

Part III

THE SECURITY OF THE YOUNG

Urban security in Kinshasa

A socio-demographic profile of children in distress

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Section 1: The research

INTRODUCTION

This study provides a socio-demographic profile of youth and urban security in the city of Kinshasa, capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The study aims to identify long-term actions to be undertaken in terms of a recuperation and reinsertion policy for children with marginal behaviours, with the expectation that the findings of the study will help to reduce the consequences of the rise of social insecurity among children in distress.

The study was conducted on two occasions: 2–4 December 2004, data collection, and 21–27 December 2004, data analysis in the communes of Gombe, Kalamu, Kasa-Vubu, and Masina. Ninety-three children were involved in the study, including 21 street children and 31 children in shelter homes. The study was completed with interviews with public authorities and people in charge of shelter homes and detention homes on 7–8 January 2005.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Since the onset of the political transition process in the DRC in April 1990, recurrent insecurity in Kinshasa has become a social phenomenon. As a result of the state's incapacity to provide a favourable economic and social environment for parents, and for other reasons yet to be identified, young men and women adopt delinquent behaviours as they roam the streets looking for a way to survive. To control this delinquency it is imperative to reconsider the educational system, given the failure up to

now of the family and the state to prepare young people for a place in society and in the job market.

In a world where people and stability are rocked by conflict and tension – as on 11 September 2001 in the United States – no nation is safe from assaults on its property and people. It therefore becomes imperative to devise strategies to fight urban insecurity in order to lead Central Africa and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) towards development projects and the well-being of the population.

The phenomenon of street children and youth (SCY) is a reality in DRC cities. In Kinshasa the number of street children and youth is estimated at 12,000, according to a study conducted in 1999 by staff members in charge of children in distress or children in need of special protection measures (ENMSP) in collaboration with Save the Children.

In the DRC, the national programme to fight insecurity and criminality needs new operational modes. This study analyses the socio-demographic characteristics of street children who are responsible for insecurity. The term ‘children in distress’ has been agreed upon because of the confusion caused by pejorative concepts such as ‘street children’ or ‘children in the street’. As we shall see, an analysis of variables in the socio-demographic profile will allow us to define a ‘child in distress’ as a child who develops a sense of rebellion as part of a survival reflex when faced with social exclusion.

Hence the following research questions have been formulated: Who are these young people? What is their level of education? Where do they come from? Why are they on the streets? What kinds of insecurity are they involved in?

We hope that the answers to these questions will contribute to these young people being accepted again in Congolese society.

OBJECTIVES

GOAL

The rehabilitation of young people with delinquent behaviour patterns seems to be a difficult and costly undertaking for many Third World countries and for the DRC in particular, because of the rising the number of young people who are agents and/or victims of street insecurity. The goal of the project is to provide recommendations for the recuperation and rehabilitation policies for children in distress.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study were:

- to obtain a socio-demographic profile of children in distress who are agents and/or victims of insecurity in the city of Kinshasa;
- to pinpoint the most recurrent cases of insecurity in Kinshasa whose agents and/or victims are children in distress;
- to assess the impact of the socio-demographic profile of children on insecurity of which they are agents and/or victims;
- to evaluate government policy of care for children in distress;
- to provide the government, public administration, and national and international partners with reliable data so that they can understand the threat that thousands of children in distress pose to society, to define their problems and to find solutions; and
- to identify research topics with a view to taking action to control the phenomenon.

METHODOLOGY

To achieve these objectives two approaches have been used: a thorough review of literature and data collection on site.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

In order to maximise data precision and taking time constraints into consideration, it was decided to conduct research in three types of location in the city of Kinshasa:

The streets

The Central Market, Gambela Market, Masina Pascal Market and the area around Tata Raphael Stadium are points where anti-social behaviour is regularly observed.

Shelter homes

Two shelter homes were selected: Solidarity Action for Children in Distress (SACD), and Monseigneur Munzihirwa Centre. One reason for this choice is that these two institutions have as their mission “the recuperation of street children and their rehabilitation in their respective homes or in specialised institutions”. Another reason is that the first is specifically for girls and the second for boys.

The Kinshasa Penitentiary and Re-education Centre

Also known as CPRK, formerly Makala Jail. Wards 9 and 10 are packed with criminal minors.

SUBJECTS

It was recommended that data be collected in a sample population of 60 people, but because of the realities on the ground and the need to include both genders, the sample was increased to 100 people distributed as follows:

Table 1 Distribution of subjects according to location and gender

Location	Gender		
	Females	Males	Total (%)
The streets (Central Market, Gambela Market, Masina Pascal Market, Tata Raphael Stadium)	0	21	21
Shelter homes (SACD, Munzehirwa)	21	10	31
Kinshasa Penitentiary and Re-education Centre (CPRK)	21	20	41
Public authorities and people in charge of shelter and detention homes	1	6	7
TOTAL	43	57	100

Selection of the sample was determined by, inter alia, access, the availability of subjects, and gender representation.

DATA COLLECTION

Two instruments were used in data collection: a quantitative questionnaire conforming to ISS standards, and a questionnaire that was administered as an individual semi-structured interview.

Data was collected by a team of ten trained investigators, two controllers, one supervisor, and one coordinator.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data was analysed as follows:

- theme identification;
- explanation of code books;
- application of code books (coding);
- matrix construction (for example frequencies of variables or themes);
- establishing comparisons; and
- making and visualising models.

We conducted a triangulation of data collected in the various locations and in the various phases.

THEME IDENTIFICATION

Theme identification consisted of the following:

- listing patterns in the collected data that relate to the objective of the study;
- discovering the meaning of these elements by examining words and expressions used by the subjects (for example “I have been baptised” is an expression used by young street residents to describe the brutality with which they were welcomed by existing residents);
- drawing similarities and differences between elements (for example one young man said that he was not brutally welcomed by existing residents because he was able to give them some money, but when he found himself in a different location and did not have any money to offer, he received an “unforgettable baptism”);
- synthesising elements for each objective; and
- identifying characteristics of each theme in analysing the content of the interviews.

ELABORATION OF CODE BOOKS

This was conducted in two steps:

- Code Book 1 for Modules 1 and 2 concerning identification and the socio-demographic profile of the study: coding answers to open-ended and semi-closed questions.

- Code Book 2 for interview guidelines in the various sites: coding different aspects of selected themes and describing each theme and the structural organisation of codes.

APPLICATION OF CODE BOOKS

Answers to interview guidelines were marked with the appropriate codes.

GENERATION OF FREQUENCY TABLES AND VARIABLE CRISS-CROSSING

- Analysis of Modules 1 and 2 data on Epi-Data and SPSS Software generated frequency tables for variables related to the socio-demographic profile of the subjects.
- Analysis of interview guidelines data per site (Module 3) generated frequency tables for the various themes and theme crossing in relation to the objective of the study.

ESTABLISHING COMPARISONS

Results for the various sites were compared and then enriched with information from public authorities and heads of shelter and detention centres (triangulation).

DIFFICULTIES

All kinds of challenges had to be overcome at each stage of this study, from design to data collection, to data analysis. They relate to:

- a change in the instrument of data collection from a quantitative to a qualitative approach resulted in non-adherence to operation dates;
- mobility of the subjects during the interview;
- weather (it was the rainy season); and
- the end-of-year holidays (2004) disturbed operations: public authorities and heads of shelter and detention homes were not available.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to all those who have contributed to the implementation of the project, and would like to mention a few:

- the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in Pretoria, which financed this study through its research programme on human security in southern Africa;
- Labor Optimus, a non-governmental organisation under the leadership of Dr Jacques Ebenga, for its permanent availability as an execution agent;
- the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Chair of the University of Kinshasa, chaired by Professor Anicet Mungala Assindie, for their continuous attention to our research programme;
- Professor Roger Kibasomba and Ms Anna Leão of the ISS for their remarks, which contributed to the scientific quality of this study;
- the governor of the city of Kinshasa, His Excellency Jean Kimbunda, for his encouragement and authorisation when needed; and
- fellow researchers for data collection and valuable remarks.

