FAMILY REINTEGRATION ON THE STREET CHILDREN OF IVORY COAST: CASE STUDY OF ABIDJAN’S CENTER HOPE

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ABSTRACT

Street children are among the most physically visible of all children, live work on roads and public squares of cities all over the world. Yet, paradoxically, they are also among the most 'invisible' and therefore hardest children to reach with vital services such as education and health-care, and the most difficult to protect. The question is certainly not a new phenomenon. Today it seems forming integral part of the daily newspapers of any company. The phenomenon of street children is becoming a huge problem which presents much diversity of a country to another and of a city to another. In all the countries including the Ivory Coast, the child occupies an important place. On the level of the cell family for example, it represents the social security. It is by the child that the line remains from generation to generation. The main goal of this study is not only to show the scale of this phenomenon in the cities, the factors being attached to it, but also to present the obstacles related to the policy of reintegration like a credible alternative with the problem of children on the street. The assumption of research which emerges is the following: The family reintegration of children on the street. The International Catholic office of Childhood function is not a conciliation of family realities to those of the rescue project.

Field of Research: insertion, family, social reintegration, child on the street.

1. Introduction

These last years, while the worldwide economy posted a rapid growth, the number of people living in poverty rose considerably. One counts for this purpose more than 1.2 billion inhabitants of which more than 600 million are children. They set up the most exposed group with abuses and violations of the basic human rights. In West Africa, mainly in Ivory Coast, the strong population added to the continual economic crisis and social problem, supported the phenomenon of the children on the street. Phenomenon which is today the subject of attention increased on behalf of the organizations and of control taking into account. Its width in the cities and of the conditions of existence of these
children. They recognize that it is necessary to renew their engagement towards the problem child's
to implement more adequate and more concrete actions.

The International Catholic office of Childhood is one of the Non Governmental Organizations
which is also leaning on this phenomenon on the level of the town of Abidjan. International agency
the layman ones with the service of the integral growth of all the children, the International Catholic
office of Childhood has been present in Ivory Coast since 1987. To initiate actions of street in order
to be identify, to sensitize and direct a greater number of children. To foresee possibilities of
insertion which is the action plans for the International Catholic office of Childhood strategy plans to
solve the problem. It also fits in a prospect for rupture. Indeed, the changes which the organization
knows nowadays cannot be in general to leave indifferent disciples of social sciences, human and
those of sociology in particular. This is why, the sociologists see the phenomenon on the children of
the street as being at the same time “endemic” (phenomenon produced by a socio-economic crisis
(for example poverty) and “anomic” (due to the social-cultural changes, in particular the
disorganization of the family and loss of the traditional values in urban environment).

In Ivory Coast, it was question at the same time immediate measurements of strong
sensitization of the partners and families on their duties. Moreover, 88% of the children who are
female as a principal activity the sale while 26.19% of the boys are devoted to the activities of
waxing of shoes and shoe manufacture. However, 10.47% of the children (all confused sexes) do not
have determined social-economic activity; this report touches especially the girls from 13 to 15
years (UNICEF, June 2012). Moreover, the study carried out jointly by the ENSEA and the UNICEF in
2007; provide us statistical data on the problem child’s in the big cities of Ivory Coast namely:
Abidjan, Man, Bouaké, Korhogo, Abengourou and Yamoussoukro.

The total staff complement on the children of the street in the cities of the Ivory Coast
amounted at that time to 15.330% including 859 boys and 7071 girls. On the 15.330% children,
10.185% are of the Ivory Coast is 66.40%; 38.5% of the children are of foreign origin with 25% of
Burkinabe; 13.4% of Guineans; 4.9% of Ghanaian and 6.2% Nigerians (ENSEA, UNICEF, 2012).
Consequently, even if these statistical data are not completely in conformity with current reality. It is
however necessary to recognize the advantage to them of illustrating the strong representative of
the children of Ivory Coast among the whole of the children living in Ivory Coast in difficult
circumstances.

