I.e. how does one get a child off the street? How does one get a child into a shelter? Are shelters the best method of rehabilitation? How does one reintegrate a child back into his/her family/community? To all these questions, there is no consensus, therefore it is difficult to draw up an official policy.

## What have been the results thus far?

Unfortunately few evaluations have taken place so far of shelters and their results (Keen, 1990). But as documented by Richter (1990): about half of street children are second-

order runaways from closed institutions, therefore we are dealing with a system, which at best is having a 50% first time success rate.

Unfortunately the major success indicator for many shelters, as in the Claremont shelter is reduced to the following:

> Lewis, "a few nights ago, there were about twenty of them here, eating supper and watching television. If the shelter wasn't here they would all have been on the street that night, probably sniffing thinners and sleeping in a subway. To see them and know that we could feed them all, that they would bath and go to sleep in a safe place is the point of it all" (Cerrans (UNESCO), 1992: 9).

In other words, at best this is a politically correct, middle of the road, 'benign', "child-centred" way of containment, with the end result: "children often leave to stroll again, and just as frequently return" (Ibid: 9). Cockburn (1990) criticises this 'rescue syndrome' as being individuals and agencies that want to be benevolent, but in reality are failing because they are failing to address the root problem.



## Conclusion

What we can conclude from this literature review, is that there is sufficient research around street children when it comes to the primary issues, such as, numbers of street children, conditions of their lives and causes for the street child phenomenon. Most of these studies have been generic and of a psychological and sociological nature. However, gaps in the literature become evident when it comes to secondary issues (what can be and what is being done to rehabilitate street children) and tertiary issues (concrete policies as written text). What becomes evident is that there is an international shift towards a more liberal "child centred" approach to street child rehabilitation. However, at the same time as this move towards children's rights, actual numbers of street children are on the increase throughout the world, their living conditions are getting worse, families are breaking down even further and the poor are getting poorer. There is still no consensus on how the street child phenomenon should be addressed on both the macro (through national policy) and the micro levels (actual shelters and programmes). Policy makers are at odds to formulate preventative policies. The thought of reforming society (the entire social system) is intimidating at all levels. There are little to no interventions that focus on the family and the community (the social structures within the child's life). Those interventions that enjoy the most success are flexible and specific enough to deal with the child on an individual level, affording him/her maximum attention. However the cost of such a welfare system is simply not sustainable and state institutionalisation of street children is now seen as inhuman (see Richter, 1991:8). This

is a partial explanation for the rise in NGO activity, as NGOs are less bureaucratic than national government in their approach to street child interventions. However, even they are not problem free (exaggeration of success outcomes to secure funds and sexual abuse of children through lack of accountability) and there is no consensus amongst them of best practice. Furthermore, when considering the New South Africa, one would have expected improvements for the welfare of the street child. The opposite is true – there are more police arrests and less government spending in real terms (see Swart-Kruger, 1996), and to this day there still exists no official policy to address the street child phenomenon. Is there a need for more research, especially on a secondary level (actually looking at sites of rehabilitation to answer the question what is and what can be done to rehabilitate street children back to their families and communities)? Is there a need to review a 'successful' South African street child project that could hopefully inform policy (and policy gaps) in this country? I believe the answer to these questions is yes. This is what I will focus on in Chapter Four.

# CHAPTER 3

# METHODOLOGY

The methodology used can be divided into two parts; studying the case files of the selected sample of children, and a review of the literature and South African policy applicable to street children. These will be discussed below, but first let us consider some of the primary considerations when doing research on street children and their related issues.

## Introduction

It is acknowledged in the literature that due to their nomadic lifestyles, the chances of getting a group of street children together on a fairly regular basis are slim (Swart-Kruger & Donald, 1994). Also, "a relatively long-term participant observer role has been seen as essential as street children, by definition of their lifestyle, tend to be guarded, suspicious and manipulative of most adults - especially where time has not allowed a relationship of at least relative trust to be built up" (Donald et al., 1997: 139).

Richter (1991) gives several reasons for poor knowledge about street children. This ranges from stereotyping, through to children lying for survival purposes, through to child care workers on the ground having their own ideas and agendas that can misinform them. But Richter documents that the primary reason for the lack of knowledge is that "no existing street children programmes have systematic records, or make data collection part of their ongoing activities" (1991: 6). She ascribes this to lack of staff, lack of specific training around systematic data collection, the desire not to intrude into what might be painful experiences and as a reaction against the "information-collection + no action" stereotype of state social work services. However, when this data collection is available she writes: "they are potentially the richest and most valid sources of information, being based on the observations of people in daily close contact with the children" (1991: 6). This information will also prove more accurate and valid, as the relationship of trust is established and the degree of honesty and 'inside knowledge' is higher. Richter also believes that such information should be the basis for the design of intervention programmes (empirical research) and the basis upon which evaluations of such programmes should be done. In light of this, I consider myself fortunate to have

had access to Ons Plek (OP) case files, which have become one of the sources of my data collection.

**Why Ons Plek?**

I was invited and given permission by OP to do this work.

**PART ONE**

**Sample**

When choosing the sample of subjects, I selected two three-month periods one year apart, from May until the end of July 1998 and May until the end of July 1999. This was to ensure that the sample selected represented a 'random', yet accurate description of the average child at OP. Included in this sample were all girls who were taken in off the street during these time slots. The sample also included those that returned to OP during these time slots, and therefore these children were not first time cases to OP. This effectively meant that some of these girls had existing case files that went back several years. I decided to include all information found within the files, even information that fell before and after the dates of the arbitrarily selected time slots. Using the daily register, 71 girls 'fell' within the two time slots (sample), however only 61 files were read. (I could not find the other ten files. I was told by OP staff that sometimes case files are not opened for girls if they are only passing through or kept at OP over-night, for example by the police. However, by the average sample size found in the literature, 61 is an extremely large number, with most sample sizes ranging between ten to twenty. This means that most of the studies available are based on relatively small sample sizes). Each case file was read until the most recent entry (10-11-00). The amount of information contained within the case files varied from case to case depending on the length of their stay at OP. All in all, a large amount of careful reading of case files was carried out.

**Measuring instruments (and data collection)**

Through reading the literature, an information sheet was drawn up (see Appendix A for a copy), which asked questions that tried to develop an understanding of the background of these children and their personal histories in terms of family and educational backgrounds. It also aimed to identify behaviours. Although these helped in processing information and analysis whilst reading the case files as well as collecting necessary descriptors, these forms proved ineffective in documenting the rich contextual histories

as recorded in the case files. Furthermore, because I was not interviewing the girls directly (many of whom have long since returned home, to the street, community or to some other area of society), I was limited to the information documented in these files. For example I was interested in finding out more about their educational histories, but unfortunately, with all due respect to OP and the case files, this was not an area that received the attention I would have liked.[1] Therefore I went back to the files, read them again and made additional notes. This time I used the same structure as the files themselves, i.e. date entries and information. Due to the fact that I included all information contained within the files, the notes taken begin with the first date entry and end with the most recent. This effectively gives a person a narrative 'picture' of the child's stay at OP. I made summaries of all information included within these files as I thought to aim for inclusivity as opposed to exclusivity, preferring to have too much data than too little (the end result was close on 150 pages of typed case file notes).



Analysis and interpretation

These notes were then typed up under three subheadings:

**1. Biographical details (conditions before coming to OP).** Name and surname (and nickname); language spoken; date of birth; age upon arrival.

**2. Demographic details (conditions before coming to OP).** The child's story upon arrival (often differing from the facts). This section includes (where possible): who they were staying with; where they were living; who referred them to OP; why they came to OP (their story, which nearly always involved some kind of abuse); the type of abuse and who was responsible; the school and grade they were attending.

**3. Investigated details (conditions while at OP)** (before coming to OP and during their stay at OP). Investigation begins: these are the efforts of OP staff (care workers, house mothers, social worker, educational and vocational co-ordinator and director) to investigate the home backgrounds of these girls. Where available they cover their personal backgrounds (not all girls are willing to discuss their past. Also where available, a family member or relative can also reveal such information). These form the bulk of the files themselves and include the weekly entries that cover: behaviour, important phone calls, informal progress reports of behaviour at OP and educational progress,

[1] In an interview with the director (4 April 2001), it was confirmed that only in the past year was the structure of the case files altered. All files now have two folders: one for education, the other for social work. This move reflects the value being placed on education by OP. Barnes-September et al. (2000: 115) claim: "the integration of children back into mainstream education is the most difficult aim to achieve." This is due to education / learning gaps, discrimination and emotional instability).

recommended plans of action and evaluations of the previous week's plans. I think of them as portholes into these children's lives, as you see weekly how their lives unfold. The overall aim of all these case files is to assist in primarily finding a suitable long term placement for the girls, hopefully returning them to their family and secondarily to 'rehabilitate' and 'normalise' them while they are at OP.

From here I went back over these typed-up case histories (clarifying with the original case file where needed) and began the analysis by using themes. These themes were once again found in the literature. The analysis took place by designing spreadsheets that captured 'nuggets' of information. From these spreadsheets, I developed formulas that calculated averages, percentages, 'counts' and a breakdown of the sample group I was looking at. Forty-one such spreadsheets were drawn up in total (but summarised to sixteen). Furthermore, since the data collected from 1999 and 1998 revealed no surface, obvious variation/deviation, I thought it convenient to combine all information into one sample from which these spreadsheets and percentages were calculated. I also thought this wise due to the fact of readmissions into OP, i.e. a child who came in June 1999 may well have already been at OP at a previous point in time, thus making the distinction clumsy and messy.

This methodology of using spreadsheets and formulas might be termed documentary case analysis. Such an analysis could be termed a documentary case analysis over time, or a longitudinal documentary case analysis. It results in 'broad' bands of descriptors, but loses the powerful qualitative research and close reading of the case files, which reveals interactions and relationships that constitute for meaning within a context of time and space.

Some of these themes used for the analysis and spreadsheets include: demographic details, place of residence, age upon arrival, educational background, work histories (type of work), types of behaviour displayed and types of abuse reported (see Chapter Four for an overview of the findings).

From here, graphs and tables were developed for clarity and presentation sake.

After presenting the quantitative results (e.g. percentages), I went back to the contextually rich case files and tried to understand, explain, substantiate and account for the results (qualitative research). The purpose in reading the case files was to gain an

understanding of the history of the girls, but, more critically, to understand what OP's strategy and policy are. This gives the research 'wholeness' and allows me as the researcher to get at the phenomenon of street children on the micro level. However, this is available as a separate manuscript and was not included due to space constraints.

**Interviews and triangulation**

I informally interviewed the director, the educational/vocational co-ordinator, the social worker, the house-mother and child care worker. Many of the informal interviews were simply asking questions in order to clarify information about particular cases. More structured interviews, using predetermined questions were conducted with the director and house-mother (I interviewed the house-mother and conducted telephonic interviews with members of the child's family in the follow-up stage, see Appendix B for a copy of this interview sheet. This questionnaire was derived from the Literature Review, reading the case files and trying to answer specific questions raised). Throughout my data collection (particularly the reading of the case files) I was asking the above staff members questions about individual cases and how OP was structured and worked (informal interviews). I also showed OP my findings and asked for their feedback. This is in fact known as 'triangulation' in research terms and increases the validity of the research. Triangulation is achieved when data collected from various sources collates, comes together and 'gives the same picture' as the data collected from a different source. It must be pointed out, that because my primary source of data were the case files, in places I sometimes got a limited 'view' of the work, programmes and policies employed by OP. To an extent this is to be expected as the information in the case files is limited (see Limitations, Chapter Three). However, through this triangulation process, any discrepancies have been taken into account and have been acknowledged (see Chapter Four). I would say on the whole, that triangulation was achieved.

**Follow-up**

The first stages of the data collection were devoted to trying to get a picture of what each child's life was like 'before' coming to OP. This data was collected from the case files where one could get an idea of the family background, education history and nature of abuse. Then, from the case files, one could get an idea of their stay while at OP through experiences, interactions with staff and other children and case development ('during'/'present' at OP). Finally, and only where possible, telephonic follow-ups were conducted. This was difficult, as most of the case files do not have contact numbers, the

case files do not record what happens to the child once she leaves OP, and they do not record where the child went. I phoned every number in the files, some were disengaged, others the people had moved on. Yet some did prove successful. It must be remembered that follow-up of this nature will give skewed results as only the more stable, wealthier families are likely to have operational telephones. A questionnaire was drawn up (see Appendix B). To complement this, I also interviewed the house-mother, using the same questionnaire. The other method of follow-up was to interview the house-mother. She had personally seen some of the girls in recent weeks, heard about others from other OP-girls and she was in personal contact with others. I therefore considered her accounts reliable.

Telephonically interviewing the family does raise ethical concerns. Aware of these, I first explained who I was, the purpose of the follow-up and asked permission to ask questions. I explained that all information is confidential and the identities of the children would be protected. Every family member spoken to was incredibly open, friendly and very responsive to my questions. I therefore consider the information obtained reliable.

It is a form of triangulation to interview both the family and the house-mother.



**PART TWO**

**Policy analysis**

I tried to read as widely as possible to get a broad and a deep understanding of the street child phenomenon. I consulted journals, books, publications, newsletters, web sites and interviewed people who work in the field.

As regards the policy analysis, I reviewed the policy documents where possible, plus studied law reviews on the legislation addressing street children. This policy analysis was made complex by the shift in philosophy and ideology of our new government, the conflicting approaches to street child interventions on the ground and the fact that there is still to this day, no official policy in place that specifically deals with street children and their issues. All this was discussed in Chapter Two.

From here, the policy of OP was reviewed as it is laid out in the "Framework for a service plan, Ons Plek Projects, 2000." This policy was then reviewed to see if and how it worked itself out in practice. This was done using the case files as a source of data (see Chapter Four).

**Limitations**

A primary limitation of this thesis is that it is not a traditional 'scientific study'. There is no before and after (although I have gone to every effort to locate data which is applicable to the children prior to coming to OP, i.e. before, however this information is primarily biographical and not psychological). Besides, this is logistically impossible: how can a researcher investigate the condition of the child before coming to OP, then investigate the condition after OP? I do not know the children who will come to OP, or end up there. Equally, (due to the fact that there are so few female street children) it was impossible to find a sample of street girls in Cape Town who have not or will not go to OP, i.e. a 'neutral' group that have not had the benefit of OP's rehabilitation programmes, by which I could compare their outcomes to the outcomes of those in OP. (However, where possible, several of the OP cases were followed up to find out what happened to the girls after leaving OP and returning to the communities. These findings are not included due to space constraints, but are available on request).

Also, there is a strong reliance on the case files for the data collection. Although this information is valid due to the reasons mentioned in the Methodology Introduction, and I could clarify any discrepancies by asking staff (who were the staff at the time, who are not only professionally involved but eye-witnesses), it falls short in that it may be limited in that I myself did not perform participant observations.

Furthermore, further limitations became apparent in an interview with the director (4 April 2001). Due to OP's internal policy of staff development, staff take turns to take minutes and fill in the files. Therefore not all the information discussed in the meetings will necessarily be recorded in the files and entries vary from staff member to staff member. Yet this could also be seen as a strength as differing staff members would hi-light different things, thereby giving the case files a 'fuller', more accurate cohesiveness.

In terms of policy and OP as an attempt to fill the policy gaps, OP remains but one attempt to achieve this. Because of time and space constraints I have only focused on this one South African street child intervention, therefore it could be difficult to make policy recommendations on this limited study.

Therefore this research should be viewed as a preliminary study.

**Ethical issues**

I was given permission to read the case files by the director, the house-mother, the social worker and the secretary. It was impossible to get the girls in the sample to give me permission to access their files, as most of them are no longer present at OP and near impossible to locate. Under the Child Care Act, OP acts in the capacity of *in loco parentis* (in the place of the parent) and therefore has legal right to grant a researcher (the identity I was acting in) the right to access the case files of the children for research purposes. Copies of these forms giving me permission can be found under Appendix C.

At no stage did I remove the case files from the office. Special care was taken in this manner, always returning them to their original location. All the girls concerned were given other names so as not to identify them and to protect their right to privacy. Although the files do contain (at times) highly personal information, I tried at all times to maintain a professional outlook on the cases (I have to acknowledge that at times I found myself responding emotionally with depression and anger).

# CHAPTER 4

# FINDINGS

## Introducing Ons Plek[1]

Ons Plek ("A place for us") is an assessment and intake programme based on the shelter system of intervention. It is located in a small rented building belonging to the District Six Methodist Church, situated in the heart of the city, close to the Grand Parade and public transport. It has sixteen beds, but can accommodate up to 25 girls on mattresses. The girls' basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, education and love are provided.

Siviwe ("God has heard us") Second Stage shelter is a large house in inner city Woodstock. Sixteen girls are housed here. The second stage shelter is needed because the girls tend to leave the shelter when any difficulty is encountered, and are easily destabilised when new intakes of children occur.

OP was opened in 1988 and Siviwe in 1993. It was the first shelter for girls in South Africa and remains but one of three. In 1988 there were only 60 girls living on the streets of Cape Town. It is now estimated that 150 girls turn to the streets of Cape Town annually and that OP serves almost all of them. They range between the ages of naught to twenty-one (some arrive with babies), with the majority between the ages of nine to nineteen years old. Nine people work at OP and Siviwe, including four childcare workers who work in shifts and do the mothering and disciplining.

"Out of several methods of working with street children, i.e. soup kitchens, drop in day programmes, skills work/shops, street workers, the shelters are the most effective in terms of returning them home on a permanent basis" (Jackson, 2000: 4).



[1] The following summary is taken from "Framework for a service plan, Ons Plek Projects, 2000" (Jackson, 2000), interviews with the director and educational co-ordinator and from the following websites:
http://www.districtsix.co.za/samp/rene_roussouw.htm
http://www.childhopeuk.org/capetown.htm
http://www.pretext.co.za/naccw/JournalFiles/jour0300.html
http://www.citybowl.net/safety/main.html#onsplek

**The aims of Ons Plek**

OP aims to prevent runaway girls from becoming street children, rescue those already on the street and to help equip and prepare the children for their future lives. Four broad, but inter-related, methods can be hi-lighted:

1. Providing a safe haven while family difficulties are treated or other community alternatives are sought.
2. Teaching both formal and informal education, vocational preparation and lifeskills are taught while the child is at Ons Plek.
1. Weaning children off street life.
2. Acting as a Children's Home for those children who can never return home.