The contribution of the following is also greatly appreciated: The Kinshasa Penitentiary and Re-education Centre (CPRK/Selembao) through its director, Kitungwa Dieudonné, of Solidarity Action for Children in Distress; SACD through its provincial representative, Evariste Kalumuna; and Monseigneur Munzihirwa, Centre of Matonge, through its coordinator, Mr Pierre. The study has also received special attention from the Ministry of the Interior, Decentralisation and Security through its secretary general, David Byaza, the Ministry of Social Affairs through Mr Kande, the director, Ms Penelombe, deputy director, and Mr Losalanga, head of the Child Protection Department; and City Hall for its interest in the project.

Hoping that all the subjects will go home soon, we would like to thank the street children, the children in shelter homes, and the children in detention homes for their cooperation in the collection of data.

Section 2: The results

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF SUBJECTS

The results presented in Tables 2–7 on page 190–193 provide answers to the key questions of the study concerning the socio-demographic profile of children in distress.

To pinpoint these characteristics, the following variables were considered:

- level of education
- residence
- age
- gender
- whether biological parents are alive or dead
- marital status of parents
- religion of origin
- province of origin (for father and mother)

RELIGION OF ORIGIN

Figure 1 Distribution of subjects according to religion of origin

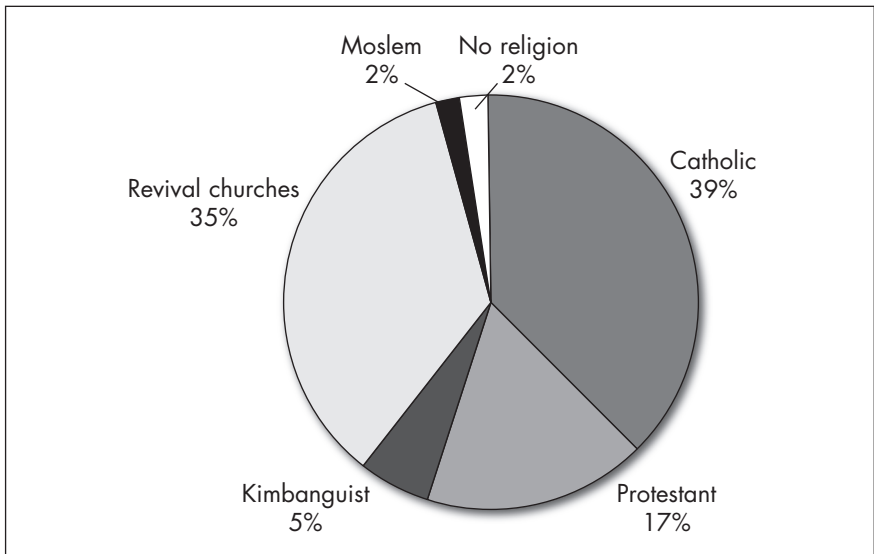


Figure 2 Distribution of subjects according to father's province of origin

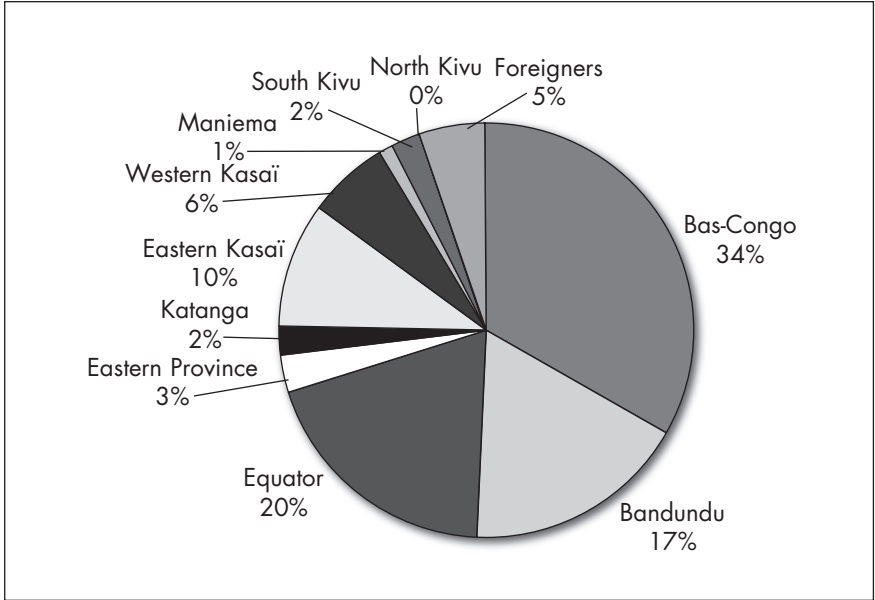


Figure 1 indicates that 96% of the population concerned are religious, and more specifically Christian.

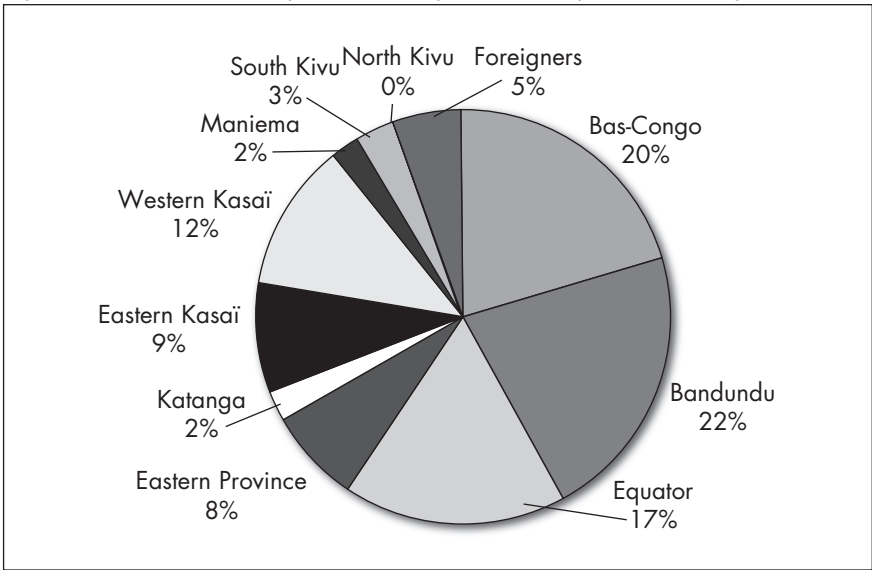
In understanding the demographic phenomenon, religion is a cultural factor that needs to be taken into account in the study of a target population. Beliefs, values and dogmas related to religious practice influence and determine the perceptions, behaviours and attitudes of believers.

FATHER'S PROVINCE OF ORIGIN

Figure 2 indicates that 34% of the population studied come from Bas-Congo, followed by Equator (20%) and Bandundu (17%). The two Kasai represent 16%, with 10% for Eastern Kasai and 6% for Western Kasai. Foreigners account for only 5%.

One explanation for this composition is that the provinces of Bas-Congo and Bandundu, together with the city of Kinshasa, constitute what used to be Central Congo Province. People from these two provinces live close to the capital city of Kinshasa, which facilitates rural depopulation. The precarious quality of life in rural areas will continue to encourage rural depopulation and migration to big cities.

