The Resocialization of the Street Children

VALENTINA TECLICI



Copyright © 1999 VALENTINA TECLICI

This research report was downloaded from the Research Support Scheme Electronic Library at http://e-lib.rss.cz. The report was published by the Higher Education Support Program of the Open Society Institute. The digitization of the report was supported by the publisher.

OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE
HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPORT
PROGRAM

Open Society Institute Higher Education Support Program Nádor u. 11 H-1051 Budapest Hungary www.osi.hu/hesp

This research report was made possible with a grant from the Research Support Scheme of the Open Society Support Foundation.



Research Support Scheme Bartolomějská 11 110 00 Praha 1 Czech Republic www.rss.cz

The digitization and conversion of this report to PDF was completed by Virtus.



Virtus Libínská 1 150 00 Praha 5 Czech Republic www.virtus.cz

The information published in this work is the sole responsibility of the author and should not be construed as representing the views of the Open Society Institute. The Open Society Institute takes no responsibility for the accuracy and correctness of this work. Any comments related to the contents of this work should be directed to the author.

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced, in any form or by any means without permission in writing from the author.

Contents

I. Introduction	1
II. History in brief	4
1. Definition	4
2. Classifications, names	4
3. Numerical estimation	7
III. Researh background	12
1. Emission of hypotheses	12
2. Research objectives	12
3. Analysis' results	13
4. Conclusions	24
IV. Causes of the street kids effect	27
1. Urbanization swept away traditions	27
2. The effects of the Romanian demographic politics	29
3. Poverty	31
4. Disorganized families, bad treatments	33
5. The diminuation of the social control	35
V. Street kid stereotype	38
1. Personality amiss	38
2. The type of street kid from Bucharest	
3. Selfperception	41
4. Case studies	44
5. Small, deviating group	55
6. The glue-sniffer, a substitute for the absence of affection	57
7. From glue-sniffer to marijuana	59
VI. Social offer and self-organization.	62
1. The street, a place for illegal work	
2. The slaughter of the homeless children	64
3. Selforganization process	
VII. Modalities of approaching street kids' problems	
1. The non-governmental organizations offer	
2. Strategies proposals to combat the street children phenomenon	
3. The chances of the street kids	
Bibliography	79
Annexe 1	81
Annexe 2	86
Appendix	95

1 l. Introduction

I. Introduction

In Romania, like in the other countries from the Eastern Europe, as a result of the socialist revolution and from the spreading of the communist ideology, the term "street children/homeless children" was excluded from the official vocabulary. It was estimated that it had been reached an goal of the social justice, which had as purpose to eliminate the social problems.

The homeless children phenomenon became visible and exploded in our country, Romania, after 1990. It also existed before, in dictatorship age, but it was kept under control by "Militie", who promptly intervened and gathered in ceaseless raids from the streets, the railway stations or from other places of refuges, the children ran away from families or from protection institutions. The fugitives were estrusted to the Under Age Kids Reception Centers, which sent them back in the families or the institutions.

The statistical datas offered by the headmasters of the Under Age Kids Reception Centers, who have had this job and before 1989, have clearly revelead that the homeless children reprezent the evolution of a phenomenon which has been well hidden by the past system.

The headmaster of the Under Age Kids Reception Center from Constanta, Mrs. Luminita Cioroiu, who has had this job since 1982, asserted that before December 1989, the average number of the boarders in the Center was minimum 500 yearly. In 1997, this average has diminished at 300 by year.

Mrs.Constantina Matei, headmaster of the Under Age Kids Reception Ccenter from Galati, aince 1973, stated a similar situation: "Over 700 boardings in the Center, on a average, before Revolution and about 500-600, on an average, after December 1989"

Mrs. Maria Negeanu, instructor of education at "Ciresarii Samariteni' asserted in 1995: "I have worked in this field for 15 years. We have had hard times before 1989, we didn't have any conditions and a lot of children ran away when we had this center in Vacaresti street.

In my researches, I have discovered homeless children, who are now 17-20, and some of them remember between 30-40 runs from institutions and other remember between 5-10 runs from home and few returns with the help of the police.

The records made in the months of February-March 1995 by the Police from the Northern Station to the homeless children who have found shelter in this area, present a special case: S.I., 18 years old, left home (Tulcea), 9 years ago, declared that he was sent by police at the Under Age Kids Reception Centers from Targu-Jiu, Campina and Bucharest, approximately 100 times.

These children, who before December 1989, ran away frequently from the protection institutions and families were forced by the Law No.3/1970 regarding the regime of protection of some categories of minors (this law has been abrogated in June 1997), to live where they were placed and re-placed, even if they have proved by their repeated runs that they can't adapt and that "something" didn't work in the family, institution or in themselves.

The strategic placement of the permanent or occasional street kids in the very center of the big cities and on the outskirts of the big urban agglomerations, in places where the contrasts between wealth and poverty are maximum, makes them represent the most visible part of kids in need.

The homeless children, the most disadvantaged and marginalized category of children's social-problem, represent serious reason to warry, because:

- The causes of its appearance are old for several decades, also in our country.
- It is maintained the division of responsibility among too many offices from government, departments, townhalls, local councils, abilitated to solve the disadvantaged children's problems, fact which determinates an overlapping of competences, a division of the responsibility and an insufficient implication hard to control and to estimate.

2 • I. Introduction

- It is maintained at the level of the decision factors the mentality that the problems which don't exert enough pressure are false problems and ,so, they may wait.

- The phenomen is minimalized because of its universality and its proportion ascertained also in the other countries parts of the past socialist system, being considered an effect of transition with no corellation with the causes who have provoked it.
- The foundamental child rights which have been stipulated in the ONU Convention and in our legislation are ceaselessly infringed either from the misunderstanding of their application's importance for a normal development of all children, including the disagvantaged kids, either from material and social impossibility to assure a real protection for the children pushed at the society's edge.
- In the last years, the phenomenon has permanently evoluated, the increasing number of the little homeless children between 4 and 10 years being allarming.
- The cost too high of efficient and viable social programs can't be supported at the present time by the very precarious budget of social protection.

The emergency signals enumerated, at which we can also add some other, stay at the basis of the following hypothesis: **The social phenomenon street children will have a sure evolution.**

This supposition has at the basis the ample extension taken by the poverty in the last years and the affectation, firstly, of the children.

In Romania, the economical reform will have as effects in the next years the increase of unemployment rate and the diminution of the living standard of the categories with low social statute, the most vulnerable to abandon or to push their children on the street.

The attempts to answer at some questions such as: "Who are street children?", "What is the street kid stereotype?", "How many are they?", "Which reasons pushed them in the street?", "Which are the envoronment and origin areas of the street children?", "What is the prevalent age sample?", "Which is their school situation?", "What are the ways of surviving that thay practice in the street?", "Which are the governmental and non-governmental institutions which involve in the street children's problems?", "What kind of initiatives and programmes were carried on, carry on or are in project in their interest?", "How can be improved and healed the genuine causes to stop the phenomenon?", "What should be the important stages of a viable strategy?" sre very strong reasons for a research about the resocialization of the street children.

Starting from all these problems and reasons for warry, the project *Resocialization of the Street Children* studied street kids phenomenon, through many ways of action, convergent among them.

By studying and analysing the aim group (a sample of 100 subjects, who frequented the day centers *Pigmalion* and the *Open House* from Bucharest) it was possible to establish the main problems of the street children: causes of apparition, age on the street, origin, sizes of the family, attitude towards parents, motifs of life in the street, toxic substances consumption, motifs of being retained by Police, their main health problems, needs, wishes.

Permanent councelling, organising some informative and educative actions with street children, had as purpose their motivation to wish to change their street kid destiny.

The experiments for school and professional resocialisation of the street children show cleary that for some there are big chances.

It is imposed the creating of some systems and mechanisms which will grant more chances of social reinsertion to the street children

The documentary trip from abroad allowed me, after visiting the centers for the disadvantaged teenagers, after the discussions, information and documentary materials I have received, to compare at

3 • I. Introduction

the level of social-politics, legislation, conditions offered in the resocialization centers, perspective measures, strategies of struggling against the social shortcomings.

Figures, dates, comparative examples from some countries from Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America where the phenomenon is very spread, give the study a large view on the complex problematical of street children

The finding connected to the real causes and age of the street kids effect were very important for the proposal of fighting the phenomenon strategy, which needs to centralize, first of all, on prevention (straight action on causes).

Making some mediating actions, which had as purpose the changing of the hostile attitute of the public opinion and of the persons with high functions towards these children, victims of some mistaken politics.

4 🛑 II. History in brief

II. History in brief

1. Definition

The term of "street children" or "children on/in the street" has been used for the first time in 1980, at Rio de Janeiro¹.

"In accordance with the definition adopted by diverse international nongovernmental organismes, the homeless child is any boy and girl who isn't enough protected, controlled or guided by responsible adults, and for whom the street (in the most large sens of the term, which includes adandoned buildings, warehouses of residues) has become the common shelter and/or his way of existence".

Differently said, the permanent or occasional homeless children are the minors between 3 and 18 years old, with or without parents, without familial, state or private climate who abandoned school.

The expression "homeless children" is not universally accepted. Even the notion of "child" is, for example, differently defined by Latino-American social sciences and by those from North America and Europe. The Latino-American children are very early confrunted with existential conflicts, so the difference in the way childhood and youth are classified is considerable, compared to the European one.

In the United States of America and in Europe, the notion of the child (minor) contains the time of age from 0 to 18 years. In the Latin –American countries, the child, beginning sometimes from 5 years is seen as an adult in miniature, forced to work for survival, often being pushed on the street by its family. The street is considered, especially in the warm countries, a privilegiate place for resocialisation of the child. From cultural reasons, opinions coming from these areas consider that the expression "homeless children" transforms the street in a dangerous and immoral place. It is considered more proper the expression "children who are working", because it covers two aspects of the same reality. First of all, the majority of the homeless children survives only by unimportant daily work. It's about the children who work, who are somehow free. Secondly, there are children deprived from a normal childhood. They work to help their family. After other opinions, the expression "homeless children" is limited because it pretends to include all the marginalized children. Other opinions classify this expression as being demagogical, because the reality it appoints is not so awful as it seems.

So, "homeless/ street children" becomes in one way a general expression, defining a reality with more sides.

2. Classifications, names

The organisations who had focused their programmes on the homeless children problems had been preoccupied with the definition and classification of their beneficiaries.

A more clear classification was elaborated in the last 10-15 years. In 1985, at the Forum from Grand Bassam (Cote d'Ivoire), was elaborated the distinction between "the children in the street" and 'the street children". This classification specifies the relationships which exist among child and its family, society, justice and public opinion, and also the kind of help is offfered to children.

In Brazil, for example, UNICEF could make the distinction between "the children who live in the streets" (homeless child) and "the children who work in the streets" (the children on/in the street).

_

¹ Tall, M., H., Droits des jeunes vivant et travaillant dans les interstices du milieu urbain, communication, UFO'95

² Savu, C., Copiii strazii, Romania, Comitetul National Romanian pentru UNICEF, no.1, 1992

II. History in brief 5

The last children work daily in the street, but they don't stay here permanently. They found a fixed shelter in their families, in the neighbourhood or at their friends.

The ENDA's programme which develops in Bolivia makes the distinction between "the homeless children" and "the children in the street", giving the arguments: "In both cases is about children whose life is developing essentially in the physical space, but also economical space of the street. The child in the street is one who plays, roams or works in the street, but who didn't break all the relationships with his family, the community, his neighbours. In most of the cases, he takes part at some school activities, but he doesn't attend them regularly. Though, he lives a contradictory situation, the child in the street has parents and he belongs to a community. For the child in the street, the cultural space (habits, attitudes, values) of the street is a permanently field of his life. This child lost all the community or familial relationships, he made from street his only and unique environment"³.

In Philippines, the expression "homeless children" (street children) appoints, generally, the children who spend most of the time in the street, maintaining however a permanently relationship with their families. 70 per cent among them return at home almost in every evening and it is estimated that only 5 per cent are completely abandoned and don't have any relationship with their families.

Don Bosco Andu Illam (DBAI) society from Madras, India, classifies the street children in twelve groups, after their way of life, activity or statute: "1) the children deprived of everything: 2) the vagabond children; 3) the children come from the families who live in the street or in the outskirks: 4) the children-wardrobe; 5) the shoeblacks; 6) the intermediaries working illegally in the stations or markets; 7) the children who give a helping hand in stations; 8) the peddlers; 9) the boys of race; 10) the parking boys; 11) pimps; 12) the children of the prostitutes".

To ease their work the agents from DBAI classify the children who are in difficult situations or the street children who are exploited in three categories, after the nature of relationships they have with their families, after their relation with the society and the resocialisation method which will be chosen. They are: 1) street children, 2) vagabond children, 3) delinquent children.

In Camerun⁵, the minors in difficulty are named: "the fighters", "the old fighters", "the mosquitos" and "the chickens". The fighters are the minors convicted in jail. The old fighters are the minors who were in prison several times. The mosquitos are the minors under 14 years, maintained under observation by Police, because they committed misdemeanour (they are very movable and are everytime about "to pinch"), but also the street children. The chickens are the abandoned children smaller than 10 years (between 6 and 8, average) or who lost their way.

In Germany, the street children who come back home before the beginning of the winter are named "touristes".

In ex-Czechoslovakia, in Poland and in Hungary, the general heading "street children" gathers very different groups: "The children whose social conditions of life are very difficult, living in abandoned buildings, basements and in stations: the children come from minority groups, especially, the gipsies and the children of the refugees: the fugitives who leave their home or the educative center; the children who haven't an official home, but who live their social life in the street, that including here the children who had abandoned schools and the jobless"6.

⁵ Idem, p.23

³ Bureau International Catholique de l'Enfance (BICE), Dans la rue, avec les enfants, JEUNES PLUS, Editions UNESCO, 1995, p.102-103

⁴ Idem, p.287

⁶ Conseil de l'Europe, *Les Enfants de la rue, Politiques de l'enfance*, document SO-COORD I (94) Report, p.15.

II. History in brief 6

In Italy, the "street children" concept is substituted with "minors in danger". This term refers to minors who are exposed to social risk to be enrolled in illicite or illegal activities, or to minor exposed to psysical, moral or psychological risks. Certainly, in large sens, the expression , minors in danger" contains the homeless children, but also specific elements of the street children phenomenon.

In England there are used many expressions, but especially these of "fugitives teenagers", "homeless youngs" and "vagabonds"⁸. The fugitives teenagers are the young people younger than 18 who have left their home or social placement without permission and, generally, for a short time. The homeless young people, often between 16 and 25 years, don't have a fixed home or a permanent domicile. The vagabonds are the young people who can be seen on the streets of big towns and who are in appearance without domicile. Many of them alternate the living in lodgings with the living in precarios conditions in the street.

In Romania, the street children are classified after different criteria:

1. After the time spent in the street, they can be:

the permanent street children, in fact, the genuine street children, who live from several years in the street, the break between they, their families and society being very big;

the occasional street children, who keep from time to time the relationship with their families, but who had totally abandoned school. They come bach home periodically, but there are very vulnerable, having a strong tendency to remain in the street. In fact, the occasional street children are not too much different from the genuine street children. They snuff glue sniffer and attend like the genuine street children the same "street's school".

the workers in the street are the children and the teenagers who perform different works and: ,...the minors sent by their parents to beg in the crowded spaces. These daily children of the street, exploited by their families, don't attend classes and they are often looking more dirty and rags than the genuine street children"9.

The authors of "The Guide of the social worker and of the educator in Romania" add to this criterion two more:

2. After the familial situation and their relationship with their parents:

- children who try "the adventure", who "explore" and they return home, their "experience" having only an accidental character:
- children who leave home to draw the attention of their parents or acquaintances, as a sign of protest towards the negative climate existent in their families;
- children came from separated families, affectionly neglected or who are considered a "property" or "changing goods" for parents:
- children subdued to familial violence or sexual abuse, a situation usually in relation with the alcohol consumption of the parents and a difficult social-economical family situation;

3. After their origins:

- children originated from natural families;
- children come from institutional media;
- children come from foster family or temporary families;

⁸ Idem, p.16

⁷ Idem, p.16

⁹ Ionita, St., Teclici, V., *The profitable organization of the street children*, in Expres, No.1, 1995

¹⁰ The Guide of the social worker and of the educator in Romania, Street children, the Local authorities of Bucharest, 1998, p.11

7 • II. History in brief

UNICEF¹¹ classified the homeless children in four groups:

1. Children who live in the street and whose immediate preoccupations are to provide them a shelter and food.

- 2. Children who live separated of their families, living in temporary shelters, abandoned buildings or who move from a place to another together with old or occasionaly friends.
- 3. Children who keep in touch with their families, but, because of the poverty, of many families members, sexual or another sort of abuse, spend most of the days in the street.
- 4. Children who are in the protection institutions, came from the street and who present a high risk to come back in the street.

In Romania, the homeless children are very frequent named "glue-sniffers" and sometimes "bower-children", by public opinion and, especially, by some of the mass-media reprezentants. Indifferently how they are named or of the classification criteria used, the children in the street and the homeless children maintain some type of relationship with their families: some of them keep in touch, others broke all relations with their families or are in open conflicts with them. Their life place is the town, its streets, the waste grounds, the abandoned or in construction buildings, the stations, the harbours, the parkings, the underground stops, the hotels, the supermarkets or the small streets which cross the poor districts and the outskirts.

The concept of "street" is very large and it covers in the case of expression "street children" all the survival spaces, everywhere the children live permanently or occasionally, day or night.

3. Numerical estimation

The numerical estimation concerning street children alternates depending on the data offered by various studies and researches, by the programmes and the projects of intervention. The figures vary also depending on the sphere of the extent which can be large, including all the children in a difficult situation, or limited, refering only to the homeless children in stricto sensu.

In 1990, UNICEF has given the following estimations: "From about two thousand million children, who represent the infantile population of the world, about 65 million are,really, without families. This figure contains the 10 million children who are in a situation of total moral abandon in the industrialised countries and 72 million without family (abandoned children and homeless children) in countries about to develop; from these about 20 million live in Asia and Middle East and approximately 50 million in Latin America".

Recent statistics of UNICEF estimate that approximately 150 million children and young people don't have a stable house, being obliged to survive in the street. Unfortunately, the number of these homeless children and young people grows daily. They come from the countries about to develop, most of them from Latin America.