Seven aims are hi-lighted in the OP *Sifunda ukuphila* document (Rossouw, 1999):[2]

1. To wean girls off the streets by providing alternative shelter and food.
2. To contact estranged family members, at the earliest possible point in their contact with the child, to see if the girl can return home.
3. To empower each girl through a variety of opportunities, which enable her to develop a sense of responsibility for herself, and for what happens in her life.
4. To prepare each girl to attend school or informal morning school. The morning school programme is designed to improve the children's concentration levels to enable them to return to formal school after lengthy periods away from school. Where formal schooling cannot become a suitable option, the programme provides essential vocational skills such as literacy, numeracy and communication skills.
5. To enrol each girl in formal or informal schooling, and/or involve her in formal or informal vocational training programmes, and/or involve her in formal or informal employment or self-employment.
6. To maximise the possibility of coping in and participating in normal society by slowly increasing the social behavioural demands on each girl.
7. To develop relationship skills and other life skills that are all important for the success of future and work prospects.



[2] Another major aim not included in this document, is to work with each family concerned, to bring them to the point where the family has changed to such an extent that the child can return home on a permanent basis.

**How do the girls access Ons Plek?**

The girls at OP are self-referred (some are referred by police, others by friends, others by Child Welfare/children's courts).

OP will assist any homeless girl AND any girl at risk of becoming a street child. The latter is provisional only if: the family is deemed unable/unwilling to provide for the child's most basic needs of love and food, safety and/or are abusing her; there must also be no other family or community member willing to house her.

**What happens when the child is admitted to Ons Plek?**

Once at OP, the children are encouraged to take responsibility for their lives even as the motto "Sifunda ukuphila" (I am here for my future life) suggests. OP wants to empower and prepare the children to cope with normal life after they leave; they are not pampered and routine is important. The children learn to cook, clean up after themselves, shop, budget, learn personal hygiene and learn conflict resolution. Household decisions and rules are made by the girls and staff together. If a child attends school, she uses public transport. At this stage the girls attend OP's programmes (these will be discussed later). The structure is such as to reflect as normal a family household as possible. This can be described as an ethos, an approach aimed at weaning the child off street life by encouraging the child to take responsibility.

**Methods of reintegration employed by Ons Plek**

OP has four options for referral:

1. Child returning home (immediate family)
2. Return child to community (relatives)
3. Child remains at OP
4. Refer child to other institutions

OP claims that they fail to help about 5% of girls on average per year (who return to the streets) while achieving an average of 70% successful home rehabilitation per annum.[3]

[3] This claim was backed up by an independent study, released in May 2000. Co-ordinated Action for Street People (CASP) did the study for Cape Metropole and found only seven girls living *independently* of their families on the street. OP knew of four of them that left their programme two years before, i.e. they were long-term hardened street people.

**Ons Plek as an attempt to fill the policy gap**

Now that I have introduced OP, I will refer back to the discussion in Chapter Two on policy gaps within the broader system, where I attempted to pull out some of the chief weaknesses of the existing policy and the contradictions inherent therein. Using these as a framework, I will then review the practices of OP in terms of these gaps to see if OP has anything new to offer, or perhaps if their practices could inform an official street child policy document. But before I do this, I will briefly touch on the question of how OP compares to what is happening on the African continent.[4]

**Ons Plek and International/African models**

As we saw from the brief review of African intervention examples (see Chapter Two), the chief focus is vocational and educational (informal and where possible formal). This is so as to help the child survive, equipping him/her with skills to take his/her place as a productive member of society and the economy. The question needs to be asked, should we be advocating for the legalisation of child labour, in the hope of 'protecting children's rights'? Does the child not remain a child in need of care? What happens on the African continent needs to be viewed in the light of traditional African culture where the child works and forms part of the economy (Richter, 1991:9), that's one explanation why Africa has more working children than any other continent (see Dunford, 1996:6).

Throughout Africa, it is rare to find the State taking ownership of child welfare. Many African governments lack the capacity to do this. This equates to a lack of national policy and provisions available to govern and legitimatise street child interventions. This has resulted in a trend of private organisations filling the gap and formulating policy on the ground. Epstein (1996: 297) records that more than 50% of street child interventions in Africa are church based. This is different in South Africa, as the South African government passed various Acts to address children in need of care, thereby making South Africa unique on the continent of Africa in that it has national policies, frameworks and provisions for the care of children (although none exists specific to street children). However, these were marred by apartheid inequalities. But South Africa is not unlike Africa, in that the apartheid government encouraged families and communities to take ownership of their problems on a local level, thus allowing space for organisations,

[4] As stated in Chapter One, I try to move from the general to the specific. This analysis is limited by the discussion on policy (Chapter Two). But as this dissertation progresses, more intricate (micro) issues begin to unfold.

churches and NGOs on the ground. These organisations are similar to those in Africa, but South Africa is fortunate to have more developed child welfare infrastructures and provisions.

South Africa has adopted what some may refer to as a first world solution, because the policy in South Africa tends to favour rehabilitation of the child into his/her family, hence a social welfare dominant rather than vocational/educational dominant model. However, under the current government, the shift is moving from a family based model to a child rights model where parental rights become parental responsibilities. This is an international move that can be seen in western liberal first world countries. South Africa is merely following suit, despite the fact that many of our welfare problems are characteristic of the third world.

OP is a practitioner of the South African emphasis on 'rehabilitation back to the family' as their primary focus. They are a social welfare, rather than vocational and educational, dominant model. It is not that OP does not have an educational and vocational programme, but it is not the focus as is the case in the rest of Africa.

In Africa, like South Africa, most of the street child interventions focus on boys. This is because as many as 90% of all street children are boys. This is another possibility for the strong focus on vocation, skills and education-based models. The HLM Montagne quarter of Dakar, Senegal is an example of a female-based model. Counselling, the need for group discussions, sharing, relationship building, women's/mother courses and 'female' skills such as housework, cooking, cleaning and making clothes. play an important role in this intervention. That is what the girls wanted and requested. This is similar to OP, in that OP also has a strong counselling programme with individual and group discussions on women's issues such as AIDS and relationships with the opposite sex. The girls are required to cook, clean, shop and budget. to equip them to be independent responsible woman who are capable of looking after themselves.

In terms of the concerns raised in the section on policy (Chapter Two), I will now look at OP as an attempt to fill the policy gaps.

## Ons Plek and the policy gaps, referring to South African policy

OP is affiliated to the Cape Town Child Welfare Society (CTCW). This relationship allows OP access to CTCW's expertise (e.g. financial and disciplinary procedures), but it also requires OP to conform to their standards, ethics and values (e.g. confidentiality). OP is also obligated to conform to the macro policies such as the Child Care Act and Criminal Procedure Act. OP works on a self-referral basis as most shelters do. However, it also functions as a place of safety where children are referred by children's courts, community, social workers and the police as a temporary measure and for investigative purposes. OP primarily functions as a shelter/children's home (especially Siviwe, their second stage shelter) where children are placed or referred. Once a child is admitted to OP, their rehabilitation programmes commence with the primary objective being a social welfare one of returning the child back to her family where appropriate. It is also important to note that OP has adopted the policy that "family is best" (where possible). Therefore they could be classified as adopting the 'old' more conservative way of thinking (refer to Chapter Two). OP is located in the city and therefore does not fall under community-based interventions. We therefore see OP playing a number of roles, but by no means being able to cover every area of the child welfare policy and policy gaps.

See Appendix 6 for a diagrammatic expression of where OP functions within the broader policy framework.



## Ons Plek as a means to fill the policy gaps - a discussion

In Chapter Two I discussed both Macro and Micro policy gaps. The discussion on Micro policy gaps was more specific to the daily practices of street child interventions. What follows is a review of how OP functions at the various Micro intervention stages/phases.

### 1. Removing the child off the street.

In Chapter Two, I discussed how the police are criticised for removing children off the street and the lack of consensus by practitioners on the ground of how to 'entice' the child off the street. This results in a potential policy lacuna. To address this, OP makes use of several options:

a. It relies on the Criminal Procedure Act and the Child Care Act, the police (and now the public), to remove street children or those in need of care from their vulnerable contexts and place the child in its care through the provision of child courts or police services. This is an indirect means of referral.
b. The child is referred by a family member, friend or someone from the public. OP would then take the case to court (Child Care Act) to gain 'legal custody' of the child. Each party (OP, family and child) is required to present its case. The court decides "in the best interest of the child."
c. The child is self-referred.

OP no longer have an official outreach programme, such as a street worker who goes about trying to entice the child off the street. At one stage OP had funding for a street worker, but since there are only seven girls living independently on the street (CASP, 2000), this position has been made redundant. The 'street work' is done by other organisations. So in this respect, OP is not adding any innovations to existing legislation.

**2. The 'thinness' of the policy.**

In Chapter Two, I discussed the horizontal nature of the system and its inability to deal with complex 'clientele' such as street children. I concluded that the 'safety-net' of state policy is very thin. In response to this, OP offers the following:
a. There is evidence in the case files of OP linking and networking with other street child organisations. Being a part-of child welfare, their social worker liases with the children's courts, they refer family cases to social services within the various Cape Metropole districts, they make use of expertise such as doctors, family planning centres, professional counselling programmes (such as "Healing of Memories Workshop"), educational psychologists, children's hospitals, mental hospitals, other children's homes, various schools, special needs schools, child protection units and affiliation to the street child forum. This is a network of key relationships that forms the safety-net for the street child. These relationships are all the more established due to their relatively long history of working with street children. This is to be seen as a strength.
b. The above network is primarily horizontal in nature, and although it looks 'gap-proof', children still fall through the net. This happens in four forms:
i. There will always be less visible, and more vulnerable children who are never picked up by the system.

ii. Some girls at OP are disciplined repeatedly for offences. Disciplinary measures taken include counselling the child repeatedly, trying to get to the root of the behaviour, e.g. a negative self-image. From here the child is given a warning. Discipline is based on the Logical Consequence Model, which encourages responsibility. Consequences can include forfeiting of privileges, extra cleaning duties or chores. If they fail to respond to discipline they are eventually put out of OP back onto the street. It is important to note that this only occurs after several warnings, if the child is nearly eighteen and therefore "no longer a victim", and when their disruptive behaviour becomes a threat to other girls, e.g. pimping them. For such girls there are few alternatives other than the street.[5]

iii. The child runs away from OP. At least 48% run-away from OP at some stage of their stay (see later in this Chapter for a discussion thereof). Although many return, there still exist those who don't and therefore simply fall through the system.[6]

iv. When the child is returned to the family, there is little/no follow-up. The literature claims that this often results in the child returning to the streets. The CASP (2000) study would strongly suggest that this is not true of OP, because there are only seven girls living *independently* on the streets of Cape Town.

**3. How to wean the child off the street?**

There is no official policy in place to address this question and likewise, as we saw in Chapter Two, there is no consensus from practitioners on the ground.

OP has an informal internal policy of gradually weaning the child off the street (interview with housemother). This means that each child is treated on an individual basis, where street children who have adopted a greater amount of street culture are given more slack, grace, time and space to adjust to routine.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) and the constitution dictate that shelters must have an open door policy. This is based on the premise of the child's right to liberty. OP agree with this from the basis that a self-referred child is easier to work with from a motivational point of view. However, OP has 'added' to this policy, by locking the gate, which protects the child from criminal elements on the street and

[5] There is the option of industrial school, but due to a lack of resources, a child can expect to wait one to two years before a vacancy becomes available, which effectively means that in reality it is seldom a possibility (interview with director, 25 July 2001).

[6] As soon as a child runs-away, OP report it to the police, where possible, phone family and friends and even send other girls to search for her (interview with director, 25 July 2001).

enforces accountability, as the child must behave like a normal child by asking permission to go outside onto the street.[7]

**4. Rehabilitation back into the family.**

In Chapter Two it was pointed out that this is an area of concern. The previous administration focused on the goal of rehabilitating the child back to his/her family, but the exact logistics of how were under-formulated. Subsequently proposals have been raised to address this concern, but as yet nothing has been adopted as official policy. One such option being that interventions should be based in the communities close to the family and community concerned. Giving thought to how OP responds to such needs, we find the following:

a. OP is not based in the community and therefore could do more to rehabilitate the family of the child itself. Although it needs to be pointed out that the family are not submitting themselves for treatment, making family rehabilitation complex (interview with director, 25 July 2001). OP does liase with the family through family investigations, and referral of cases to social services within that community and within the broader Provincial Social Welfare framework. Yet more could be done to follow-up, on a long-term basis, where the child is referred back to her family (although logistically and financially this may be impossible). OP does have a family rehabilitation programme, which involves counselling and where need be, referral to other projects for parental training.

b. OP have been criticised for being in Cape Town and not in the community. This is said to attract children out of the community into the city. However, OP also caters for children who come from other cities and towns. If there are shelters like OP in the various communities and OP remained in the city, then the policy model/system would be several layers thick, thereby increasing the chances of 'picking a child up'. The first 'catchment' being in the community, the second being OP that is based in the city. Having 'satellite' shelters in the communities can also help with family rehabilitation, as

[7] The open door facility is based on the premise that children want to be in a shelter, but there are children who keep running away. To deal with such children, OP used to send them to a state children's home based in Kimberly, which had a school on the property. This is no longer possible as recent amendments to the national policy does not allow for inter-provincial transfers. Unfortunately there is a lack of such resources in the Western Cape. Jackson (director of OP, interview, 25 July 2001), believes that such volatile children should be contained in a small place for a minimum period of six months. This would facilitate sufficient time for relationships with caring staff to be established. Such relationships are essential for the healing process. However this is seldom necessary anymore as OP 'picks-up' the girls before they become street children. Under such a model, the child has two options: 1. The child comes in voluntarily; 2. The child is sent to a small lock-up facility, which is for the child's own good.

shelters could network. However, with their current facilities, OP cannot be in every local community and therefore defend their location in the city because 'they are where the children are'. To have many shelters in the various communities would be more costly than one central one based in the city.[8]

c. OP is only dealing with the symptoms, not the root causes of family disintegration, poverty and a culture of crime and violence. However, even the SA Law Commission (1998) acknowledges the limitation of national policy to effectively address such issues.

d. OP is powerless to prevent the child from running away from home again once she has been rehabilitated.

It therefore becomes apparent that OP's effectiveness and power to influence at the family rehabilitation stage is minor. However, OP does try and send the child home on weekends so as to build and maintain relationships with family members in the hope of successful family rehabilitation. This is in keeping with the Child Care Act (1983).

Overall, OP complies with the law (policy included). In other words they aim to enrol all the girls in their care back into school (achieving as high as 75%), thus complying with the Schools Act (1996). OP does not push girls 'under-age' to find work, thereby complying with the Labour Act.

At this stage it becomes necessary to create a theoretical dichotomy, primarily for analytical and clarity purposes. On the one hand we have the policy and programmes that OP are implementing to rehabilitate the children back to mainstream society. The programmes, policies and the how and application of the policies can be seen as one entity. On the other hand, we have the children themselves and their issues. Knowing the children's needs and responsiveness to possible programmes is essential for the success of the intervention itself. In reality these should not be separate and for the policies and programmes to be relevant, they need to meet these needs and the two

[8] OP plan to expand their facilities in town as they expect some of the 800,000 AIDS orphans to run to town for income and neutrality (e.g. putting distance between themselves and the rapist). For this to happen, more funds are needed. State policy is against more children's homes, therefore OP plan to expand into giving day programmes in the community. OP are also expanding their training services, where they invite community workers to come to OP for skills training. These people are then sent back to the community better equipped. This is a type of leadership training (interview with director, 25 July 2001).

entities need to 'equate', 'come together', and 'correlate'.[9] The aim of this next analysis is to determine if the programmes and policies developed by OP can inform national policy, but there is no way to be certain, if in practice, they do not work and meet the child's needs. Therefore it becomes necessary to evaluate OP's programmes to see if they are relevant/successful (if so, the practices adopted by OP could inform a national street child policy).

I will first give an overview of the children and their issues, and then I will look specifically at OP's programmes.

**What do the children at Ons Plek 'look' like? A documentary case analysis.**

(This section is a summary and a condensed overview. A larger, more detailed, substantiated and explanatory manuscript is available, complete with graphs and spread sheets. These are not included in this dissertation, due to space constraints, but the manuscript is available on request).

The purpose of including this summary is to give an idea of the nature and issues of the children at OP as well as to support and back-up findings in other sections. All information is derived from the sample of 61 cases (although one of the cases was in fact a boy dressed as a girl). The case files of the girls concerned were studied in detail and the methodology used is discussed in Chapter Three. However, it should be stressed, the statistics that follow are merely an indication and have limitations. This is because the statistics are derived from the case files that record incidents (not necessarily behaviour or habit). The case files themselves are not exhaustive, they do not record every detail and they cannot possibly record every detail of the child's life BEFORE coming to OP. Where I do give statistics BEFORE coming to OP, these are found in the case files and came about through the background investigative work of OP.

The first section is calculated on reports that documented biographical background and behaviour BEFORE coming to OP.



[9] This analytical tool may look like a child-centred approach – meeting the child where she is at and being relevant to her needs. I believe interventions should go further than this, uplifting the child, aiming for a higher ideal. In this analysis – mainstream society.

**1. Language background**

On average, the girls spoke 'one and a half' languages each. 62% spoke Xhosa; 43% spoke Afrikaans; 26% spoke English; and 10% spoke another language. It is clear that over the history of OP, the number of Xhosa speaking girls has increased with time, indicating a shift from a dominant coloured Afrikaans speaking street child composition in the Cape to a dominant Black Xhosa speaking street child phenomenon in the Cape. This is most likely due to the influx of Xhosa speaking families into the Cape from the Eastern Cape.

**2. Age upon arrival**

The average age upon arrival is 14 years and three months, with the oldest being 26 and the youngest being nine. The majority are between 12 and 16 years old. This indicates that street children at OP are younger than they were ten years ago (see Keen, 1989: 8). This could be because of a greater degree of family disintegration and brokenness, than a generation ago (interview with director of OP).

**3. Composition of who the child was staying with. A look at family life**

Only 13% were staying with both their biological parents, who were not necessarily married. This effectively means that 87% (perhaps higher, under a broader definition) came from broken families.

Only 53% of the girls' were living with their biological mothers, while only 21% of the biological fathers' were at home. 11% were staying with extended family.

54% of the girls came from reconstituted families (i.e. a step-parent), while 39% came from single parent families. 7% were staying either in a children's home, with a friend or neighbour, or living on the street.

The breakdown of family is reaching pandemic proportions. In the US, the greatest cause of fatherlessness is through divorce. However it was expected that by the year 2000, this cause would be overtaken by illegitimacy or non-marital births (see Popenoe, 1996). For this sample of street children, the greatest cause of fatherlessness is illegitimacy. The negative effects of fatherlessness have been widely documented, which includes, lower academic achievements, higher incidence of teenage pregnancies, higher incidence of juvenile delinquency and greater levels of drug addiction (see Popenoe, 1996; Adams et al, 1984).