Figure 3 Distribution of subjects according to mother's province of origin



MOTHER'S PROVINCE OF ORIGIN

Figure 3 has almost the same composition as Figure 2 (father's province of origin), with the same explanation. There is a slight increase for

Figure 4 Distribution of subjects according the life status of biological parents

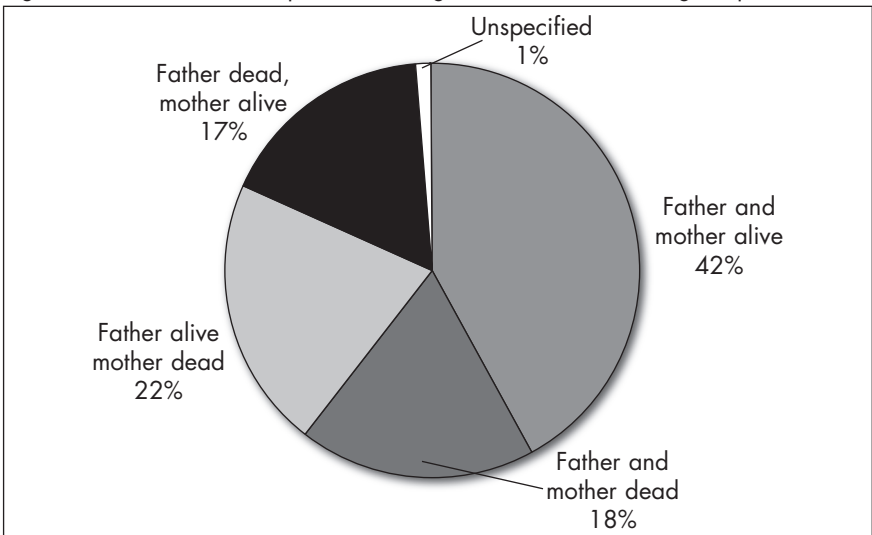
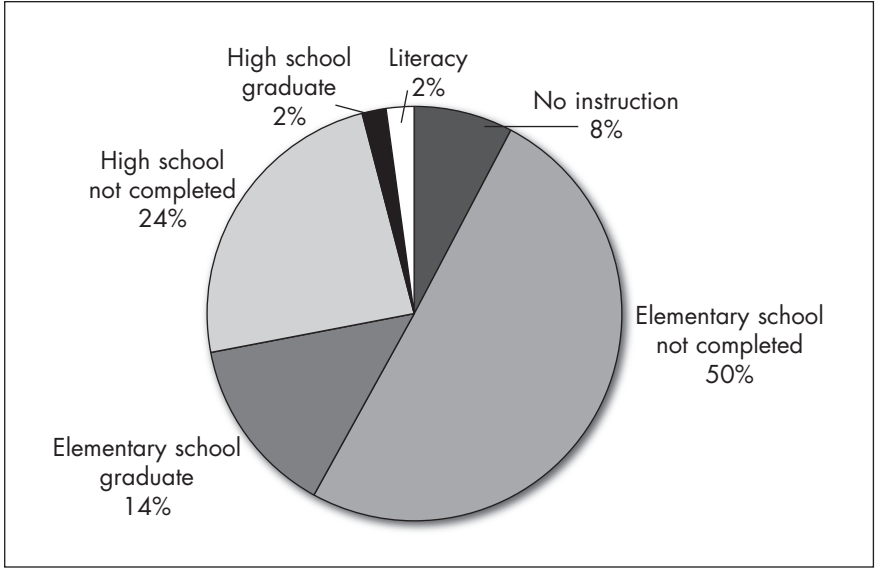


Figure 5 Distribution of subjects according to level of education



women in Bandundu (22%) and Bas-Congo (20%). They are followed by women in the two Kasai, with 9% for Eastern Kasai and 12% for Western Kasai.

LIFE STATUS OF BIOLOGICAL PARENTS

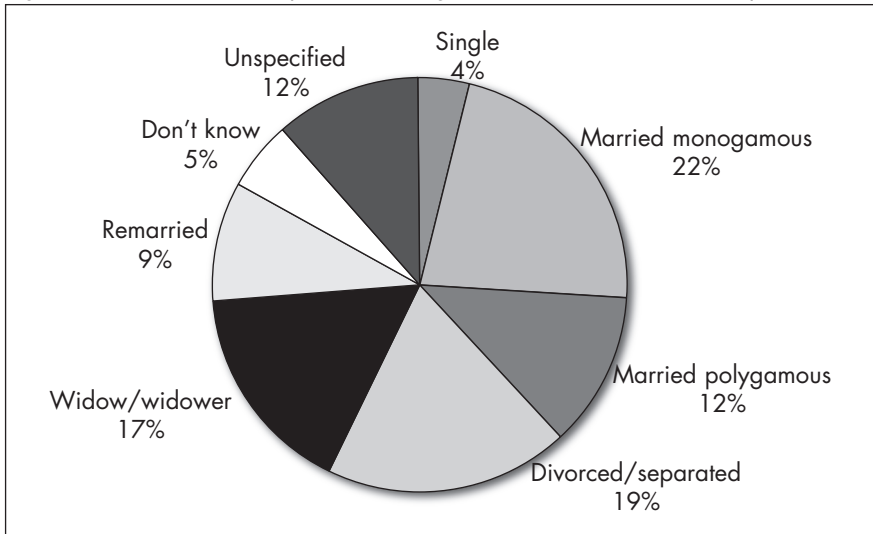
Figure 4 indicates that almost half the subjects (42%) have both parents alive, as opposed to 18% who have lost their father and mother. Furthermore, the study indicates that 39% of subjects have one parent alive, while 1% of subjects have no idea whether their parents are alive or dead.

SUBJECTS' LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Figure 5 indicates that 50% of the subjects had not completed elementary school, 14% had graduated from elementary school, 24% had started high school but had not graduated, and 2% had graduated from high school.

Education changes the individual, both culturally and intellectually. Educating a child means leading the child to adult life so that he or she can fulfil future responsibilities.

Figure 6 Distribution of subjects according to the marital status of their parents



PARENTS' MARITAL STATUS

Thirty four per cent (34%) of the subjects' parents are legally married: 22% in monogamous households and 12% in polygamous households. Nine per cent (9%) have remarried. Figure 6 also shows that 17% of parents are widows or widowers, 19% are divorced and 4% are single. However, 17% of the subjects do not know their parents' marital status.

RESULTS: THEMES

STREET CHILDREN

Early ambitions

All the subjects who were interviewed stated that before going to live on the streets, they had dreamed of having a career as they grew up. Most of them dreamed of becoming a driver or mechanic (57.14%), a business person (19.85%), chief executive of a business (14.28%), an engineer (4.7%), a medical doctor (4.76%), or a musician (4.76%).

Family affection

Family love, affection and warmth are factors of growth and success in children. It is therefore worth examining to what extent the subjects

enjoyed these qualities, and whether deprivation of them might have contributed to their ending up living on the streets.

Here are some statements about family life by street children who were interviewed in Kinshasa.

“We are on good terms with them; they give me everything I need.”

“My stepmother insulted me and didn’t give me enough food.”

“As for me, I consider them enemies. In fact, when my father and his current wife come here to the market, we pass each other as if we did not know each other.”

“When my father’s wife did not want give me any food, my brothers and sisters secretly gave me some.”

Statements such as the above indicate the following:

- There is some presence of affection towards them by other family members (47.6%).
- There is a lack of affection (33.3%).
- There is mixed affection (19.0%).

The results indicate that presence or lack of affection does not necessarily account for the presence of these children on the street. In this case, what could be the reasons for these young people leaving the parental home and going to live on the street?

Main reasons for leaving the parental home

“I wanted to earn money through my own efforts.”