In Argentina, for example, the number of street children is estimated at several million. In Buenos Aires, the street children come from the large suburbs. These represent huge spaces (5 times larger that a town like Paris) which count 7 million habitants, almost a quarter of the population of the country.

"Over 30 million children live in misery and 7 million are totally abandoned, in Brazil. Rio de Janeiro gathers about 1 million, and over 10,000 from them actually live on the street"¹³.

Idem

¹² See foot note 2

¹³ Reseau d"Echange de Projets et de Programmes en Faveur des Enfants de la rue (REPPER), No 3, Nov., 1996, Paris

In Bolivia¹⁴ it is estimated that there are, all over the country 80,000 children under 14 years who work and over 20,000 homeless children who take care of themselves. In El Alto, a bolivian town, placed to 10 km from the capital (La Paz), over 50,000 children and teenagers (the number represents more than of 11 percent from the entire population of the town) live in the street. They spend here, daily, much more than 75 percent from their time, though, generally, they come back home in the evening. In El Alto there are over 3,000 genuine street children, who don't have any home and who struggle alone to assure their survival.

Lima is one of the huge urban crowdings of the Third World, where millions of people came from all corners of the country in search for a much better life for them and for their children.. Useless attempt for most of them: "At a population of about 7 million habitants – less than 700,000 exist from half century, how many street children would be? Several thousand in Lima, after some sources, several thousand hundred, after other sources, in the entire country. The figures offered don't seem to be very strict and they depend of the sens given to the expression "street children". In stricto sensu, it means the children who escape all of the familial and social structures"¹⁵.

In 1963, the year when Kenya 16 conquered its independence, the number of street children was totally insignifiant. In 1995, the number was estimated at 400,000-500,000, about the population of a middle town from this country.

There are thousands of street children in India. It is estimated that in the streets of the town Bangalore live about 45,000 street children and this number grows every day; "The street is the single shelter for those children (lots of them were born on pavements!), it is the place where they eat, sleep, earn their livehood. The knowledge of the street is for them the only form of education. About 80 per cent from these children are boys. Indeed, the girls don't survive long time in the street conditions. The girls over 12 who live in the street, became prostitutes"¹⁷

Among the over 35,000 street children who live in Madras 18 , another indian town, 87,2 per cent are homeless children.

In Philippines¹⁹, over 2,400,000 young people wonder about on the streets of the urban centers searching means of subsistence for them and their families.

The Department of national planning, estimates that in Sri Lanka, the entire population of the country includes about 25 percent children under 15, from whom over 10,000 live in the street.

In Madagaskar 20 the fourth island in the world as size -13,000,000 inhabitants, from whom one tenth are in the capital) different sources estimate that 2,000-4,000 homeless children live in the street. Most of them are the homeless children living in the street all the time. The youngest are 4, and most of them are between 6 and 16.

The special committee concerning young people published in Canada, in 1986, an important report, where it was estimated: "Ten thousands of teenagers are living in derive in the streets of all the towns of the country. Forced to leave their home because of their familial problems, these young people are unable to find convenient places to live". ²¹

¹⁶ Gitau, K., Street children with special reference to girls: a kenyan experience, African Academy of Sciences, Nairobi, 1995, p.3

¹⁴ see footnote 3, p.99

¹⁵ Idem, p.113

¹⁷ see footnote 3, p.230

¹⁸ Idem, p.287

¹⁹ idem, p.126

²⁰ see footnote 13

²¹ Rapport du Comité spécial sur les jeunes, Jeunes: un plan d'action, Montréal, février,1986

In U.S.A, over 1 million young people between 11 and 17 run away from home: "Over half are girls and most of the disappearances are not denounced at the Police. They sleep in abandoned buildings, in unlocked cars, under bridges, in cemeteries etc. The prostitution, the pilferage and the drug take part of their existence "²².

In London, 1987: "50,000 teenagesr (...) live in refuges, friends or relatives' flats or houses, in hostels, hotels, abandoned vans; they sleep in semi-basements, on the banches in the parks, in the underground's stops".

In Ireland, according to the estimations, there are between 500-1,000 street children. Most come from large urban centers.

In Netherlands, a research made in 1993, has pointed out that there were about 7,000 young people under 25 without any stable residence.

In France, the street children phenomenon took proportion since 1980. Different official sources estimate that the street children number is about 10,000.

It is estimated that in Germany there are from 5,000 to 7,000 street children. But, other sources state: "Unrealistic estimations assert that in Germany there are 20,000-40,000 street children who live occasionally or permanently on the street"²⁴. Uwe Britten, the author of the book "Run away from home – how the street children live in Germany", assert thet only in Berlin there are about 3,000 street children.

In Turkey, the street children are "with thousands", after some official sources assertions. Police from Istanbul reports that there are between 6,000-7,000 street children.

The numerical estimations about street children from Moscow and Sankt-Petersbourg are different too. A table from "Méd cine Humanitaire" ²⁵ reveals that from 18 million inhabitants of Moscow, 200,000 are homeless persons and 20,000 are homeless children. In Sankt- Petersburg the homeless children number is estimated at 10,000-20,000. Another source offers different figures: "From the two million children Moscow town counts 150,000 are between 11 and 18 and they are homeless children or risk to become so. In the entire Russia is estimated that 500,000 children run away from home every year" ²⁶.

Valentina Spilova, a pedagogue who has founded in Sankt-Petersburg a refuge at her own initiative " The House of Charity and Peace", estimate that : "in this area, at a population of 5 million inhabitants, there could be 15,000 vagabond children, from whom almost one third ran away from protection institutes." 27

Gyorgy Kollmann, the author of one articol about street children from Hungary, states the existence of the phenomen, but he is prudent in offering figures, no matter if they are related to the quantity aspect of the problems made by street children or their numerical estimation. "It is very difficult to estimate quantitatively the problems made in Hungary by the street children or by the children found in abandon and poverty situations, or by the refugees who don't stop to arrive from neighboor countries. On the other hand, there are a large number of street children. They live almost all the time on the streets, in the parks, in the abandoned houses and in railway stations. We find them

22

²² Mc. Call, *Life*, 1983, p.35

²³ Lloyd, J., Weekend FT, 20 December, 1987

²⁴ Joachim, K., *Mobile Jugendarbeit/Streetwork* ISMO, Stuttgart, 1997

²⁵ Lebas, j., Veber, F., Bucher, G., Méd cine humanitaire, Méd cine-Sciences, Flammarion, Paris, 1994

²⁶ Trubiline, H., Zaitsev, V., *Les enfants des rue moscovites*, Forum Mondial de la santé (OMS), Revue Internationale de développement sanitaire, vol 16, No 2, 1995, p.146

²⁷ Quattara, V., Aimer mal, châtier bien, dans Journal du Droit des Jeunes No.134, 1994

10 II. History in brief

in the Margaret Island during the summer, too. In the winter, they refugiate at the warmth of the underground stops or in stations, which they share with the homeless people". 28

In Romania, the street children began to draw seriously attention since 1991. In October 1992, the Government ordered a vaste social investigation which had on purpose the numerical estimation and the discovery of the important problems of these minors extremely disadvantaged. The social investigation financed by the European Council and realised by four nongovernmental organisations: "The Romanian Ligue for Mental Health", "Terre des Homees" (Switzerland), "Red Barnet" (Denmark) and "Equilibre" (France) established that in Bucharest, in April 1993, there were 1,400 street kids.

In 1995, different sources: police, mass-media, social-workers, street children etc. estimated that in Bucharest there were approximately 3,000 street children. This figure included the occasional street children but also the workers who at night return to their families.

At the European Conference regarding the street children from everywhere, which took place at Amsterdam, 20-23 June 1996, The NGO-s representants from Romania: "The Association for Supporting the Social Integration:, "Save the children" and "the Open House" talked about 1,000-2,500 street children in Bucharest, figure which contradicted the exaggerated information vehiculated by foreign mass-media, according to which only in Bucharest would be 30,000 homeless children.

The Inner Department and the Department for Child Protection estimated in May 1997 that in Romania there were between 4,000-6,000 street children. Almost 1,500-2,500 (from whom over 1,000 permanent) are in Bucharest. Approximately 35 per cent from the street children estimated in the Capital are from Bucharest. The rest migrated from big cities, but also from rural areas; so Bucharest became a "collector of misery" and, implicit, of this category of marginalised under age children.

After the documentary visits in the country and analysing some official statistics (Inner Ministry, the Institute for the Quality of Life) I estimate that in Romania are almost 6,000 - 7,000 street children, from whom over 3,000 permanent street children. Most of the kids (over 80 per cent) are boys. Most of them (over 50 per cent) are between 10 - 14 years old. In almost every big city, a big percentage, over 40 per cent, migrated from other areas.

The phenomenon widely extended in other districts such as: Bihor, Constanta, Timisoara, Deva, Iasi, Prahova, Mures, Arad, Dolj, Galati, Cluj.

I have to stress that most of the street children (65%) are those for day, who in the evening return in families. This aspect shows the increase of the poverty state, the demaging of the parental responsability and the decrease of social control.

The phenomenon is only occasionally present in the counties: Teleorman, Olt, Salaj, Covasna.

In other districts like: Calarasi, Gorj, Arges, Dambovita, Mehedinti, Vrancea, Ramnicu-Valcea, Braila is of low proportions (15 - 50 street kids, including the day street kids in each county).

Reasons: richer areas, low unemployment, efficient activity of the protection institutions.

Street children's numerical estimation is hard to achieve for various reasons: their **migration** from town to town, or from area to area of the same town, according to season and sight; their **classification** in different categories: permanent street children, occasional children in the street or the children working in the street; **minimalizing the phenomenon** by some institutions involved in child's protection, which don't draw up separate statistics for the street children, but only global estimations about the juvenile delinquency or all the children placed in the minors receiving centers; presentation of some **contradictory situations** by the institutions for child's protection from the same district.

-

²⁸ Kollmann, G., Les enfants dela rue, BICE, L'Enfance dans le monde, vol.20, No.1/1993, Paris

11 • II. History in brief

The numerical estimations are hard to make because of these reasons and others, but, despite these difficulties all the opinions coincide: the number of the street children increased every year, everywhere.

III. Researh background

Durind 1 August - 30 December 1996, I made a study on a sample of 100 street kids of age 5 - 18 years old, who frequented the day centers *Pigmalion* (Foundation *Family and Child Protection** - F.C.P.) - 59 kids, The *Open House* (The *Open House* Association) - 38 kids and the night center (permanent) *Oliver* (F.C.P.) - 3 kids.

1. Emission of hypotheses

First stage: 1 -31 August 1996

I have noticed the kids who frequented the two day centers observing: habits, verbal communication, nonverbal communication, abilities, relations among them, with employed staff, with other persons. I have orientated the discussions in the two ways:

- interviewing on problems which interested me, important on emitting the hypotheses;
- listening finding recepting other needs, interests, problems which them, if they felt listened, noticed, they wanted to communicate/transmitt/signal.

I have emitted the hypotheses:

- 1) The disorganized family, numerous is the main sourse of street kids
- 2) Bad treatments represent the main cause why streey kids option to live in the street.
- 3) The number of street kids is continuing growing.
- 4) Bucharest became a "collector" of the street kids from all over the country.

Methods used in the first stage:

- direct (open) observation
- meeting
- interview
- conversation

2. Research objectives

Second stage - The investigation

1 September - 30 November

During this stage, I gave to the subjects a questionnaire (omnibus kind, with close and open questions) which I have completed, by writting, in front of them, while they were answering.

I have done social investigations, accompanied by a social assistant from F.C.P., in the families of day street kids which according to the information frequente sporadic (and permanent in the winter months) for 2-3 years *Pigmalion* day center.

The social assistants from the *Open House* gave me the records of observation completed by them, also different documents (medical certificates, school certificates) to compare data, to corect eventually some inadvertences.

At *Pigmalion* center, in the studio, the kids were tested by drawings, free creations, imposed themes: tree test, house test.

During the investigation stage I have continued to observ their behaviour, to talk with them, to involve them in various activities which I'm going to mention later.

^{*} Since June 1998 this foundation has changed its programme of intervention with a programme of prevention of the street children pnenomenon, working directly with the disadvantaged families and their children.

By methods, technics and instruments I've mentioned before, I' ve followed the aspects:

- groups of age
- the allocation on sex criterion
- the environment origin of the child
- the size of the family
- parents' profession
- the ethnical membership
- the origin
- attitude towards parents
- reasons (motifs) of living in the street
- the school situation
- where and how they sleep
- the age of kids in the street
- the consumption of toxic substances
- health problems risks
- the cleanliness state
- the motifs the street kids are arrested for
- police violence and abuse
- desires of the street children

3. Analysis' results

Third stage 1 - 30 December

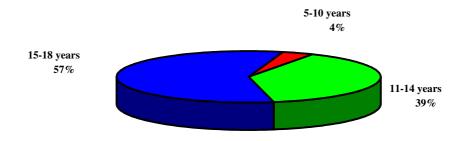
From the analysis and the interpretation of the data gathered during the first two stages, by methodes, technics and instruments enumerated at every stage, I have obtained the results:

1. Groups of age

between 5 - 10 years old: 4%

between 11 - 14 years old: 39%

between 15-18 years old: 57%

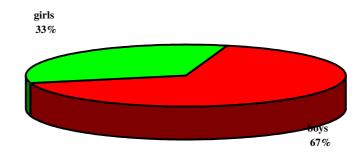


The distribution on groups of age indicates a high percentage, 57%, of minors older than 15 years of age. They are "the first postrevolutionar wave" of streetchildren who left theirs families (rarely institutions) because of the increase of unemployment, the bad treatments they received, the diminution of the social control in general.

The "second wave", the group under 15 years of age, it also consisted by high percentage, 43%, and it shows the material and moral difficulties.

2. The allocation on sex criterion

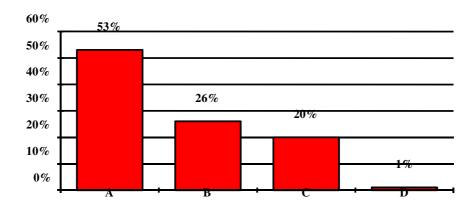
boys: 67% girls: 33%



Comparing with other studies** who indicate the percentage of 16-18% of girls among street children, the percentage of 33% seems to be exaggerated. But 13% of girls belong to the category of day street kids. They go home in the evening. The general low percentage of girls (under 20%) can have two explanations:

- girls prefer to endure violence or misery of the family than of the street unknown aggressors, possible rapers or murderes;
- girls who leave home and choose the street, majority lose after few month one year the statute of street children because some of them begin a illegimate life (married) or are traped in the channels of prostitution.
- 3. The environment origin of the child
- A 53% come from disorganisated families
- B 26% come from structurated families
- C 20% come from institutions (9% abandoned at 0 3 years; 11% come from school children houses, abandoned at the age of 6 7 years)
- D 1% don't know

** Investigation made by the organisation "Save the children", as part of the programme of street assistance, 1995



A very high percentage, 79%, coming from families, Only 26% coming from organised families, but most of the times with unappropriate climate for development and education.

53% coming from disorganised families (separation, divorce, demise, prison, incomplet structurated, reconstituted) with big material and moral problems.

20% coming from institutions. 9% have been abandoned at 0 -3 years and had known only the institutional model. 11% have been abandoned at the school age, knowing until 6-7 years also the family model.

4. The size of the family

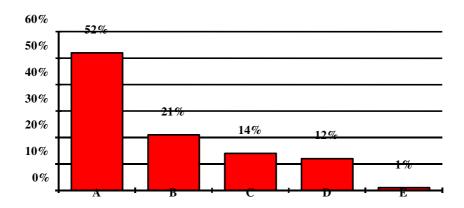
A - 52% - have among 3 - 6 brothers

B - 21% - have among 1 - 2 brothers

C - 14% - have among 7 - 16 brothers

D - 12% - alone (9 abandoned and 3 from families)

E - 1% - doesn't know



In the sample of 100 subjects 35 are brothers. 13 pairs of 2 brothers, 3 pairs of 3 brothers. The succesive illegitimate families have series of brothers coming from the same mother and 2 - 3 fathers.

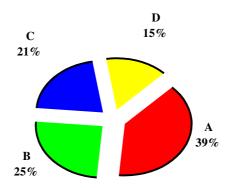
5. Attitude towards parents

A - 39% - negative

B - 25% - positive

C - 21% - came from institutions/refused to answer/they don't know

D - 15% - ambivalent



The negative attitude is declared especially towards father or step fathers, aggressive and violent especially when we deal with alcohol consumption.

6. Parents' professions (occupation)

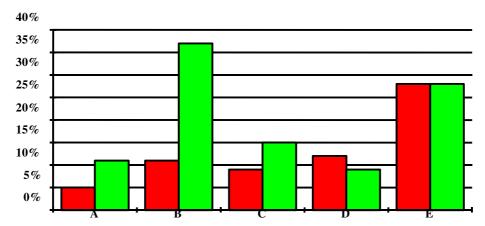
A - 5% fathers, 11% mothers - working

B - 11% fathers, 37% mothers - work occasionaly

C - 9% fathers, 15% mothers - unemployed workers, medical pensioned off

D - 12% fathers, 9% mothers - don't work

E - the rest (27-28%) - doesn't know

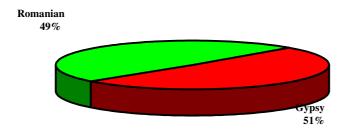


Parents who work all the time are: sellers, tailors (dressmakers), painters (dyers), street-sweepers. These works require a weak schooling and professional qualification and usually are low remunerated. Parents working occasionaly practic trades like sellers in markets, glass washers, beggers, robbers. Interesting is the fact that begging, theft, seeds selling are considered by kids as beeing trades. This way of thinking points out both the degree of degradation of the family in which they were born and the family model they had as example.

7. The ethnical membership (citizing)

51% - Gypsy

49% - Romanian

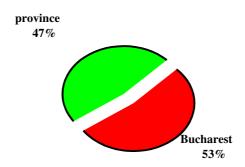


The big number of street kids coming from gypsy families gets the attention on some degenerations, also on the degradation of family cohesion which appeared in the traditional system of living of this minority.