**4. Place of residence**

At least 75 - 84% of the girls came from townships/informal settlements. 20% came from outside of Cape Town (some arriving with truck drivers); 2% were living on the streets (this is proof of OP's early intervention); 8% came from lower income residential areas; 3% came from 'higher' income residential areas (by no means were they wealthy); and 3% were unknown or unrecorded in the case files.

The general trend is that the girls came from environments far from ideal (e.g. many girls were negatively influenced by local shebeens); and the location of their homes supports the notion of poverty.

**5. Type of abuse**

These statistics are taken from 'reported' abuse and therefore in all probability the reality is more extreme. Classifying the various types of abuse would help with effective rehabilitation and a further understanding of the nature of family breakdown.

**6. Sexual abuse**

I defined sexual abuse as rape, forced into prostitution by an adult or member of their family and/or sexual molestation. 34% reported some kind of sexual abuse. I found this figure to be conservative. South Africa has the highest rape rate in the world, for example, with one in three Johannesburg schoolgirls experiencing sexual violence at school (http://www.rapecrisis.org.za).

Of those that were sexually abused, 45% were abused by a member of their family (includes boyfriends of the mother), while 55% were sexually abused by someone in the community (includes strangers and neighbours). Generally, one would expect the number of family related abuses to exceed the number of community ones. The reverse of this is indicative of the broken communities, broken families and lawlessness. Males committed all the community sexual abuses, while females committed three of the 16 family sexual abuses. This equates to 90% of ('family') sexual abuses were committed by males and 10% by females.

**7. Other abuse**

I categorised the types of abuse into: 'AGGRESSIVE' Abuse, which includes sexual abuse, being threatened, physically abused and chased-away from home; and

'PASSIVE' Abuse, which includes being neglected, emotionally abused, verbally abused and abandoned.

69% of the girls were 'AGGRESSIVELY' Abused. This can be broken down to reveal that: 34% were sexually abused, 10% were threatened, 39% were physically abused and 7% reported being chased-away from home.

51% of the girls were 'PASSIVELY' Abused. This can be broken down to reveal that: 38% reported being neglected (e.g. given no food or no school uniform), 16% reported emotional abuse, 5% reported verbal abuse, and 7% were abandoned.

34% of the girls reported alcohol abuse by at least one parental figure in the family. Alcohol abuse is often linked to other forms of abuse.

11% reported 'other' types of abuse. This includes being traumatised by being abducted and used in a sangoma ritual; accidentally abandoned at the railway station; the child had a mental disorder, refugee related trauma.

Of the 'AGGRESSIVE' Abuses, 64% were committed by males and 36% by females.
Of the 'PASSIVE' Abuses, 27% were committed by males and 73% by females.
Although there are a greater number of females in the girls' lives, the high incidence of females responsible for abuse is alarming. The traditional role of the woman as nurturer appears to be under threat. This speaks of a culture under threat. Indeed Barnes-September et al (2000: 87) were shocked to discover that child prostitutes suffered as much physical abuse from female pimps as they did from male ones.

**8. Time on the street**

30% of the girls had spent no time on the street; 21% is unknown (either not recorded in the case files, or the girls themselves were unsure); 21% had spent one week or less; 11% had spent between one week and three months; 11% had spent three months or more on the street. 5% were refugees and therefore spent years away from home.

If we take one month on the street as a loose definition to define a street child, then only 19% of the girls in OP are street children. This either means that OP is not reaching the 'hidden', 'vulnerable' street children, or they are so effective that they are taking them in

before such time, thereby preventing the children becoming 'real' street children. The study by CASP (2000) would suggest the latter.

**9. Educational background of the girls**

100% of the girls attended formal school at some stage of their lives. Of these, 74% dropped out, while 26% were still in school when they arrived at OP.

The average highest grade attended was grade 6 (Primary School, std. 4). On average they were two chronological years behind school age, i.e. two years older than their peers. (This is conservative, because only recently did the school starting age go from six to seven years and most of the girls would have started school at age six).

**10. Type of work done before coming to Ons Plek**

I define 'work' very broadly to mean anything to obtain money and survive (from working in restaurants, domestic work, begging, to criminal work such as prostitution to petty crime. 'Work' is also defined as being time flexible, and includes both part-time and full-time work). Dunford (1996) uses the same definition.

41% of the girls were working prior to coming to OP. Of those working, 82% were involved in criminal type work (gang-related activities, prostitution, theft) and 27% were involved with non-criminal type work (begging, domestic work, restaurant kitchen work). The overlap is because some of the girls were involved with both.

**11. Type of work while (DURING) at Ons Plek**

35% of the girls were working while at OP. Unfortunately, of those working, 79% of the sample were involved in incidents of criminal type work (pimping other girls, gang-related, theft, prostitution), while 26% were involved with non-criminal type work (begging, disability grant, car-park attendant, hair-braiding, child-minding, making and selling beads). The figures are roughly the same as before coming to OP, this despite the fact that OP has a limited Vocational Skills Programme. This would suggest the need for a remedial programme to specifically address the high incidence of criminal/deviant behaviour.[10]

[10] The director of OP believes that all counselling, educational assistance and discipline at OP is remedial and addresses deviant behaviour. However, all programmes dealing with abused and marginalised children can expect low results (interview with director, 25 July 2001).

Of those working in criminal type work while at OP, the following deductions can be made: OP failed to prevent five girls from continuing this type of work; OP managed to stop thirteen girls who were doing criminal type work prior to coming to OP; but at the same time failed to prevent ten new girls from getting involved in criminal type work.[11]

The number of those working in non-criminal type work prior to coming to OP is the same as those working in non-criminal type work while (DURING) at OP. There is no increase. This raises concern over the success of the Vocational Skills Programme.[12]

**12. Behaviour displayed before and while at Ons Plek by 'definites' only[13]**

**12a. Running away**

48% of girls ran-away from OP at some stage of their stay (many of them did return), tying in with other studies, that about half of all street children have absconded from institutions (see Richter, 1990). However, the limitation here is that I failed to look at how many of these girls returned to OP. Another limitation is the unclear distinction between sleeping out without permission (more temporary) and running away (more permanent). Because, these figures were derived from the case files, it is nearly impossible to make absolute distinctions. Nevertheless, 48% is high despite OP's conservative interpretation of the "open door policy." Methods need to be sought to reduce this statistic.

If we consider only those that had run-away from home and thus landed up at OP, then: 40% of these run-aways ran-away from OP; 35% settled down and never absconded from OP; 8% of those that absconded from OP, had no history of such behaviour.[14] It



[11] There is no mention in the case files of these ten girls being involved in criminal type work before coming to OP, but this does not guarantee that they were not involved. This limitation has been acknowledged in Chapter Three and at the beginning of this section.

[12] The Vocational Programme has fallen under the Educational Programme. Thinking long-term, OP prefer to have the child attend school rather than work. However, a more substantial pilot programme was initiated in 2000 for sixteen year olds and older, which has now led OP to employ a full-time vocational trainer. More success can be expected in times to come. Finally it is worth pointing out that unskilled 'over sixteens' are a difficult group to find work for (interview with director, 25 July, 2001).

[13] NB: 21 of the 61 cases in the sample can be excluded from this section because of: 1. Insufficient information (too short), and 2. the child's stay at OP was too short to have gathered sufficient information, thus leaving a sample of 40. The reason that this was not done for the other statistics was because they depended mainly on biographical data and in most cases OP recorded such information in their cover sheets, upon the child's arrival at OP. Behavioural information can only be gathered with some accuracy over a period of time. Unless otherwise stated, behaviour displayed includes both BEFORE and DURING their stay at OP.

[14] There is no mention in the case files of these ten girls absconding before coming to OP, but this does not guarantee that they did not. This limitation has been acknowledged in Chapter Three and at the beginning of this section.

therefore becomes evident that much of the behaviour displayed at OP is learned or repeated behaviour.

**12b. Sexually dysfunctional behaviour**

I define sexually dysfunctional behaviour broadly to include: sexual abuse, pimping, prostitution and promiscuity. 70% of all definites reported/were defined as having, some kind of sexually dysfunctional behaviour at some stage of their lives (BEFORE and DURING their stay at OP).

Of those in the sample, 30% were never involved in sexually dysfunctional behaviour, 25% stopped behaving in a sexually dysfunctional manner once at OP, while 45% were involved in sexually dysfunctional behaviour while at OP (this can further be broken down to reveal that of these 45%, 30% were repeating behaviour, while the remaining 15% were displaying sexually dysfunctional behaviour for the first time). This shows the need for a counselling programme that effectively deals with sexual brokenness. Such a programme "exists and is in depth" and functions on a continuous informal day-to-day basis (interview with director, 25 July 2001).

**12c. Theft**

50% of all definites were involved in incidents of theft at some stage of their lives. Of those in the sample, 50% were never involved in theft, 20% stopped stealing once at OP, while 30% were involved in stealing while at OP[15] (this can further be broken down to reveal that of these 30%, 10% were repeating behaviour, while, from evidence in the case files, the remaining 20% were reported to be involved in theft for the first time). There is a programme to address theft, namely the child is first counselled, then if appropriate, the child is to make restitution, and take responsibility (e.g. she is to apologise to the shop-keeper concerned). Unlike many shelters, OP will not simply defend their children if guilty, but encourage justice. Sometimes OP has even laid charges against girls who have stolen from OP. This should be seen in the light that justice now, could prevent future criminal activity and encourage respect for the law, which is in the child's best interest. Those that stopped stealing can be explained through their basic needs of shelter, clothing, food, clean water and education was being

[15] Once again, the limitation must be acknowledged. These figures can not be absolutised as OP did not go out of their way to ask if the children stole before coming to OP, therefore there is no scientific baseline data. These figures are based on information that was recorded in the case files.

met by OP, hence the need to steal has been diminished. There is no obvious explanation for the same amount that started stealing for the first time.

### 12d. Other behaviours[16]

| Behaviour | Percentage displaying behaviour |
|---|---|
| Sleeping out[17] | 58% |
| Rudeness/Cheekiness to Adults | 62% |
| Not following instructions | 75% |
| Substance abuse[18] | 40% |
| Truanting from school | 22% |
| Fighting with peers[19] | 35% |
| Being bullied by others | 38% |
| Overly quiet/depressed/withdrawn | 48% |
| Overly loud/psychosis[20] | 10% |
| Boyfriends[21] | 55% |
| Manipulative[22] | 42% |
| Lying[23] | 62% |
| Mental handicap[24] | 42% |

[16] The only other comparable statistics I could find in the literature was the research done by Richter (1990 & 1996). Basically Richter classified behaviours into, acting out behaviours (lying, stealing, sleeping out), depression and cognitive impairment/mental handicap. In all cases, the percentage of those displaying such behaviours was about 33% or a third. Generally, the percentages are higher than this for OP girls. This can be explained by my in depth study of the case files, but also these percentages for OP girls may be somewhat inflated in that they include incidents of behaviour. I had no way of differentiating incidents from repeated habit forming behaviour. However, in saying that, many of the children did display repetitive behaviours and therefore these percentages cannot simply be dismissed, although they would need to be triangulated in order to hold scientific weight.

[17] Sleeping out is when a child sleeps out of the shelter without permission.

[18] Substance abuse includes alcohol and dagga. Rarely, for OP girls is there a problem with thinners or glue. Drug abuse is more common amongst male street children.

[19] This is predominantly displayed by bullies, but does include volatile children who use physical fighting as a means to an end.

[20] Psychosis type behaviour includes uncontrolled outbursts of laughter for no apparent reason, dancing in the street when no music is playing, sleepwalking at night, talking to oneself at night. Most of these girls were sent to a psychiatric hospital.

[21] An in depth study is available as part of the additional manuscript. Basically all relationships with boyfriends had negative consequences for the girls concerned (very few exceptions). From increased cheekiness and showing off, to loss of interest in schooling, to extremes of rape, murder and even the staff at OP's lives being threatened. A programme is needed specifically to assist the girls in building healthy boundaries in relationships, wisdom in choosing a 'decent' boyfriend, planning for the future, plus looking at alternatives to meeting the emotional needs in these girls' lives.

[22] I defined manipulative as deceitful, playing parent up against parent, exploiting the 'goals' and 'objectives' of OP to get their own way.

[23] Donald et al (1994) show in their research, that for the street child, the ability to deceive an adult is considered an act of power.

**Comment:**

It becomes apparent that there are discrepancies between some of my findings and the stated outcomes in the *"Framework for a service plan, Ons Plek Projects, 2000"* and *"Sifunda ukuphila"* documents. I will comment on these in Chapter Five. It also becomes clear that the nature of this clientele (street children) is not as simplistic as one might imagine. Perhaps, such a problematic clientele would fail to respond to most programmes, thereby making them look ineffective. For example, for both the sexually dysfunctional behaviour (12b) and the theft (12c), OP appears to have comprehensive programmes. Questions might be raised about the success of such programmes given the high incidence of repeat behaviour despite the intensive counselling. However, as the director pointed out, repeat behaviour is not necessarily a sign that the programme is failing. Like most addictions, the deliverance from vices is not instantaneous, but rather progressive, with the distances between relapses (repeat behaviour) ever widening, until new systems of behaviour are learnt and adopted (interview, 25 July 2001).

I will know summarise and then review the programmes developed by OP.

## A closer look at the internal programmes and policies of Ons Plek

The Child Care Act lays out guidelines for interventions, but the exact nature and interpretation of these guidelines is open to interpretation. The following programmes are laid out in an OP policy document known as the *"Framework for a Service Plan, Ons Plek Projects, 2000."*

## Educational and Vocational Programmes offered at Ons Plek

Various programmes have been developed to achieve the aims of OP. These are closely integrated and consist of:

- Personal assessment
- Informal education
- Formal education
- Education support for girls in formal education
- Homework support programme

[24] Mentally impaired children require more time and expert help. With staff shortages, lack of properly trained professionals and non-ideal environments, this will prove challenging for the staff at OP. However, it must be said that OP often consult educational psychologists, refer such children to special needs schools and generally do exceptionally well under the circumstances. When age appropriate (16) OP often go to the trouble of arranging a disability grant for the girl concerned.

- Interactive educational workshops
- Computer supported education
- Education through crafts
- Vocational and life skills groups
- Volunteer programme
- Bursaries
- Resource building and staff training
- Advocacy

These can be expounded on to reveal the following:

**1. Informal and Formal Education**

Education is traditionally seen as a viable option for rehabilitation back into mainstream society, OP has developed the following programmes:

**1a. Informal Education**

Most of the girls experience smaller or larger developmental 'gaps' due to poverty, neglect, social circumstances, physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse at some stage in their personal history. Very few girls are ready to return to formal school upon intake and for others, no suitable formal education options may exist. This supports the existence of a morning school (two hours per day from about 10 until 12pm) where the girls are gently brought into practising sustained concentration and effort, and co-operating in a group. The girls are also assessed so as to draw up an individual care/educational and vocational plan for their lives.

Initially the girls referred to Morning School as "poppie skool" - a dolls play school. Recently a navy and white school uniform and a school bell were introduced to show learners that this school was real, valuable and serious.

About 100 girls are assessed annually by the Vocational Co-ordinator in conjunction with: the School Support Teacher who is Xhosa speaking, two voluntary Morning School teachers, the Director, social worker and Child Care Staff. The Formal Educational Assessment includes: verbal and non-verbal tests, ability and potential related testing as well as scholastic testing. With IQ testing the Vocational Co-ordinator consults the testing psychologist to ensure that reasonable allowance has been made for cultural,

linguistic and emotional factors affecting the assessment process. Then the Vocational Co-ordinator tries to access the best available educational opportunities for each girl, matching these as closely as possible to each girl's needs.

This programme is very flexible, while the aims are clear. It can also act like a bridging programme (from the street with no schooling, to shelter with two hours of schooling, to formal school with about six hours of schooling).

The focus of these sessions is communication, especially English communication (English is the 'unofficial' official and status language in South Africa, thus allowing the girls "to interact with the mainstream culture'). Through games and puzzles the following are developed: cognitive development, numeracy, literacy in child's first language and English. Life skill discussions are also facilitated.

Between six and eighteen girls attend daily in two classes, a larger class for older learners and those able to work more independently, and a smaller class for younger learners.

Some girls return from streets specifically because they like their teacher and their classes so much.

**1b. Holiday Programme**

This is run by the School Support Teacher for those who do not go home during school holidays. Activities include: baking, candle making, interactive group work programmes, visits to museums with interesting activities, traditional African games, traditional African story telling sessions and bead work programmes.

**1c. Interactive Educational Workshops: Drama**

This programme currently consists of about 14 girls who create plays, read and produce dance and music items.

**1d. Computer Based Learning Programme**

This includes computer literacy, familiarising girls with the use of keyboard and mouse. Girls first work on the older tougher PCs that run on DOS based games, a typing tutor and word processor, then once they have learnt to manipulate the keyboard, mouse, and on/off switches, and learnt to control their tempers and energy levels so as not to be a

danger to the hardware, they are allowed to use the multimedia machines with interactive educational software in the computer class under supervision.

**1e. Formal Education and Support Programmes**

The lack of available educational vacancies within formal schools greatly hinders this process. Formal education is a powerful symbol for all the girls, since it represents to them and to the community a 'real' return to mainstream society.

Girls are placed on a case-by-case basis, when they are committed and ready to re-enter the formal education system (for some it is the first time in school).

Schools the girls attend include Skills High Schools for learners with special needs, such as Batavia and Florida. Other schools include The Molenbeeck Training Centre for more seriously mentally challenged, a range of local and township primary schools and a technical college. Criteria for school choice include: transport (safe public transport); does it meet the needs of older learners, does it accommodate language of the child, and meet the special learning needs of the child; proximity to the community to which the child wants to be re-united.

About 75% of those who stay at OP for a while (not returned to families immediately) attend formal school.

**1f. Homework Assistance Programme**

This programme was introduced in 1996, where upon the pass rate shot up from 5% to 95%! Educational barriers for girls attending OP include: language of instruction, attitudes of teachers, lack of facilities, emotional barriers, peer group problems and lack of previous guidance with homework. The girls are provided with structured support to assist them with their homework in the afternoons, the teaching of study skills and helping girls grasp concepts.

**1g. School Liaison**

The School Support Teacher liases with schools to support and provide information to the teachers concerned with regard to teaching the girls. OP also works with the Provincial Education Department School Support Centres, especially with those girls who are in LSEN (Learners with Special Educational Needs) classes. LSEN classes

work well, because of the relatively small classes and the expertise of the teachers. However the government is phasing these out.