“What dragged me onto the street is lack of money.”

“My uncle’s wife started to dream that we were sorcerers. Then my uncle started to ill-treat us.”

“I already had a friend with whom we were hanging around at the market. When my father died, I left with him and never came back home.”

“I stole something, and for fear of being arrested, I ran away from home and found myself on the street.”

Statements such as the above indicate that young people leave home for reasons that include the following:

- search for freedom and autonomy (33.3%);
- accusation of witchcraft resulting in ill-treatment (19%);

- peer pressure (19%);
- banditry/fear of parental correction and/or of justice (19%); and
- family antagonism/jealousy (14.2%).

Welcoming new members

“You are new in the business of street children you therefore have to be baptised.’ They started to beat us up, including my young brother, who was only seven years old.”

“I was beaten severely by other street children they burned me with cigarette and pot butts, and even with a candle; they put pepper in my eyes and anus. That is why I treat all new members in the same way. I give them ‘baptism’.”

“Welcome was hard. Like all new members, we were beaten up. We underwent humiliation. For example, they threw faeces on our bodies.”

“In my case, I had a friendly welcome from other street children because I already had my friends in the group.”

Of the street children interviewed 52.3% said they were welcomed brutally when they first arrived on the street, whereas 47.6% said they received a friendly welcome.

Daily activities

Subjects were asked about their daily activities. Responses included the following:

“I am a ‘luggage carrier’. Sometimes I sell water in plastic bags.”

“I beg, especially as I am physically handicapped. I have no choice.”

“I clean and set market tables and they pay me.”

“I steal things from sellers.”

Street children are involved in a variety of activities. These activities are mostly ambulatory. Sometimes they pretend to be in need just to give them an opportunity to be in contact with passers-by and operate at the slightest opportunity.

These activities include:

- acting as carrier (28.57%)
- selling (23.8%)
- anything (23.8%)
- theft and ransom (19.4%)

- cleaning (14.28%)
- begging (9.5%)

Caretaking

“I take care of my own health, but if the situation becomes serious, I go to my grandmother’s for help.”

“When I fall sick, I get assistance from other street children, and sometimes from kind people.”

“I go to Lisalisi Medical Centre, where I get free treatment. We young men [boys] are sometimes chased because some of us sometimes cause trouble there.”

As for food and clothing, these young people take care of themselves through the activities listed above. As for medical care, each one takes care of him- or herself (27.2%); some go to their families for help (9.0%); some receive assistance from friends or from kind passers-by; others go to medical centres run by NGOs, religious organisations, or the Red Cross (27.2%).

Satisfaction

“I am here because I eat when I want to and nobody disturbs me.”

“Nothing pleases me here on the street. At 18, I should be practising an occupation, but until now I am nowhere.”

“I am not happy with my situation because we suffer a lot. Sometimes, our clothes are confiscated by others when it rains or when it is cold.”

As can be seen, 5% of the street children say that they are satisfied with their new situation; 40% say they are not and would like to reintegrate into normal life; and 10% have mixed feelings, that is, sometimes they are satisfied, sometimes not.

Possibility of reintegration with the family

“I long very much for life in my parental home since life on the street is a mere adventure. If my mother were alive, I would rather go back home than suffer this predicament.”

“I very rarely think of my family. When I think about my stepfather, I feel like killing him, especially as the house in which he lives belongs to my late father.”

According to their responses to these issues, the majority of interviewees

(72.2%) seem to be ready to reintegrate into the parental home, whereas a minority (27.7%) hate the idea of returning home.

Sexual health

“I have had protected sexual intercourse with street girls using condoms.”

“I satisfy my sexual needs with girls we live with on the market. Girls use condoms sometimes, but as far as I am concerned, condoms totally reduce sexual pleasure. I prefer to have sexual intercourse without condoms.”

“Yes, I do it. Condoms? No, she is the girl of my heart.”

“I am not really interested in sexual relationships. My friends who are here are aware of that. I am afraid of diseases like HIV and AIDS.”

Results indicate that 47.3% of young people do not use condoms during sexual intercourse; only 5.2% do; and 47.3% avoid sexual relationships for fear of disease.

Predisposition to acts of terrorism

“I just go to drop off the parcel to earn some money, and then I run away.”

“If I am given money, I can pull off any job, whatever the content of the parcel – provided you give me money and I don’t get killed.”

“The way I see things today, I would accept being enrolled in an armed movement because I can’t see anything of interest in what I am doing now.”

“I would ‘correct’ him for you. If he happens to be stronger than I am, I would use another strategy to control him (stick, metal bar, etc). You yourself would decide how to pay me.”

“No, the money you will give me is not worth my life. And then I risk going to jail while you will be free.”

Results indicate that the majority (68.4%) of interviewees are prepared to commit acts of violence but never terrorism; 31.5% do not seem to be prepared to become involved in such acts.

Drug use

“I smoke pot and I sell it, too. In fact, I left people selling it for me. That is how I earn my living.”

“To get some courage, I smoke cigarettes; I take drugs, alcohol or Valium.”

“I don’t take any drugs because I am a Kimbanguist Christian. In my church, it is forbidden to take these things.”

The results show that 63.1% of young people take drugs including alcohol, while 36.8% do not.

Street children are exposed to the use of drugs, and trafficking networks develop easily in this environment.

Current ambitions

“My intention is to go back to school, study, get a job, and earn money. I would like to be a driver or mechanic as I always dreamed. Marriage is very important for me. I want to get married and have three children.”

“My dream, as I said, is to have a shop, and also to learn other skills, have a family, wife and children. However, how I am going to fulfil this dream is something I don’t know.”

“I don’t believe in my future any more.”

Results indicate that most of these young people continue to believe in their future and retain their ambitions: 61.1% say they wanted to learn and become drivers or mechanics or pursue another technical occupation; 5.5% say they wanted to become musicians; 5.5% say they wanted to become chief executive officers; and 22.2% did not seem to have any ambition.

These results become interesting, then, as there are candidates among street children who can be trained to take technical jobs and thereby solve the problem of shortage of manpower. Competent authorities have some work to do here.

Comparing past and current ambitions of interviewees, results indicate that 63.1% of young people have held on to their ambitions and 36.8% have changed them.

Expectations

“Let the state take care of me. I cannot go back home as long as my father is living with that woman. Let the state take care of me by teaching me a skill.”

“I cannot ask anything from my family. Instead, it is my responsibility to help my family.”

“We have nothing to expect from the Congolese government. They are useless. It is a group of thieves and selfish people. We trust in God, our creator and Saviour.”

Results indicate that almost all young interviewees (84.2%) expect help and support from one partner or another – the state, an NGO, the family. But a small percentage (15.7%) are resigned and hopeless.

YOUNG PEOPLE IN SHELTER HOMES

Early ambitions

“I went to school and intended to become a pastor one day.”

“With the help of God, I wanted to become a rich woman and help my family. I also wanted to become a singer.”

“I wanted to become God’s singer. Apart from that, I wanted to become a tailor.”

“I wanted and still hope to become a soccer star and a computer programmer.”

Early ambitions of young people interviewed in shelter homes include:

- star – 23.3%
- receptionist, air hostess, tailor, beautician – 16.6%
- chief executive – 13.3%
- servant of God – 10%
- technical occupations – 10%
- merely to be employed – 6.6%

Becoming a star (musician, dancer, etc) is the dominant ambition. This is not surprising, since the two shelter homes are located in the Kalamu Commune, in the Funa and Matonge neighbourhoods, where there is a lot of musical activity.

Many girls (25%) want to become beauticians, tailors, or receptionists (two thirds of the sample in shelter homes were girls). Boys prefer technical occupations. In fact, that was their sole choice of occupation.