8. The origin

53% - Bucharest

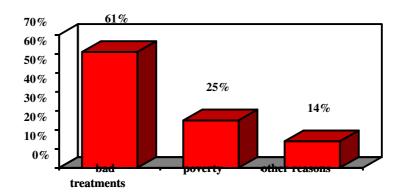
47% - province



The big percentage***, 47%, of those coming from province is explained by the advantages offered by the Capital to the little fugitives: more freedom, less social control, more opportunities of surviving (varied shelters: ducts, underground, unfinished buildings, diverse works, more places for begging, street kids centers).

- 9. Reasons (motifs) of living in the street
- 1) bad treatments 61% (46% come from families, 15% come from institutions)
- 2) poverty 25% (20 from 100 are kids in the street or day street kids in the evening they go back home)
- 3) other reasons 14% (curiosity, the influence of a brother/another child)

A statistic situation offered by the center "Gavroche" indicates the fact that from 100 boarded and interviewed kids from this center during 1 June 1995 - 1 June 1996 indicates: 15 coming from rural surroundings, 85 coming from urban surroundings; 50 of them were from province and only 35 from Bucharest.



Bad treatments are especially applied when alcohol had been consumed. 73% say that parents (step father especially) are alcoholics.

Bad treatments are generally, violence and psysical aggressivity, psychical or verbal aggressivity, affective indifference, attempts of rape (5 cases) of mothers' boyfriends on step dauthters.

Poverty becomes a motif of life in the street when is associated with the lack of affection, respect, understanding.

10. The school situation (classes graduated)

18% - illiterates

9% - 1 class

14% - 2 classes

15% - 3 classes

16% - 4 classes

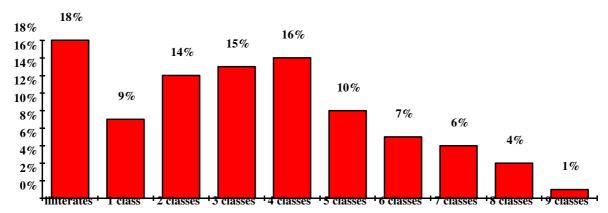
10% - 5 classes

7% - 6 classes

6% - 7 classes

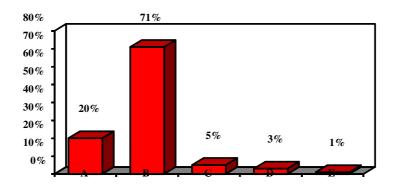
4% - 8 classes

1% - 9 classes



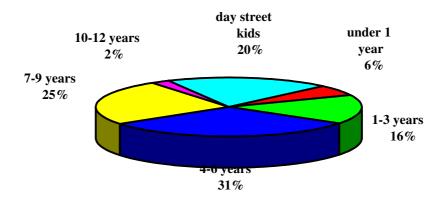
The real level of instruction is much under the presented one. Most of them can read and write or they do it with difficulties, have a poor vocabulary, they use incorrectly the meaning of some words, have often vulgar expressions or of subculture.

- 11. Where and how they sleep
- A 20% home but from time to time in ducts and in different left buildings;
- B 71% ducts, in the Northern Station, Basarab Station, buildings' stairs, left buildings, others places;
- C 5% at different persons, employers;
- D 3% at night center *Oliver*;
- E 1% in a home for unmarried persons.



From 71 kids who sleep in ducts,underground stops, stations etc., 9 kids sleep alone, 62 sleep in groups of 2 - 6. Solitaries are those who left recently their family, the institutions, but also those who think that they can manage better on their own having less problems than those living in a group.

- 12. Age of kids in the street
- 6% under 1 year
- 16% between 1 3 years
- 31% between 4 6 years
- 25% between 7 9 years
- 2% between 10 -12 years
- 20% day street kids



56% are in the street for 4-9 years.

Those having over 7 years on the street, 27%, were street kids and before 1989. Thanks to the prompt intervention of the police, their repeated experiences of running from families/ institutions lasted between few hours and few days.

The percentage of 22% of those having on the street under 3 years shows clearly the evolution of the phenomenon.

Occasionally, day street kids run away from home for 2 - 3 days - 1 week, sometimes for more, time when they live among street kids and have the same way of living.

13. The consumption of toxic substances (the glue-sniffing)

A - 36% - daily

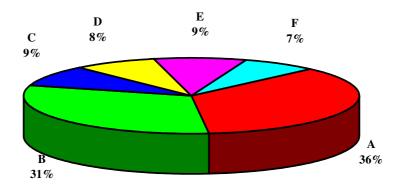
B - 31% - occasionally

C - 9% - they tried, they gave up very soon

D - 8% - they gave up after 1 - 2 months

E - 9% - they say that they didn't try

F - 7% - vague answer, no answer



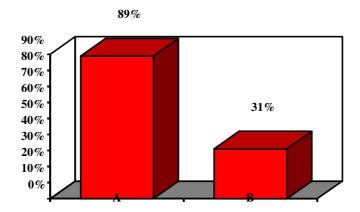
To sniff glue-sniffer means getting a special state of hallucinations which replaces the feelings of hunger, cold and, not last, the lack of affection. "Aurolac", "Aluminiumlac", "Adela" etc., are chemical substances based on solvents and can be bougth (without restrictions) at low prices (4,000-6,000 lei) from any magasin which sells chemical products.

Psychologists, social assistants who work of 6-7 years with street kids say that the glue-sniffer frequently inhaled creates dependence. Physicians and chemists agree that the toxic substances systematically inhaled, for a long period (over 3 - 4 years) cause chronic troubles; appear nervous lesions, motory troubles, epileptic attacks, lung lesions, eyes problems etc.

14. The tabacco and alcohol consumption

89% - smoke

37% - consume occasionally beer and wine



Smoking is a custom of street kids, no matter the age. And the youngest, between 5 - 7 years, smoke from few cigarettes to one packet per day.

15. Health problems, risks

96% - are notched on hands

80% - pale aspect, underfed

21% - accidents, usually car accidents

28% - strong colds at lungs, kidneys

7% - chilblains

5% - tuberculosis - they started and interrupted the treatment many times

6% - veneral diseases

11% - behaviour troubles, hospitalization at psychiatry

4% - epilepsy

6% - hepatitis

9% - scab

5% - other problems; meningitis, sinusitis etc.

11% - they ran away from hospitals

7 girls were raped

3 girls gave birth and have kids of 2 - 3 years

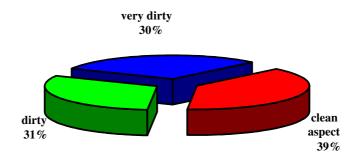
The emphasized self - hurting in the moments of glue-sniffer or alcohol poison is often demonstrative, the kid tries to get the attention on him. The hurtings, the lack of the sense of physical autoprotection can be with any doubt interpreted as chemical signs of nervous break-down. The autoaggressive gestures have relative generalized reprezentation among street kids.

16. The cleanliness state

A - 39% - clean aspect

B - 31% - dirty

C - 30% - very dirty



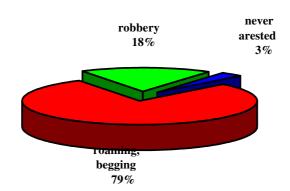
I have to mention that 37 of the kids with clean aspect are those who frequented the *Open House* day center. All the day street kids are very dirty.

17. The motifs the street kids are arrested for

79% - roaming, begging

18% - robbery

3% - never arrested



Roaming and begging are the main offences committed by street kids. Robberies, especially those of food are committed in the marckets and malls. Kids confess that they steal more often than they are caught. Often they are caught, scolded, beaten by employers but left free, without being surrended to the police.

Serious offences like robbery, murder are extremly rare among street kids and usually with a high impact in mass media.

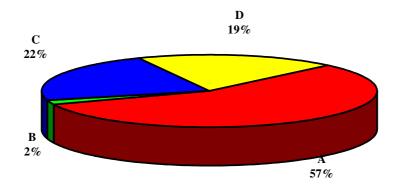
18. Police violence and abuse

A - 56% - beaten by policemen, put to different works, their money coming from begging or various activities have been confiscated

B - 2% (a girl and a boy) - attempt of rape

C - 22% - they weren't beaten

D - 19% - no answer



Street kids consider that the brawlest policemen are at the reception center "Ciresarii 1", Capital Police - all from Bucharest, Police from Ploiesti and Police from Valenii de Munte.

Most af the kids denounce bad relations with bodyguards. Those confisc their money and frighten them by beating them when they find them sleeping.

19. Desires of the street kids

A - 15% - to go to school

B - 13% - to stay in a night center

C - 11% - to qualify in a trade

D - 8% - to work

E - 8% - to go back home

F - 6% - to have a home, a safe place to sleep

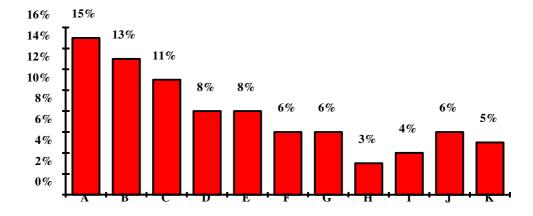
G - 6% - to have identity card

H - 3% - to have a family of their own

I - 4% - diverse (car, money, go abroad)

J - 6% - they never thought, they don't know yet

K - 5% - nothing



Kids desires are actually rights (which are sanctioned by legislation), of which every child or young man should benefit.

Almost 15 children wanted 2 - 3 rights in the same time. 13 want to go in a night center but, <u>only</u> if they would be left free, not kept like in jail and not beaten. Also conditioned is the desire to go back home: not beaten, not to be sent to beg.

4. Conclusions

- Street kids come, usually from disorganized families, reorganized families (usually illegitimate), numerous, with low social status, with low degree of schooling, low qualification, working occasionally, low income. The culture of the poverty represents an accepted way of life.
- Bad treatments applied by parents, especially by step fathers/sometimes by mother/ by the natural father alcoholic, too authoritative, are the main motifs of the life in the street invoked by the children. Beating, the affective indifference, sexual aggressions are also invoked as motifs by kids who left institutions.
- The number of street children is in continuing growth fact which indicates the aggravation of deficiences at the family level, the insufficient protection and social assistance, the lack of preventive strategies/stop of extension of the street kids phenomenon.
- The age of kids on street (56 are on the street for 4-9 years) shows:
 - a) the inefficiency of the centers set up by the state and the NGO-s for the resocialization of the street kids:
 - b) risks these kids and teenagers take: dependence of toxic substances, prostitution, the accustom to freedom, the lack of obligations, responsabilities of life in the street (which can became the second nature);
 - c) the degradation of the health;
 - d) the impossibility of being educated in the educational and professional system;
 - e) the dark prospects they can have as adults: beggers, tramps living on the street or delinquents (permanent clients of prisons).
- The big number of street kids came from province for living "better and more free" in Bucharest, change the Capital into a collector of the street kids. The concentration of these disadvantaged under age in one place makes more difficult the possibility of resocialization, impose an expensive social control, difficult to make.
- Street kids do not benefit of most elementary rights sanctioned by the legislation of Romania, of ONU Convention for Child's Rights at which Romania adhered.
- Day street kids have the advantage of a family climate which despite the state of degradation gives them the feeling of membership and domestic protection, it guarantees to them the security of the sleep. In other respects, the schooling level, the day street kids are absolutely disadvantaged compared with the permanent street kids. The bigger percentage of illiterates, 14 kids from 18, is made from street kids living "in the Ghetou". Families who live "in the Ghetou" a block of one room flats, disafected after the Revolution, live 10-14 persons in misery in one room flats, confort 4. The building has no water, light, gas. Adults have no place to work/they work occasionally, are alcoholics. Two sisters (7 and 12 years old) don't have birth certificates. The absence of this document makes impossible the matriculation of the children at school and the grant of the allocation at which kids have the right by law. Day street kids are sometimes more dirty than permanent street kids and some of them sniff daily glue-sniffer. Occasionally

they leave home and they sleep in ducts or at the underground. Also, the day street kids are sent to beg.

The main needs of the street kids:

- normal conditions of existence (shelter, food, clothing) and hygienic;
- the reconstitution of the identity (birth certificate, identity card);
- to be taught to read and write, to continue school;
- qualification in a trade;
- an affective and instructive climate which can make them give up glue-sniffer and to make them want something for their future: school, qualification, a place to work;
- the reintegration in families which do not represent any danger for them;
- information, instructive activities about contraception, about sexual diseases, AIDS;
- to know their rights and the obligations they have, how they have to claim them, to fulfil and to keep them.

Activities comparison of day centers

Pigmalion and the Open House

Similarities:

-Areas of activity as part of street assistance programme: street workers from the *Open House* work in the street with children from the underground station Brâncoveanu, a "grey" area with a smaller degree of degradation of the street children. Street workers from *Pigmalion* action in the area of Northern Station, a "black" area, where are the oldest street kids (dependents of glue-sniffer), but also street kids just came from province (with big chances of resocialization). From the point of view of the area, the work of those from *Pigmalion* is much harder.

-Duration of daily programme. The programme is at Pigmalion between 8^{30} - 17^{30} and at the $Open\ House$ between 9 - 15. Kids who frequent the day center Pigmalion stay 3 hours less on the street being favoured from this point of view in comparison with those from the $Open\ House$.

-The hygienic aspect is totally neglected at the day center *Pigmalion*. The kids are dirty and very dirty, they aren't taught to wash themselves, to wash their clothes, they don't get clothes when they want to wash. At the *Open House* hygienic problems are primordial in educational activities. When they arrive at this center, the first thing they do is to wash themselves, and their clothes at two authomatic washing machines which are at their disposal and they were taught how to use them. I have noticed that the clean kids are psychically much better than the others because hygien is a habit and a need in the same time.

-Food. At the day center *Pigmalion*, kids have three meals prepared by the employed staff (a cook and a cook assistant). At the *Open House*, kids have two meals prepared by them, guided by a social assistant. Street kids from *Open House* are private of a meal, but they are advantaged by the fact that they cook their meals. By this activity they get domestic habits, have responsabilities, have an immediate satisfaction of their work.

-School activities are sporadic at the day center *Pigmalion* and practiced only by a small group: 5 - 6 kids. In change, at the day center *Open House* school activities are daily, they are part of the imposed programme and are compulsory for all the kids. In the school year 1996-1997, 6 kids from *Open House* have been entered a school with no-frequency system (2 of them, aged 12 and 13 have been taught to read and write and they graduated the first class) and only 2 kids from day center *Pigmalion*.

-Professional and artistic activities. Joiner's workshops, workshops drawing-painting, mechanics metal processing, bodily expression and motion carry on only at the day center *Pigmalion*. The leadership of these workshops is guaranteed of 3 qualified persons, employed in this purpose. Kids are attracted to this activities. They form skills, practice and improve some abilities, they enlarge their capacity of concentration, of attention, their imagination, their creativity. Satisfaction and the feeling of usefulness are turned to good when there are expositions and shows organised by the center with the purpose of mass media these activities and of getting new financial sources.

-The system of rewards and punishments work only at the day center *Open House*. For non-observance the programme the kids are penalized (the reduction of points from a maximum score) and, depending on the gravity of the action, even expelled. The regulations of the center forbit: violence, the threat with violence, drug (glue-sniffer) consumption, alcohol consumption, thefts, insults. Kids who respect the programme receive different prizes (shows, trips, money etc.).

-Students access at practical activities. The day center *Open House* is very open for students practice, from establishment, in 1994. The day center *Pigmalion* brought hardly in may 1997, four students to carry on practical activities.

-Day street kids are accepted to take part of the day centers' activities. Their major problems (the absence of identity card, illiteracy) are not in the area of social service of the center *Pigmalion*. The day center *Open House* has another philosophy and attitude towards this problem, having a real activity of warning: tight relation with day street kids' families (with the families of the permanent street kids, too), counsellors, support in obtaining the identity cards, material support, teaching, help them to enter a school with no-frequency system.

In conclusion, the programmes of the two centers have similarities and differences. The main similarity is the daily opened door for 6 - 9 hours for kids with families but with big economic-social problems, for kids who lost contact with families and institutions, who came in these centers of their's own free will.

Most of them had been to other centers, they can compare them, they became attached of one center which they frequent sporadic or for long periods (2 - 3 years), even daily.

Children find here a community coordonated by adults, social control, understanding, affection, superior condition than those from home or street, the possibility of self-discovery practicing different activities, having some opportunities which can change their street kids destiny.

The mentioned differences are connected with the philosophy or the programme, methods and work style, the quality of relations with the employed adults of the centers.

Making their's choice for one center or another means a choice which kids make instinctively because they like more a type of programme, a kind of community and not last because they appreciate more a kind of behaviour and relations which are established by the adults towards street children

I must mention that the day center *Pigmalion* has a capacity of 70 children, occupied in the winter month of 35 - 50 kids daily. In summer, the degree of occupation is of 18 - 25 kids. The *Open House* has a capacity of 15 - 20 kids. The degree of occupation is of 12 - 16 kids daily, no matter the season.

IV. Causes of the street kids effect

1. Urbanization swept away traditions

The street kids became an international phenomenon. "But most of the time these social issues have a multiple determination" and that is why any attempt to explain the variable effect: street kids, has to cover all the intermediate causes - effects links till the end of "the causal canonical chain" At the terminal point we find the most important cause, yet the most far-off.

The main cause of this phenomenon seems to be a universal one. It is called **industrial civilization** and means, concretely, the extensive development of the industry and the strong urbanization.

The effects of mass migration from the village to the city led to the tremendous increasing of the cities, to the deterioration of the traditional relations which were ruling the societies, to the development of the outskirts, to the social disorganization, to the erosion of social and moral integration, to the deficiency of the social control, to the impossibility of adjustment, to unemployment, to the deterioration of family life, which engendered other chain of effects: separation, divorce, children chased in the street, abandoned children.

The outrageous urbanization led to a polarization of the families, at a pecuniary level, as well as at a behaviour one. Some of them turned their child into a hostage ³¹, placing him in the centre of family concerns, investing him with an exaggerated role. Other families, placing him to the antipod, couldn't control him any more, and thus pushing him at the edge of society.

The changes of the city affected also the street. "Through nationalization, society lost the traditional street as the main center of child's education, as the place of existence and apprenticeship, of discovery and adventure"³². But, we should add that society "gained" the modern street instead, as the main place of dehumanizing rejected people who have handicaps of primary socialization.