Since September 2002, the war which the Ivory Coast saw amplified the suffering of the
children working with the refuse tip, of the children hired as killers, the children carrying goods,
the children as salesmen. One can assist the retailers of the goods, the children working in the
plantations and children as slaves (…). They are private of school education, their childhood and
several their rights of children of the street of Abidjan. The social-political crisis after the presidential
elections of 2010 is one of the factors. Indeed, the children victims of exclusion, given up or orphan
are taken responsibility for in reception facilities which are the social centers, (orphanages, the
center of pilot listening of Adjame, the center of Hope for rescue, etc). The International Catholic
office of Childhood, the Non Governmental Organizations of relay is the typical example from the
actions discrete and targeted in the direction on the children of the street in the town of Abidjan.
What are the obstacles met in the process of social integration, of family reintegration and how is
this Catholic International office of Childhood is able to surmount them?
The family reintegration of the children on the street by the Catholic International office of Childhood can be effective and efficient only through the identification of the origin of the problem of children on the street, their follow-up after reintegration and by a real taking into account of their aspirations.

2. Review of the literature and theoretical framework
A major analysis of the question of NGO and process of insertion and reintegration of the problem child require the taking into account of various determinants which intervene in the company.

2-1. Typology of the problem child’s

In their work entitled “with the listening of the children of the street in Black Africa”, Yves Marguerat and Danièle Poitou (Sept. 1994) propose a typology in which they hold the urban fact like the factors responsible for the emergence of the phenomenon “problem child”. For them, the NGO of the third world know fast changes because of urbanization. Indeed, the accelerated rate/rhythm of the urbanization in the developing countries generates imbalances that the intelligence and the will of survival of the populations compensate daily. The urban and industrial explosion are combined together to worsen the process of restructuring the demographic fabric evil controlled in the African cities which seems to be according to these authors, the primary education indicator with the blossoming and the extent of the phenomenon of the children in difficult situation. It is also ascribable with the disorganization of the family unit.

With the analysis, these two factors interact in the sense that one explains the other. This categorization all judging of the explanation of the cause of this phenomenon appears more restricted in as far as other aspects such as ideological and psychological cultural dimension are also important. Moreover, the causal explanation of the social phenomenon is as well related to exegetic or environmental factors as the endogenous factors, which determinants are interns with the social system itself.

2-2. Political reasons and socioeconomic

This concern seems to be divided by Ouizan Bi H (1997). According to him, the political and economic reasons and created by the historical conditions would explain the phenomenon of children in difficult situations, if one wants to apprehend the phenomenon and his values in the field of causality. Thus, the variables related to unemployment, wars, increasing impoverishment, the race for power, accelerated demographic challenge are the dominant indicators. For him, the social evolution generates a change of the cultural practices, just as the economic situation marked by the socioeconomic crisis a major change of the values involves.
2-3. The role of the social actor

From the general point of view for the sociology of the action as conceived by Alain Touraine (1965) the analysis of the phenomenon of the youthful marginal rests on two complementary concepts: that of the social report/ratio and that of the social factor. The individual who is excluded from the total company develops attitudes via this exclusion. The delinquency is regarded there as the factor of one’s reaction other than the child. “Through this behavior, the delinquent tries to reconstitute with others, a social universe in which he is admitted, recognized, accepted and in which he can have an image satisfactory itself because he plays a part there. In the universe of the band, the deviating acts that it poses there and the part which it plays confer an identity indeed to him, reconstitute it as a developed active social actor, being able to be expressed and be made hear(1994).” By what precedes, who is included/understood easily the marginalized children forge of the models of behaviors other than the social norms.