Family affection

“My stepmother and her son never wanted me. They inflicted insults and mockery on me without any good reason” (15-year-old boy).

“Yes, we love each other. I love them and they love me. I often visit them, and if I need school fees, they give it to me. They sometimes visit me as well” (13-year-old girl).

“Some, yes; others, no. We do not get along and I don’t like them. When my father died, they began to ill-treat us and still do” (14-year-old girl).

“In the beginning, I could feel that my aunt and other family members loved me. But when I was accused of sorcery, their attitude towards me changed. I was denied breakfast, I had to wait for dinner, and at dinner time, I was given very little food. Everybody avoided me, nobody wanted to be near me to talk to me. I was not feeling at ease at all” (18-year-old girl).

Results indicate that these interviewees experience:

- affection from family members – 21.4%
- lack of affection – 46.4%
- mixed feelings – 32.1%

For many children a lack of affection seems to be the major reason for leaving the parental home. These results are mainly valid for girls because the sample here is mostly female. Results obtained from street children who are exclusively males are different. Why is there a lack of affection? Here are the children’s main reasons for leaving their parental homes.

Main reasons for leaving parental home

“I was living with my grandmother, and she did not have enough money to feed us, that is why I went on the street” (13-year-old girl).

“When my mother passed away, her family members accused us (my younger brother and I) of killing our mother” (15-year-old boy).

“My father did not want to see me at home. He chased me and to go and get rid of sorcery. I was beaten up and tortured. The situation became such that I ran away to protect myself” (13-year-old girl).

Results indicate that the main reasons for leaving include:

- accusations of sorcery and consequent ill-treatment – 48.2%
- a search for freedom and autonomy – 0.6%
- family antagonism/jealousy – 17.2%
- banditry/fear of punishment – 6.9%
- peer pressure – 6.9%

The ‘child sorcerer’ phenomenon has assumed alarming proportions. This is illustrated by the proportion of children who state that this is the main reason they left their parental homes. So-called child sorcerers may be scapegoats and charged with causing family problems. One author pointed out that in Kinshasa, for example, 30% of street children have

been abandoned and turned to vagrancy, after being accused of sorcery or witchcraft.²

Welcoming of new members

“When we arrived, we had a warm welcome” (14-year-old girl).

“I had a nice welcome, I was even pampered” (15-year-old girl).

“There has been a warm welcome here at the centre” (16-year-old boy).

All the children in shelter homes who were interviewed said that they had received a warm welcome. This is quite normal considering the educational and humanitarian missions of the centres.

Care

“I am happy. I go to school, School items are given to me free of charge. When I need clothing, it is bought for me. I eat well and enjoy myself (playing volley-ball, football)” (girl).

“We are now growing up in an educational environment; we are really taken care of: education, housing, clothing and learning.”

“We are well prepared for reintegration into our respective families” (girl).

“We don’t study here. If we were home, perhaps we would be in school. As for food and clothing, these are taken care of by the centre, including medical care” (boy).

From these comments by interviewees in shelter homes, it was inferred that 86.6% receive total care from centres, whereas 13.3% receive partial care.

The heads of the two centres say that their main goal is reintegration of the children into their own families or into specialised institutions where they can be fully cared for. During the transit period the centre for girls provides total care, whereas the centre for boys provides only food, housing and clothing. Some special cases receive school assistance. (We will come back to this in the section on heads of shelter homes.)

Satisfaction with current environment

“Here, I am calm, I am free, I eat, I dress, I go to school and I have friends. Most of all, I am free.”

“I am particularly happy, because I go to school and I study aesthetics. It is as if God blessed me to recover my early ambitions.”

“Satisfaction is not total here: we eat cassava bread with beans every day, and they have us do some chores.”

“We don’t go to school here. If we were home, we would be going to school. However, food and clothing are taken care of by the centre.

The results of our meetings with young people in shelter homes indicate:

- satisfied – 80.6%
- dissatisfied – 3.2%
- mixed satisfaction – 16.1%

It appears that children are more satisfied in shelter homes than on the street, and even more than in parental homes.

Possibility of reintegration

“Yes, I feel homesick when I think of living with my brothers at home, because it is home.”

“I have never felt homesick, because home is hell for me.”

“I am homesick, but the family has rejected us for good. They said: ‘Stay here until you get married so that the centre can take your dowry.’”

From these statements it can be inferred that the possibility of reintegration is easy in 66.3% of cases and difficult in 33.3% of cases.

The centres are transit locations before children are reintegrated into their respective families. The high rate of reintegration can be explained by the fact that many children already have contact with their families with a view to reintegration.

In addition, the head of one centre commented: “We only accept children who are predisposed to reintegration; those who accept going back.”

For one third of the children reintegration is difficult. Their parents have categorically refused to allow them to go back home. There were a few cases of children who were temporarily accepted at the centre while they were waiting to be transferred to a full care institution.

Street children are more likely to return to the family home (72.22%) than those living in shelter homes (66.66%).

Sexual health

“Sexual relationships? I don’t know much about this. In fact, since I was born, I have never known a woman. I dreamed of becoming a priest one day.”

“I always require a condom because there are so many diseases.”

“I was raped in the daytime by a group of four street children.”

“Some days we use condoms; other days we don’t.”

Results indicate that:

- 51.6% of young interviewees do not have any sexual relations;
- 35.4% have unprotected sex; and
- 12.9% have protected sex.

When the genders are considered separately, 60% of males are not yet sexually active, 20% have unprotected sex and 20% have protected sex. As for females, 47.6% are not yet sexually active, 42.8% have unprotected sex, and 9.5% have protected sex.

The results indicate that girls are more exposed to sexually transmitted infections than boys.

Predisposition to terrorism

“Yes, I know how to shoot. Our uncle showed us how to use a weapon. If you hand me a gun right now, I will be able to operate it quite easily. Quite often, my uncle used me to carry out an armed robbery.”

“I would accept the offer because it is a job, and I would be paid for it ... Even if I had to lose my life, at least my family would benefit.”

“I would drop off a parcel because I want to earn some money. What is inside is none of my business.”

“No, I would never accept that, despite the money ...”

“No, I wouldn’t use it because I hate weapons and everything related to war, violence, and fighting.”

“No, but as there is some payment, I would accept if only to get money.”

“Yes, I have already told you: for money, I would do anything.”

Results from these statements indicate:

- 58,0% of young interviewees are predisposed to terrorism;
- 38,7% are not predisposed to terrorism; and
- 3,2% have mixed feelings.

If the genders taken separately, 70% of males are predisposed towards terrorism and 30% are not, while 52,5% of females are predisposed towards terrorism and 47,5% are not.

Although no one wanted to talk about their predisposition towards

becoming mercenaries, there is only one step between being mercenaries and terrorism – especially when these children are prepared to do anything for money.

These results are alarming in a country that is prone to political insecurity, because young boys know how to shoot and are ready to join gangs for money.

Drug use

“Yes, I sometimes smoke cigarettes and pot once a day. I feel dizzy and courageous at the same time. I started smoking it when I was ten.”

“I smoke and take pot, Valium and drugs. I started taking drugs on the street, mainly in order to get the courage to steal, to think, and to control events.”

“When I was on the street, I smoked pot and took Valium. I started at 13. When I came here, at first I continued to do so. Then I stopped and I don’t take it any more.”

“I don’t smoke and never will.”

Results indicate that 80.6% of children in shelter homes do not take drugs, but 28.5% do.

Genders taken separately:

- All the males said that they do not take drugs any more, but that they used to take drugs when they were on the street.
- A total of 28.5% of females still take drugs, even in shelter homes and despite formal prohibition by the heads of the shelter homes; 71.4% have never taken drugs and still don’t.