The effects of excessive urbanization showed up immediately. For example, Africa recorded in 1990 the highest urbanization rate in the world. But this huge step to civilization brought about a lack of balance which was compensated and still is by the intelligence and the will for surviving of the populations. The African youth, recently urbanized, experienced two considerable events during one single generation: 1) the prevalent part that it played in that society which grows younger day by day: at this moment over 50 per cent of them are less than 18 years old; 2) the loss of its social position, which was strongly defined in the traditional society and which could not be replaced in the modern one, where even young doctors can not find a place to work. Most of the children and teenagers from the country-side have no future either in educational circuits (school or technical), or in the remunerated fields.

"We deal with a youth which is rejected by the city, although it represents the largest part of it. Youth has the power to build or to destroy the society. The children and the teenagers who try to survive in the streets of the big cities, illustrate the creative reaction of the population, but also represent the foreboding symptom, of an increasing injustice, poverty and inherent effects, among which the outburst of the urban violence".³³

³¹ Rapaille, G., Breugnot, P., Bouthier, B., Si vous ecoutiez vos enfants? 36 reponses aux problemes capitaux des relations parents/enfants, Editions Manges, Belakopi, 1978.

²⁹ Zamfir, C., *Structurile gindirii sociologice*, Editura politica, 1987, Bucuresti, p.39.

³⁰ Idem, p.47.

³² Aries, Ph., L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'ancien regime, Editions du Seuil (reedition), 1973.

³³ See footnote 1

The prospective studies ³⁴ for Africa 2000's show a strong urbanization. Most of the people namely children and teenagers will migrate towards cities. For example, on long term, some statistics show for Dakar and its outskirts, in 2025, a juvenile population of almost three billions, while the entire actual population is below two billions.

Poverty, life on the outskirts are a few effects of the urbanization but also of the increased birth rate. No surprise that the biggest economical and social problems exist in those cities with a young population. For example, at the International Congress of the fraternal cities which took place at Lima, in 1987, the city El Alto was named not only "the youngest city in South America", but also "the poorest city of the subcontinent".

People aged from seven to eighteen represent 55 per cent of the country population.

Bouaké ³⁵, the second town in Cote d'Ivoire, has more than 2,500,000 inhabitants, from which more than 45 per cent are under 25 years old.

In Freetown (Sierra Leone) a genuine town of contrasts, it is estimated that more than 40 per cent of the inhabitants are under fifteen and that tens of thousands of these young people, separated from their families, deprived of any home, are leading an unsecure life in the street.

According to the census of 1981, Togo ³⁶ (country lying in Guinea Bay) had a population of 2,720,000 inhabitants. Now it is estimated to reach a number of 3,500,000 inhabitants. 75 per cent of these people, half of which are less than fifteen, are living in the country side.

In Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroun, there are lots of children and young people coming from the North from Tchad, from Central Africa, who are fleeing from poverty and who, seduced by the magic of the city, are forced to survive no matter how. Most of them hope to earn money, to look better and to get back home.

Brazil, lying very close to Western Africa, is confronted with a totally disorganized cultural and social action, where the present attempts of reconstruction are actually made according to the basic elements of the African culture. We are facing a tendancy of emphasizing the contrasts and therefore, of the conflict between the privileged minority and the majority living on the edge of poverty. In this climate of urban violence, the children are actors and offen the victims. "Thousands of black children poor and useless died from the bullets of the anonymous justice makers, of the policemen or beggars".³⁷

In Peru, street kids are named strictly those who have escaped from every family and social structure. Nine of ten children are part of the second peasant generation. There were some theories that an overcrowded urban environment brings about mental disorders.

In France³⁸, the social exclusion of a big number of under age, many from Africa, plus the bad reputation of the places they live in, make them a distinct group called "street children". To live and grow on the outskirts is for them like a stigma, like a guilt and makes them suspicious. So, they suffer of exclusion and they are "pushed at the edge of society".

In Spain, Italy and Portugal³⁹ the street kids phenomenon is explained by the low economical development of these countries comparing to that of other states european members.

³⁷ See footnote 1

³⁴ Les problemes demographiques, Dossier d' information 1995, FNUAP.

³⁵ See footnote 3, p.40

³⁶ Idem, p.168

³⁸ See footnote 6

³⁹ Idem, p.22

In Turkey⁴⁰, the rural exodus was mostly invoked. Indeed this has a strong impact on the capacity of families to raise their children. The re-settling down leads to many social economical problems. So, many urban areas aren't easy to access to the migrating population and the result is the proliferation of the outskirts and the impossibility of family members to help one another like they used to in the rural areas.

Henry Laborit⁴¹, beginning, for example, from some evolutionist premises proves that there is a series of biological and social determinations which create alienation, complexes, frustation feelings, states of unbalance and tension among the members of an urbanized family.

The child is often in some contradictory situations in the street, if he is part of a family recently arrived in town. First the child preserved the connections with the rural community and he still is impregnated with the values of its culture, from which yet he feels alienated.

2. The effects of the Romanian demographic politics

Of course, it is possible to find a few mutual causes of the abandoned childhood phenomenon: uncontrolled urbanization, poverty, prostitution. Yet there are some unique, particular events that played a decisive part in every country.

In Uganda, there were the political, economical and social crises, brought about by Idi Amin Dada's dictatorship, after 1971. First it was the indians' expulsion and then the creation of an artificial commercial activity, in order to compensate their leaving, which made a lot of school children abandon school and make money "without difficulty". Then, thousands of opposants were massacrated and sentenced to exile. Later on, after the dictator's fall an endless civil war followed. "Ever since the '70's hundreds of orphans have been loafing on Kampola's streets. Their average age is between eight and ten and they are nicknamed *les bayaye*, meaning in a literary translation *the thiefs*". ⁴²

In Germany, a particular cause was represented by unification. In Berlin there are about 3,000 children who ran away from their homes and even from their protection shelters. The Germans' unification brought about the failure of many families. It was not only the adults that felt insecure after '89, but also the children, who even have a saying; "Let the wall stand, may the wall be rebuilt" ⁴³.

In the ex-communist countries from Eastern Europe⁴⁴, the ridiculous transition of the socialist society to market economy is quated as one of the causes of the street children phenomenon. This passing is accompanied by the colapse of the economy centralized planned, the disappearance of the old cultural and moral standards, by the apparition of unemployment and the blind imitation of foreign models of social help.

National causes, such as demographic politics strongly emphasizing the quantity and not the quality of the descendents for Romania until December 1989, were added to the universal cause, the industrialization, with its effect of fast urbanization, turned into the cause of other effects.

As part of the causal chain, **the extensive demographic politics** was an effect of the political decision of achieving the megalomaniac industrialization programme through an increasing volume of manpower. "Besides, the nationalist ideology of the formes system connected the development of the nation to the population size. Unable to find other methods, the political leadership resorted to the most brutal method; prohibition of the abortion, at the same time discouraging any way of using the

⁴¹ Laborit, H., L' homme dans la cité, Editions universitaire, Paris, 1972.

⁴⁰ Idem, p.22-23

⁴² See footnote 3, p.191

⁴³ Britten, U., Bamberg, StraBenkinder in Deutschland, in Theorie und Praxis der sozialen Arbeit, Nr.1/96.

⁴⁴ See footnote 6, p.22

modern methods of birth control. This violent measure engendered an immense generation of unwanted children, born in precarious social conditions of the family ". 45

We can state that among the street kids who are older than nine years old there also are "the morous", some of them having congenital mental disorders, caused by failed abortion. because of the physical and mental handicaps, some of these unwanted children have been more easily abandoned by their parents.

After 1966, the year of the famous 770th Decree which forbade and punished the practice of abortion, the demographic outburst was associated with a gradual process of degradation concerning the life conditions of those children coming from numerous families.

"The increased rate of maternal mortality represented an additional cause of children's abandoning. This is the justification of a much higher rate (from twice to eight times higher) of Romanian children in comparison with all the other countries in the neighbourhood". 46

Statistics show that during 23 years, as long as the previous decree lasted, about 400 - 500 women died yearly because of the septic empirical abortions. Some of their children, placed in sheltering institutions couldn't fit and after December '89, once the social control growed weaker they chose to live in the street.

The incapacity of the state to offer a proper protection and social assistance to those families with low income and numerous children coincided with their pushing to the edge of poverty.

An other long-termed effect was the fast increase of the institutionalized children.

Separating children from the families with material difficulties and their placing in orphanages turned them immediately into semiorphans or social orphans: children with families but being deprived of the family environment, patterns and relationships.

An immediate effect of this protection measure especially applied by the paternalist state was represented by the deterioration of the paternal responsability.

Beginning with children's institutionalization all those paternal concerns were taken over by the state. The responsabilities of the "week-end parents" became even smaller, the relationships between parents and children grew worse and superficial. A statistic made by the Department for Child Protection, the Statistics National Board and PHARE showed that, till May 1997, in accordance with the Law 3/1970, 653 law shelter institutions - 550 public and 73 private - have been founded; beginning with 1990, 154 more institutions were created. The fact that the statistics point out 28.938 children (from the total of 98.872 institutionalized children) who have broken off any relations with their parents for at least six month, is very significant in proving that the paternal responsability has grown worse.

Depriving children of the family environment and of its patterns by protecting them in certain institutions brings about, because of the permanent frustrations, mental and physical changes as well as difficulties and impossibilities of social and family integration.

⁴⁵ Zamfir, E., Zamfir, C., (coord), *Politici sociale, România în context european*, Editura *Alternative*, Bucuresti, 1995, p.201.

⁴⁶ Zamfir, C., Pop, M., A., Zamfir, E., *România '89-'93, Dinamica bunastarii sociale*, Editura *Expert*, 1994, Bucuresti, p.22.

3. Poverty

All the relations between causes and effects, more or less far-off are activated by certain favouring elements which accelerate the release of street kids effect.

We should remind a few factors: life on the outskirts, numerous family, incompletely organized family, one - parent family (especially when the mother is alone in leading the family), the lack of communication at home and at school, violence, abuse, poverty.

Poverty can be an effect of unemployment or of the incapacity of adjustment and profesional integration, but it also represents a favouring element for the "guilt" of being a street child.

Young people who are alienated from the traditional rural culture will experience all sides of poverty's culture which " is both a **product** and a **source** of poverty. On one hand, it's an answer of the poor person to his solitary condition in a highly stratified and individualt society. On the other hand, as a way of assumed life by the individual and transmitted from generation to generation it tends to engender a real poverty trap that individuals and their children will hardly be able to escape"⁴⁷.

In spite of all the experienced social protection systems, the Western Europe countries are not spared of the extend of poverty and rejection, so that the poor people seem to be abandoned.

In 1994 it was estimated that 15 per cent of the population of the twelve countries which were representing the European Union at that time, lived in an extreme poverty. In 1992, in these countries, according to a report of the European Observer of the homeless people, over 2,5 millions were reported as homeless. The real number of this category, which obviously also include the permanent street kids, taking all those unknown by the receiving services into account, would be almost five millions.

The incidence of the phenomenon varies and, according to the mentioned report, the heighest rates are in Germany (12,8 in a thousand inhabitants), in the United Kingdom of Great Britain (12,2) and in France (11,1).

The report noted the increased number of illegal emigrants among the homeless ones, especially in the countries of South Europe. "70 per cent of the homeless people were under forty years old. The percentage of women and children showed a tendancy for growing. The homeless people phenomenon has important consequences upon health, hope of life and school level". 48

For instance, in Belgium⁴⁹, 20 per cent from the population who loves in homes for people without shelter are kids, numerous street kids have been boarded in penitenciary institutions for under age kids.

Poverty remains a serious problem for Portugal, whose very low GDP sets this country among the last three countries from Economical Development and Cooperation Organization.

"In Portugal's cities the children haunting on the streets while their parents are working are not rare and a lot *street kids* have no steady home. These children often coming from imimgrant families are living in improvised district called *barracas*. These huts are unwholesome, the shelters from here are unsuitable and the criminal activity, which means above all selling drugs, in highly spread; living here is dangerous and it is difficult for the children of these districts to go to school" ⁵⁰.

⁴⁸ Travail, *Le magazin de l 'OIT*, Nr.11. 1995.

⁴⁷ See footnote 45, p.70

⁴⁹ See footnote 6, p.22

⁵⁰ Center pour la Recherche et l'innovation dans l'Enseignement, *Des services efficaces pour les enfants et familles a risque*, OCDE, 1996, Paris, p.142

These children, who come from the lower classes are exposed to the main risks of being compelled to give up school, of losing their shelter, of being pushed on the edge of society.

At Saskatchewan (Canada)⁵¹ estimations show that 30-40 per cent of the children are considered to be in risky situations. This region is supposed to record one of the highest poverty rates in Canada. In 1990, a child from six was living in poverty.

In Slovenia, 30-40 per cent of the few children admitted to school are in various risky situations.

In Turkey⁵² one can estimate that three million children need a specialized education and that, at this moment, only 25,411 of them have already benefited by it.

The seventh yearly report concerning the states from the world of hunger confronts us through its numbers, its comparisons and its remarks with an undeniable reality: poverty and hunger conquer new territories and become even worse in the old ones. "Over 800 millions of people are still too poor to afford the food that they need for a healthy, active life. The sizes of hunger took proportions also in others sides of the world, even in developed countries. In 1995, this number got to 30 millions". 53

In the same report, in U.S.A. children are said to represent almost half of the pamper population.

The situation became more serious also in the countries in transition. The transition from socialism to capitalism made living difficult and still does for countries in Eastern and Central Europe. Poverty and inequality became even deeper. Income lost the purchasing power and the food got more expensive, "swallowing" 50-80 per cent of the income.

In the ex-comunist countries, it is the children that were the most affected, poverty and hunger pushing the most disadvantaged of them in the street.

The report intitled "Pentru o societate bazata pe copil" (For a society focused on the child), elaborated in 1997, by the Research Institute for the Quality of Life, coordonated by professor doctor Catalin Zamfir, has a categorical conclusion: beginning with 1990, the general situation of the Romanian children has been continously deteriorating. This denouement was possible through the absence of some national strategies and of the political will of dealing with disadvantaged minors, in spite of the efforts made more than by the occidental institutions by the Romanian ones.

The report shows that 50 per cent of children in Romania live in the poorest families, representing 30 per cent of the whole families. Only 15 per cent of the children belong to families that can provide them a decent living.

Poverty is not the only favouring element of the "guilt" of being a street child. There are six more elements that children experience; emotional poverty, the lack of education, the absence of a spiritual guiding, intelectual penury, the lack of hope. When a child experieces all these deficiencies he tries to find another way of fulfilling them and he is getting in the street.

⁵¹ Idem, p.285

⁵² Idem, p.329

⁵³ What governments Can Do, Seventh Annual Report on the State of World Hunger, 1997, Bread for the World Institute

4. Disorganized families, bad treatments

Among the social elements: families, school, company, the quality of cultural information, entertainment, etc., which reflect especially in the child's mental condition in a particular way, bringing about the elaboration of the causal structure, the family contains the most prevalent causes which lead to the appearence and to the manifestation of behaviour disorders (resistence, anger, violence) or to the expressing of some elements announcing a criminal behaviour (lying, stealing, running away from home).

As a result of some research, the couple Eleonor and Sheldon Glueck got to the conclusion that the family climate and especially the intimate relationships between parents and children are a final judgement of the fact whether the child is predisposed to a social or to an antisocial behaviour.

Paul Osterrieth⁵⁴ thinks that the most important elements of the relationship between a parent and his child are based on two extreme but essential attitudes of the parent: the accepting or the refusal of the child: "My mother/father didn' t want me!".

Paul Symonds ⁵⁵ defines the word "reject" as a child who is not accepted by his mother or father. The American psychologist discovers that these children show, in a highest proportion than at the others, behaviour deviations such as: aggressivity, indignation, hostility, tendency of lying vagrancy.

The reason of the life in the street, presented in the "Final Report" of the social inquiry made by some nongovernmental organizations such as; "The Romanian League for Mental Health", "Terre des Hommes", "Red Barnet" and "Equilibre", during 1st of November 1992 - 30th of April 1993, set on the top (56,60 per cent of a sample consisting in 463 subjects) the disorganized family. The subjects said about their parents that they are separated/divorced (36,20 per cent); deceased/arrested/I don't know (26,70 per cent) and other situations (7,60 per cent). Only 29,50 per cent declared that their parents live together.

The research made in the context of the Reserch Support Scheme programme, during 1st of August 1996- the 30th December 1996, at "Pigmalion" and "Open House" Bucharest daily centers revealed that 53 per cent of one hundred subjects come from disorganized/incompletely structured families, that 52 per cent have between three and six brothers, that 35 per cent are brothers (13 pairs of 2 brothers, 3 pairs of 3 brothers).

Staying with one parent, they couldn't fit in their new family and run away from home. The justifying text "recited" by street kids is almost the same: "My parents got divorced, my father got married to another woman who didn't want me. My mother married to a drunkard who used to beat all the time".

Other children left their natural families, although their parents weren't separated, but where the conflicts become permanent and where the relations between parents and children got completely worse

The father's aggressivity (who beats both his children and his wife to death) is often put forward as a reason of going out in the street. This attitude is stimulated by the excessive drinking, used as a "solution" to "forget" about poverty, unemployment, misery and about the incapacity of adjusting to the new demands peculiar to the transition.

In Paul Lazarsfeld's opinion all the family conflicts have repercussions on the child's emotional life, and the most tragic condition consists in the absence of that family affection.

⁵⁴ Osterrieth, P., L'enfant et la famille, Editions du Scarabee, Paris, 1967.

⁵⁵ Symonds, P., *The Psychology of Parents-Child relationship*, Appleton-century, 1939, New York.

Corporal punishements systematically applied on the children, with or without well-grounded reasons -caused certain moods of descouragement, frustration, certain tendencies of aggressivity and indiscipline, also expressed by running away from home.

For example, the street kids recruted by DAARA programme (Senegal)⁵⁶ come from very disadvantaged prevalently rural families (farmers), than suburban families. We are talking about one-parent families or families having the mother as a leader, but being either unemployed, or a begger: families exposed to the crisis, where the father lost his job or has a precarious, badly-payed one; numerous families, where the father has only one income or a small retired pay.

Ninety per cent of the children examined by the animators of CEDRO⁵⁷ programme (Lima-Peru) complain that they were beaten at home. Fifty per cent of them come from families where at least one parent was not the biological one. Actually these children abandoned their family precisely because they were treated badly.