**2. Vocational Preparation Support Programme**

Like education, equipping the child to work and survive is viewed as an option to reintegration back into the mainstream of society.

**2a. The Vocational Skills - group and individual sessions**

The girls participate in flexibly structured groups designed to accommodate their needs. These include Life Story Books, which help the girls to piece their pasts together and form a foundation for doing year-to-year planning. Girls are helped to become conscious of their strengths, and given resources to understand how they can use these in a work situation.

**2b. Personal Vocational Plans**

The girls meet with the Vocational Skills Co-ordinator in a one-to-one interview. They discuss future educational and vocational plans; this is followed up to ensure that implementation is taking place. The girls volunteer for work shadow and work experience programmes. These interviews are followed up with placements, bursaries, counselling, health issues, and networking.

**3. Volunteer Programme**

Outside volunteers are 'employed' on the basis, that they will volunteer for a minimum period of one-year. They add fresh expertise to the program.

**4. Life Skills Programme**

Life skills programmes deal with personal development and equipping to function in the mainstream. OP has developed the following programmes:

**4a. Baby and Home Care Life Skills Programme**

Many of the girls will become mothers and all will need home-care and home making skills. This is taught practically through everyday experience. This is a long-term strategy as it is also aimed at preventing the girls' children becoming street children by ensuring that they properly care for their children.

**4b. Relationship Skills**

Relationship skills necessary for success of future family, social and work prospects are taught and mentored on an on going basis. This is particularly boosted by the fact that the adult staff live and work with the children on a daily basis.

**5. Other Programmes**

Other programmes include conflict resolution groups among girls/staff that involves role-playing; plus workshops on wife battering, sex, contraception, HIV/Aids, substance abuse and nutrition.

OP also has a daily focus on house management skills, such as cleaning, ironing, shopping, and baby care, which are all learnt practically through everyday experience.

**6. Cultural Roots and Rites of Passage Programme**

This programme is closely linked to the family reunification programme. It is aimed at increasing the child's sense of belonging, heritage and cultural roots. Often this is done by sending the girls to visit wider family in rural areas, who cared for them for a period when they were little.

Another aspect of the rites of passage process into adulthood is three days spent in the country. They are told cultural stories, they confront various fears by partaking in certain activities, they spend time on their own getting in touch with their emotions, fears, hopes (this is a major challenge), they accept responsibility for themselves and their actions. Another programme includes trips to Robben Island, which includes talks on South African and other struggle history. The aim of these is to teach respect for other cultures (interview with director, 25 July, 2001).

**7. Counselling Programme**

Counselling is essential to help girls overcome and work through neglectful, abusive and traumatic experiences of violence. Nearly all the girls report an inability to concentrate due to 'bad thoughts'. This includes serious depression and post-traumatic stress, in addition to the stress of adjusting to mainstream society. All the girls in the programme show signs of low self-esteem. Counselling goes around issues such as: peer group participation, self-image, current problems in relation to the girl's family, as well as work on deeper psychological trauma such as past sexual abuse and abandonment.

Counselling helps the girls form better relationships with the adults in their lives and motivates them to participate in educational activities.

See Appendix 7 for a diagrammatic expression of where OP fits into the broader policy and Appendix 8 for a diagrammatic expression of the programmes offered by OP (admittedly this diagram is not able to fully express the complexities of how these programmes might happen in a different order depending on the needs of an individual child. In other words the structure of the programmes is flexible).

**Concluding comments**

The above programmes are innovative and were developed over time as the needs were identified. This can therefore be viewed as policy in practice. To see how they worked themselves out in practice/reality, using the case files to do a documentary case analysis, I have put together the following evaluation. As pointed out earlier, should these programmes prove successful in practice, then perhaps these programmes and policies can be applied generically, i.e. forming part of a national street child policy.

**Evaluation and analysis of OP's *"Framework for a Service Plan, Ons Plek Projects, 2000"* with reference to the case files.**

*The Framework for a Serviced Plan, Ons Plek Projects, 2000* is more a guideline than reality. The director explained (in an interview) that it is difficult to simply implement a programme, as the children are so damaged (they have difficulty concentrating, mental handicaps and emotional needs). The director explained that the girls are not like robots that can simply be re-programmed. From the case files it becomes apparent that intervention work is not as clean and neat as the Service Plan Framework suggests. Success appears to depend more on the human element, the human relationship, a relationship of trust, and the complexities and meanings that happen within those contexts, than the neat clinical objective programmes, where it is supposed that the child enters in one end and comes out altered on the other. The programmes happened as much on an informal basis as they did on a formal. By informal, I mean programmes that were there to support the staff members, something they could apply, fallback on and work within on their day-to-day dealings with the children. They are tools, much like a doctor has a range of medicines to choose from in prescribing a treatment. A 'patient' may respond positively to one and be allergic to the other. Each 'patient' is treated

individually and may not receive the same medicine).[25] But there is evidence that the programmes as laid out in the Service Plan did occur, and to a degree with some success.

I will now briefly review these programmes, with specific reference to the case files.

**Informal Education/Morning School**

OP claim that the function of the two hour a day Morning School is a step toward reintroducing the child into formal schooling. It is a place where basic communication is taught. While the child attends Morning School, she is assessed so as to place her in an appropriate school that will be in her best interests.

On the basis of evidence in the case files, it could be argued that morning school is relatively successful. Sophie Shoko is an example of this:

01-03-99 . . . She is attending morning school at Ons Plek and improving. Her alphabet, handwriting, effort and co-operation is all improving. . . (Sophie Shoko).

There is also evidence to show that assessment did take place:

22-09-98 . . . At Ons Plek's morning school, she could write and spell in Afrikaans. . . (Melissa van Tonder) (This girl had a mental handicap).

Morning school can also be viewed as successful because it acted as a bridging programme from being out of school, to a full return to formal education. The following quote confirms this:

05-08-98 . . . She attended Morning School classes and showed potential to be able to cope in Mainstream. But before this could be explored she developed behaviour problems. . . (Gladys Ludidi).

One aim of morning school is to settle the children down, then when at a place of sufficient emotional stability; more formal educational placements can be sought. It also becomes clear from the case files that if a child is too old to be returned to school, then alternative paths are sought as a means of rehabilitation, most notably work.

11-06-99 Tamara worked out a budget, she is not attending morning school because she needs to find accommodation and employment. . . (Tamara Smit).

There are however signs of shortcomings and difficulty:

28-01-00 Ons Plek realise that in two years all she has done is 4 months of morning school . . . (Agnes Mabandlela) (The child kept running away)

[25] This is significant. Social Sciences tend to conceive the doctor analogy as one treatment suits all patients. Here we have each patient being treated individually. This is a case of the human element being placed above the programme rather than the other way round.

**Conclusion:**

There is evidence of the Informal Education/Morning School Programme taking place as laid out in *The Framework for a Service Plan, Ons Plek Projects, 2000*. OP makes a continuous effort to update their morning school programme, educational materials and curriculum.

**Holiday Programme**

The Holiday Programme is educational in nature. Without doubt, the Holiday Programme has enjoyed some success, as the following quote reveals:

30-03-99 (After an education trip on which she acted very maturely). She sent a note to OP thanking them for the trip. She said that her mother would never do that for her. . .(Pinki Pango)

Where possible, girls are sent home during the holidays (and weekends) to be with family. The holiday programme is for those girls who stay at OP during the holidays. There does seem to be some advantage of sending the child on the holiday programme as opposed to sending the child back to negative, unresolved community environments, as seen in the life of Pricilla Meyer:

15-01-99 On holiday Patricia was drinking alcohol. . . (Patricia Melkstroom).

**Conclusion:**

There is evidence of the holiday trips being arranged for stable and well-behaved children. These are educational in nature. There is also evidence of girls not being sent on trips due to fear that they may run-away. OP uses the STEP (Systematically Training Effective Parenting) method of 'discipline'. STEP is designed to put the responsibility and power into the hands of the child. Examples exist where girls forfeit the privilege of going on trips if their behaviour does not improve (behaviour altering). This effectively empowers them to choose.

**Interactive Educational Workshops: Drama**

I found no evidence (from the case files) in my sample of the girls participating in such a programme. However, this programme is run weekly by Miss Jane Lawrence, a former senior lecturer at a teacher training college (interview with the director, 25 July 2001).

**Computer Based Learning Programme**

I found no evidence (from the case files) in my sample of the girls participating in such a programme. However this programme is for the more stable girls, i.e. those at Siviwe.

## Formal Education and Support Programmes

OP aim to send the girls back to formal school. This is seen as a major step towards re-entering the mainstream of society. From the case files, there were examples of what appears to be successful rehabilitation back into school life:

19-08-99 . . .She tries hard at school and is making steady progress. . . (Pinki Pango)

31-10-97 She is promising at school. She is quiet and does not raise her hand and does not participate in class. She will pass at the end of the year. She is to go to prize giving on Sunday at 1pm (Winnie Mapela)

OP also demonstrate a sensitivity towards and a support for the children's education:

06-06-00 She is doing 2 years in one . . . OP staff told to leave her (no more errands) as she has to study. She has exams at present. (Fatiwa Dyangkini) (This child did standard 9 and 10 in one year at Cape College, studying very hard).

But while there are signs of success, there is also evidence of children experiencing difficulty reintegrating into mainstream schooling, as the following example suggests. In cases like these, OP often intervenes by doing a school visit.

13-08-99 . . . She says that she hates school as the children are rude and nasty to her. . . (Gloria Ntsebeza).

As can be expected, most of these girls carry emotional baggage, and therefore may experience problems around motivation:

22-01-99 She is depressed. In December she spent time with her father; he gave them money. She is losing hope as she wants to be in a 'normal school'. (Patricia Melkstroom) (This child was at a special needs school).

To counter all these school problems, OP gives additional academic support in the form of an Education Support Programme/Homework Assistance Programme:

15-06-96 . . .She was attending Ons Plek's/Siviwe's homework support classes and getting extra English classes from Stephanie. . .(Qamisa Melanto)

### Conclusion:

OP claims that since they started this education support programme, they have had a 95% pass rate. Educationally speaking such a programme is very sound pedagogically. Such a programme/model is to be applauded, is a strength of OP's Education Programme and deserves further research and development.

## School Liaison

This includes school visits by members of OP staff.

There is evidence within the case files of negotiations with school authorities and championing the rights of the child:

4-06-99 The social worker negotiated with the school as her parent's can't afford the costs of sending her to school. . . (Belinda Klein)

But the involvement of OP staff in the school lives of the girls goes beyond an administrative nature. This next quotation is an example of that:

27-03-98 Nombule is picking on Winnie at school. Nombule says bad things and wrote a letter about her. OP plan to help Winnie defend herself. . . The house-mother is to go and see the principal. When the school opens, OP will speak to Nombule. (Winnie Mapela)

**Conclusion:**

The more involvement and encouragement in the school lives of these girls the better for them. In this regard, OP visits the school at least once per term, is in the habit of checking homework books and the child-care worker is expected to phone the school to get progress reports (interview with director, 25 July, 2001).

**Vocational Skills - group and individual sessions**

It becomes clear from the literature (see Richter, 1996) that having the children write Life Story Books and put together their histories is an extremely valuable exercise. This combined with a life plan/path map, which is future orientated is powerful. There are examples of these exercises in some of the girls' files, predominantly in the files of those girls who were at OP for a long time.

It is recommended that these exercises be implemented on a larger scale. Books, literature and experts, such as art psychologists, could be consulted to help, develop and interpret drawings, in this manner.

**Personal Vocational Plans**

There is no evidence of work shadow and work experience programmes from the sample of case files. In fact, in my sample, there was no evidence of a child being placed in a job by OP. There are however examples of vocational plans being drawn up and the entrepreneur programme being implemented. What is positive, is that these Vocational Plans are drawn-up in consultation with the child, empowering the child to take responsibility for their actions and decisions:

11-06-99 Tamara worked out a budget, she is not attending morning school because she needs to find accommodation and employment. . . (Tamara Smit)

However, there are not many successful outcomes of the entrepreneurial programme in the case files. These therefore need to be reviewed.

28-12-99 The business is not going well (selling beads) (Patricia Melkstroom)

**Conclusion:**

There are examples of discussions taking place between the vocational co-ordinator and some of the girls who are at decision-making times of their lives, e.g. matriculating.

Evidence exists of OP helping girls set-up businesses such as the making and selling of beads. However, the making and selling of beads needs to be reviewed, as it is not sustainable and therefore the girls lose faith and patience. Alternatives will be sought, as OP has recently employed a full-time vocational co-ordinator (interview with director, 25 July 2001). OP also liases and networks with vocational service providers, ABET (Adult Basic Education and Training) courses, and others in and around Cape Town. There are excellent courses in the market place such as mini MBAs, specifically designed for the 'lower' end of the market. These are excellent grounding for running your own business. OP could either send a member of staff on such a course so as to be accredited to teach it, or bring in a consultant. Such skills are an imperative for girls being sent back to their communities.

**Baby and Home Care Life Skills Programme**

There is evidence of Home Care Life Skills being taught on an ongoing basis. This includes cooking, cleaning, shopping and 'stock-taking' of groceries in the pantry.

Should girls misbehave they are given punishments/consequences. These often include cleaning the kitchen. However it is recommended that this be reviewed as it is a contradictory message, i.e. wanting the child to view home care in a positive light, yet at the same time using house cleaning as punishment.

There were no examples of OP having access to the girls' babies in my sample, as those who had babies had left them in the care of another person. However, in the Barnes-September study I found the following quote:

> One respondent [child prostitute] was asked why she did not go to 'Ons Plek', a children's shelter and she said that they would take her baby away, and she did not want that to happen as the baby was all she had. Barnes-September et al. (2000: 88).

This quote shows that both researchers and the child prostitute were aware of OP and the work they do. Clearly this child and her baby are in need. Ways will have to be looked at to work around these sensitive issues.

**Cultural Roots and Rites of passage Programme**

There was only one example in my sample of such a programme. This was in the lives of three refugee sisters at OP. OP helped reunite the family, liasing with the Department of Home Affairs as their brothers were stranded in Mozambique. OP can be proud of the manner in which they assisted and re-united this family.

**Counselling Programme**

Effective counselling services are often seen as the greatest gap in service provisions of this nature. Counselling should include: crisis counselling, trauma counselling, long-term interventions, and substance abuse rehabilitation (Barnes-September et al. 2000: 116).

There is evidence of counselling being administered as the issue arises or the underlying problem "manifests". This is then dealt with in a helpful 'problem-solving' manner.

09-07-99 . . . She was counselled by OP as she expects people owe her something. OP spoke to her about self-motivation. . . (Tamara Smit)

16-04-99 . . .They (OP) will help where they can, e.g. HIV counselling. . . (Leana Baardman)

03-02-99 . . . OP counsel Nozuk who is ambivalent and angry with her parents. (Sylvia)

Counselling is also a means of 'discipline' (where appropriate) and a form of parental guidance. It is important that these children get some form of adult input upon which to model their values. OP aims to establish why the child acted in a particular way, and thereby deal with the root of the problem (interview with director, 25 July 2001). The following quotes are an example of the child's behaviour and subsequent actions taken by OP:

19-05-98 It was reported by girls at Ons Plek, that Odwa was touching their private parts and when they are asleep, she climbs into bed with them and masturbates against their backs and fronts (this was done to a number of girls). Ons Plek counselled Odwa as regards to these reports. (Odwa Budani)

13-04-99 The house-mother spoke to her. Joshua is not to come on the weekend. She was sent to family planning. (Thandeka Mahobo)

29-05-98 . . .Sarah fights her way through problems. . . The house-mother spoke to her about hitting people. . . All three girls were caught on the balcony early in the week by the house-mother. Thami accused them of "messing in my vagina" pulling at it. They all denied it. The house-mother spoke to them about not doing it. (Sarah Thompson)

29-05-95 . . .She is feeling safe at Siviwe because she is spoken well to and can sleep well and eat well. She plays sexually with dolls. Ntombi is sleeping naked with the other girls at night and they then look at pornography. The educational co-ordinator told her not to do this.
09-06-95 . . . Ntombi is opening other girl's cupboards and using their things. The house-mother spoke to her about this . . . (Ntombi Ngcangula)

It must be noted that the exact details and content of the counselling are not recorded in the case files. The above quotes also reveal the intensity of the dysfunctional behaviour displayed by the children, therefore it is wise of OP to network and even refer children to experts where appropriate. The following two quotes are an example of that:

04-02-99 Thandeka was assessed by the counselling psychologist. . . (Thandeka Mahobo)

(15-05-98) Ons Plek took her for counselling, after which she decided to have an abortion. . . (Nowonele Mageda)

Some personal problems are merely an extension of dysfunctional family relationships. Furthermore, if a child is to be rehabilitated back to the family, the family should undergo some process of reconstruction. There is evidence in the case files (albeit limited) of families being referred for counselling.

31-05-99 . . .The mother was referred to the parent centre PAWC Khayalitsha and the drug-counselling centre. (Nobuzwe Qwabe)

Within the case files, there is also evidence to suggest that not all counselling is effective, nor does it alter the child's decisions:

22-06-98 . . .OP have counselled Gladys yet she still chooses to associate with Rasta. . . (Gladys Ludidi) (Rasta is a vagrant who committed violent murders)

The following quote is worth commenting on:

26-06-98 Winnie dressed beautifully last night as she was asked out. She went to meet his family and was very excited. The house-mother spoke to her about family planning . . . (Winnie Mapela)

What we find is that the child is going out with a boy, and suddenly there is a rush to counsel the child on sexual matters. This kind of counselling is reactionary. These are common issues and counselling and educational programmes should be ongoing. Another dimension of counselling is dealing with the past. Once again OP refers children to experts:

06-08-99 Went for "healing of memories" workshop on Saturday . . . Sarjhi gets nightmares . . . OP to send her to Trauma Centre where she can see a youth counsellor
13-09-99 . . . Sarjhi attended workshop hosted by "Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP)", where she expressed feelings related to displaced family . . .
02-11-99 . . . She does not want to go back to the Unbuntu Centre. Last time they made her talk about her past . . .
09-11-00 She is on medication for post-traumatic stress disorder and dissociate behaviour. She speaks of memories - man coming out of grave . . .She is seeing Tuli, an individual therapist/social worker. (Sarjhi Nyingiri)

However, some girls are clearly resistant to being counselled:

01-10-99 . . . Fatiwa is not prepared to go for counselling . . . (Fatiwa Dyangkini)

**Conclusions:**

The need for counselling cannot be underestimated. In this regard, continuous staff training is encouraged. Needs include past (dealing with roots and past hurts); present (crisis counselling, discipline and general guidance); and future (such as vocational counselling). There is evidence of staff counselling the girls, and where appropriate the girls are referred to experts. Networking is taking place. There is even evidence (from the sample of case files) of the family being referred for counselling.