The reason why males do not use drugs is that the centre for boys belongs to the Jesuits, where moral education is very rigorous. The centre for girls belongs to an NGO.

Current ambitions

“I am not sure about my future since both my parents are dead. But, since the centre sends us to school, God bless.”

“I really don’t care about my future, either with or without school ...”

“I would like to become a priest and serve the Lord.”

Results indicate:

- business executive – 25.8%
- receptionist, tailor, beautician – 25.8%
- star – 19.3%
- technical occupation – 12.9%
- religious – 9.6%
- middle-class employment – 6.4%
- no ambition – 3.2%

Genders taken separately:

- Males: 40% of young men chose a technical occupation; 30% wanted to become stars; 20% wanted to become middle-class employees; and 10% chose the priesthood or a religious life.
- Females: 38.1% of young women wanted to become receptionists, dressmakers, or beauticians, 28.5% business executives, 14.2% stars, 9.5% middle-class employees, and 9.5% chose a religious life.

When previous and current ambitions are compared, it emerges that 54.8% of young people retained their ambitions whereas 45.8% changed their ambitions.

Expectations

“The government need to arrest mothers who refuse to allow their children to return home. I want the government to take us back home by force. My family should leave me alone. I need to be treated like any other child. My stepmother should leave me alone. I need to enjoy love and affection and I need to go to school like my stepbrothers.”

“The government cannot do anything for me. My wish is that the centre should point us in the right direction. If they could find us a safe place to go after here. I don’t know if my family can do anything for me.”

It emerges that all the young people we interviewed expect something to be done by NGOs, their families, and/or the government.

YOUNG PEOPLE IN DETENTION HOMES

Early ambitions

“I thought I would become a famous mechanic.”

“My ambitions were to become a female soldier in an army somewhere.”

“My ambitions were to go to school and then get married to a supportive husband; then to become a servant of God” (young female detainee, 16 years old).

All the young people (males and females) said that before they were detained, they had hoped to become somebody in life.

Technical occupations (driver, mechanic, fitter, mason, etc) attract these young people most (21,9%). Other occupations include:

- businessman/woman – 19.5%
- receptionist, dressmaker, beautician – 17%
- servant of God – 14.6%
- executive – 9.7%
- star – 4.8%

Family affection

“Total harmony.”

“My parents are divorced, and my stepmothers do not want me.”

Statements by interviewees indicated the family affection / lack of family affection in their families of origin:

- affection present – 46.3%
- affection absent – 26.8%
- mixed affection – 26.8%

These results indicate that lack of affection is not the main reason for leaving the parental home.

Reason for detention

“I am detained because I stole an outfit, a watch, and a bag from our neighbour. Unfortunately, his son was hiding somewhere. He saw me and told his mother. That evening the police came to arrest me. I gave back everything except her son’s bag. She got angry and refused to have me released. I was sent to court and later transferred to jail.”

“My friend and I were watching DCMP [a soccer team] training on television. Suddenly, we saw a young boy get in the police. The young boy said we were with them when they stole whiskey. We were arrested on the spot and taken to the police station. Here, the young boy told the police officer that they were with us when they killed that man ...”

“A girl called ... slandered me and said that I had raped her.”

“I am 16 years old. I am here because I performed an abortion ...”

Since the detained young people tended to try to justify themselves and claim their innocence, hoping to attract the investigator’s sympathy, we decided to take into consideration only the reason for their detention. The following crimes were listed:

- theft – 41.4%
- fighting/banditry – 26.8%
- abortion – 9.7%
- manslaughter – 7.3%
- rape – 7.3%
- drug use and drug trafficking – 7.3%

Young people are detained mainly because of theft and fighting on the street or in their neighbourhood. It is deplorable that under-age young people should be detained for minor reasons.

Of the girls in detention, 19.5% had been detained for having had an abortion. This is a health security issue for young girls.

Congolese law regards abortion as a crime and condemns it.

Welcoming new members

“There is a tradition of brutalising newcomers here.”

“The welcome was good. When I came in, Christians gave me the chore of cleaning the ward, the dormitory, and toilets for six months. I was given a friendly welcome, and that is why I also welcome newcomers.”

Results indicate the following for detained young people:

- brutal welcome – 50%
- friendly welcome – 50%

Acts of brutality are forbidden in jail, but there are always some detainees who commit them and threaten newcomers if they dare denounce them.

Care

“We don’t eat here. Every day, we are served *viengèle* [a mixture of beans and maize].”

“I was OK on the streets, except that I suffered from the cold a lot at night. Here in jail, the situation is worse: we eat poorly, and as for clothing, forget it.”

“When we fall sick, we go to the hospital for treatment. As for clothing, we receive donations from churches. For food, they give us some when they feel like it. As you can see, I have not eaten since yesterday ...”

All interviewed detainees (100%) say that they are taken care of by the prison administration only when they fall sick. Even in that case, some detainees claimed that when the illness is serious, most prescriptions are taken care of by the detainee’s family. When the detainee has no family, anything can happen.

Satisfaction

“This is a house of suffering. Nothing can satisfy us here, whether it be food or clothing ...”

“No possible satisfaction for me. I hate being in jail.”

“I am not satisfied. I have always said to myself: if I am here it is because my father and my mother are dead. I am not happy here. I am already a grown woman, but I do nothing. My boyfriend misses me, and he is afraid to come and see me.”

Possibility of social reintegration

“My wish is to go back so that I can see my father, my sisters, and my friends.”

“I am ready to go home, even today. I miss my boyfriend, my business.”

“I think about my family all the time. I took care of my sisters; now that I am here, I wonder who takes care of them.”

Sexual health

“I feel like having sex, but my situation as a detainee does not allow me to do so. Quite often I let the feeling go without satisfaction. It is difficult to be in contact with a man here.”

“I masturbate, and then I think about my boyfriend. I wonder whether he also thinks about me because he caused the pregnancy I aborted.”

“I have not started sexual relations yet.”

“Since I have been detained, I have not had sexual relations.”

Nobody has said he or she had sexual relations in jail, whether homosexual or heterosexual. It is forbidden. However, some people masturbate, which has no impact on sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS.

Predisposition to terrorism

“I would drop off the parcel because you pay me for it.”

“I know how to operate a gun because my uncle is a soldier and he taught me how to do so.”

“I have never used a gun, but if it is to make money, I will do it. I could agree to work for an armed movement.”

“I cannot take it because I don’t know what is in the parcel. I cannot agree to conduct any mission which leads to death.”

Results indicate that 45% of young people are prepared to commit acts of terrorism, deliberately or non-deliberately; 55% are not prepared to do so for fear of being sentenced. Detention seems to have had a positive impact on the majority of young detainees.

Drug use

“Here, I don’t do it, but when I was on the street, I used to take Valium.”

“I don’t take anything.”

Since prison is a re-education centre for these young people, the use of drugs is forbidden. They are also not in contact with any drug distribution network.

Current ambitions

“I intend to become a mechanic or a driver, and then get married.”

“I will still be a dressmaker or perhaps a seller if it doesn’t work. I hope to get married one day and have seven children.”

“It looks as if my life is lost. No husband ... what is going to happen? God knows. No hope. I have no-one to support me.”

From these statements, it emerges that the current ambitions of interviewees are as follows:

- technical occupations – 28.5%
- receptionist/tailor/beautician – 20%
- marriage – 20%
- businessman/woman – 11.4%

- company executive/employee – 8.5%
- star – 5.7%
- no ambition – 5.7%

Technical occupations seem to be the first choice of the interviewees. Half of the interviewees were females and that is why becoming a receptionist, a dressmaker or a beautician accounts for 40%.