In Germany, among the causes of home abandoning is often set forth the parents' aggressivity, and concerning girls, a decissive part is played by the sexual aggressivity. Separated families offer an appropriate background in this respect. Teenagers have a strong reaction, especially in this period of their life, against violence and have the feeling that they are not accepted by their families anylonger. The social coldness (absence of affection, of communication, of interest), peculiar to many families, is obviously suffocating for their children: "Thirteen thousand suicide attempts were recorded only in Germany, in a single year" .

An inquiry shows that in Russia, at Sankt-Petersburg, most of the street kids, who are frequently very young, abandoned their families because they didn't get along with their parents.

Also in France there are a lot of children who choose living in the street because they were ill-treated by their parents. This country began to be more and more preoccupied with child maltreating.

During the last years, in France⁵⁹ ,the number of known ill-treated children almost became stabilized around 15 thousand cases a year, but the number of children in risky situations increased from 22,000 in 1991 to 30,000 in 1992 and to 38,000 in 1994.

Some of these ill-treated children escape from the measures of assistance and protection and, being influenced by the language of the violence used in their families, become aggressive, violent, virtual or real criminals in their turn.

In Paris, the loafers that J.Weiss talks about in this book 60 come from violent families. These youngmen feel a sharp need to represent something for somebody.

They often commit criminal acts and prison only emphasizes their negative features: 'When they get in prison they are only young people and after getting out they become real beasts" 51. Joel Weiss's studies show that the parents of these delinquents are eithers alcoholic, adulterous or disinterested.

Bad treatments beared by children in their families are considered some "educational measures" by those parents and unfortunately they are often practised also in those institutions where these children are sheltered from various reasons.

⁵⁸ See footnote 43

⁵⁶ See footnote 44, p.80.

⁵⁷ Idem, p.113

⁵⁹ Gabel, M., Un enjeu pour les professionnels dans la prevention de la maltraitance des mineurs, dans Journal du Droit des Jeunes, No. 148, 1995, Paris.

⁶⁰ Weiss, J., Ces loubards de banlieu qui sement la terreur, Editions Garancière, Paris, 1986.

⁶¹ Gilbert, G., Des jeunes y entrent, des fauves en sortent, Editions Stock, Paris, 1982.

Violence used by the pedagogues in orphanages is an effect of the general mentality, according to it, physical punishment is a certain method for correcting the negative aspects of children's behaviour.

The results of the inquiry made by "Save the children" organization, on a sample of 220 street kids, in 1995, at the indicator "The reason of abandoning orphanages" were: 60 per cent - bad treatments of the older children; 6 per cent - bad treatments of the staff; 19 per cent - unspecified; 15 per cent - bad conditions of life.

Almost all the street kids coming from orphanages claim that they were being permanently beaten by their older mates and frequently by their pedagogues. Surely, beating as a way of communication, of persuading and contrast is only one of the reasons why these children chose the street and ran way from those centers which have as a purpose the protection and education of disadvantaged minors.

5. The diminuation of the social control

Urbanization, causing the migration of the labour power from the rural to the urban environment, brought about an excessive populating of the cities and a vertical - lined dwelling development.

The social control practiced by the family decreased especially in the urban environment, because of the transition from "nuclear" family sistem (more generations in the same house) to the "insular" system (parents and their children) as well as of hiring women (also mothers) with a full output standard.

Living in the flats districts coincided with obscurity, ruining the social control practiced by the community, as well as with the increase of indifference and uninvolvment of the public opinion concerning diverging manifestations.

Demographic politics and protection social assistance emphasizing on the quantity increase of the population and on institutionalization of the children in need, caused a deterioration of the paternal responsability and a transfer of the social control from the family environment to the institutional one.

In the ex-communist countries from Oriental Europe⁶², street kids' s problems are generally taken in consideration together with the problems of others categories of kids and young people. The street doesn' t represent the object of a special attention, nor the existence of kids who live here. The public institutions, like police, justice, school, health services and social workers take care of these problems indirectly.

It is known for those who worked and still do with disadvantaged children that, during the previous system, the police was very efficient in keeping under control and hiding the homeless children fact. "During the golden age, these children were permanently troubling the policemen who were gathering them from the street and who were dropping them in the minors placing centers. From there they were sent to the orphanages where they would jump over the fence and run away in a couple of days. The game between the homeless children and the policemen was continously repeating itself without any concrete solution.

After 1990, the police gradually lost its statute of social supervisor that it owned when it used to by called *Militia*. Although our legislation still conveys a great degree of liberty in acting, a lot of policemen gave up considering vagrancy, begging and even minor food stealing as criminal acts. Street kids represent "an unpleasant but normal effect" of transition for most of the policemen.

In the last few years both policemen's individual acts and also their raids, which gathered a lot of forces in order to a successful, showed a total inefficiency. There are a lot of reasons. Colonel Gh. Gheorghita, chief of the third Police Station gave the following explanation: "Most of the times, after

_

⁶² See footnote 6, p.30

having succeeded in confining these children into reeducational centers or in hospitals, we could surprisingly realize that most of them would get to the station before the officers, who had just picked them up from here. The authorized institutions show no interest either in stopping these children or in helping them reintegrate in the society. In the places where they are received because of our intervention they are put to flight in no more than two or three days".

Other police officers state that when they tried to reintegrate those street kids in the resocialization centers, they failed because the persons in charge motivated either there were no spare places, or that child escaped from the center a few more times and he even made other children run away with him. Some of them also mentioned the parent's refusal when they tried to reintegrate those children in their families.

It should be specified that in police's opinion the social control of street kids is applied in a brigade manner, in repressive actions, such as raids called: "The chance", "The Mirror", "Fluenza", "The Labyrinth". These actions don't record the appropriate feed-back of social reintegrations, more precisely, the declared aim that they were started for.

Police's inefficiency of the social control is caused both by the previous reasons, and also by other ones, such as the misunderstanding and the minimalizing of the real psyho-social problems of their clients and the absence of any real interest in finding the best ways of resocialization. We also cannot ignore the general economic and social crisis and its engendering criminality, a fact which determines this institution to focus its attention on the emergencies which make ist activity profitable.

We mentioned that an important rate of street kids comes from the governmental shelters; orphanages and houses of school children, although after the Revolution those institutions have been considerably improved, both at a financial level and also at the one of the hired staff. The number of qualified persons employed in the psycho-social field is still very small, insufficient in comparison with the number of street kids.

Unfortunately, in these centers, these still is a preconceived idea that any social efficient control can be achieved through bad treatments may these measures be repressive or expressing their indifference.

The legislation concerning the protectin of the child in need, precisely, the 26th Emergency Injuction for June 1997 stipulates that family and community should be involved and held responsable for the problems of all disadvantaged children

It wouldn't be easy to make a reality of it (practising and increasing the social control) because of the existent mentality, indolence, education, incapacities of informing, of organizing, the absence of the financial and human resources.

For example, the 14th article, paragraph c stipulates: "He who notices the existences of any situations which impose the placing of the child in an emergency condition, are compelled to inform immediately the specialized public service for the child protection placed in the neighbourhood of his home, so that certain measures should be taken. The authorities are compelled to give the necessary support for applying this measure".

This paragraph clearly proposes the involvement and the responsability of the community (and of the police, too) in practising the social control. So that this obligation shouldn't remain just a legislative theory, it is still necessary for the public opinion:

- to know that it is compelled by the law to inform any situation (explained in paragraph one, in which street kids perfectly fit) that may jeopardize the child;
- to be continually informed about its coercive duty until it is convinced and made responsable for this part;
- to be permanently informed where it should make the intimatious (adress, telephone number);

- to ascertain that its intimatious were taken seriously and were properly used;
- to be stimuled by assessments and by the publicity of the results and, considering the reality, to get still involved.

The 24th article stipulates an increase of the parent's responsability, parents whose children are entrusted or placed in the shelter institutions by the Child Protection Comission. Concretely, parents will be compelled to contribute monthly to their child's financial support or unless they can pay the contribution "they should perform an unpayment activity for the community benefit, as long as the child is untrusted or placed in that institution".

Mircea Nicolescu, manager of the Minor Center in Braila, noticed that this attempt of the parents' involvement and responsability coincided to the fact that "some parents began to take their children back from orphanages, and shortly some of these children became street kids".

The street kids effect is a link of a causal chain which is more than half a century old.

It is also important to add that if a child chooses or not to live in the street depends not only on the previous causes, effects and external elements, but also on himself, on his mental problems, on his anxieties, on his bounderage mind. Economical, social and cultural elements must be correlated with the features of the child's personality. If his personality contains certain weaknesses, such as a labile structure of his Ego, a pronouced suggestibility, discrepancy, instability etc., it will be more difficult for him to resist the eventual influences of the environment.

The correlation of as many causes, effects and favouring elements as possible allows the explanation of the fact why in certain social and family conditions of identical institutionalization, which have a bad influence upon a child's personality, only some of them turn into street kids or criminals, the other ones (most of them) showing a generally accept normality and adjusting to the society as normally as possible.

V. Street kid stereotype

1. Personality amiss

Most of the street kids chase the street because they felt rejected or because they "were allowed to do anything they wanted", or because they simply had no choice.

Both the family and the institution didn't answer to their elementary needs; their need of affection and protection, a double condition for the children to learn to form themselves, to relate to others, so that they could live their first psycho-social experiences as naturally as possible, in a normal and positive climate.

When these climates don't offer a correct answer, children feel frustrated, bewildered, they don't trust or value themselves anymore and start looking for other patterns in relation with which they also mean something, in some other environments, frequently in the street.

Jerome S. Bruner, resuming one of the valuable ideas lauched by Maria Montessori, states that: "...if it is true that all the people are essentially human, the expression of this human condition is affected by the type of childhood that they experienced"⁶³.

The type of childhood experienced by a street child is characterized by abuse, perceived in its highly sociologic context, from the hostile, aggressive abuse to the "passive" one, expressed by the absence of any interest, by negligence (...) From the child's point of view (...), all these manifestations are viewed as acts of ill-treating". ⁶⁴

Aggressed or ignored, the child has chosen to live in the street. Why namely the street? Because: "The street never rejects the children, it is always proud of them and remains their best friend", Daouko, an old-times of the street from Bouaké, in Cote d'Ivoire, declared. Or because: "In the street I can do whatever I want. I can beg and buy everything I like. I can play as long as I want to. And I can run away from the older children who might threaten me", Ionut, a twelve years old street child, living in Bucharest for three years, explained.

The inquiries, the investigations, the studies made on groups of children in and of the street revealed that the street is considered to be an "attractive" choice in extremely seldom cases and never by those children who are supported by a strong emotional basis of a poor but secure home.

No matter what the reason of their getting out in the street may be it is sure that the way to the street is much much shorter and much easier than the one back - to the family or to the shelter institution - which is so difficult and, most of the times, impossible to be continued.

The permanent street kids leave the street especially when they are made attractive offers that should provide them normal, civilized-living conditions, and shouldn't solicit them too much. They leave the street and come back here every time they can meet their friends and they also come back for good if the demands of the new environment constraint them too much.

The world of the street is like a double-edged knife blade. On one hand, it is seducing attracting the children through its full freedom, its variety of events and numerous opportunities of expressing their enterprising spirit and their creativity.

In Bucharest, for instance, the oldest children of the street disposed their own "apartments of luxury" in all kind of ducts (in Eroilor, C. Brancoveanu areas). They were helped by some charity organizations and even by private persons, who offered them mattresses, blankets and clothes. The children are very proud of these "houses", that they keep clean and where only the "owners" are allowed (in groups of 8 to 10 persons) and sometimes "the guests".

⁶³ Bruner, Jerome, S. *Pentru o teorie a instruirii*, Bucuresti, Editura didactica si pedagogica, 1970, p.13.

⁶⁴ Manea, L., *ABUSE*, in Zamfir, C., Vlasceanu, L., (coord.) *Dictionar de sociologie*, Editura *Babel*, Bucuresti, 1993, p.13.

The other side of the street is represented by its dangers, its violence, its lack of perspective and its anxieties.

Without the compensation of a home, where they come back in the evening, the street is often like a hell. Drugs, sexual aggressions and exploitation, promiscuity, street kids being procreated by street kids, murders.

Another important element is represented by the age. The youngest children are most likely to be attracted into a project and to be resocialized. Equally they can be the most threatened, being forced to accept the older ones' protection in exchange for the "lion's share". "The lion's share" can be a considerable percentage of the begging, various favours done to the strong one, as well as sexual relations and perversity got willingly or not.

Life conditions in the street, in unappropriate places, the poor alimentation, drugs abuse and addiction, sexual aggressions, the promiscuity mean a continous weakening of their physical and mental health. After a longer period in the street, the children claim concentration difficulties, anxiety, alienation feelings, fear of any emotional context.

They became fearful, introverted or expressing violent tendencies. They don't know how to clean themselves, to eat, to sleep, to make contacts with the others.

They are deprived of any value system because of the anonymous conditions and hospitalization from the orphanages, as well as of the lack of any family pattern or because of the assimilation of some negative patterns. Self-harming, self-aggressive gestures, the refusal of communication are general features of the street children, a way of expressing their involutive states.

Many of them are infected, have incurable wounds. Because of the absence of protection, of the unwanted pregnancies and the danger of sexually transmitted diseases (and of infection with HIV!) are possible any time.

The medical services offered to these children are limited. Lack of information, some of them don't get to these services or are treated superficially and often dismissed after a formal, inefficient control. Others do not realize how sick they are because of their ignorance. As a result, many street children are dying because of easily curable diseases.

Living from hand to mouth they gradually become suspicious and reject any help coming from the adults whom they don't trust anymore.

We should also emphasize these children's potential. They have extraordinar resources that allow them to stand: expulsion, humiliation, sufferance, incarceration. They develop germine adjustment and solidarity abilities in order to survive and express important creative qualities which allow them to get out of the difficult situations and to evolve in an organized and hierarchized world, having its laws and habits.

First, most of the street kids abandoned school. Their reasons were complex; from the financial difficulties, their lack of interest for the importance and value of the school, the contemptuous attitude of their mates because of the dirty, worn-out clothes, as well as the weak school results, to the teachers making discriminatious between these children with various problems and those coming from a higher social status.

Most of the street children express their regret for school. Maybe they are honest and admit that school is necessary or maybe they just don't care, but they are sure it is the answer that adults expect from them. When they start attending a daily center where are helped to reintegrate themselves, the problems are difficult to surpass, sometimes even from the beginning. The most important reason is represented by their "incomplete record"; the absence of their identity documents or of their registration certificate, etc. When the school reinsertion is achieved, these children experience a very serious impact: attention and concentration difficulties, big knowledge deficiences caused by the forgetting and by the lack of cognitive accumulation, the decrease of their interest until they face a new failure because of their bad marks and of their mates and teachers' ironies.

Living in a community (resocialization center, school, qualification center) street kids take to their heels when they have to face a problem which they consider to be very difficult, very hard to surpass or whose content, meaning and purpose they cannot understand.

An explanation of the difficulties that street kids acutely experience after they feel ready and motivated to try to change their way of living is also the impossibility of making up for absence of a certain order from their first childhood.

The fact that the habit of a severe programme and of a precise behaviour rules must be created and appropriated from the very first years of their life is emphasized by Paul Zarifopol in the work 'The Essential Localism"; "The stability and periodicity of some facts from the life of the family community are the main forces which form a child's education, which take him out of the animal incoherence and guide him towards a human perspective (...) Those persons who didn't experience the unique feeling of peace and stability which the family life can give right from the beginning of their life can't be normal anylonger: their inner life lacks a whole chapter and the substitute of this chapter represents an everlasting infirmity for them".⁶⁵

Most of street children have been at least once arrested by the police, their main criminal acts being stealing and vagrancy. The food stealing, especially the sweets is the most frequent one. At first sight this kind of stealing represents a way of soothe the hunger. But the psychologists extend the area of this fact's meaning: "Candy and other sweets stealing is a way of expressing the *oral greed*. Children try to get money in order to buy sweets. These minor stealing are also the manifestation of some regressive desires. These little food conquests and in the same time regressive and substitutive have their characteristic oscillations. Generally speaking, a youngman tends to fill himself up with a lot of sweets, which will be replaced later on by an excessive consumption of sweets, alcohol, drugs and tabacco". The serious criminal acts: robbery, murder are extremely rare among the street kids and usually they are intensely made know with the aid of mass-media.

The General Police Station and the General Prison Board do not have separate statistic of the street children" s criminal acts, but only general statistics concerning youth delinquency. One can talk only favourable about the criminal acts committed by this category of children, and the persons in charge say that the rate of street delinquent children is meaningless in comparison with the total of the delinquent minors.

The lack of perspective is another general feature of the homeless children and that scores them, especially those who have serious educational deficiences, meaning the most of them.

They can hardly bear any constraint, except that of their equals' group, because they have a degraded and diformed vision of the society and also a devaluated image of themselves.

2. The type of street kid from Bucharest

```
-sex: male (67 per cent);
-age: from 15 to 18 (57 per cent);
-ethnie: gypsie (51 per cent);
-origin: Bucharest (53 per cent);
-category: street kids permanent (59 per cent);
-age on the street:31 per cent between 4 and 6 years; 25 per cent between 7 and 9 years;
```

⁶⁵ Zarifopol Paul., *Localismul esential*, în Paul Zarifopol, Pentru arta si literatura, Bucuresti, Editura *Minerva*, 1971, vol.II., p.391.

⁶⁶ Lemay, M., *J'ai mal a ma mere*, Approche thérapeutique du carence relationnel, Collection "Pedagogie psychosociale", Editions *Fleurus*, Paris.

- -the origin medium: family (79 per cent), disorganized (53 per cent), numerous (52 per cent have from 3 to 6 brothers; 14 per cent have from 7 to 14 brothers);
- -reason for living on the street: bad treatments (61 per cent);
- -attitude towards family: negative (39 per cent);
- -schooling situation: school abandonment from 2 to 6 years: 15 per cent graduated 3 years; 16 per cent graduated 4 years;
- -manner of organization: small groups (71 per cent): reasons: sleep security, entertainment, emotional relationships;
- -toxic substances consumption: tabacco (89 per cent), glue-sniffer: 36 per cent addicted, 31 per cent occasional consumers;
- -health problems: self-chastising (96 per cent are scratched on their hands; 80 per cent are pale, underfed);
- -hygienic aspect: very dirty -30 per cent, dirty 31 per cent;
- -main income source: begging, theft, frequenting day centers;
- -relations with the police; retained; 79 per cent for vagrancy, begging;
- -attitude towards police; negative -56 per cent say that they were abused by policemen;
- -expressed wishes: 15 per cent a school integration/reintegration; 13 per cent boarding in a night center;
- -perspective; confused, lack of hope (wishes to live normally, but feels a double hindrance; from inside and from outside, from the society).