Upon entering OP, the girls are explained the house rules. They therefore know what is expected of them, but like all adolescents, they will challenge boundaries (interview with

director, 25 July 2001). Courses could be designed to address common street child behaviours, however the director believes it is idealistic to expect 'miraculous/treatment' programmes (interview, 25 July 2001).

**Comment:**

We can see from the above that there are examples of these programmes and policies being carried out on a daily basis, as found in the case files. They are also being met with some success. Therefore, OP is a good example of a 'successful' street child intervention, and could be used to inform national policy. But before such recommendations are made, we should consider the day-to-day practices of OP for additional informal policy practices. Furthermore, the girls' responses to OP itself will give valuable insights.

**Policy applied on a daily basis**

In the previous section, I looked at the 'what' of OP's policies (their programmes). The question needs to be asked 'how' does OP operate on a daily basis. Once again this section is derived from a careful documentary case analysis of the case files.

**1. Good decisions**

OP shows their professional approach and experience by what I would call 'good decisions'. These decisions can be seen in the case files. They are based on the premise of "acting in the child's best interest" and as their *Sifunda ukuphila* document suggests – I am here for my future life. Many of OP's decisions are made with a long-term vision of the future life of the child. This is to be commended. The following quotes, are two such examples.

**1a. Requiring/guiding the child to take responsibility**

15-06-99 . . . OP set tasks for Tamara (*get her to take responsibility). Tamara has to phone Edmund House. She is not attending Morning School so she must decide what she will do, she is to enquire about a savings account at FNB. The social worker follow up with the New Kings. (Tamara Smit).

Tamara is 18 years old. Within reason they aim for the child to take responsibility and become empowered to take control of her own life.

**1b. Privileges used as incentives. 'Threats' carried through**

05-12-97 . . . She slept out from Thursday till Tuesday. OP warn her, she has to behave if she wants to go on the camp before Christmas
02-01-98 Pam, Winnie, Sophie all slept out therefore no camp for them. (Winnie Mapela).

A good thing about OP is that they often follow through on their promises and 'threats', i.e. integrity. This is essential for trust. This is a practice OP is strong in.

In the day-to-day running of the intervention, OP may tend to react more instead of being pro-active. This is looked at below.

**2. Reactionary management**

Due to the nature of the work, which is developmental, OP often have to respond or react to circumstances or try and solve a situation after it has arisen. However, it can be argued that OP could improve their outcomes by providing better foresight and planning.

(This girl leaves Siviwe, as she is too old. Ons Plek organise a bursary for her to live on). In March of 1999, she complained that the R246/month bursary is too little to live on (*not surprising). . .
Siviwe intervened by teaching her to budget and prioritise expenses (she grasped the idea of budgeting) (Qamisa Melanto).

The girl was only taught to budget after she complained that she was not surviving. OP should learn from this and incorporate it into their 'survival teaching programme' (when the child is 'released' back into the community). (The director confirmed that although not recorded in the case files, this girl was counselled repeatedly on budgeting, but she did not believe it (interview, 25 July 2001)).

Another informal practice/policy, is that OP does omit children. This discussed below.

**3. Ons Plek do omit children**

Girls are only omitted from OP when they are too old and fall out of OP's target age group; or they become a threat to other girls (for example pimping them) and as a final disciplinary resort they are omitted from OP.

**3a. Difficulties dealing with problem children**

22-09-99 Odwa ran away on Friday. A boy from Maitland phoned to say that Odwa is busy being raped. This boy was pretending to be a child care worker. Odwa was in the toilet, the boys were taking turns to go in and out. Odwa denies everything, however her face was swollen and she was quiet. The staff at Ons Plek are finding it difficult to give her consequences as she will run away again. She cleaned the kitchen. (Odwa Budani)

There are insufficient structures at OP to deal with such problematic children. The policy as stated intent and policy in practice gets very thin when dealing with children that 'kick' against the system. Perhaps a lock-up facility would be better in the long term for such children.

### 3b. Remaining firm with decisions to omit

04-04-00 Patricia wants to come back to Siviwe but she is drinking. Ons Plek gave her advice but did not accept her back. (She was at OP for 5 years) (Patricia Melkstroom).

This case was disturbing because the child's mother is an alcoholic. Given this example, her low self-esteem, mental handicap and inability to follow-through on tasks/business plans; she could well turn to alcohol abuse.

### 3c. Omitted because Ons Plek does not benefit the child

10-11-00 She came back on Monday. She is strolling again. She does not benefit from OP service. (Thandi Lukoko).

It was decided that this child was not responding to the programmes at OP. She kept running away despite considerable efforts to stabilise her.

### 3d. Omission as a form of discipline

21-08-98 She is the most street wise girl at OP and bullies and manipulates the other girls. She was warned about this and knows the rules yet she persists. She takes the new younger girls and introduces them to boys on the street.
07-07-99 She is not allowed to be readmitted to OP. Close file. (Joyce Nczela)

This same girl was perhaps the most untrusting of adults and OP staff. She ran out of the gate soon after admission. The same girl was responsible for theft in and outside of the shelter, responsible for bullying and pimping other girls. She was a threat to staff and the other girls. Last OP heard, she was living on the street. What can be possibly be done for such children?
As a continuation of "policy applied on a daily basis", we have to consider how the daily running of OP includes and interacts with broader society.



## The broader networking. Possibilities for policy and signs of hope

We should be continuously aware that policies in the form of shelters, children's homes and foster parents, are all substitutes for the ideal - a healthy loving stable family. Therefore the greater the number and the greater the effectiveness of these substitutes for family, the greater the chances of reintegration back into society. If we use Richter's (1990) tool of analysis - differing degrees of connectedness to kin or family, then from the case files, I found the following possibilities and opportunities. I will extend Richter's tool of analysis to include connectedness to other 'institutions' in society as a means to re-entering the mainstream.

Generally speaking, those children who have greater amounts of connectedness are often in the best state of mental health and they have wider options available to be reintegrated into society. OP has a philosophy of believing that family is best, therefore wherever possible they aim to reunite the child with her family (as defined by nuclear and extended family). Therefore the greater the connectedness, i.e. the larger, more intimate, tightly woven, supportive, willing and caring the family (including extended family), the greater the hope or options available to OP staff to explore in the final aim of reintegrating the child back into mainstream society. Once again connectedness pushes family life and parenting to the forefront of where much intervention work needs to be done.

Another way of thinking of connectedness, is as restraining factors. Unfortunately, many of these children's lives are so broken, that they lack self-govemment and discipline and therefore the ability to resist negative peer pressure and influences. In fact all the projects I visited (amongst them Learn to Live, School of Hope, OP) had a battle to get the children to think beyond the present, to a vision for the future, i.e. planning was a severely lacking skill. Therefore the greater the number of restraining factors, the greater the hope. From the case files, it becomes clear that one such possibility is the influence of church.



**Church influence**

Church influence is an unusually successful way of bringing the child back into mainstream society. Church life is an already existing sphere of governance in society. The potential to access it, should not be overlooked. At OP the girls are encouraged to attend church (or mosque if they are Muslim). It is also an excellent way of building relationships, connectedness and rebuilding damaged and lost value systems. Over the years, those girls that have been more committed to church have been amongst OP's greatest success stories.[26]

[26] Research in the United States (see Ruff, 1988) has shown that youth who get involved in church activities and youth groups are far less likely to partake in criminal behaviour - fewer teenage pregnancies, less likely to experiment with drugs and alcohol, etc. Ruff writes that teenagers who attend religious services frequently are less than half as likely to engage in fornication than teens that seldom or never attend religious services. While those attending sex-education courses correlate to a 50% higher teen promiscuity rate. This can be explained in that church acts as a diversion of the wayward youth's energies, focusing the child on something positive and giving the child opportunity to grow and develop. But it is also testimony to the power of authentic Christianity as a positive restraining factor in these children's lives, which, according to Ruff, emphasises chastity, ruling premarital sex as immoral, and emphasises the devastating consequences of teen promiscuity (AIDS, STD's, pregnancy).

### 1. Church as a place of positive socialisation

In November it was documented that Qamisa has a good relationship with her peers. She attends the church youth group at Central Methodist Mission in Cape Town, where she learnt to overcome her shyness, co-operate well in activities and not be swayed by peer pressure. (Qamisa Melanto)

### 2. Church as a place of learning positive values and strength of character

11-09-98 She came to OP for Stephanie's class. She goes to church Wednesday and Thursday.
16-02-99 Pinki went to her aunt's house in Mandalay for the weekend. The mother (sic) phoned to thank her for the Valentine's card that she left for her. She phoned after 10pm (OP wonder why she phoned so late, did she not see the child?)
22-02-99 house-mother spoke to Pinki. She left the card for her aunt (* this was like a surprise. Very sweet of Pinki).
Pinki goes on end of March Educational Trip.
On Wednesday 24-03-99 because she had been up the mountain with the church she was therefore able to go into the cave easily. When asked the question, how did you get up the mountain, she answered: "I think it could show that I am strong and brave, I believe in myself and my belief in God also helps me. I think it will help in other situations." She had nice things to say about others on the trip. (Pinki Pango).

### 3. Church as a place of friendship

26-06-98 . . . She got presents at church last night- the people there like her (Winnie Mapela).

### 4. Christianity as a restraining and solidifying influence on the family

25-02-99 OP did a home visit. . . The step-father was happy to see her. Her parents are very old. Her parents say she does her own thing. . . Nozuk's parents have come to the parade to look for her, but could not find her (*genuine concern). The step-father said that Nozuk is like his own daughter. . . The family are God-fearing and attend church regularly. Nozuk has a good relationship with her parents. They are poor, but she is well cared for. The step-father wants Nozuk to return home. . . She returned home today. (Sylvia).

Even in the lives of what can be argued as OP's current most successful in house cases are the lives of three refugee sisters (whose story defies belief). They ran on foot for days without stopping, while eating grass and sleeping in trees. They fled thousands of kilometres from Burundi to Cape Town. Once in Cape Town, the oldest of the three did standard 9 and 10 in one year in her third language (English), waking up at four am to study. There are many other examples of how these sisters' characters 'outshine' the average OP girl. Three factors of connectedness can be identified in their lives:

1. A strong, loyal family unit with a committed mother (the father was killed in civil war, the mother had her arm shot off) (people who have someone to care for, always have better self images and a reason for living);
2. A 'middle class' background - parents had own businesses and children attended private schools;
3. Influence of religion and idea of one God (Islam) (no doubt it is their faith in God that brought them through all their trials and gives them a hope for the future).

Other signs of hope and 'connectedness' is the issue of status. Donald, et al (1997) make reference to status.

**Status as connectedness**

25-11-99 . . . Patricia has developed good cooking skills and through this she has earned the respect of her peers. . . (Patricia Melkstroom).

It was OP that got her into the cooking course in the first place, hence the power of education and skills based education. But this quote also shows the status attached to doing something well, and which the girls perceive as valuable. These 'status trophies' serve to build the self-image and confidence of the girls, fuelling their success in the right direction, increasing their chances of 'recovery' and entering into the mainstream.

Other such restraining factors should be sought and implemented.

This concludes the review of the OP's programmes and policies. I will now attempt to review the relevance and value of the work done by OP by looking at possible meanings OP has for the children. Once again, this is derived from and substantiated using the case files. The successful outcomes of this review are also an important consideration, if we are to consider OP as a model to inform national policy.

**What Ons Plek means to the girls**

OP means different things at different times and serves different functions at different times (see the end of this Chapter on the follow-up of girls once they have left OP for further discussion).

**1. Ons Plek as a 'safe-place'**

19-03-99 She explains that her uncle came to fetch her to take her to the Transkei, that's why she ran away and came to Ons Plek. . . (Amanda Bakubaku).

OP takes on the meaning of being a safe-place, a resource to access in times of crisis. Much like a trusted friend or neighbour. A place to turn until the storms of life has passed.

**2. Ons Plek as a safety net**

18-05-99 . . . They (family) will come today or tomorrow to OP. Later that day the grandmother, uncle and mother came to fetch her. . . They found a letter by Moesfikah saying there are people blackmailing her and want to hurt her and she could not explain it to her family. She has an extended family and a grandmother and there is lots of support. . . She went home (reluctant at first). . . (Sylvikah Khan).

OP acts like a half way convenient stop - a safety net. Such a speedy return will look good for OP's statistics.

### 3. Ons Plek as advocate for the child. Ons Plek as detective

13-02-98 (*?) Precious was chased from her shack by another family from Transkei. She came by train to Woodstock to look for a lady from the church she had once attended. Her mother's friend disappeared in December 1997. Precious was accused of stealing R110 and was chased away by the boyfriend of the mother's friend. The man who picked her up promised her school, board and lodging. He bought her Kentucky and a cool drink and then he raped her. He locked her up and then he raped her again (*and a third time?) He was a white haired older man. The case has been taken up with Child Protection. The police promised to send someone round to his house, but have not done so. Ons Plek plan to follow up with Child Protection to get them to do their job properly. Ons Plek also aim to try trace her relatives in East London. (Precious Kofumani).

OP acts as detectives and investigation officers on behalf of the child. This is an aspect of social services. They also act as an advocate for the child, pressurising other government departments such as Child Protection to ensure that they carry out their task.

### 4. Ons Plek as a 'life enricher'

30-03-99 (After an education trip on which she acted very mature). She sent a note to OP thanking them for the trip. She said that her mother would never do that for her. She went home for the Easter. (Pinki Pango).

OP enriches their lives. This is a successful example of their Holiday Programme.

19-08-99 Pinki is a kind child. She gets on well with adults and her peers. She tries hard at school and is making steady progress. She is a lovely girl and carries herself with grace. Her dream is to do ballet. She did ballet in the community centre before all the tragedies struck. She needs a sponsor for the ballet shoes and clothes. (Ntombi Ngcangula)

This is a lovely story illustrating how through staying at Siviwe, the staff put effort into getting to know these children on a personal level, building trust and discovering the child's interests. OP managed to raise the sponsorship and got her to go for ballet lessons in Observatory, thus fulfilling her dream. It was reported that every time she went, she would be in a good mood.

### 5. Ons Plek as a vehicle for rehabilitation back to the community

24-07-98 . . .OP plan that they will pay for the ticket as the family seems genuinely poor. OP also look into getting her a disability grant. . . (Fundiwe Mafange).

OP act as the bridge, after tracing the family, they pay for the bus ticket for her to return home. They also access Cape Mental Health to organise disability grants for appropriate children.

### 6. Ons Plek as moral/parental guide

09-06-95 . . . Ntombi is opening other girl's cupboards and using their things. The house-mother spoke to her about this (Ntombi Ngcangula).

Often OP will step in in a correctional way to raise or parent the child. This parental style is 'real'. By 'real' I mean informal teaching, guidance on daily issues, offering guidance and correction and a moral code, much like an involved parent would be able to do.

**7. Ons Plek acting as 'parental' protector**

17-07-98 . . .Phillip Tegga phoned from Hare Krishna Temple. She's been there a few times. He wants her to meet him at the train station. The house-mother told him that he must come fetch her. OP are not keen on the whole idea (Pinki Pango).

OP offers discernment, protection and parental guidance. This is the best the corporate parent can do: protect and look out for and discern for the best interests of the child. The corporate parent is always a substitute for the real parent. Unfortunately, because the corporate parent is strongly linked with the state, it is therefore subject to the popular political ideology of the day. Such ideology could clash with or contradict traditional family values.

**8. Ons Plek as 'accessor'**

11-02-99 She had a tooth extracted (Thandi Lukoko).

It is doubtful that this girl would have gone to the dentist on her own. This is perhaps amongst the most significant interventions of what OP is able to do. Perhaps most of these children are ignorant of the institutions that are available to them, or perhaps they do not know how to access them. Nevertheless because of the adult wisdom and experience at OP, they are able to champion the cause for these girls' lives. These include enrolling them in school, applying for bursaries, health institutions (e.g. day hospitals), family planning, getting special needs girls psychologically assessed and helping appropriate girls open a bank account. These kinds of opportunities, however incidental they may appear, could prove a watershed in the lives of many of these children. Logistically it is not possible for each child receive attention all the time, but it is difficult to say how many of these children would be living on the street, out of school, have no access to health care, no food, shelter, clean water or clean clothes and linen (basic needs), no solidarity and routine to their lives if it were not for the incidental, yet on going work done by OP.

**Comment:**

On the whole, we find that OP adds value and has a positive impact on the lives of the girls at OP. Once again, this points towards considering the practices of OP for informing

national policy. I will now review the follow-up of the girls after leaving OP to ascertain any lasting impact and value that OP may have made on the lives of these children.

**The follow-up of girls after leaving Ons Plek**

Due to space constraints I cannot elaborate on every child I was able to follow-up on, but I will expound on findings that add to the previous discussion of what OP means/meant to the girls. This is to be seen as an evaluation/review of OP's policy and programmes and the value thereof. The mechanics of how this follow-up was conducted is discussed in the Methodology.

The results of the follow-up give the following picture as a type of evaluation of OP:

**Perceptions of Ons Plek**

I categorised these into positive and negative perceptions.

**POSITIVE PERCEPTIONS**

Some of the girls, such as Petunia Sebenza, enjoyed OP/Siviwe, even indicating that she preferred it to being at home:

. . . Petunia is enjoying Siviwe and wants to stay there. (Petunia Sebenza, interview with house-mother)

Others, such as Agnes Mabandlela, indicated that they enjoyed and benefited from the programmes at OP:

. . .She loved Stephanie's school so much. She even asked Joyce once while she was home if she could go to Stephanie's school for the day and then go home. . . (Agnes Mabandlela, interview with house-mother).

The same could be said for Princess Sakawuli, who although enrolled at a formal school, received and benefited from OP's ongoing Educational Support Programme (i.e. Stephanie's afternoon classes):

. . . OP was good for her and benefited her. She was one of the best girls in Siviwe. At school, she was involved in sports and did well academically. (Gladys Ludidi, interview with house-mother)

Within the stormy lives that many of these girls lead, OP becomes a 'safe place', a site of protection and security. The following two examples confirm this positive perception of OP:

. . . She said it was a lovely place and explained why it is there (purpose). It is there to help children if things weren't going well at home, if the child lands up on the street or if the child was abused. . . (Karen van Niekerk, interview with Mrs Mauridah Coopman, community leader).

. . .Roxanne believed OP was a safe house for her. (Roxanne Jacobs, interview with house-mother).

All persons have basic human needs such as shelter, food, clean water and clean linen. OP becomes such a place for many of these children and the girls themselves see OP as such:

. . . Melissa said that OP was a great place to live because you get food, clothes and a place to sleep. . . (Melissa van Tonder, interview with child).