In spite of being detainees, females say they would like to become good mothers (40% of interviewees).

A comparison of early and current ambitions shows the following:

- Have retained their ambitions – 52.5%
- Have changed their ambitions – 47.5%

Expectations

“I would like the government and NGOs to help me leave jail. I would like the government to pay for my training as a tailor. Once I become a tailor, I would like NGOs to find me a job.”

“I would like the government to get me out of here. My life has stopped with the five months I spent in jail. Possibly, I would have learned a skill, or got a fiancé. To the NGOs, I would say that I don’t need the food they bring us; on the contrary, I want them to help me get out of this hell.”

All young detainees wish to get out of jail.

RESULTS: MATRIXES

CHILDREN ON THE STREETS

Table 2 shows that the majority of children (42.8%) whose parents are both alive landed on the streets through peer pressure, whereas 100% of those who lost both parents are on the streets in search of freedom and autonomy. Children who have lost one parent are also on the streets in search of freedom and autonomy – 28.4% of those who have lost their mothers and 40% of those who have lost their fathers. Of those who are on the streets for having committed reprehensible acts, 28.5% have lost their mothers and 20% have lost their fathers. Most children accused of sorcery have lost their mothers (28.5%).

Table 2 Distribution of street children according to life status of biological parents and main reason for deserting the parental home

Parents alive or dead	Main reason for desertion					Total (%)
	Search for freedom and autonomy	Accusation of sorcery and ill-treatment	Peer pressure	Family antagonism or jealousy	Banditry and/or fear of punishment	
Both parents alive	14.29	14.29	42.86	28.57	0	100
Both parents dead	100	0	0	0	0	100
Father alive, mother dead	28.57	28.57	0	14.29	28.57	100
Father dead, mother alive	40	0	20	20	20	100

RELIGION OF ORIGIN AND DESERTION

Despite religious teachings in general, and Christian teachings in particular, children still roam the streets for various reasons, including family antagonism and jealousy (25% Catholic, 20% Protestant, 33,3% Revival churches).

Table 3 Distribution of street children according to religion of origin and reason for deserting the parental home

Religion of origin	Main reason for desertion					Total (%)
	Search for freedom and autonomy	Accusations of sorcery and ill-treatment	Peer pressure	Family antagonism or jealousy	Banditry and/or fear of punishment	
Catholic	25	25	25	25	0	100
Protestant	20	20	40	20	0	100
Kimbanguist	66.67	0	0	0	33.33	100
Revival churches	16.67	16.67	16.67	33.33	16.67	100
Moslem	0	0	0	0	100	100
No religion	100	0	0	0	0	100

Table 4 Distribution of street children according to biological parents’ marital status and the main reason for deserting their parental home

Parents’ marital status	Main reason for desertion					Total (%)
	Search for freedom and autonomy	Accusations of sorcery and ill-treatment	Peer pressure	Family antagonism or jealousy	Banditry and/or fear of punishment	
Single	0	0	0	0	0	0
Married/monogamous	28.57	14.29	28.57	14.29	14.29	100
Married/polygamous	0	0	0	0	0	0
Divorced/separated	0	50	50	0	0	100
Widow/widower	50	16.67	16.67	16.67	0	100
Remarried	0	0	0	0	100	100
Don’t know	0	0	0	0	0	0
No response	50	0	0	50	0	100

The question is whether the church plays its traditional spiritual role of teaching one to love one’s neighbour. Some early youth religious movements such the Boy Scouts, Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) and Xaveri contributed to the supervision of children. It is worth considering whether these movements are able to adapt to the present context with a view to becoming a more effective force in the socialisation of young people.

PARENTS’ MARITAL STATUS AND DESERTION

Table 4 indicates that children who have lost one parent roam the streets in search of freedom and autonomy (50%). This means they feel that they are victims of injustice and that the streets seem to be the last recourse when all other possibilities of hanging onto the family have failed.³

Children of monogamous parents are on the streets more in search of autonomy (28.5%) and because of peer pressure (28.5%).

Table 5 Distribution of children in shelter homes according to life status of biological parents and main reason for deserting the parental home

Parents alive or dead	Main reason for desertion					Total (%)
	Search for freedom and autonomy	Accusations of sorcery and ill-treatment	Peer pressure	Family antagonism or jealousy	Banditry and/or fear of punishment	
Both parents alive	10	50	10	20	10	100
Both parents dead	12.50	75	0	0	15.50	100
Father alive, mother dead	25	37.50	12.50	12.50	12.50	100
Father dead, mother alive	40	40	0	0	20	100
No response	0	0	0	0	0	0

CHILDREN IN SHELTER HOMES

Parents' life status and desertion

Whether parents are alive or dead, accusations of sorcery appear to be the main reason for deserting the parental home (50% for children with parents alive, 75% for those who have lost their mothers, and 40% for those who have lost their fathers). (As a reminder, in this category two thirds of our sample are female. When girls are left with their fathers and stepmothers, they usually encounter rivalry and antipathy, which lead to victimisation. The stepmother might seek any reason to get rid of the girl. Accusations of sorcery are used most often because they are the most difficult to prove.)

Parents' marital status and desertion

Table 6 indicates that in stable relationships (monogamous couples), the probability of children being accused of sorcery is very low, if it exists at all (0%). However, in unstable relationships the percentage of children accused of sorcery is high: 50% for children of polygamous parents, 100% for children of divorced or separated parents, 66.6% for orphans of father or mother, and 50% for children of remarried parents. However, the highest percentage (40%) of children who have gone onto

Table 6 Distribution of children in shelter homes according to biological parents' marital status and the main reason for deserting the parental home

Parents' marital status	Main reason for desertion					Total (%)
	Search for freedom and autonomy	Accusations of sorcery and ill-treatment	Peer pressure	Family antagonism or jealousy	Banditry and/or fear of punishment	
Single	0	0	0	0	0	0
Married/monogamous	40	0	20	40	0	100
Married/polygamous	20	50	0	0	30	100
Divorced/separated	0	100	0	0	0	100
Widow/widower	33.33	66.67	0	0	0	100
Remarried	0	50	0	50	0	100
Don't know	33.33	0	33.33	0	33.33	100
No response	0	100	0	0	0	100

Table 7 Distribution of children in detention homes according to life status of biological parents and main reason for arrest

Parents alive or dead	Main reason for arrest						Total (%)
	Rape	Theft	Illegal abortion	Fighting	Man-slaughter	Drugs/banditry	
Both parents alive	4.55	50	13.64	18.18	9.09	4.55	100
Both parents dead	11.11	22.22	0	33.33	11.11	22.22	100
Father alive, mother dead	0	33.33	0	66.67	0	0	100
Father dead, mother alive	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
No response	0	100	0	0	0	0	100

the streets come from monogamous couples. Again, poverty is a possible reason for deserting the parental home.

CHILDREN IN DETENTION CENTRES

Parents' life status and reason for arrest

Whether parents are alive or dead does not seem to have anything to do with children's arrests. However, all the girls who were arrested for voluntary abortion have both parents alive (13.6%). They therefore commit offences and are subsequently arrested.

Religion of origin and reason for arrest

Table 8 Distribution of children according to religion of origin and reason for arrest

Religion of origin	Main reason for arrest						Total (%)
	Rape	Theft	Illegal abortion	Fighting	Manslaughter	Drugs/ banditry	
Catholic	0	29.41	5.88	47.06	0	17.65	100
Protestant	12.50	50	12.50	0	25	0	100
Kimbanguist	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Revival churches	0	69.23	7.69	15.38	7.69	0	100
Moslem	0	0	0	100	0	0	100
No religion	100	0	0	0	0	0	100

Table 8 indicates that theft is the main reason for young people being arrested and that all religions are represented: 24.4% Catholic, 50% Protestant, 100% Kimbanguist, 69.2% Revival churches.