3. Selfperception

"My name is A. Badji and I'm 15. I have three sisters and two brothers. I am from Soutou (Department from Bignona, Senegal). Until two years ago I only performed domestic works. I left my village and I come to Dakar at the request of my parents, in order to make my wedding trousseau. My sisters gave me this orientation, as every year, they leave the village and come to Dakar and when they return, they bring lots of thinks: clothes, jewels, footwear. They tell about the beautiful things from the capital such as the television, the beautiful houses. All these made me come.

The problem I faced was the unpayment of salaries. Some employers are far from being serious. They don.'t pay the salaries, are very mean and they want us to work day and night.

The life of governess is hard, but we are obliged to do it cause in the village there is nothing to do now. Our parents are there with the children and they harvest some rice in order to give them something to eat. We are tired cause we didn't expect this situation in town".⁶⁷

"From our arrival in Dakar, we get up in the morning and walk from door to door in order to find a job. At the beginning is very hard because people aren't hospitable. Sometime, you bearly open your month to talk and they shut the door in your face. At first I was wondering how could I get a job in this conditions. I was ashamed to continue. In the evening when I told my collegues what happened to me they started to laugh. They told me that this usually happened and that I had to insist. The next day I went again with more will and a woman invited me in. She asked me about my capacities and my salary. We rapidly agreed on the sum of 8,000 "centrafrican" francs per month for working until because I didn't have to stay there over night. She asked me to start working (it was 10:30), but I asked her to wait till the next day, so I could come in my uniform. She told me that in this case I didn'

⁶⁷ Les Mbindaan sans Mbindou, étude avec les petites bonnes a Dakar, ENDA, tiers monde, Jeunesse action, févr. 1996, p.54

t want to work and that the deal was off. Conscient of the risk of not finding anything else, I started waking that day. She gave me the laundry of her entire family which seemed to be gathered from a long time. The entire day and the next day I washed. Finally, I gave up because of the big volume of work". 68

Kerstin, 19 years old, Germany. She was 12-13 when she thought of leaving her family. She didn't want to leave her mother and she wanted to finish school somehow. She quit school when she was 16, and her mum didn't want to see her anymore:

"My father is an alcoholic and is always having fights with my mother, says Kerstin. I once got in the middle in order to separate them. In February, three years ago, my father was drunk, he beat me and kicked me out; take your coat and bye-bye! I was sure of one thing, I didn't want to come back. I wish people would understand that there are street kids on the street not far away. This entire thing has nothing to do with freedom. Life outside is an adult thing, is very tough and mean. It's a permanent job. You are always busy to get money for food, cigarettes or drugs, you wonder where are you going to sleep during the night. In the winter, I usually wasted time during the day and during the night I was walking because it was too cold. I often warmed myself at the underground. Drugs are something normal in the street. They are used to drive away loneliness and cold. It's an way to deceive yourself. Kids don.t have any chance to refuse drugs, cause they would automaticly exclude themselves from the group, they hope to find what they miss at home; love, affection, recognition, joy of living. On outside you have to seem tough. If you seem weak, the others attack. You musn't cry in front of the others. If I felt like crying, I went in the park. I was dependent of heroine, but I go for many months to a programme of desintoxication. I live now as the lodger of a lodger, I dream to have my own house and to become a journalist. I already wrote an article for the Berlin rewiew Under the stress of time, review for young people".69

Pepsi, 16 years old, Berlin. She lives in an improvised place, but hopes to have her own house. As the other street kids she tried drugs. Her childhood is taboo:

"I don't talk about my father. At 15 I decided to "free" myself. About this freedom I can talk hours. On one hand yes, on the other hand no. I can go wherever I please, but there are rules on the street. I noticed pretty soon that it wasn't a party. The nights I stood with other children in houses which had to be demolished. There where finally evacuated and the children are driven on the outskirts of the town, during the operation "cleaning the streets". It's really horible the way people treat us, how they ignore us and consider us morons. As soon as we find a place to stay we are driven away by security services, usually, by force. Not because we disturb phonetical, but because we look they way we look"."

Sorina, 19, Bucharest. She has been in the street for 8-9 years. She is the second child, "the girl her parents wanted" from four brothers:

"That is where all troubles began. Because we are a large family, and the income was too small our father decided to drown his pain in drink. And how a trouble never comes alone, when I was nine my mother left for good. She left in another world and we, four kids, remained without mother. But now father was a different person, he had totally changed, he became mean, and was always drunk. He beat me with the cable, with the hose and many other things. So the fear made me leave my house and choose the street. In the street I learned how to live, how to handle on my own, to support myself, to see the world and to make the difference between people. Not after a long time I began smoking, then I tried glue-sniffer. First it was curiosity, then I was dependent of them. Till last year I spent my life in homes, re-education centers, hospitals, ducts, etc. Until after getting a sound beating from my father and because of the life I was living I chosed to die. I was desperate so I jumped from the forth

⁷⁰ Idem, p.10

⁶⁹ Strassenkinder in Deutschland, in T.V. Horen und Sehen, No.14, Programme von 5. bis 11, April 1997, p.9

⁶⁸ Idem, p.54

floor, but God, knowing that I made the wrong choice, didn't let me give my soul to the Devil. Since than the situation has changed because I moved with my grandmother and she needed me more that anything in the world.

But this doesn't mean that I quit drugs, street and ducts, where were my only friends. From time to time I find a place to work but not for long because the street is like a magnet".

Daniela, 18, Bucharest:

"I live in the street with many children. At this moment I would like to have a house, a family and a job. I would like to be like other children who don't know what trouble means. Until I was 12 I had a beautiful childhood and then everything changed and I got from bad to worse. It is very hard to grow in the street, in ducts or on a buildibgs' stairs. I don't want to lie, but it was a time when I was on drugs, but I wasn't a drug addict because I could easily quit. In the same time I believe that someone, up there, wants to help me. I'm a good person and a bad person in the same time but this doesn't mean that I have to suffer because my parents were wrong".

Adina, 17, she migrated to Bucharest from Buhusi:

"I had an argument with my mother, she kicked me out and this is how I got in Bucharest in September 1993. I lived near Fundeni hospital for two weeks. From there, police officers took me to the police station number six. I told the policemen that my mother kicked me out and they sent me to "Pinocchio" to Damaroaia. I stood there for a while and then I ran away and the police took me to "Ciresarii 2". The police from my county took me home. I stood aproximately one week and again, I had an argument with my mother. I went to Bucharest and I found a job at a pub in Herastrau park. After 3-4 months I went home with money and objects. I had another argument with my mother who kept calling me "slut". I came to Bucharest again and lived in the street. I met a social assistant who told me about "FOC" foundation. One Sunday I called her and told her that I was sick of the street. The next day we met and she took me at the day center "Pigmalion". I come here every day ever since I miss only when I find a job or when I go home in visit. I don't know why I keep going . Every time my mother and I argue, sometimes out of nothing and I leave upset.

I would like to have a job and house to stay without being afraid of getting hurt, I am a very sensitive person. For instance if somebody tells me that I talk to much I shut up and don't say a word. I am very kind. If somebody ask me objects or money, if I have I give. From some time I became indifferent. I learned not to see, not to hear, not to care about the others.

I don't know what it means to have a mother or a father to teach me what is right or what is wrong. I didn't want my life to be this way. Maybe this is the way it was ment to be. But I would like my life to change, to be different, to forget my past as if it didn't happen, as if it was just a silly dream in my head it the middle of my night".

Laurentiu, 16, Bucharest:

"I am a street kid from a long time and my existence conditions were very bad. I didn't have where to bath, what to eat, where to sleep safe. That's why I moved from place to place with more friends in different areas of Bucharest.

When the center "Terre des Hommes" opened I went there too and at first everything was fine but then the things turned bad. I had many enemies and not one faithful friend. All children were mean for me, so I left again in the street, where I began to take drugs. My relation with the glue-sniffer which I inhaled every day lasted almost one year. Then I changed my area from Romana Place to Victoria Place where I met several boys and became friends soon. I began stealing clothes from the wires with them but shortly I gave up and left their gang. Because it was summer I decided to move with my mother and my brothers on the building site. In 1998 I came to "the Open House" and for the moment I like here".

Florentina, 16, she migrated to Bucharest from Slobozia:

"I had a beautiful childhood in the past until my parents began having problems with the money and they couldn't support me. So, I decided to take care of myself and of my life. I left home at 14, more exactly from the first February 1996. To reach 16 I stood two years in ducts and basements. I didn't have problems with the food because I was going to centers like "Terre des Hommes" and "the Open House" where I was eating, taking baths, receiving cloths. This is the way I spent my last two years and now I'm beginning the third since people call me "street kid", "bower-girl", "drug addicted of glue-sniffer" and all kind of words that people don't understand although, maybe, we the children are guilty".

4. Case studies

Case number 1

M,-S., C.

Sex: female

Birth date: 26.XII.1978 Birth place: Bucharest

Origin: family

Socio-economical family conditions:

- a) the couple: legally constituted;
- b) father: M. C., 42 years old, plumber;
- c) mother: housewife, died in 1987, abandoned in a wood when she was just a new-born child, she was found by shepherds and raised in an orphanage;
- d) place among brothers: the second from four brothers;
- e) brothers:
 - -F., brother, 22 years old, he graduated 8 classes, qualification: waiter-cook, employed;
 - -A., sister, 16 years old, she graduated 5 classes; street kid for 5 years;
 - -V., brother, 14 years old, he graduated 4 classes; street kid for 5 years;
- f) attitude towards parents: negative.

Reasons for living in the street; bad treatments (they were beaten extremely violent by their father who is an alcoholic);

School situation: 8 classes;

Toxic substances consumption: she smockes and is glue-sniffer addicted;

Attitude towards police: negative, especially towards railway Police;

Special mention: suicide attempt in January 1996;

Historical; resocialisation attemps:

The first run away from home was at the age of 7 (1985, 2 years before her mother died). She lived in the street in the areas: Northern Station, Unirii, Piata Romana, Dristor.

She was boarded in the Home for School-children no 8, but she ran away after 9 months. She was in V th grade and had almost 11 years old.

There followed the wanderings to different resocialisation centers for street kids and the street: "Alexe Marin" center (now "Saint Ioan"), the emergency center "Saint Andrei" (1991-1992), "Point-

Coeur" (1-2 months), street, "Pinocchio 1" center (3 months in 1993), back at "Saint Andrei" center (8 months in 1993), street, the emergency center "Saint Dumitru" (some times, for washing), the social flat rented by "Caritas" (5 months), street, the day center "Pigmalion" (sporadically), street, received by her grandmother in the one-room flat, after her suicide attempt, street.

Now she lives in the one-room flat inherited after her grand-mother died.

During her stay in the street she prefered "group life" for "fun and jokes".

During the social investigation from 1992-1993, M. -S.,C. was one of the 463 subjects included in the investigated sample. "Child Record" drawn out by Eugenia Sgubeanu and Nicusor Sgubeanu during the investigation, contained some aspects, which we'll point out, considering them as being essential as starting point in the study of this case in the last 5 years.

General characterization: "A reserved child, "folded" in herself. Suspicious, she hardly exteriorise to kids or to grown-ups. Tired of life, doesn't care no longer about her life and her future, she lets herself be caried by life circumstances".

As "prognosis-solution" it was mentioned: "Well-adopted to street, she is used to administrate her freedom, in a community she will be hard to master. Beside the school delay she is used to live from one day to the next in a total neglect. She hardy (or not at all) finishes what she has begin. She can't adapt to the social environment indifferently the company".

From April 1993, when the social investigation was over, M. -S., C. continued her wanderings in the day centers "Pigmalion", the "Open House", street, grandmorher's one-room flat even lodger with one of her lovers in her father's flat.

She succeded in graduating 8 classes at no-frequency, with the help of the day center "Pigmalion", being praised by the social assistants for the motivation and perceverence she showed.

In 1997 she wanted to qualify in tailor-designer job, but at the Qualification and Requalification Center for Preventing the Unemployment in Romania, center coordinated by Dan Popescu, which opened its gates to street kids too, doesn't exist a course for this job. Because she was working temporary at a bar, from Eroilor (underground station) she considered suitable the qualification for the job waiter.

The registration to the course was conditioned by solving her health problems and giving up drugs (glue-sniffer).

In December 1997 with the help of "SOS Childhood" and "Open House" foundations she was joined to the course for waiter-cook of the qualification center I have already mentioned. She frequented the course sporadically for two months, than she abandoned it.

Prognosis: it is likely that she in a period of awareness, will resume the course, and will be able to finish it, but doubless she woun't be able to get used to the strict programme of a job. She will develop activities from time to time, when the need of money is acute and when she can't find an easier way to get it.

Even if the problem of "shelter" is solved, her existence is still from one day to the next. Because of the long period of time she lived as and among street kids, of her dependence of volatile substances, and because of her specific personality features: introversion, suspicion, unsteadiness she will allow in her company only persons from the same medium, with the inherent influences and habits.

Case number 2

M.S.

Sex: male

Birth date: 8.10.1979

Birth place; Mures district (county)

Origin: family;

Socio-economical family condition:

- a) the couple: incompletely structured;
- b) father: natural father unknown; 2-3 step fathers;
- c) mother: prostitute; abandoned her two children, M.S. when he was 7 and his younger brother, two months after birth;
- d) place among brothers: first from two brothers;
- e) brothers: G, 11 years old, step brother, in the care of his father;
- f) attitute toward parents: negative, the only thing he appreciated in his relation with his mother was her help for his identity documents.

Reason for leaving in the street: bad treatments, violently beaten by one of his mother's lovers.

School situation: 3 classes;

Toxic substances consumption: over 10 cigarettes per day;

Attitude towards police: negative;

Special mention: he was shot during the '89 Revolution in the colf (of the leg). He says that he was beaten and tortured by terorists. Hospitalised for three months.

Historical; resocialisation attemps:

His first run away from home was at the age of 7. After the Revolution he says that Cristian Topescu took him to The Guard Regiment where he stood in the period 1992-1993. The daily programme was: school, training and applications. In 1992, M.S. says that he was taken from the Regiment to the under age kids center "Aaron Florian": " just to be taught a lesson".

During the social investigation from 1992-1993, M.S. was included in the investigated sample. In "Child Record" drawn out by Ioana Crupenschi, Carmen Lia and Dani Borsova, M.S. is characterised by: "Marked mental instability (frequent fits of rage)".

At "prognosis-solution" it was mentioned: "The child was strongly influenced by the life he had as a soldier and he would like very much to be again in the army. It is the thing he likes best. He says that if he would be again in the army, he would also return to school".

From April 1993, when the social investigation was over M.S. migrated among many areas of the Capital and resocialization centers. On the street he lived in groups, especially in the areas: Piata Unirii (4-5 months), Eroilor (4-5 months), C.Brancoveanu (9 months). He sporadically consumed glue-sniffer without becoming dependent. He smokes over 10 cigarettes per day. He was a client of the centers: "Pinocchio 1"(during one year the school from the neighbourhood in the 4th form, but he didn't finish it, the night-center "Oliver" (6-7 months, from where he left willingly influenced by a friend). At the day center "Pigmalion" (6-7 months) he took part in the course of joinery, and he proved that he has talent in wood sculpture and piroengraving.

While he lived in the street the only way to make money was by selling the objects stollen from cars. For a year he lived paying a rent at a friend, with his girlfriend.

From April 1997, he frequents the association "Open House".

He attended and finished the qualification course for six months for the job of mechanic-auto.

From May 1997 he lives in the social flat of the assosciation "Open Hause".

The social workers of this organisation described M.S.: "Clean, tidy, he has a respectful, civilized behaviour. He can mobilize and he is able to respect a programme, but not for long. He knows to follow his purpose, using all ways, including self-humility".

From February 1998, M.S. is employee at a joinery shop, for a period of three months for trial. He is very proud of these victories: the qualification certificate and the place of work.

For M.S. the future projects are in the following order: mentaining his place of work, a rented dwelling, where be could live with his girlfriend and saving money in an account for a dwelling of his own.

Prognosis: Regarding M.S., I consider him a virtual successful resocialization case. He has well-marked the line he has to follow in the future. It is hard to believe that be will return in the street. After he will leave the social flat he will support himself and will live with the rent payed from his own work, even if he will have to change several places of work till he will get used with the length of the programme.

Case number 3

I.C.

Sex: male

Birth date: 18.XII.1978 Birth place: Bucharest

Origin: family

Socio-economical family condition:

- a) couple: disorganised; divorce in 1986;
- b) father: unqualified worker, unemployed;
- c) mother: unqualified worker;
- d) place among brothers: the last from four brothers;
- e) brothers:
 - -M., sister, 29 years old, graduated 10 classes, divorced, different relationships, one child;
 - -V., brother, 26 years old, graduated 10 classes, married, two children;
 - -C., sister, 21 years old, gratuated 8 classes, works temporary (baby-sitter);
- f) attitude towards parents: ambivalent towards mother, negative towards father;

Reason for leaving in the street: bad treatments (extremely violent physical aggressions from his alcoholic father and neglect from his mother);

School situation: 5 classes;

Toxic substances consumption: glue-sniffer dependent, over 10 cigarettes per day;

Attitude towards police: negative;

Special mentions: penaly punished for theft in 1995 and 1997;

Historical; resocialisation attemps:

His first run away from home in 1994 (two years before his parents' divorce) at the age of 6.

Until January 1993 he graduated 3 classes (frequenting two schools from Bucharest, one from Lugoj).

He ran away several times in the street for periods from few days to few months, living with other boys in different areas: Piata Progresul, Piata Unirii, Piata Universtitatii, Piata Romana. For 6-7 months he lived at Children's Farm (Ranch) from Aricesti.