The rupture of the social reports/ratios gives birth to a counter-culture in answer to a claim from the role of the social actor. This is why, while denouncing the solitary existence of the individual, Alain Touraine insists especially on the importance of sociability and the social system, because according to him “the individual is identified with a group, on a collective subject, exceeds his individuality thus by sharing feelings, standards, intentions. Moreover, it enriches his personality while being affirmed in the relation with others, like a personal subject (Touraine A.(1965). ” This is essential in the sense that in a social environment, confrontation with the others is the source of progress. Social ability of the individual thus perpetuates the cultural heritage of the community and on the basis of the statutory values themselves.

2-4. Educational theories

The educational theories of Pierre Bourdieu and Passeron J.C(1965) insist on their part on the social reproduction by the school. According to them, the social institution far from supporting the equal opportunity between the individuals perpetuates the cultural injustice by its selective character. Moreover, the inequalities cannot be only the fact of the school insofar as these inequalities existed on the level of the social classes before even the schooling of the children, as testifies the Marxist theories to them. According to P. Erny (1968) “the study of the black child must be inside its culture, of its particular universe where such form of thought prevails, such type of language. It is thus necessary to give up studying according to the child of another continent and in constant reference to this one”. Thus, this study on the social rehabilitation of the African child on the street in his singularity proves it more effective to avoid the educational losses which are majority the source of the difficult living conditions on the children of the street of Black Africa. The noted educational losses and massive school failures undoubtedly contribute to increase the manpower of the alive children in difficult circumstances. These consequences are importable with the structural organization, therefore an incompatibility between economic development and human development.
3. Methodology
3-1. Sample and data collection method
The methodology used is qualitative and quantitative. A structured group-administered questionnaire using 7-point Likert scale was used in assessing the children’s self-reported experiences and feedbacks. The population of study is consisted of the whole of the children (girls and boys) who reside at the Catholic International office of Childhood precisely in the center hope located opposite the judicial police of the commune of the plate. They are the children whose age varies between 8 and 18 years. The population also takes into account the personnel of the center of hope. Our choice with regard to the technique of sampling is the quota. Our target population is consisted of the children on the Catholic International office of Childhood especially those of the center of hope.

The children inserted or not constitute our mother population. For manpower of 114 children, 85 fill this criterion, that is to say 97%. 02 children were isolated afterwards because not being able to be express themselves well. 85 X 97: 100 = 82.45. One made a selection compared to those who are able to put forward ideas correctly; because we want to study the obstacles related to the family reintegration of the children of streets of the Catholic International office of Childhood (center hope). The base of survey is of 85 children left again according to the following variables: the gender, age, educational level, ethnicity, religion and social status. Because, for the quantitative collection, one has recourse to the questionnaires and the qualitative data with the guides of semi-directing maintenance.

3-1 Instrumentation
The instruments of research which we used for the data-gathering are: the information retrieval, the guide of maintenance and the questionnaire. The children were gathered and asked to respond to the questionnaire in a group administered living in the center hope. The historical method and the systemic method are the two (2) methods which we used during the data analysis collected on the ground.

Table N°1: Summary of the sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gender</td>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>9 à 14 years</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15 years and more</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational level</td>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary education</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Akan</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kru</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mandé of north</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mandé du South</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gur</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>others</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Ivorians</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>others</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Animist</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Finding & Discussion
The table hereafter the manpower of the children having remained in the center hope and those which could be reintegrated in family. It is important to stress that results which were analyzed, came from documentation on the phenomenon of the children of the street and the center hope, on insertion and its mechanisms, and from the direct semi talks with the agents of the known as center and some children in authority of insertion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children accommodated in the center</td>
<td>77(45,50%)</td>
<td>171(41,7%)</td>
<td>202(50,25%)</td>
<td>215 (45,74%)</td>
<td>220 (44,44%)</td>
<td>230(44,66%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children having resided at the center</td>
<td>60(33,90%)</td>
<td>120(34,19%)</td>
<td>100(24,88%)</td>
<td>170 (36,17%)</td>
<td>182(36,77%)</td>
<td>184(35,73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children reinstated in family</td>
<td>40(23,60%)</td>
<td>60 (17,09%)</td>
<td>100 (24,88%)</td>
<td>85(18,06%)</td>
<td>93 (18,79%)</td>
<td>101(19,61%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>177(100%)</td>
<td>351(100%)</td>
<td>402 (100%)</td>
<td>470 (100%)</td>
<td>495 (100%)</td>
<td>515 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Social-educational service of the center hope