. . .She came to OP about 10 February 2001 and was making a noise at the gate. . .Belinda would ask for food, but this is not acceptable as she is no longer staying at OP. (Belinda Klein, interview with Education Support Teacher at OP).

Being in a shelter with other girls means that relationships will be formed. Some of these were of a positive nature:

. . .Leze had friends at OP. . . (Leze Witbooi, interview with mother Elizabeth Witbooi)

Considering the inherent need for parental care and guidance, it is encouraging to note how OP staff attempt to build positive staff/child relationships:

. . .Agnes often visits Joyce's house (house-mother) in Khayelitsha and is very fond of Joyce. . . (Agnes Mabandlela, interview with house-mother)

In the following quote, the fact that Nozuk phoned implies to inform OP of her well-being, implies that OP are fulfilling a parental caring role:

. . .She phoned to say that she was doing well. . .(Nozuk Makile, interview with house-mother)

Similarly, the following quote, confirms this 'parental-bonding' relationship with OP staff, by the fact that Thandeka came to say goodbye:

. . .She came to say good-bye as she's going off to E Cape. . . (Thandeka Mahobo, interview with house-mother)

The following two quotes, reinforce this perception that a relationship of trust was established with OP staff:

...she often came to OP with her problems and personal problems to discuss them... (Leana Baardman, interview with house-mother)

. . .Qamisa is very helpful and two weeks ago (about 12 March 2001), even brought a girl to see if OP could take her. . . (Qamisa Melanto, interview with house-mother)

One sign of wholeness is the ability to have enduring long-lasting friendships, another is the ability to care for others. This particular quote shows how Qamisa Melanto was 'reformed' by Ons Plek. Her ongoing commitment to help other girls like herself who are in the care of OP, shows her support for the work they are doing:

. . .Qamisa is staying at the Cornerstone Christian College Residence, where she is also attending classes. . .Qamisa spends time at Siviwe and fetches some of the Siviwe girls to spend time with her on weekends if they don't have anywhere to go. She is involved with other girls like herself. (Qamisa Melanto, interview with house-mother)

**Conclusion:**

We see once again, that much of the success OP enjoys is because of the committed staff. The success is because of the people, and through relationships. The director confirms this analysis (interview, 25 July 2001). Perhaps this is simply meeting the need for parental love, care and acceptance. Another theme is the "meeting of basic needs", such as safety, security, food, shelter and clean linen. Before coming to OP, these needs were often neglected. OP's work can be seen as a substitute for the needs family should be fulfilling.

Some of the success appears to be incidental, such as the positive peer friendships that some girls form while at OP. Other success, seems to be the result of their programmes, e.g. the positive experiences in Stephanie's homework/school support classes.



NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS

At Khaya Lethu shelter in Durban the Black social workers were concerned that the superior facilities at the shelter could actually attract children. This same concern is that OP may also act as pull factor, attracting children away from the community, as the following quote indicates:

. . .The mother does not know why her children go to OP. The mother thinks it's bad that all children are running to OP. (Karen van Niekerk, interview with Mrs Mauridah Coopman, community leader)

It is unrealistic to expect a 100 percent success rate. The following quotes show that the children did not always respond to or benefit from OP programmes:

. . .Joyce battled to respond to OP programmes. . . (Joyce Nczela, interview with house-mother)

. . .She said that OP didn't help her find work. (Melissa van Tonder, interview with child)

For others, the programmes were simply too boring and were not engaging enough to override the child's personal issues or problems:

. . . she had a mental handicap. She would get bored sitting in one place. (Precious Kofumani, interview with house-mother).

. . . Odwa used to like OP but found the programmes boring. She preferred the freedom of the street, drinking and big guys and boys. (Odwa Budani, interview with house-mother)

Unfortunately, some girls could not conform to the house rules, like these two examples suggest:

. . .It was difficult for Kim because she was the only white girl in the house. She was fine with the other girls but did not cope with the rules of the house. (Kim Sterk, interview with house-mother)

. . . She battled to stick to the rules. . . (Joyce Nczela, interview with house-mother)

Incidents like this have led some critics (see Swart-Kruger, 1996) to label shelters as adding to the street child problem because they require prescribed behaviour and self-disclosure in return for service. However, to have no house rules would not be natural and would create further problems. Furthermore, to individualise rules, will create an administrative and ethical nightmare.

Richie (1999) suggests a move in the child from abused to abuser, from victim to criminal. The following child was using OP as a base/place to operate from for her own purposes (this child was involved in prostitution):

. . .She would fight, steal other girl's clothes and give them to friends in the street. . . Basically she was using OP as a place to stay (a shelter, a base). (Joyce Nczela, interview with house-mother)

Under "Positive Perceptions", it was mentioned that positive peer relationships do exist. Unfortunately, however, so do negative peer relationships. Given the child's need for inner healing, these are to be expected:

...The only problem was that the influence of other girls in the house caused her to run away. (Amanda Bakubaku, interview with house-mother)

The following quote suggests that often a stronger personality takes advantage of a 'weaker child', who is likely even to be mentally and/or emotionally handicapped. This raises questions around mainstreaming policy.[27]

. . .Gloria is strolling in Cape Town with another ex-OP girl, Beauty Mabece. The two are not prostituting, they are lesbians. They survive by robbing, shoplifting and a life of crime. . . (Gloria Ntsebeza, interview with house-mother)

Some of these negative peer relationships are characterised by teasing, as the following quote illustrates:

. . .She did not enjoy her stay at OP as the other girls made fun of her as she had a mental handicap.. . (Precious Kofumani, interview with house-mother)

When sharing a living space, people impact on others through relationships. For some of the 'good kids', like Pinki Pango, this can prove distracting:

. . .The social worker believes that OP was good for her, but unfortunately it was chaotic at times, especially for Pinki's education. The children coming through OP were a distraction to Pinki. . . (Pinki Pango, interview with social worker Niki Lourens)

Then there were the cases where the child never mentioned Ons Plek to her parents/guardians. This can be explained in three ways, either the child concerned did not stay long at OP; or OP left little impression, therefore was not worth mentioning to the parent; or the child was too embarrassed, shy, chose to forget about OP, or never

[27] The director explained that it is difficult to separate such children due to limited resources. OP therefore aims to equip such a child to stand up to the bully.

mentioned their stay at OP to their parents/guardian for other personal reasons. (The final explanation is less likely, as I generally spoke with close family and telephone conversations can be non-threatening. I was surprised at how open family members were on the phone).

. . .She has never mentioned Ons Plek. (Sarah Thompson, interview with social worker Desree Erandson)

. . .Charmayne has never mentioned or spoken of OP. (Charmayne Engels, interview with Charmayne's mother)

. . ."never said much (about OP), in fact she has never spoken about it", older sister. (Nolene Simpson, interview with older sister)

. . .Riana has never mentioned OP. (Riana Pienaar, interview with Riana's aunt, Verushka Geldenhuis)

When a child is 'released' from OP, it should be done in such a manner so as to prime the child to survive on her own (or within the support structure of the family). Unfortunately, there are examples of having never been properly weaned off OP, with the child having a dependency relationship on OP and seeing OP as a 'source':

. . .She was eventually discharged from OP given her poor behaviour at OP, yet she kept coming back and begging to be readmitted. . . (Meyer, interview with house-mother)[28]

The final negative perception about OP, is that some of the girls were simply not interested in it. OP, as a pull factor, was simply not strong enough:

. . .While out on the street OP begged and pleaded with her to return. She did not. (Thami Manyosi, interview with house-mother)

**Conclusion:**

The negative experiences are primarily found amongst those girls with particularly difficult problems. OP's programmes and efforts appear to have little to no impact on these problem children's lives, despite considerable effort. This brings to mind the romantic and realistic school of thoughts, again raising questions around the identity of the child as a point of departure from which to form policy. It may be that a child starts out more closely fitting the romantic school's identity construction, but through life moves closer to the identity construction of the realist school of thought. Perhaps a containment model would be beneficial for such children.

Like the positive experiences, the nature of negative experiences is determined by people, and is relational and transactional by nature. Even the incidental negative experiences (those between peers) are often one problem child negatively influencing another.

[28] The director confirmed that his child later returned (interview, 25 July 2001).

**Comment**

The above evaluation technique, of setting out the positive and negative points of OP is useful, but it is simplified and is not fully able to gauge, analyse or evaluate the complexities. If we analyse these findings, we begin to see contradictions, complexities and discrepancies. For example, on one hand some girls found OP's programmes boring and not engaging, while for others it was a pull-factor (even pulling them out of community back to OP). Evaluations have their short-comings when applied to an impure science like the social sciences. Human beings are simply too complex and unique with powerful individual histories that have shaped who they are. The one size fits all, cookie-cutter paradigm is simply too limited to do the reality on the ground justice. Similarly not all programmes are going to work for each individual. Some may argue that to believe in a 'magic formula' is naïve (interview with director, 25 July 2001). However, this does not mean we completely eliminate good research. We should always aim to improve and seek best practice.

**Concluding remarks**

The main purpose of this dissertation was to gain an understanding of the policy around street children, a deeper understanding of street children and their issues and specifically to gain an understanding of policy in practice, particularly the contributions it can make towards policy as stated intent, with specific reference to OP. In the final chapter, I attempt to consolidate my findings with possible recommendations.

# CHAPTER 5

# CONCLUSION

What we can conclude from this limited study is that interventions in the form of shelters (of which OP is an excellent example) are primarily dealing with symptoms. This again raises the concern that more preventative work is needed. For this to happen, research needs to be conducted into deeper issues and causes of the street child phenomenon. But first, let us return to the primary question, how can OP, as an example of a successful street child intervention inform a much needed national policy? To answer this, we need to move from the local to the national level.

**How can OP inform other shelters/interventions?**

The following 'successes' could be used for informing programmes that could be adopted by other shelters/interventions (local level):

a) OP deserve praise for their innovative Education Support Programme that has boosted the pass rate tremendously. Indeed 5% to 95% is dramatic! Other shelters could adopt similar programmes.

b) OP always searches for an appropriate school when placing a child back in formal education. This is often one close to the community to which the child will be rehabilitated. This is to be commended as it is thinking long term so as not to disrupt the child's schooling once rehabilitated back to the community. This is in keeping with the "best interests of the child" guideline. Other interventions could adopt this as a valuable guideline.

c) OP's recent decision to have two sets of files is to be commended. It shows a more balanced approach, placing importance on both social welfare and education/vocation. Those interventions that have the resources and administrative manpower could do the same.

d) OP's Holiday Programme is a wonderful experience for the children. This too could become a policy guideline.

e) OP's internal policy of staff development and staff inclusion (see Chapter Three) is to be praised as it develops the skills base, thus strengthening the organisation and the levels of commitment and motivation. This equates to effective management.

f) Equally, OP's management are constantly trying to equip themselves and staff with staff training. As pointed out in Chapter Two, there is a need for specialised skills in

this field of work. Staff training that other shelter staff could also access would be beneficial. OP's effective management style deserves more research as it could contribute towards an official policy.

g) OP's willingness to network and refer where they lack, is to be praised. For example referring children with psychoses to mental hospitals. A database of counsellors and other services including church and other faith based camps, programmes, crisis pregnancy centres and safer sex counselling could possibly be drawn up. This could boost service delivery.

The above possibilities are detailed practices that could be copied by other shelters/interventions. However, OP, also offers the following options for day-to-day practices. These could be reproduced by other street child projects on the "local" policy level:

a) OP's interpretation of the open door facility, as a 'lock-up' one, is responsible. It protects the girls and staff from 'unsavoury' characters and criminal elements on the street and enforces accountability from the girls forcing them to ask permission to 'go outside' much like a normal child in a family would.[1] Their Voluntary Programme is also to be commended as it causes the volunteer to commit for at least a year; thereby the continuity in the children's lives is in keeping with "their best interests."

b) OP's decision to encourage the children to attend church (or mosque, etc.) goes a long way to reintegrating the children back into mainstream society, plus rebuilding damaged value systems. Such faith-based interventions are powerful alternatives for policy.[2]

c) Skills, talents, vocational training, etc, (what I called 'status trophies'), is an area that requires additional research as they could inform policy formulators.



[1] In an interview with the director it was explained to me that if a child wants to run-away, a child will run-away and there is very little that can be done to prevent it. OP tries to prevent a volatile child from running away by working at the child-staff relationship in the hope that the relationship will be strong enough to prevent the child leaving. Considering that OP has a 48% rate of run-aways, their locked-gate policy seems redundant. However, I would imagine this would be higher if it were not locked. 'Unsavoury' characters are always trying to solicit young girls onto the streets.

[2] The National Religious Association for Social Development (http://users.iafrica.com/e/ef/efsa/nrasd.htm), has put together a report asking for state recognition and support for faith based interventions. The report calculates that annually faith based organisations contributes (private financing) two billion Rand, towards social welfare in South Africa, in finances, interventions and voluntary services. Indeed what has happened in the US, with the move away from State towards faith-based welfare could yet prove an international precedent. But it does have implications that cannot be discussed here due to space constraints.

We can conclude that OP has much to offer other street child projects and interventions in terms of policy and practices.

**How can OP inform policy on a national level?**

From my findings I conclude that as much as OP's policies and programmes exist, they do so in a climate of flexibility, which is dictated to by the nature of the intervention – rehabilitating street children. Indeed, with all due respect, I agree with the summary of the director and the educational co-ordinator of OP, where in one of my first interviews with them, they informed me half jokingly that, "What we do here is organised chaos." At this stage, I also have to agree with de Clercq (1997), who claims that policy depends on the human element. The same can be said for OP. Their success is not so much based on the programmes and the structures themselves as it is on the human relationships. These relationships of trust facilitate and allow the programmes to exist. For me this following quote summarises what OP is all about:

> The core of our work lies in the personal relationships between the children and staff. We live together, sharing in the children's lives, joys and sadness. Without this, transformation in the children's lives would not be possible to the same extent and duration. (Rossouw, http://www.pretext.co.za/naccw/JournalFiles/jour0300.html)

It therefore becomes important to conclude that human relationships should be prioritised above cold clinical policies and programmes, since success is dependent on the human element and relationship, more than the programme and policy. Policies and programmes are tools in the hands of skilled people. However, this should not be a license for autonomy. Accountability should be built into a national policy.

**Other factors to be considered for a national policy**

In Chapter Two, Part Three; comment was made on the inadequacies of policy and state welfare with their bureaucratic government machinery being open to mistreatment from the judiciary and the executive. Furthermore, state welfare has fallen short in that it is unable to discern the needs of its recipients and in particular meet the emotional needs that such a vulnerable clientele like street children clearly have. Moreover, in the past, South African state welfare has been guilty of racial inequalities.

It is always tempting for policy makers to formulate a one-size-fits-all approach. But according to Jackson (director of OP), such an approach is idealistic. As we saw from the section on the review of interventions happening on the African continent, there is *no* consensus. Interventions in reality are forced to deal with street children as individuals

and not categories. This leads me to caution policy makers, that while OP has much to offer national policy, to crystallise their policy practices as written text could prove too rigid for these volatile clientele. OP's strength lies in the fact that they have policies, but that these are flexible, subject to the human and relational element. Because OP's policies work for them, does not mean they should be codified into a national policy, as there is no guarantee that OP's policies will work in a different context. Treatment work requires flexibility for it to be successful.

Having said this, I believe the existing primary Acts (Child Care Act and Criminal Procedure Act), although problematic, especially in application, lay the foundation for a solid system. There is however, a need for these to be reviewed. The current amendments, as pointed out by the SA Law Commission, are too broad, even violating parental rights, and intruding into the sphere of family responsibility. This effectively empowers the state, often at the expense of the family. Richter (1990) pointed out the negative effects of institutionalising children. Raising such humanitarian concerns calls for bureaucratic state welfare to be revised. Only recently has there been a swing back to community and family empowerment, which has largely been the result of the swamping of the state welfare system with AIDS casualties. AIDS has begun to show the limitations of state driven welfare, that in and of itself it is not sustainable. Therefore there is a contradiction – more power to the state, yet at the same time other kinds of welfare is pushing a swing back to family and community responsibility/empowerment.

If sustainability and prevention is what policy makers fuss over, then the focus should be on strengthening and reforming the family. The family is the starting point of a child's life. Street children fall-out of the family. Even in my limited study, 87% of the street children came from broken families and the remaining 13% from families where parents were not necessarily married. This is cause for great alarm. Given Richter's findings that most street children come from maladaptive homes, warrants additional research into problems within the family sphere. Research like this is not uncommon to South Africa (for example, the National Family Programme for the Republic of South Africa and the Committee of Inquiry into Certain Aspects of Child Care (the De Meyer Report)), and at this time in our history, desperately needed. To support the family, is to support prevention. Alternatively, if the needs are for love, emotional support, good responsible parents and caring families, can the state legislate such 'relationships' and 'emotional wholeness'? Can the state fill 'policy gaps' like these emotional needs? For the state to

replace the family, could, in the long-term, be counter-productive to prevention. We should be reminded that OP's success was because of the human element. Family is very much about the human element.

OP (like many other interventions) remains a treatment intervention, dealing with symptoms of greater problems. However, to burden OP with the mandate to solve welfare problems is unfair. Nevertheless, to have reduced the number of female street children living on the streets of Cape Town from sixty in 1988 to only seven in 2000, shows their success in preventing runaways from becoming street children (see CASP study, 2000). But it is worth reminding policy formulators that even in this limited study, 87% of my sample (cases studied) came from broken families, and not even all of the remaining 13% had the stability of marriage holding the family together. This requires research, family friendly policies and interventions urgently if the noble notion of "prevention is better than cure" is to be achieved.

A cynical question, is to ask is whether a state bureaucrat would seriously consider prevention, because if he/she achieved his/her end, he/she would be out of a job and off the tax funded government pay role. Has a bureaucrat ever worked him/herself out of a job?

**Possible recommendations for policy formulators to focus on**

If we consider that most of the success (and shortcomings) experienced by OP was through building relationships and the human element, then there is a need to develop human capacity in street child projects (but also throughout society). This equates to the need for training. The training should include moral and ethical values, as well as knowledge and skills. In light of the above discussion, a possible avenue to consider is the training and equipping of families. However, this should never be at a national level, as too much power would be concentrated in one place. It should be decentralised as much as possible (local council) allowing accountability, democracy and representation to flourish.

Also, given the poor record of the girls being rehabilitated into the family, a system of family accountability should be sought. This could include, being accountable to church, community members and/or local council. This could provide a better means of ensuring that a child is properly reintegrated back into family and community. Note that the

emphasis here is on family and community empowerment, thinking holistically rather than fragmentally (which thinks of the child as an individual, to the exclusion of family and community).