"Child Record" drawn out during the social investigation by Ioana Crupenschi, Carmen Lia and Dirgins, includes the observation: "When he was 3, his father, during a rage attack provoked by alcohol, throws him to the ground, he hits his head, makes a blood cyst which needed a surgical intervention". At "abilities and handicaps" it is mentioned "difficulties with social abilities". It is also mentioned "glue-sniffer dependent, for over 5 years", "at the beginning he hardly communicated, he couldn't have any responsibility, he refused sometimes aggressively".

Regarding I.C., it couldn't be said anything at the end of the investigation "because he left for almost 3 months from University area".

I.C. was no longer in the "eye hole" of those making the social investigation because his older sister took him at the end of 1993 to the Ranch of the Children in Aricesti where he stood for almost two years.

About "Aricesti period", I.C. has bad memories: "I slept in shanties near the stables", "for two years I' ve been used, I' ve worked only for food, at joinery, locksmith's trade, at horses and cows", "I have became a nasty fellow because I started to claim things".

He ran away from Aricesti, but he returned after 2-3 weeks "for revenge" and he stole a TV set. He was caught after few hours by Railway Police in Ploiesti South Station.

The Commitee for under age Kids protection decides one educational mesure, which is boarding the under age offender at the Reeducational School from Nedelea. Here he stood during 1994-1995 and graduated 4^{th} and 5^{th} forms.

Because of the superposition of competences of the departments which take care of the unfortunate under age kids, he is punished two times for the same mistake: the theft of the TV set.

The prosecutor's office made appeal and I.C. was arrested in August 1995. After three weeks in Jilava penitentiary he is transferred at Tichilesti penitentiary where he stood 8 months and 10 days.

Freed from prison, I.C. went home, but shortly he resumed his roams; he took a round to Aricesti Ranch, life in the street, especially in Piata Unirii and Northern Station areas. After police's action "Labyrinth", he became a client of the day center "Pigmalion". He drew the social assistants attention being very clean and because he made himself the file for the qualification course for the job mechanic-auto.

Because of his past his application for boarding in the night center "Oliver" was denied, the leadership of FPC Foundation considered a good idea his boarding in a home for people without family, although the under age was not at all delighted with this decision.

I.C. also applied for 6th form at no-frequency.

He attented regularly the qualication course for three months, than he abandoned it because a mate had stollen a car part and he was afraid of being blamed. He had a crisis with accusation to "his unfortunate destiny and to people around, who pull him in the precipice when he is trying to become a man", combined with exaggerated consumption of glue-sniffer.

Being sustained mentaly he resumed the course after 2-3 weeks, but he frequented it sporadically and 2 months before the final exam he abandoned it.

He failed in every plan. For the unmarried people house he wasn't ready, The medium was too elevated and with too many rules which he coudn't manage.

He slept there 2-3 nigths per week and the rest he slept in Unirea area with the street kids group he felt comfortable with.

He also abandoned the attempt for school reintegration, after in his winter sesion sustained with one exception all his exams.

I consider it was too much for his abilities, habits and his mental and intellectual capacities. And more, I don't think he was sufficiently sustained by the social assistants and that he couldn't manage the integration solicitations which pressed him from three ways.

Slowly, I.C. began to live a strong existential crisis, manifestated by verbal exteriorisation of all his frustations: the injustice of being born in a family with problems, the violences he had to bear, the punishments of society which he considered way too big comparing with the mistakes, the impossibility to retrieve the years he lost.

He had a strange behaviour ascentained by the other kids, the staff of the day center and by his mother. He was agitated (nervous) obsessed that "someone send him quick silver" which he could counteract with many vitamins and especially by eating sweets". His "hunger for sweets" and his desire for revenge made him steal again. He stole from a sweets counter and electronic apparatus from "Pigmalion" center, getting back to jail.

Prognosis: It will be a miracle that he's stay in the penitentiary to influence positively the evolution of this frustrated young man and to give him the desire of a life with rules and social standards.

Sooner, I believe that what couldn't be built in this individual it will turn against him, making him a client of the penitentiaries, but also will turn him against the society for which he is "trash".

Case number 4

O.G.

Sex: female

Birth date: 27.01.1978

Birth place: Brasov county

Origin: family

Social-economical family situation:

- a) the couple: legally constituted;
- b) father: N.G., 40 years old, graduated 2 classes, works in the constructions field, now unemployed;
- c) mother: B.G., with handicap: deaf-mute, died in 1991;
- d) place among brothers: second from 5 brothers;
- e) brothers:
 - -N., brother, 22 years old, graduated 5 classes, shop assistant in Brasov, not legally married, one child;
 - -C., brother, 16 years old, graduated 3 classes, lives with his grandmother in a village;
 - -S., sister, 14 years old, graduated 2 classes, lives with the father in Râsnov;
 - -V., sister, 7 years old, first grade, lives with the father.

Reason for leaving in the street: bad treatments (father alcoholic, extremely violent, attempt of rape);

School situation: 4 classes;

Toxic substances consumption: for 2-3 years sporadically glue-sniffer, she gave up, 8-10 cigarettes per day;

Attitude towards police: negative;

Special mentions: O.G. is the mother of two and a half years old little girl. Being taken by association "Mother of Life" (from the hospital), the girl was given to a family without the legal proceedings;

Historical; resocialisation attempts:

O.G. left in the street in 1991. She stood during one year in Brasov Station with her older brother and other street kids.

She tried to live at an aunt but she was rejected. She was boarded at the Reception center for under age kids from Brasov, but she ran away. In Bucharest she came with two girls. In the capital she lived in the underground stations: Piata Romana (6 months), Dristor (over 2 years), Piata Unirii, Obor, C. Brancoveanu, different hostesses (she paid the bed, for example, with 1,000 lei pe day in 1992), parks, blocks of flats.

"Child Record" drawn out during the social investigation from 1992-1993 by Luciana Protopopescu and Andy Taylor has the following observations regarding O.G.: "She washes often. She spends a part of her money to buy clean clothes. Obedient, easily adapted, responsable and understanding she thinks herself to a solution for herself. Group lider, takes care of other children. easily reintegrated, with low effort".

Trully the reintegration was possible, but also after four years of different experiences as a street kid, although during these years she frequented many resocialisation centers which could with minimum effort to give her the support she needed.

So at "Aaron Florian" center she was taken three times for roaming. For few months she frequented the day center "Pigmalion". Talented in painting she paints icons on glass and as a reward she went for two weeks in a camp organised by "Saint Stelian" association at Techirghiol monastery.

For three years she consumed glue-sniffer but she gave up alone with a lot of strengh.

She had a relatioship during one year and a half with F.F., and she gave birth to a child whom she abandoned. "This relationship was for me like a nightmare says O.G. He was extremely violent. He used to beat me without reason. He was jealous and he kept threatening me that if I leave him he will kill me". O.G. could get rid of him because F.F. is in Jilava penitentiary accused of complicity in a double murder.

- O.G. frequents from May 1997 the "Open House" association. She attended and finished the qualification courses for six months for the job confectioner pastry. Appreciated for her conscientiousness during her practise, she is now hired with permanent contract at a laboratory of farinoceous products. From June 1997 she lives in the social flat of the "Open House".
- O.G. is concious of her victories. She is tidy, very clean, she likes to work and to be appreciated for what she does.
- O.G. is a success of social reintegration. In the school year 1997/1998 she applied, with the help of the association "Open House" in 5^{th} from at no-frequency.

For the future, she wants to keep her job, to have her own house and a child with both legitimate parents.

Prognosis: I consider that in O.G.'s case the break with the world of the street is for good and that this young girl has fructified her opportunities from the last year and changed her destiny.

Case number 5

L.V.

Sex: male

Birth date: 13.07.1981 Birth place; Bucharest

Origin: family

Socio-economical family situation:

- a) the couple: legally constituted, separated by decease;
- b) father: L., qualified worker, died in 1984;
- c) mother: E., 4 classes, worked of ILEF Berceni, unemployed for 3-4 years;
- d) place among brothers: third from five brothers (the last two are twins);
- e) brothers:
 - -D., sister, 29 years old, graduated 10 classes, married, one child;
 - -M., brother, 26 years old, raised in an orphanage;
 - -H., sister, 14 years old, graduated 2 classes, street kid;
 - -G., brother, 14 years old, graduated 3 auxiliary classes, street kid;
- f) attitude towards parents: positive towards mother and his natural father, negative towards step-fathers.

Reason for leaving in the street: bad treatments, was rejected by the step fathers.

School situation: 4 classes.

Toxic substances consumption: smoker, circumstantial glue-sniffer, first time he took drugs was at the age of 6.

Attitude towars police: negative. "At police station 1 and 2 the cups beat us badly and without reason. Once they made me do physical exercices all night long".

Special mention: his mother is from the category of persons without shelter because: "three-four years ago she sold her flat at the advice of a lover".

Historical; reintegration attempts:

L.V." s first run away from home was in 1985 (at the age of 4). He stood alone in the University area. From 1985 he continuously left home. In 1990 stood in tents in Piata Universitatii until the miners came.

He permanently migrated among home, street and different resocialisation centers.

On the street L.V. stood most of the time alone, isolated, rarely accepting life in small groups of 2-3 kids. He "lived" in different areas: Universitate, Northern Station, Piata Victoriei, Piata Romana (underground), Eroilor (Opera area), Piata Unirii, Eroil Revolutiei. He slept especially in the underground stops (stairs and in the ducts).

He goes to the centers: "Pinocchio 1", (for 3 weeks, in March 1993, he is taken out by one of his mother's lovers), "Aaron Florian" (taken to the police in 1994 because he committed a theft together with other 4 boys. L.V. says that they stole 51.000 lei from a "drunk guy", who denounced them when he woke-up. He stood in the center one year and a half and he was taken out by another lover of his mother), "Pigmalion" (from the opening, from 1994 until 1996), periodically for 1-2 months.

In 1994, for 3 months was a troop child at a gendarme unit from Bucharest. He ran away because he couldn't stand the rigour of the programme and "because there was too much drill".

In 1996 he stood from February till July at "Pinocchio 1". He ran away because "he felt like a stranger".

In 1996 and 1997 he frequented the programme of "Parada" foundation, helping organising some shows.

In 1998 the tries the programme of the "Open House" association with his twin brothers. The association granted material help to the entire family few times.

The last 2-3 years he lived more with his mother and twin brothers in different places (basement, ducts) but they were driven away by lodgers or other persons who "burned their belongings". The mother looks to the events with resignations and she lives from one day to the other. Remarcable is the always clean aspect of this family without shelter.

From March 1993, L.V. was entered the qualification course for waiter-cook with the "Open House" help.

In the "Child's Record" drawn out Liliana Protopopescu and Andy Taylor during the social investigation from 1992-1993, L. V. is characterised: "clever, nimble, understanding, conscious, very sensitive, slightly frightened, good friend".

In perspective it is possible for him to finish the qualification course but this "step", decisive for gaining self-confidence, doesn't necessarily mean also the professional integration.

The lack of usage (habit) of having a long programme, to obey rules and standards, the incapacity of developing an activity for a long period of time will create problems for maintaining his job.

Obtaining the qualification certificate represents a necessary condition for him to find, when he' ll feel motivated, a place to work even if temporary.

Case number 6

C.H.

Sex: male

Birth date: 19.02.1980 Birth place: Constanta Origin: institution

Socio-economical family condition:

- a) the couple; legally constituted;
 - b) father; P.H., remarried after his wife died;
 - c) mother; M.H., died in 1984;
 - d) place among brothers: first from 2 brothers;
 - e) brothers:
 - -I.H., a year smaller, street kid proceeded from institution, at this moment in the reeducational center from Gaiesti;

f) attitute towards parents: contradictory. During the social investigation from 1992-1993 C.H. said that he doesn't know his parents. During the investigation from the programme Research Support Scheme he says that he ran away from home in 1990, because he felt rejected by his step mother and because he was beaten by his father when he was drunk, but he kept in touch with his family, visiting them 2 times.

Reason for leaving on the street: bad treatments (from older boys in the institution, neglected by pedagogues).

School situation: graduated 3 classes.

Toxic substances consumption: glue-sniffer dependent, frequent alcohol, 5-6 cigarettes per day.

Special mentions: he was a troop child.

Historical; resocialisation attempts:

At the age of 8-9 C.H. runs away from the orphanage "M.Kog lniceanu" from Constanta, starting his life as a street kid on the streets of Constanta. He is taken few times by the police to the center for under age kids from Constanta and back to the orphanage but every time he runs away again.

He comes in Bucharest in December 1989, becoming in 1990 a troop child near different army units. He will stay at "tank brigade Ghencea" almost 6 months, 0190 Unit-military Police almost 5 months, military police Timisoara almost one year, at paratrooper unit from Boteni almost 3 months. At these military units he continued his studies at the level of 3rd from.

Until the social investigation from 1992-1993, C.H. experienced life of "troop child', he was boarded for a few months at the under age kids center "Pinocchio 1", at "Saint Paul" house and lived in the street in University underground area.

On the street he lived in large groups (25-30 street kids) and secured his money from begging and singing in the underground, spending it on cigarettes, food, alcohol, glue-sniffer.

The "Child's Record" drawn out by Carmen Lia, Ioana Crupenschi and Dani Borsova has the following prognosis-solution; "Integration in a home will be hard to do because this is the place he ran from and he is well integrated in the street life. He is skilled for technical works. He could easily be placed in a workshop, his relation with his brother being weak".

At the end of 1993 he begins frequenting the "Open House" association programme, and he is orientated in February 1994 to the Reception Center "Pinocchio 1". After a week, as a decision of the Committee for protecting the under age kids, C.H. is taken by the police to the orphanage from Constanta, but he runs away after few days, comes back to Bucharest, police takes him bach to Constanta, he runs away again.

He returns to the "Open House" programme, which he frequents till October 1994. The Evidence Record drawn out by the social assistants of this association includes this general characterisation: "Adequate body development, knowledge - normal, agitated behaviour, noisy, coleric temperament, aggressive tendency towards his group mates, tendency to make alliance with debauchee elements, using frequently a dirty and violent language, attitude of indifference towards school, whises an "easy" life without work".

At the end of November 1994, C.H. was brough by Police station number 12 and boarded in the under age center "Aaron Florian", being accused of "very serious harm". He was set free after a month.

C.H. frequented intermittently, until February 1998 the day center "Pigmalion" and was also boarded in the night center "Oliver" but he was thrown out.

In December 1997, through "SOS Childhood" C.H. was registrated to the qualification course for the job waiter-cook, but he abandoned the cours after almost 2 months.

On the street he lived in the areas: Piata Universitatii, Piata Unirii, Dristor, Eroilor, C. Brâncoveanu.

Prognosis:

C.H. will never be resocialised, because of his psyhic instability which doesn't allow him to respect a long programme, but also because of his indifferent attitude towards school, professional qualification and work in general, also because his dependence to glue-sniffer which caused him transformation in his nervous system producing long and often slumber states.

C.H. will be one of the grown-ups without shelter more numerous from year to year.

Case number 7

R.M.

Sex: male

Birth date: 18.06.1979

Birth place: Cluj Origin: family

Socio-economical family condition:

a) the couple: disorganised, separation through divorce in 1981;

b) father: V.M., 46 years old, graduated 8 classes, trolley driver;

- c) mother: A.M., 4) years old, graduated 8 classes, worked for few years "for supply", housewife for many years;
- d) place among brothers: first from six brothers;
- e) brothers: the other 5 are step brothers, come from parents' reconstituted families;
- f) attitude towards parents: ambivalent.

Reason for leaving in the street: bad treatments, indifference, rejected by parents, "being placed as a ping-pong ball from one to the other".

School situation: graduated 8 classes.

Toxic substances consumption: 2 cigarette packages per days.

Attitude towards police: negative.

Historical: resocialisation attempts.

His first leave from home was at the age of 5 when he was lost. He remained 2 days on the street. Before the Revolution he left home several times and he returned being brought by police. After Revolution he left his home for good, returning, of course, in vizits.

After 1990, R.M. roamed through many places, areas in Bucharest and resocialisation centers.

Immediately after his leave from home he lived in Simeria for 2 weeks, in Braßov 5 months, in Sinaia 2 years.

In Bucharest he lived for 6 years from which 5 in the Northern station. He also survived in the areas: Piata Iancului, Eroilor, Piata Romana, Canalul Olimpia.

In 1992 he met Oliver Fenichiu, the coordinating of the organisation "Terre des Hommes".

In 1992, after a police raid in the Northern Station, R.M. was taken along with another 9 boys to the orphanage from Priboienii of Arges. He stood there for 9 months and left with the other kids brought by police back on the street in Bucharest.

In 1993 he lived for few months with a family from Târgu-Mures. From there, he was taken by John, a missionary came from America and boarded with other 10 girls and 12 boys in a permanent center coordinated by John. He stood in this center till the end of 1994 and graduated the 5th form. R.M. says that he ran away because he could't stand the long prayers programme.

In 1995 he returned in Cluj, lived for few months with his parents, especially with father, he was helped to get his identity card and to find a place to work (he unloaded flour bags at a factory).

At the end of December 1995 he drove without licence and without his boss's permit, the boss's car and he abandoned it near Cluj. The boss complained against R.M. who asked for help to "Terre des Hommes" organisation from Bucharest.

The organisation decided to watch and to take care of under age R.M. during the educational mesure, till may 1994.

R.M. was boarded in the organisation's night center "Oliver" and, during the boarding, until June 1997, he graduated 8 classes at no-frequency and the qualification course for mechanic-auto.

R.M. was considered an example for the other kids because of his polite behaviour, because he was always clean, of his seriousness and counscientness for school and profesional forming.

After he turned 18, the social assistants tried to integrate R.M. in a family.

At Cluj, R.M. lived from June till November 1997 and had several temporary jobs.

He couldn't find at any of his parents a good family climate for his family reintegration. His income didn't allow him to rent a room.

In November he contacted SISA organisation from Bucharest, explained his situation and received help.

From December 1997, R.M. was included in the programme "A temporary life place'. He was helped to find a job at a fast-food where, after his verification period, he was hired with permanent contract of work.

Due to his good results: adapting to standards and rules imposed in the moral contract concluded with SISA organisation and his place of work, R.M. was trasfered at the end of May 1998 at the "social flat" programme, representing the last stage (6 months - 1 year) of the road which R.M. has to walk in order to be able to earn his living.