With the reading of the data of the investigation, one notes that the majority is 58.75% their parents are married. Discussion with the picture framers, those affirmed to us that the majority of the parents contract a second marriage. Let us recall that, the children in difficult situation are aged (4-15 years) where affect is a very important factor. The lack of emotional cover predisposes the child with serious effective disorders. Indeed, the majority of our surveyed children result from mediums where the parental affection constitutes a very rare food product. It lack by following death of parents.

The emotional disorders are all the more serious as the maternal love is stronger than the paternal love. They are the mothers who follows the divorce are repudiated of their hearth leaving children in an emotional need which is most of times not satisfied. And besides these various aspects, which is the other criteria of admission in the reception center? That takes us back to analyze the social status of the children. The International Catholic office of Childhood collects several categories of children: they are the maltreated children, and in difficulty. There are parents imprisoned or died, handicapped physical or mental, etc. One distinguishes three (03) cases from orphan of mother is 3.75%, six (06) social cases (7.50%), fourteen (14) cases of complete orphan either 17.50%, twenty five (25) orphan of a father with a percentage of 31.25% and finally thirty two (32) cases of maltreated children or 40% taking into consideration data of the investigation. The report which emerges is that the maltreated children are most numerous, and then come the orphans from father. The high percentage of the maltreated children is justified by the fact that our companies today do not manage any more to make the distinction between a child and an adult; they are all the two objects of the same treatment from where the phenomenon of the work of the
children and sexual abuses. However, we know that the child represents a vulnerable being which needs much affection.

In addition, when the father is a live, he is regarded by the family pillar: it is him who is thus in charge of the material safety of the household. Then when he dies, then follows an upheaval or a disorganization of that family. It becomes difficult for the widow to take over in as far as this role is not assigned to her socially. The death of the mother on the other hand, does not affect much the hearth. One counts only 3.75% of orphan of mother. The place of a child is at the school and not in the streets or a plantation. It is necessary thus to specify that one finds at the International Catholic office of Childhood, the two categories of children: those who are nourished in sufficient quantity and those which are not. So where is the problem? It is surely due to another factor. It is in this logic that we sought to know how was the home environment?

The data of the investigations reveal that the majority of our surveyed (47) affirmed to live in a “bad environment” at the house; that is to say 58.75%. These results come to confirm that the majority of surveyed live in a home environment which is not favorable to their physical, intellectual and moral glooming. However, which they gain east cannot be not sufficient. Thus, some have recourse to these institutions. That can be also explained by the fact why they have many loads. The parents having eleven family members people and more with load account for 57.14% of manpower and are as a majority of liberal profession and civil servant, those having six to ten people with load 30.95% and the parents having 1 to 5 people is 11.91%. The report is the number of people with load is on average more than 10. This explains the disengagement of the parents of their child. According to this situation, it poses the problem of their education.

They are perceived here through the framing of the children by teachers and role of the parents in the process of socialization. Education is an is to empower the young generation by the elder action, that of the socialization of the young people by the elder ones. It is for this purpose, that Durkheim defines education as “the action exerted by the adult generations on those which are not yet ripe for the social life. It has the aim of causing and to develop in the child a certain number of physical statuses, intellectuals and moral whom claims of him and the political company as a whole and the medium for which he is particularly intended (Durkheim, 1977).”