It becomes clear from the research that one of OP's strengths was that they are well-known in their field and therefore well networked. This is an excellent possibility for interventions themselves. A system could be set-up (perhaps through the world-wide-web) to share ideas, best practices, expertise and experience, with the aim of moving towards a culture of sharing. Such a culture of sharing, is where the state needs to move towards as well. But this culture of sharing could include the family and church.[3]

**Additional considerations for policy formulators**

I have been stressing the need for flexibility and that one size does not fit all. The following finding confirms this and also shows the need for various levels of intervention within a national policy/system: OP disciplines (where appropriate) the girls with counsel, admonition, and logical consequences in the form of forfeited privileges and house chores. Finally, problem girls are omitted if older than sixteen (sometimes for a period of time, finally permanently). These children are falling through the system (the waiting list for industrial schools equates to at least a one-year waiting period). Policies therefore need to be formulated specific to such children, policies possibly based on containment measures. Policy cannot afford to have a limited identity construction or definition of street children and their needs, which is what the 'romantic' school of thought tends to have. Policy makers therefore should avoid rigid policy that will prevent interventions and shelters acting with flexibility and effectiveness.

This concludes the section of the successful practices OP has developed that could possibly inform policy makers. As previously mentioned, in terms of dealing with street children, interventions and shelters need the flexibility to be able to act more as a family and less as state machinery. Policy should therefore allow shelters the freedom to respond appropriately to each individual child's complex set of needs and problems, whether material or emotional.

**Summary of considerations for a national policy**

To summarise the points made above, policy formulators should consider the following:

[3] By church, I mean all faith-based organisations.

- Flexibility should be built into a national policy to allow for shelters the freedom to respond appropriately to unique individuals in unique contexts.
- Accountability should be built into the policy.
- Policy formulators should rethink their definition of "street child", especially in terms of the 'romantic/'realistic' framework.
- Children's rights should not be defined outside of or apart from the family.
- Prevention is to be prioritised over cure, therefore there is a strong need for a return to family friendly policies.
- Given the family breakdown in the lives of street children as a causative measure, is reason enough to focus on family friendly policies.

I will now consider some of the broader policy issues that could impact on street children.

**The broader policies**

I agree with the IMC report that there needs to be a shift from the treatment approach to a prevention approach. The IMC suggests a shift towards interventions based in the communities themselves where support is given to the entire family. This is to be commended. There is a desperate need for more family friendly policies in South Africa.

Nothing happens in a vacuum and thought needs to be given to the broader policies as stated intent and those in the pipeline. These could negatively impact South African communities, thereby increasing the numbers and aggravating the circumstances of street children. Although there is a lack of space to discuss these, it would not be surprising if these become subjects of future dissertations related to street children. It is extremely troubling that South African national and provincial governments are passing or attempting to pass laws that could be so harmful and inconsiderate of children's needs and circumstances. Two examples include:

- The recent court ruling on the legalisation of prostitution (2 August 2001). This could ultimately lead to a reworking of the laws that will effectively give South Africa the same legal framework as Thailand. In Thailand there are more than 800,000 child prostitutes (child prostitution is not legal, but the framework grossly inflates the market) (Barnes-September, 2000). In Thailand, there are more brothels than schools (Mayne, 1998:4). This will bring terrible consequences to bear on (street) children such as AIDS, STD's, drugs, child pornography, sex slavery, sex trafficking,

violence and further breakdown in families. Considering that impoverished broken families are more susceptible to such problems, government should instead be considering protecting its citizens from such potential damage. For example, equality before the law could mean that both the prostitute and the client are guilty of an offence. Consider Keen (1989), who found it difficult working with female street children because of the high levels of prostitution, and even in my own findings, from the case files alone, 70% of the 'definite' cases, displayed sexually dysfunctional behaviour (by sexual dysfunction, I include prostitution and use of pornography. Some of these girls even prostituted for *no* money! From the case files, it is not clear why, but nor does it rule out the possibility of sex slavery). For the sake of vulnerable 'sexually damaged' street children like these, more thought should be given to tightening the prostitution laws, rather than liberalising them.

- The proposed Liquor Bill could have serious consequences for the lives of children. In this limited study alone, there is evidence of the link between alcohol abuse and other domestic abuses. Also, many of these children's lives are horribly derailed by the influence of community shebeens. In the case files, it is documented that rape, abductions and negative peer pressure are associated with shebeens. Provincial government should be considering enforcing existing laws and protecting its citizens from abuse by limiting the hours and outlets for the sale of alcohol. Furthermore, increased availability may increase minors' access to alcohol. In my limited study alone, 40% of the 'definite' girls at OP abused substances (primarily alcohol), and 34% of the entire sample of girls reported alcohol abuse by at least one parent figure. Richter (1990: 8) confirms this finding, with her work proving that most street children come from homes characterised by parental alcohol abuse, and subsequent child abuse and neglect. Similarly, Dunford (1996) also found a high incidence of alcohol abuse among parents of street children. Once again, for the sake of children and their families, greater consideration is needed before this law is passed.

The reason for referring to these two current legal discussions, is that while many people claim concern over the plight of street children and their rights to representation, there is no-one advocating their case as regards these laws. By advocating for and considering the position and concerns of street children as regards broader policies, we would bring them into mainstream culture. If we pride ourselves on adopting the UN CRC and including Section 28 of our constitution, then other laws should at least consider how to

"act in the best interests of the child." TO do otherwise would be hypocrisy. Street children need advocacy.

If the state wants to play the role of dispenser of welfare and bureaucratic parent then their commitment should be across the board. They cannot play several contradicting roles at the same time. It is apparent that these laws could have devastating consequences on the lives of vulnerable street children. I believe, advocating for the rights of the children, is a future role all interventions, OP included, need to play. Fighting for more family friendly, child friendly laws and policies is, on one level at least, vital to the prevention of the street children phenomenon.

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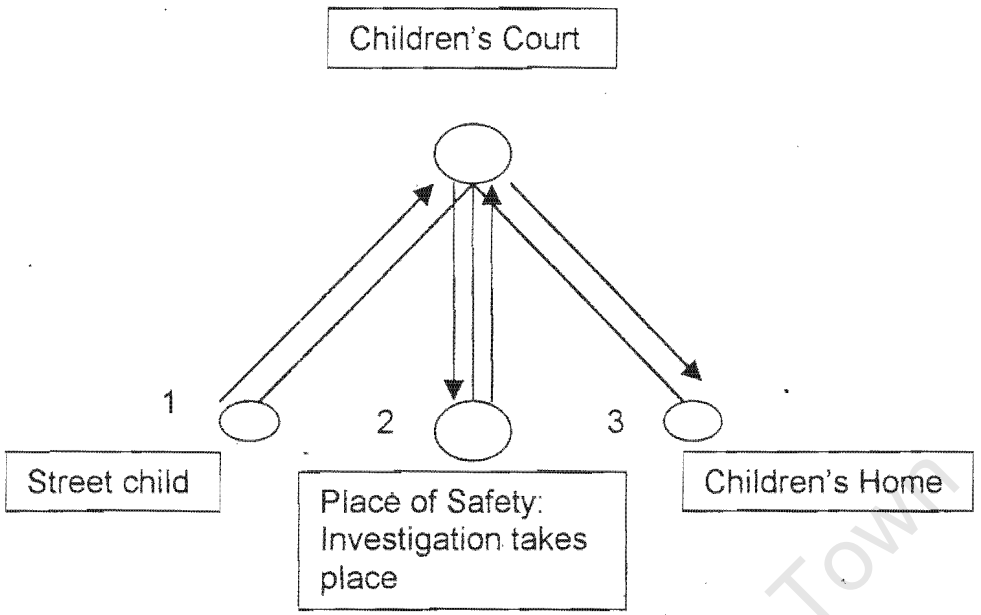
# Appendix 1

**A diagrammatic expression of The Child Care Act**

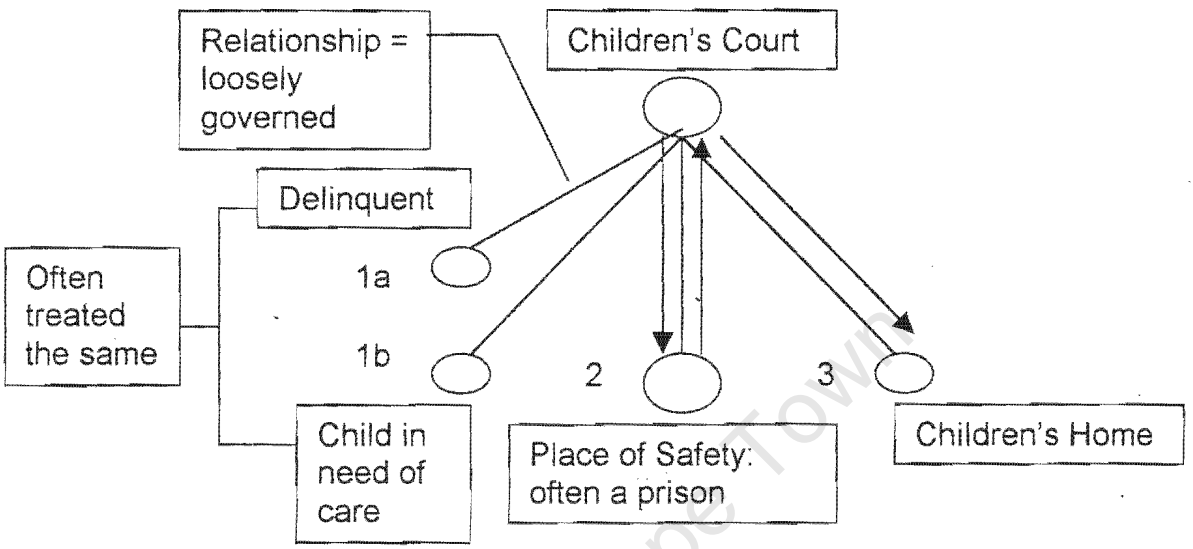



This diagram is an attempt to explain the system, where "authorised persons" (police), under the Child Care Act, could "arrest" a street child on the pretence of being "in need of care", brought before the child's court, then placed into a Place of Safety (Section 28) where "reception, custody, observation, examination and treatment of children" took place (Schurink: 42) and then after an undefined period of time (Schurink: 55) placed by the court under the Child Care Act in some kind of residence. These time delays have been described as a form of secondary abuse (SA Law Commission: 96).

A similar diagram (to diagram 1) could be used to explain the Criminal Procedure Act, although the identity of the child changes to one "in need of care" to 'criminal offender / juvenile delinquent'.

## Appendix 2

**A diagrammatic expression of expression of how the Acts were applied in practice.**




The "practice of the law tended to treat children in need of care and juvenile delinquents in the same manner" (Schurink: 54). Furthermore at this time, there was no accepted strategy for dealing with children in trouble with the law and no higher authority to whom the law enforcement officers were accountable for their decisions. Furthermore they received no training in psychological, social diagnosis and treatment of juveniles (Schurink: 54) (although this has been subsequently reviewed).

# Appendix 3

**A diagrammatic expression of this Proposed Integrated Provisional Policy Framework**

**Level 1: Prevention:**

This is on a micro (individual), meso (family) and macro (national) level. Those at risk should have access to services within their communities.

**Level 2: Early Intervention:**

They seek to divert children from entering the statutory system and remain within the family system instead.

**Level 3: Statutory:**

This comes into effect when children are in conflict with the law or are in need of care and protection in terms of the various Acts discussed earlier. Placement is considered appropriate if in the best interests of the child.

**Level 4: Post Statutory / Alternative:**

Services for children who have been through level 3 and are in need of being reintegrated with families or communities of origin or providing alternative care for those who cannot be reunited with their families.



PTO

| LEVEL 1 | PREVENTION SERVICES AND PROGRAMMES |
|---|---|
| | ECD, after school centres, parenting skills, youth and Community development programmes, life-skills and leadership training, education and training, economic empowerment . . . |

New Paradigm

| LEVEL 2 | EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES AND PROGRAMMES |
|---|---|
| | Drop-in centres, street-work, community-based home schools, diversion programmes, family support/reconstruction services, school-based services, ECD and after school care, youth groups . . . |

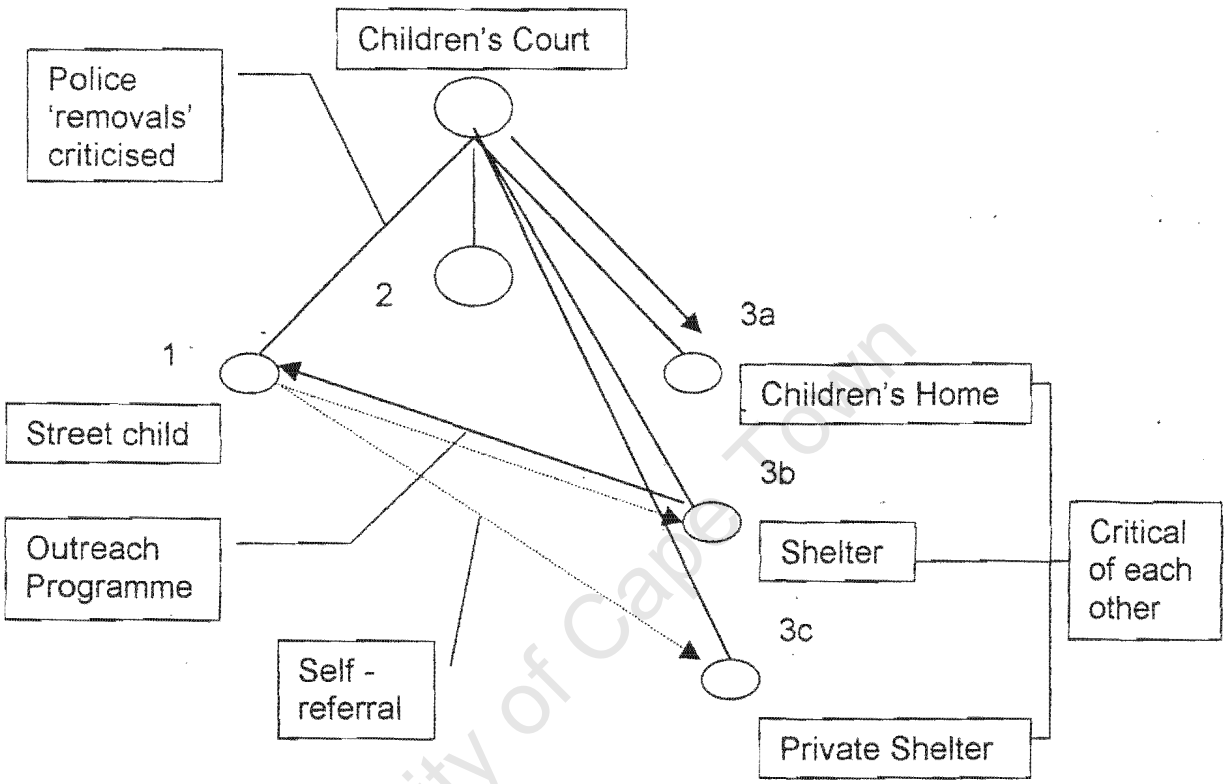
| LEVEL 3 | STATUTORY SERVICES |
|---|---|
| | Assessment, referral, trial and sentencing, diversion programmes, places of safety . . . |

Current Paradigm

| LEVEL 4 | POST STATUTORY / ALTERNATIVE SERVICES |
|---|---|
| | Residential care / alternative care, quality services through a range of programmes, such as parent skills training, after school care . . . |