Parents' marital status and reason for arrest

Table 9 indicates that girls who were arrested for illegal abortion mainly have parents who have separated (14.3% girls with divorced or separated parents, 20% with remarried parents). This is evidence that the separation of parents correlates with the practice of illegal abortion.

Table 9 Distribution of detainees according to biological parents' marital status and reason for arrest (%)

Parents' marital status	Main reason for arrest						Total
	Rape	Theft	Illegal abortion	Fighting	Man-slaughter	Drugs/banditry	
Single	0	50	0	50	0	0	100
Married/monogamous	0	85.71	0	14.29	0	0	100
Married/polygamous	0	100	0	0	0	0	100
Divorced/separated	7.14	28.57	14.29	37.71	14.29	0	100
Widow/widower	14.29	28.57	0	42.86	14.29	0	100
Remarried	0	80	20	0	0	0	100
Don't know	0	0	0	0	0	100	100
No response	0	25	0	25	0	50	100

MEETINGS WITH PUBLIC AUTHORITIES AND HEADS OF SHELTER HOMES

AUTHORITIES OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Main challenges of the 'street children' phenomenon

- To design a global policy to protect street children and children accused of sorcery;
- To appoint qualified manpower and create shelter homes for these children;
- To budget for the rehabilitation and social reintegration of street children.

Problems caused by the 'street children' phenomenon⁴

Problems commonly dealt with include theft, rape, fighting, aggression, illegal seizure of the property of others, prostitution, delinquency, pimping, social insecurity, disobedience, and banditry.

Existence of action programmes to control the 'street children' phenomenon

According to the authorities, action programmes exist, but they are still in an early stage and need to be implemented.

Other possible reasons for deserting parental home

The main reasons that were indicated include parental poverty, ill-treatment of the children, parental irresponsibility and instability in the homes.

Actions to halt the phenomenon of ‘street children’

- Utilise the media to advise parents, public authorities and institutions in charge of vulnerable children.
- Create and equip shelter homes to take full care of vulnerable children.
- Train staff in charge of vulnerable children.
- Raise parents’ salaries and pay them regularly.

Intervention capacity of the police and specialised services

The police and other specialised services in charge of public order are not equipped to reinforce the police and other services’ ability to deal with situations.⁵

Main challenge posed by criminal children

Succeed in the re-education, reintegration and security of detained children.

Serious problems posed by criminal children

The CPRK is not qualified to deal with criminal minors. Since there is no qualified centre, the Catholic International Bureau for Children (BICE) looks after children in prison.

Action programmes for the rehabilitation and reintegration of criminal children

There was no appropriate programme for looking after criminal children, as can be seen from the following statements by heads of the CPRK:

“Honestly, I don’t know if there is one” (CPRK/personnel manager).

“Actually, there is no action programme because of funds. NGOs usually take care of that.”

Other possible reasons for deserting the parental home

There are many reasons, including the breakdown of marriages and accusations of sorcery. In short, children’s rights are not respected. Orphans are neglected. The government seems to have abandoned measures to protect children. Similar reasons were given by the children themselves and by public authorities.

Actions to halt the phenomenon of ‘street children’

- The government should organise the necessary structures for child protection.
- The government should disseminate family codes.

Capacity of the police and specialised services to intervene

The police and other services in charge of public order do not have the necessary tools to face the ‘street children’ phenomenon. This can be seen from the following statements:

“First, the police should be equipped to play its role. They should be given power to enforce the law. Currently, interventions come from all over, which reduces its power. The police should have its own law, which allows them to act instantly without waiting orders from anyone” (personnel manager, CPRK).

“The police and services in charge of public order are not equipped in terms of human resources. These children need psychologists and ethics experts who should help them re-integrate in society” (deputy director CPRK).

PEOPLE IN CHARGE OF SHELTER HOMES

Main challenge posed by sheltered street children

The main challenge that has been pinpointed by people in charge of shelter homes is long-term reintegration of the children into their nuclear families or substitute families.

Main problems posed by sheltered street children

These include:

- difficulty in reintegrating children accused of sorcery even in their own nuclear families;
- poor living conditions in some families into which these children expect to reintegrate;
- limited material and financial means to take care of most children; and
- the lack of protection of street children. They are manipulated by politicians who wish to maintain their positions and it is not unusual for children to lose their lives as the result of a political dispute. The police and the army have an obligation to protect and not to harm children.

Possible reasons for desertion of parental home

Reasons that were stated include the poverty of the children's own families, polygamy, divorce, parents' separation and superstitious beliefs (child sorcerer phenomenon).

Actions to halt the phenomenon of 'street children'

- The government should establish the necessary structures for child protection.
- The government should disseminate family codes.
- The government should pay civil servants well and regularly.
- The government should rehabilitate towns and villages so that people can stay in their original environment, thereby reducing rural depopulation.

Capacity of the police and specialised services to intervene

Heads of shelter homes have come to the conclusion that the police are not equipped to take care of children in distress or to do their job properly.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS FROM EXPERIENCES ON THE SPOT

Contacts with the children, particularly in the street, have in essence revealed the following:

- Contrary to preconceived ideas, rather than vectors of disorder and disturbers of the public order, these children are victims of poor adaptation because of the disintegration of the social order.
- If the street children generally come from poor families, poverty is not necessarily the fundamental cause of criminality. Criminality is only the result of childhood suffering.
- The Family Code, which was promulgated in 1987, and which should protect the rights of the child, defines the reciprocal rights and obligations of husband and wife, and also the rights and obligations of parents for their children. The code is not readily available to the public and therefore not well utilised.
- The child is almost an abandoned cause. Fifteen years of economic embargo on the DRC for breaking a multilateral agreement in 1991 have

only increased the suffering of the population and the fate of the Congolese child. Since 1999 the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) has spent thousands of dollars per day without financing an ongoing programme for Congolese children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on results of this study, a number of recommendations need to be made to the government, people in charge of public order, heads of shelter homes, as well as families, NGOs, churches, and so on.

These include the following:

- Design a global policy to protect street children and so-called sorcerer children.
- Budget for the rehabilitation and social reintegration of children in distress.
- Use the media to call on parents, public authorities and institutions in charge of vulnerable children and inform them of the danger of the phenomenon of 'street children'.
- Create and equip shelter homes to take full care of vulnerable children.
- Train staff in charge of vulnerable children.
- Create and train a specialised police force to take effective care of young delinquents.
- Raise parents' salaries and pay them regularly.
- Disseminate the Family Code, as it protects the child.
- Rehabilitate towns and villages so that people can stay in their original environment, thus reducing rural depopulation.

CONCLUSION

It is hoped that the results of this study will constitute a database to be used by the various actors who are involved in trying to reduce the prevalence of the phenomenon known as 'street children'. The research will provide a tracking system that may help to obtain a full understanding of the variables involved in the phenomenon studied.

NOTES

- 1 Hubert Kabungulu Ngoy is a research consultant at Labor Optimus, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

- 2 B Nzuzi, *Approches africaines de la sorcellerie*, Présentation de l'ouvrage par son auteur, *Congo-Afrique* 316, juin-août 1997, p 365.
- 3 B Kabanga, Rapport de l'enquête sur l'administration de la Justice pour mineurs dans la Ville de Kinshasa, *CODE*, janvier 2004.
- 4 Statement by the head of the Office for Child Protection / Urban Division of the Ministry of Social Affairs.
- 5 Statement by the head of the Urban Division of the Ministry of Social Affairs.