This definition underlines the social character of education. By education, the child will be able to fit in the total organization. To have the opinion of the children to those who are supposed to educate them, it was posed the question of knowing: How will you find your mentors? Let us retain that the children have positive ratios with their mentors. The teachers as for them play their part fully since they lavish councils with the children and help those who are provided education for their school works. In addition to the school, they profit from civic education and morals. Education with the International Catholic office of Childhood (hope center), is also to teach the children to know-how, the knowledge being good mannered, the direction of morals the rules of the life to facilitate their social integration. Thus they are educated to break away from the delinquency, the flight, and drugs and gradually one removes any desire to them for integrating the streets again. The children are also initiated with the professional life by the organization of manual work.

It is in this logic that we put the following question: Does the idea to leave the hope center delight you? One notices in the conclusion of the answers that the manpower of those which are for the departure is lower than that of those which wish to remain like illustrates it the diagram with band n°2.
Graph 1: Opinion of the children on the departure of the Catholic International office of Childhood

![Graph showing opinion on departure]

Questioned on the fact of knowing if the International Catholic office of Childhood prepares them to face life, one could note the same result as that which precedes. It is of 100%, which represents the totality of the 80 surveyed. Here is the advanced fundamental reason is the fact that in the hope center, they receive sufficient councils on all realities of life, which was not the case in family. According to them, these councils will be able to galvanize them and teach them how to have another vision of seeing life.

Finally, the children in difficult situation are not entrusted more to a family member as it was done formerly. One has more recourse to the public assistance like substitute for the guard of the children. Thus, the question of knowing how the children arrived at the International Catholic office of Childhood, 70% of the children answer that they arrived by a member of their family, 19.2% by the juvenile bureau, 6.8% by a member of the personnel and 4% by an NGO like illustrate it below the diagram.

Graph 2: The arrival of the children in the center hope

![Graph showing arrival methods]
Which once more justifies the crumbling and the loss of the traditional values, since there exists family ties between the children and the people who lead them to it. What amounts saying that no family member assumes the parental responsibility? It is once admitted in the center that research is made to find their family of origin.

The majority of our surveyed state to live either with an uncle, or with an aunt. Rare are those who answered that they live with their own parents. Indeed, these substitute parental does not regard these children as theirs. There are sometimes victims of ill-treatment, abuse, negligence. All these causes contribute to the presence of children on the streets. These tutors were supposed to bring to them moral support, emotional and material; what is thus not the case. But what of it is parental responsibility or legal guardians? Other children on the other hand do not want to return back to their family since they fear to be maltreated there. Those who wish to return evoke that they could be accepted by their parents and friends.

Finally, it should be retained that the International Catholic office of Childhood contributes to the education of the children in difficult situation through their various actions. This reintegration consists of on one hand seeking the families and meeting them and on the other hand to accommodate them in the center. Placing children in their family of origin. Thus, of 1990 to 2001, they are 828 children among 1.406 is 58.9% who could regain their respective families. From 2002 to 2005, they are 285 children among 665 is 42.86% who could regain their family. From 2006 to 2007, they are 194 children among 450 is 43.11% who could join their family. The reintegration takes place only when the child has provisions of stabilization (physical health and morals) and that the two entities (families and children) are ready to be accommodated. The stage of the research of the parents in the process of reintegration often raises difficulties due to removal of certain parents or the not-collaboration of the child. In the center of hope, we noted that very few children are in liaison with their family. The reasons which the children mentioned to explain this separation from the family are: misery, death of a relative, ill-treatment, etc.

However, when the child arrive at the center, the organizers try to find the traces of the family with the assistance of the child. It can happen that the family refuses to join again the contacts with the remembering child of her past and vice versa. It is being explains why? in the center one who finds children who do not have any contact with their family. On this subject, one inquired by stating the following speech which appears strongly significant to us: “After the death of my father, I could not continue with school because my mother did not have any more means. The life had become very difficult at house. To eat, it was necessary "to manage". I left the village to come to find my brother in Abidjan. I had to spend a few days on the streets before arriving at the center. It is with this/ his phone number which had been given to me, that my uncles could join me. One sees oneself very little. I never went to, him because it shown me his house forever. All my weekends, I spent them at the center. Extract of a discussion with an 11 year old child”.