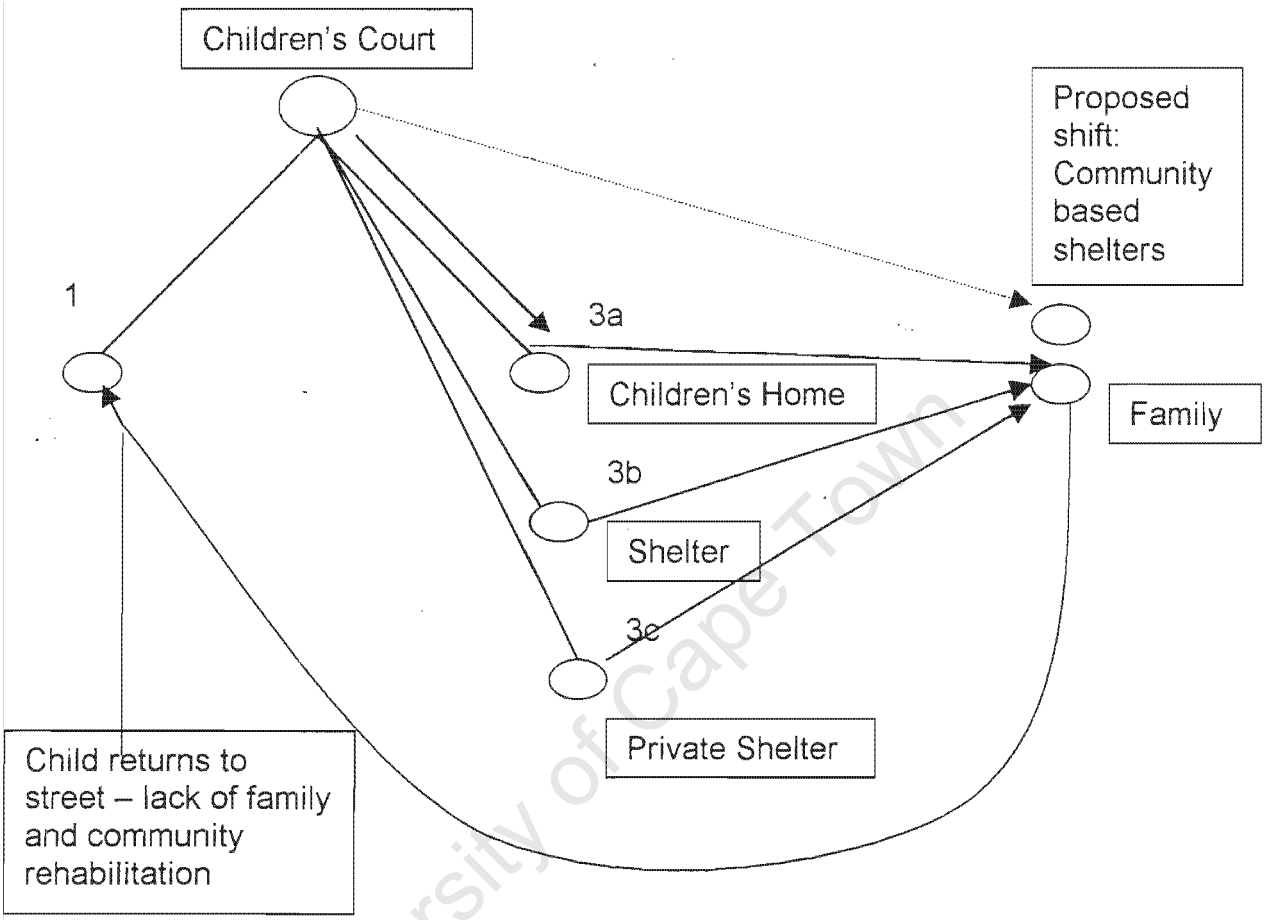
## Appendix 4

**A diagrammatic expression showing complexities and tensions of the system**



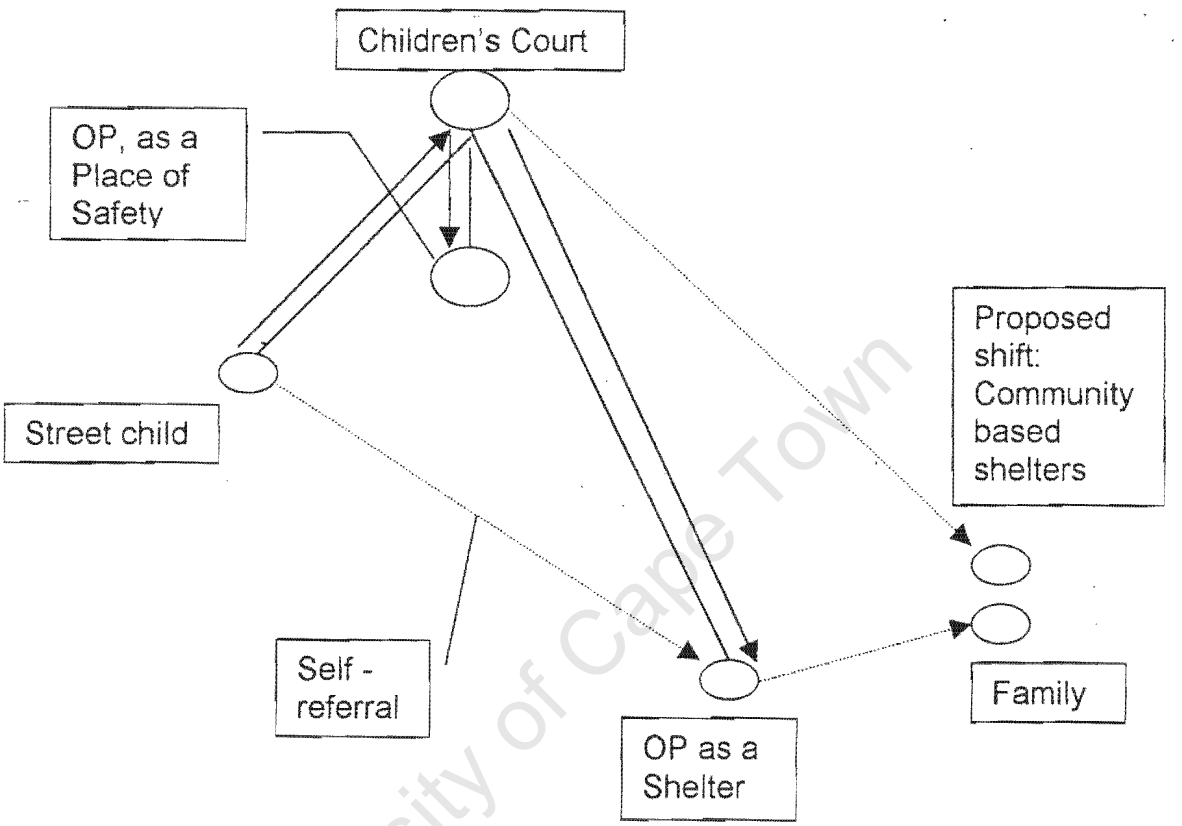
## Appendix 5

A diagrammatic expression showing tensions around returning the child home.

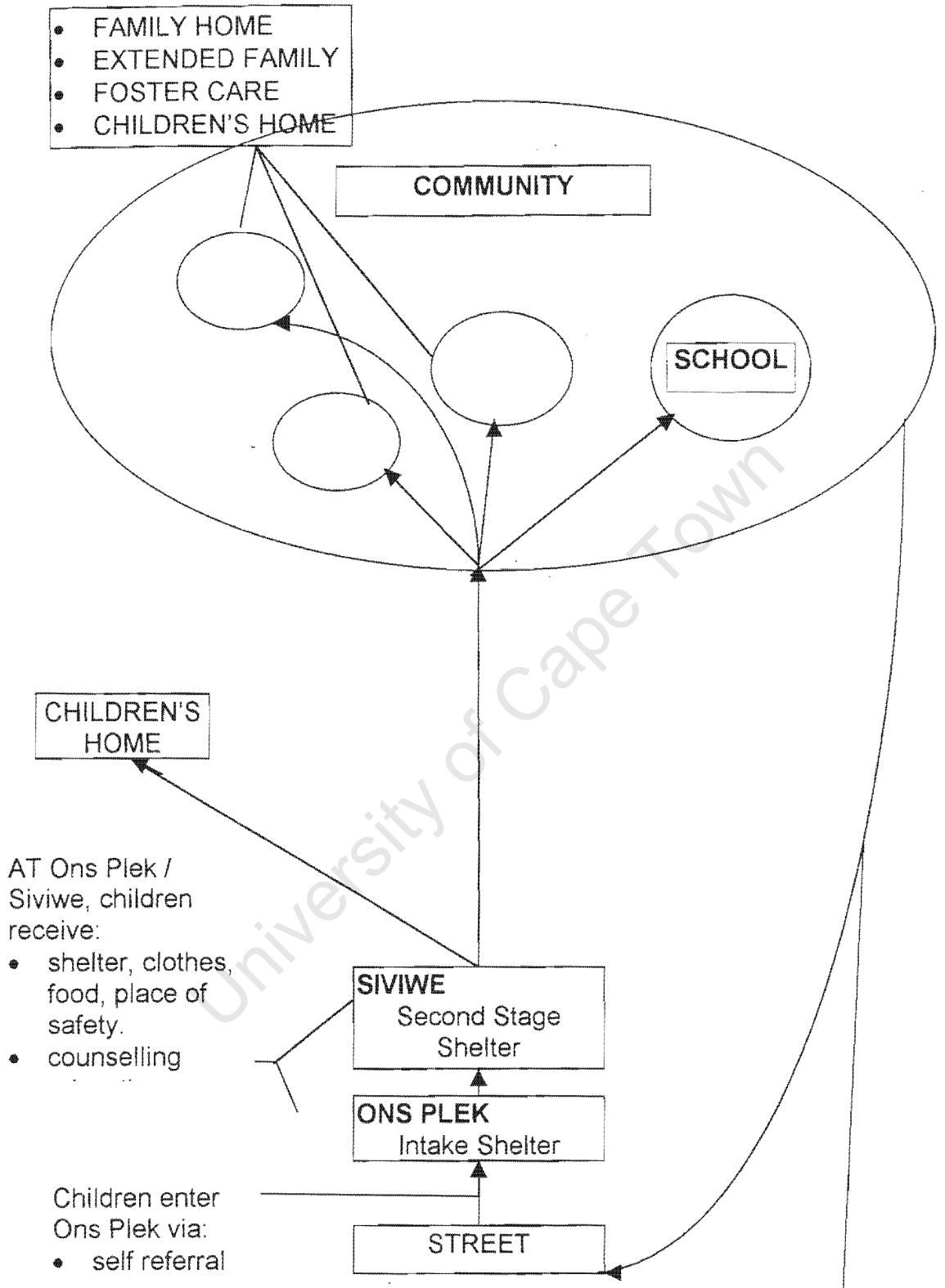


## Appendix 6

A diagrammatic expression of where OP functions within the broader policy framework.



## Appendix 7





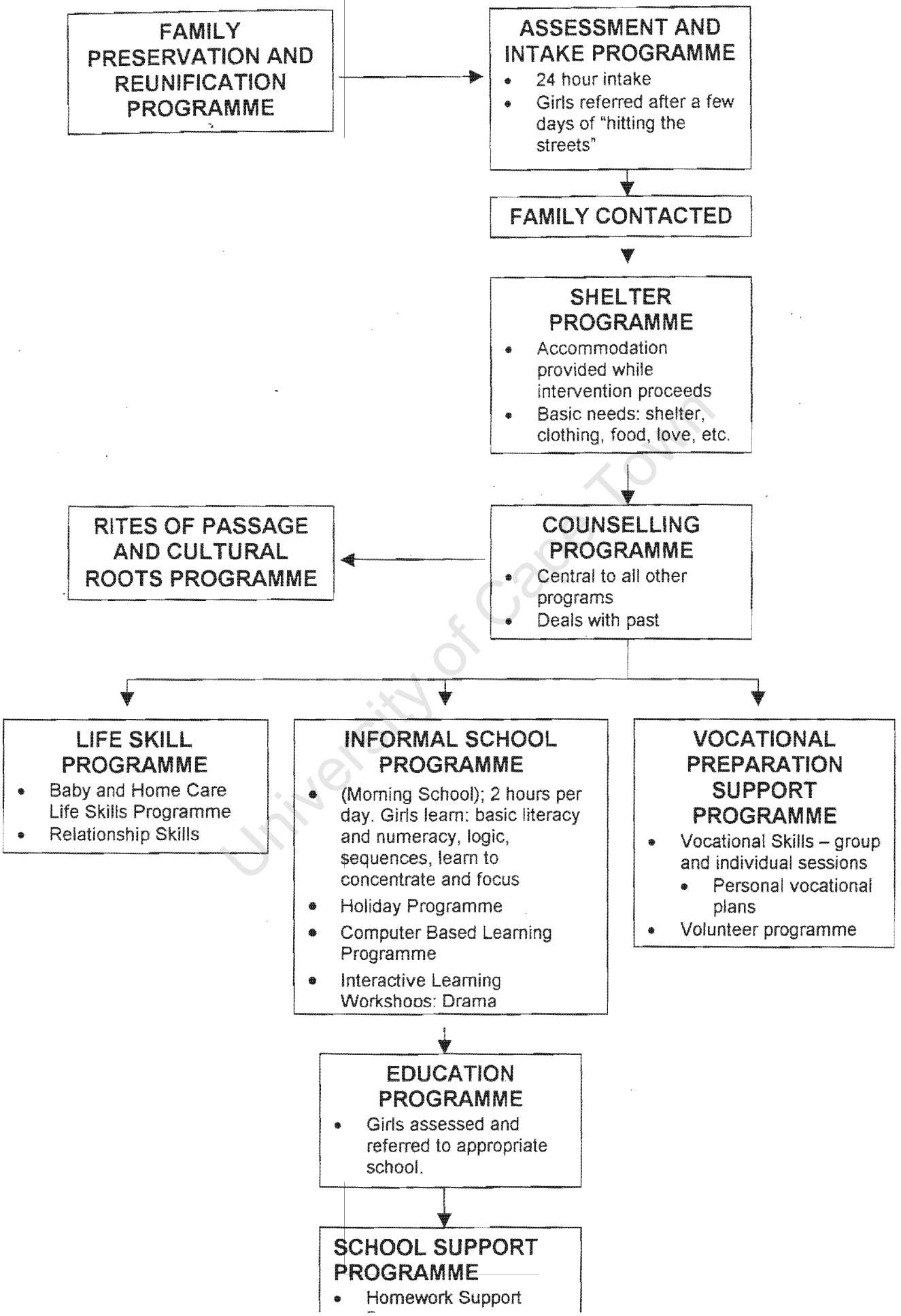

Reasons for leaving the community. Push Factors:

- Abuse
- Poverty
- Family alcoholism

Pull Factors:

- Adventure

## Appendix 8



## Appendix A

**Questionnaire upon Arrival at Ons Plek** Date: _____

Language: _____ DOB _____
Background Information:
Surname: _____
Full Names: _____ Nickname: _____
Age: _____ Length of time on street (weeks): _____
Length of time in Ons Plek (weeks): _____
Length of time out of Ons Plek (weeks / months): _____
Contact person: _____ Tel: _____
Contact person: _____ Tel: _____

**Indicators upon arrival:**
Reasons for being on street:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Abuse in home (sexual, physical, emotional, rape, neglect) | YES | NO |
| Child put on street to work | YES | NO |
| Family financial difficulty / poverty | YES | NO |
| Pull factors (peer group pressure, attraction of city, adventure, prospect of earning money) | YES | NO |
| | YES | NO |
| | YES | NO |
| | YES | NO |
| Other (please specify) | | |

Previous placement prior to child turning to the street:
Child lived with:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mother | Father | Step-mother | Step-father | Mom's boyfriend |
| Extended family (aunt, uncle, gran) | Someone in community | Foster care | No. of siblings | Other - |

Child lived in:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Informal settlement | Former homeland | Children's home | | Other - |

Work:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Did child work before coming to Ons Plek | | YES | NO |
| Full Time | Part Time | Type of work: | |

School

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Did child attend school | | YES | NO |
| Did child drop-out of school | | YES | NO |
| Was child passing / coping in school | | YES | NO |
| Attendance | | | |
| Punctuality | | | |
| (First lang.): | Science: | Mathematics: | |
| Std Ave: | Std Ave: | Std Ave: | |

## Appendix B

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Name | | | | | |
| Age | Language | | Date | | |
| Telephone No. | | | | | |
| Address | | | | | |
| Person spoken with? | | | | | |
| Relation to child? | | | | | |
| Attending School? | | | Std (Grade) / level | | |
| Attendance? | | | Coping? | | |
| Working? | Part-Time | | Full-Time | | |
| How Surviving? | | | Provider? | | |
| Who is child staying with? | | | | | |
| Where? | | | | | |
| Stable? Describe stay (atmosphere, conditions, events) | | | | | |
| Time on the street? | | | How long? | | |
| Abuse? | | | Who? | | |
| Physical | Verbal | Emotional | Neglect | Sexual | Alcohol/drug |
| Behaviour of child, description? | | | | | |
| Sleeping out without permission? | | | | | |
| Running away? | | | | | |
| Cheeky to parents / caregivers / persons staying with? | | | | | |
| Not following instructions? | | | | | |
| Boyfriends? | | | | | |
| Fighting with peers? | | | | | |
| Bullied by others? | | | | | |
| Lying? | | | | | |
| Manipulative? | | | | | |
| Depressed; overly quiet? | | | | | |
| Overly loud; emotional outbursts? | | | | | |
| Substance abuse? | | | | | |
| Theft? | | | | | |
| Truanting from school? | | | | | |
| Other? | | | | | |
| What did you think of OP? | | | | | |
| What effect has being at OP had with child's education? | | | | | |
| What effect has being at OP had with child and family? | | | | | |
| What effect did OP have on child's behaviour? | | | | | |

Comments

.
.
.
.
.
.
.
.
.

School: _____ Age: _____

Tel: _____ Highest Std passed: _____

Behaviour (on a whole / character; not isolated events)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Fighting with peers | YES | NO |
| Cheekiness to staff / parents | YES | NO |
| Not following instructions | YES | NO |
| Wetting bed | YES | NO |
| Running away from shelter | YES | NO |
| Truanting at school | YES | NO |
| Avoid conflict | YES | NO |
| Overly Quiet / reserved / introverted | YES | NO |
| Overly Loud / excitable / boisterous (given to emotional outbursts) | YES | NO |
| Substance abuse | YES | NO |
| Other (please specify) | YES | NO |

Appendix C

# ONS PLEK PROJECTS

Shelters for Female Street Children

## RIGHT TO ACCESS INFORMATION

I, hereby give Robert Mc Cafferty permission to work on the premises of Ons Plek and have access to case files of children who are or were in the care of Ons Plek at one time or another.

As the children were in our care, we were acting *in loco parentis* and therefore have the authority to grant Robert Mc Cafferty access to the case files.

I am aware that the purpose of Robert Mc Cafferty's accessing of this information is an academic study / dissertation towards the completion of his Masters degree at the University of Cape Town.

I am also aware that all names of the children in the sample / caseload will be changed. They will be given other names so as to protect their identity and right to privacy.

SIGNED: signature removed

PRINT NAME: Pamela S. Jackson

POSITION: Director DATE: 25/6/04



Ons Plek Projects
P O Box 3506
CAPE TOWN 8000
Fax : 461 0530

Ons Plek
4 Albertus Street
CAPE TOWN
Tel : 465 4829
Fundraising No. 08 8002 49 0001

Siviwe
7 York Road
WOODSTOCK
Tel : 448 6529

A BRANCH OF
Child Welfare Society
Kindersorgvereniging
CAPE TOWN

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SIGNED: signature removed

PRINT NAME: [illegible]

POSITION: SOCIAL WORKER DATE: 25.06.01



Ons Plek Projects
P O Box 3506
CAPE TOWN 8000
Fax : 461 0530

Ons Plek
4 Albertus Street
CAPE TOWN
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A BRANCH OF
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I am also aware that all names of the children in the sample / caseload will be changed. They will be given other names so as to protect their identity and right to privacy.

SIGNED: signature removed

PRINT NAME: WENDY WILKINSON

POSITION: SECRETARY DATE: 25 JUNE 2001



Ons Plek Projects
P O Box 3506
CAPE TOWN 8000
Fax : 461 0530

Ons Plek
4 Albertus Street
CAPE TOWN
Tel : 465 4829
Fundraising No. 08 8002 49 0001

Siviwe
7 York Road
WOODSTOCK
Tel : 448 6529

A BRANCH OF
Child Welfare Society
Kinderzorgvereniging
CAPE TOWN

**Appendix D**

# ONS PLEK IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

Surname _____ Alias _____

First Names _____ Nickname _____

D.O.B./Age _____ Previous School, Std _____
Dates of Admission _____ Period on Streets _____ Lang _____
Later Dates of Admission _____
Referred/Brought in by _____
Last Address _____

Reason for leaving home/Admission (by child or other) _____

Date(s) of departure _____
Allergies _____

Mother-Name _____ Maiden Name _____
Address _____
Employment _____
Real Father-Name _____ Father to _____
Address _____
Employment _____
Stepfather/Mother _____
Employment _____

| Other Children | Age | School & Std | Details |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |
| 5. | | | |
| 6. | | | |

Maternal Relatives _____

Paternal Relatives _____

| Previous Institution | | Other Contact Persons |
|---|---|---|
| Names of Social Worker(s) | | Name(s) |
| Case Ref No | | |
| Address(es) | | Address(es) |
| Telephone and fax numbers | | Telephone and fax numbers |