What is the impact of the social reports/ratios in the social re-conversion of the child? What enables us to explain how the social relations can support the social re-conversion of the child. They are the relations between individuals and social group more particularly, between children of the street and family or children of the street and institution. This social re-conversion is a considerable factor in the effective family reintegration of these children. The family represents the base of any institution. She is the first structure in which any individual evolves/moves. The analysis on the relationships of the children with their family enabled us to understand that in the center of hope, several children are not in liaison with their family.
However, the fact for the family of not joining again the contacts with the child makes it difficult for his re-conversion and thus weakens his/her reintegration. Moreover, it should be recognized that adolescence is one delicate enough period for several children.

The analysis previously made relating to the attitude of the organization enabled us to identify the attitude of the institution in the process of re-conversion of the child. The children do not feel not accepted. It is on this subject that a child of the center said this: “It is difficult to find me out of my house the day when I am not at the market where I sell clothing from time to time. I spend all my days here. Sometimes, I will to return visit my friend… with whom I was in the center. It is besides my only true friend whom I had in the center. Extract of a discussion with 13 year old child”. What we can retain in this part it is that the social reports/ratios facilitate the social re-conversion of the child when the family and the company are implied actively in the process of rehabilitation or socialization again of the child. These implications are translated on the level of the family by contacting the child and by visiting the child. It is to say that there is still to make in the center of hope. With the International Catholic office of Childhood, the most important it is the departure of the child off the streets for a framework which him favorable best apart from the streets. However, according to the person in charge of this center, the family reintegration respects three stages: One needs initially the stability of the child; this stability is checked as from the moment when the child expresses the desire to set out again in family and presents all the criteria of stability; the second phase relates to the renewal and the consolidation of the bonds (parent-children, the third stage intervenes which is the reintegration itself and the follow-up.

5. Conclusion and Future Recommendation
Finally our study relating to: “Obstacles of the family reintegration of the children on the streets of the International Catholic office of Childhood; case of the rescue project”. Indeed, the general objective that we aimed through this study is to show the importance of the phenomenon of the children of the streets in Abidjan, the factors and to present the obstacles related to the policy of reintegration like a credible alternative with the problem of these children on the street. Like objectives specific assigned to our study; we had shown the strategies worked out by the International Catholic office of Childhood to help with an effective reintegration of the children on the streets; to analyze the effectiveness of the policy of integration and if possible determine the obstacles related to the implementation of this policy; to become aware of the extent of the phenomenon of the children of the street. In spite of the actions granted a given moment and analyze the difficulties which block the return of children of the streets to their families of origin.

To achieve these goals, we formulated an assumption of research which assumption is confirmed or refuted after the presentation of the results. Like working hypothesis, we retained that the family reintegration of the children of the function of the non-conciliation of family realities to that the center of hope. In spite of their good intentions of a return to a “normal” life, the children goes through psycho-sociological disturbances which do not support the identification of the true cause of their departure on the streets; staff shortage or the insufficiency formed, justified and especially equipped in the center of hope, which skew’s “the actions of street” and those of the family reintegration; the possibilities of accommodating and of reintegrating a great number of children on the streets varies according to the incomes intended for the center of the International Catholic office of Childhood; the family reintegration is function of the relation parent-children; the total lack of implication of the children in the actions of the institutions constitutes a blocking in their reintegration and consequently makes ineffective this reintegration and the hostile attitude of the company towards the children supports their return to the streets.

From the results obtained which confirm our assumptions besides, it arises that the weak results obtained by the institutions are not justified only from what is above-mentioned. Another
explanation that we can give to the current location is that the institutions of assumption of responsibility of the children on the street does not associate with the community in the project of fight against the phenomenon of the children on the street, it is what explains their failure until now.

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