Prognosis:

This is a happy case of social reintegration. The achievements have been possible because of the help from the two organisations in the right moment when the young man really needed help, but also because of the individual features of R.M. realized his conveniences and got involved in his own transformation and social adaptation.

R.M., after the "social flat" programme will be able to help himself, from his own work, normally integrated in society.

5. Small, deviating group

Homeless children have their own society, their own standards and rules. He who doesn't understand or can't face them is expelled or pushed to the edge. The fight for existence and the selection come naturally.

Claude Allaer⁷¹ considers that the gang (as a devalorized group) represents the refuge of those teenagers who were emotionally torn from their family environment. This tear followed by evasion creates from the very beginning a tensionate feeling between the minor and the rest of the social environment. The adult adopts an attitude of reserve or even avoidance towards this minor as well as towards the groups where he organizes himself. The behaviour of the young person and of the group which he belongs to is "deviating", to put it better, this behaviour compromises the conformism, the habits and the lifestyle of the adult as well as the rules traditionally accepted by the society. The

⁷¹ Dimitriu, C., *Constelatia familiala si deformarile ei. Elemente de propedeutiva a unei pedagogii familiale*, Bucuresti, Editura *Didactica si Pedagagica*, 1973, p.254

young person answers with a refusal, hostile attitude or even with agressive reactions. The members of a homeless children group have a pre-criminal and often even a criminal behaviour.

By being organised in group, the homelees children from Bucharest can be characterised according to the area where they live. "The peeks" earn their living and organize their sleep in areas such as: Piata Romana, Piata Universitatii, Piata Unirii and those who have been selected here are more talkative, smarter and more urban.

At the Northern Station, so mixed and so full of life, till the end of 1997 (since the platform tax has come into use and since the Police of the station hasn't allowed anymore the access of the homeless persons on the platform), settled down the most different children, as personality and behaviour.

In 1996, the colonel Ilie Corneciu, chief of the police office at the Northern Station stated: "The Northern station, which is a compulsory point of intersection, but also a terminal point, becomes a main canal for the homeless children. Their number varies between 85 to 100, but there are about 25 constant children for a few years."

The investigation of 1992-1993 had estimated about 80-90 homeless children in this area.

The groups of homeless children are varying numerically. Between two to five, two to seven, even less, often in groups of two, or two-three, begging, wandering, making noise during the day, getting to the larger group, of 20-40 persons who organise their sleep after dark.

Within the homeless children groups there is a strict hierarchy such as: the big and the small, the strong and the weak. The small and weak children understood that they were accepted only if they let themselves be exploited by the big and strong ones. Those who don't fit to the exiges imposed by the leader, who can't pay off the sum settled for the begging, which is different from a leader to another one, or who are not able to provide foot (by begging, stealing, working) are not tolerated much longer in the group and in the area.

The most miserable children who, after they have been expelled from all the areas, get at the railway limits, considered to be the lowest level of their society. They are the most fearful, they don't talk much, the have a permanent abject look and they haven't much luck in begging (their main sourse of surviving).

"Often those children have psycho-pathological problems. You can stay by their side, day after day, you can try all methods and strategies and you still can't make them communicate", the psychologist Bogdan Lucaciu explained.

"The dependencies between homeless children are very strong. There are gangs which are emotionally very attached one to another. These are also the associations based on homosexuality, or just on sympathy and affection. In all situations law is inflexible: the big guy uses the small one"²².

Although, the involvment in the group life is very strong, justified by the security of sleep, the providing of the food, the sharing of the drugs, the fluctuation of persons in more than three persons groups is quite frequent. Those who can't adjust to a certain group try other different groups, until they find the right one. There are also children who can't fit in any group. Generally these children are watching during the night and sleeping over the day, in the means of conveyance in the railway stations, cinemas, parks and other populated places.

Others are expelled from the group because of their individualism, especially when they don't share with the other the food that they managed to get.

In this battle for existence, the most difficult part is played by the little children who are systematically exploited by the older guys. The small kids have also the greatest efficiency in begging, no matter what "formula" they are practising. It is also the little children that are easily forgiven and that get away unpunished when they are caught stealing.

-

⁷² See footnote 9

In fact, they are stealing food openly from the market stalls and from the hand of the passersby. They are rarely denounced for the food stealing by the victims. When they happen to be around, most of the police officers don't do anything, understanding their being hungry and their necessity for food.

Also the legislation is "indulgent" with them, considering them to have no judgement till the age of fourteen. It may appear surprising, but the homeless children know this "advantage".

For most of the homeless children, organising their sleep represent a genuine problem. Promiscuity, insecurity, insalubrity, temperature conditions are factors which make the quality of sleep worse. To feel safe, the sleep is usually organised within the group. The main fears of the homeless children are: abuse, robbery, fear of dark. The most part of homeless children are watching until late in the night, taking drugs or drinking alcohol or, in turn both drugs to manage to sleep. Mr. Nicolae Mitrofan, the dean of Psychology Faculty from Bucharest, stated, with the occasion of an interview: "The street environment favours the appearance and the growth of the anomic, individualistic and criminal behaviours. At the same time, the information and acquisition at the cognitive level deficiencies are growing deeper. Living in groups with certain standards and values pattern which deviates from those usually promoted tby the society, re-socializing these children must represent the main object of all the institutions involved in children's protection."³.

6. The glue-sniffer, a substitute for the absence of affection

The public opinion, the mass-media often use, instead of homeless children the word of "glue-sniffers".

The synonymy was possible because of the shoking image of the homeless child from Bucharest, ostentatiously snuffing volatile matters from a plastic bag.

In other towns, too, such as Craiova, Timisoara, Constanta, Iasi, Ploiesti, Pitesti, the homeless children are inhaling volatile matters, but their number is much reduced comparing to the capital.

The social investigation accomplished between the first of November 1992 to the 30th of April 1993, by four non-governmental organizations, as outlinned above, concluded that: 30 percent of the investigated group used glue-sniffer (436 subjects), 19,4 per cent used it sometimes; 44,5 per cent didn't use it at all; 6,7 per cent didn't answer.

In 1995, the psychologist Bogdan Lucaciu stated: "The oldest users, most of them way passed adolescence, are estimated to be about 150 in Bucharest, practising this habit for more than 5 years, living in isolated groups, alienated, poor, depending on drugs and having obvious neurological problems. On the other hand *the beginners* are between 7-8 years old"⁷⁴.

The last year, the glue-sniffer counsumption increased.

The investigation of 1995, within the street assistance programme of 'Save the children' organization on a sample of 220 subjects-permanent homeless children from the Northern Station, ascertained that: 36 percent are snuffing every day: 29 percent occasionally; 25 percent unspecified, refusal; 10 percent didn't snuff at all.

My research performed on a sample of 100 subjects, between the first August to the 30th December 1996, within the Research Support Scheme programme, at the daily Bucharest centers: "Pigmalion" and "the Open House" revealed that: 36 per cent are snuffing avery day; 31 per cent occasionally, 9 per cent have tried and soon gave up; 8 per cent gave up after one or two months; 9 per cent state that they haven't even tried; 7 per cent no answer/vague answer.

To inhalate glue-sniffer means to obtain a special hallucination feeling which can replace the hunger, the cold and last but not least the absence of affection.

⁷³ S.O.S. Street Children, No.5, 1995

⁷⁴ Idem

"The specialists who are working with homeless children noticed that if the drug is inhaled frequently, it creates a certain addiction. The alarming part is that the hallucinating matters, such as stirocol (adhesive at tubes), and glue-sniffer (aurolac – silver or golden metal paint) that homeless children procure are toxic and if they are systematically inhaled, they produce chronic disorders (nervous injuries). Epileptical crises and motor "damages" may also appear"⁷⁵.

Also, pharmacologists mention lung injuries and destruction of the nervous cells. The psysicians who work in the centers for homeless children also add the ophtalmological affections. Some social assistants state that in some cases the exaggerated consumption, for, a long period, may cause somnolence states, "the child is sleeping with open eyes, or he falls asleep all of a sudden while he is eating or cleaning the floor", explained a social assistant.

The glue-sniffer is usually shared in group, sometimes in the evening around a fire, as a collective drunkeness. The children cut their hands, become sworn brothers, but the whole idea of brothership is only the justificative aspect. In fact, the main cause is the absence of affection, back in their childhood, which can't be replaced or soothed anymore (rocking in a cradle). The group model, the instigation of those who have been snuffing for a longer period and who keep telling "that they are feeling better" are convenient regression feeling.

It is also within the group that homeless children get accustomed to the manners of drugging: the dosage, how to perceive different types of solvent by colour, price, "quality" (smell, intensity).

The perception is also influenced by the group. The effect of the glue-sniffer lasts between half an hour to on hour, while they feel more brave, more spiritual and having a more ready tongue, tougher in battles, quicker in robberies. The fact of comitting rapes, crimes, robberies is also explained by the excessive consumption of volatile matters, as a favouring factor (irascibility, losing control).

When they were asked "why did they drug themselves?", "what do they feel when they are sniffing?", their answers were stereotypical: "I'm not afraid of anything anymore".

The first glue-sniffing snuffing is a quite unpleasant experience, being associated with headaches, dizziness, disconfort. Homeless children keep on using those volatile matters after they have passed the impact of the first attempts, because they are instigated by the others, for, unconsciously, thus they show their adherence to the group and especially for the drug offers a retort to the permanent regression and frustration feeling that they experience.

The drug is used for a few days or many times a day, according to the money, to the stock of the group, to the will or mood of every child, it is certain that the aurolac will soon create phsysical addiction.

In 1996, Anca Luca, psychologist at the minors' receiving center "Ciresarii Samariteni" ("The Samaritan sweetcherry children") from Bucharest commented that after their hospitalization at the center, the consumers and especially those who are addicted to drugs are recognised and discovered by their behaviour: "For about 20 days they have a disforical feeling, they are very anxious and agitated, they even get so smash their heads against the wall. After the critical period has passed away, they calm down and behave normally. Then, after one or two months, they feel again like drugging themselves and become agitated again. If they get in the street again they will surely begin to use glue-sniffer again. Most of the children do admit this fact."

The resocialization chances of an addicted homeless child who has been using glue-sniffer for more than five or six years are much more reduced. The general condition when entering a daily center for children is to give up snuffing. Even the dialogue in the street with a drugged homeless child is considered by some people involved in this resocialization work as a nonsense, because no

-

⁷⁵ See footnote 9

real profitable communication can be achieved. When they are under the influence of the volatile matters, these children don't perceive correctly what's going on around them.

Homeless children are usually trying volatile matters after they experienced smoking and alcohol, which they don't give up when they pass the glue-sniffer.

Because of the high toleration at drug, they use more and more substances such as: "Glue-sniffer" ("Aurolac), "Aluminiumlac", "Adela", which they can buy without any restriction at the chemical substance shops, at prices varying between 4,000 to 6,000 lei.

The persons who work with homeless children, specialists, journalists have found out the danger of the addiction to volatile matters and some "voices" have even suggestet that these drugs should be submitted to a special policy of trading, which the homeless children shouldn't have access to.

First, the prohibition of the volatile matters wouldn't eliminate the causes of the consumption and second, would encourage even more a blackmarket which already exist for these costumers, in weekends, when the other shops are closed and the price of a bottle with volatile matters could be from three to ten times more expensive.

The situation of the homeless children from Bucharest who are living in sewers and are snuffing volatile matters, was highly advertised on TV stations abroad. In a feature report on Euronews, in November 1996, a social assistant stated that she couldn't stop those children from inhaling volatile matters as long as "they have no hopes, no illusions".

Considered to be more noxious than heroine and alcohol, handy to every homeless child, the glue-sniffer is a bad substitute for the absence of affection, food, warmth, security and for absence of any perspective.

7. From glue-sniffer to marijuana

There is a very strong connection between street, drug and delinquence to soon as the child plunges in the street, he is more often initiated, willingly or by force to appropriate "the model" of the group in order to face up to cold, tiredness, pain and fear more easily.

The homeless children from the ex-socialist system, less from the ex-Eastern Germany, are snuffing especially volatile matters. In the Western and American countries, where the issue of the homeless children is reviewed, the consumption is based on tougher drugs: marijuana, opium, cocaine, hashish.

For the homeless child, once "caught", who becomes addicted, is almost impossible to get away from the dance of the "white death", without the help of the special desintoxication and social assistance services, without leaving the street. In order to buy his indispensable dose, there is no price that should be too high for him. He is capable of anything: of stealing, begging, prostituting himself, he becomes pimp or drug and guns dealer.

Robbery, prostitution and drugs are an integrant part of the run-away child's life.

Bambi, a sixteen years old teenager from Germany is a significant case among hundreds of thousands homeless children all over the world who are experiencing such things. She left home at the age of fourteen because her mother divorced and got married again. The police brings her home a few times, then puts her into a psychiatric center for youth. She manages to get out of there at the intervention of a relative, but Bumbi keeps on loafing on the streets. Misery and poverty torture her badly, but she still doesn't want to return home. For she doesn't stand the situation anymore she begins to take drugs one night, for the first time, at the urge of a friend. The money obtained by begging is not enough for her so she begins to prostitute herself. She is threatened with death and together with some friends she leaves for Berlin where social insurances will get her a place to live. She is going to school during the day and then she likes to ramble at the zoo. She is hospitalized in the

last moment because of the heroine consumption (a "too" pure dose). She comes back to life after two days of coma.

In Köln⁷⁶, in 1993, as a result of a helping project for the homeless children, it was estimated that 500 children and teenagers are living in the street and are dealing with drugs trade, robbery, prostitution, making possible their surviving.

In Germany, the main issues which the street assistants and workers are dealing with in their work with the disadvantaged children are; drugs, violence, prostitution, delinquence.

In Italy, drugs and prostitution are under the control of Mafia.

In an article published in "Weekend FT", in December 1987, John Lloyd stated that only in 1987, 50 thousand of teenagers were dwelling in London, in different places and according to certain statistics: "Thirty percent of them were given drugs, immediately after their arrival at London. About twenty per cent were on the verge of practising prostitution".

In Russia, it is estimated that five millions young men "have tasted" the drug, 500,000 of them being permanent customers.

At the present moment there is no satisfactory treatment pattern for the alcoholic or addicted teenagers in this country. The addicted children are left to their fate and it is especially in a society where they can't fit in that they feel useless.

In Sankt-Petersburg area, too, among the young loafers, "prostitution and drugs are working havoc, without mentioning about delinquence and rapes" the teacher Valentina Spilova declared.

In the political, economical and social conditions,,,favourable" to unemployment and criminality, also the teenagers of U.S.A. try to escape in the deceiving world of drugs.

"The United States of America are counting at this moment maybe the highest number of consumers (500,000 toxicomen only of heroine and 3,5 million permanent users of cocaine) while in France there are between 80,000 to 100,000 persons who use drugs, and in Italy there are 250,000 od such persons" ⁷⁸.

In Marseille, about 400 clandestine minors, aged between 12 to 16 years old, are haunting in the neighbourhood of Belsunée, at Saint Charles Station and on Prado beaches. If, by a special providence, these children without any identity cards get away from the pimps, drug dealers and other exploiters, they manage to live only be stealing and from expedients. With only 5 francs they can buy Rohypnol, a soporific also called "the poor man's drug", released at the drug stores without any prescription.

The statistics of an investigation offer some tremendous figures about the allienation by drugs of the Frenchmen. In 1993, these figures were estimating in France 800,000 occasional and permanent drug users, 6,39 percent being under 25 years old.

"Unemployment, greffed on a mined family field (misunderstanding between the members of the family, separation, parents' divorce create real psuchosis in children's behavior) has a big influence upon the ethiology of addiction"⁷⁹.

According to the above mentioned investigation, 75 per cent of the drug consumers were illegitimate children, orphans, they came from disorganized families or didn't get along with one of their parents.

⁷⁷ See footnote 26

⁷⁸ Dragan, J., *Almost all of...the drugs*, Militara Publishing House, Bucharest, 1994, p.144

⁷⁶ See footnote 43

⁷⁹ Idem, p.145

Although anybody is welcome in the world of drugs, it remains an illusory refuge, especially for the poor, rejected and allienated persons, whom society turn its back upon, leaving them no hope.

VI. Social offer and self-organization

1. The street, a place for illegal work

Working from an early age is not a choice. More often, it is an absolute need.

In Bolivia this labour begins around the age of ten, sometimes even earlier, from six , even five years old. What could the word "education" mean in this context?

"A child who is working today, tomorrow he will be a grown up without any school education or professional grounding, caught in the trap of a tremendous poverty forever. It has to be done everything to break this vicious circle". 80

The Bolivian child was pushed in the street mainly by his own parents, who have to face insuportable economical problems. Child's labour is often, for himself and for his family just a matter of surviving. And the street is the only space of work that society could offer to him. Food, clothes, a minimum of hygiene and medical assistance: everything depends on his capacity of surviving in this environment.

In Senegal, most of the children who work in factories are apprentices and abandoned school. In fact, the school failure is one of the reasons for their apprenticeship. Employers say that they recruit children because they need help and that they prefer those around the age of ten, for these kids learn more quikly and fit more easily than the old people.

In Philippines too, employers often prefer to hire children because they are worse payed and complain less than grown up. Children work as servants or as workers in factories and on the plantations. It is estimated that there are 5,5 millions children at the labour market. About 30 thousand of boys and girls are practising prostitution, often from the age of seven.

"According to an investigation of the Filipino Association for Menthal Healts, the activities practised by children in order to survive in the city jungle are divided in this way: home jobs 24 per cent, hawing 24 per cent, rummage in the garbage 19 per cent, begging 13 per cent, car surveying 11 per cent, prostitution 8 per cent, car robbery 4 per cent. The most profitable activity is prostitution, which brings an income of 50-100 pesos a day"⁸¹.

International Labour Organization informs that all over the world, the number of the children between 10 to 14 years old who are practising an economical activity is very high: 73 million of children, which represents more than thirteen per cent from all children of this age in the entire world. According to the statistic, the number of boys who are working is much higher than the one of gils. International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that almost 41 millions of boys between ten to fourteen are working, compared to 32,5 millions of gils.

"The greatest number of children who are working was emphasized in Asia - 44,6 millions (13 per cent), followed by Africa - 23,6 millions (but the highest percentage: 26,3 per cent, and Latin America - 5,1 millions (9,8 per cent)" 82.

Still these figures don't say everything. So nobody knows exactly how many children, under the age of ten are working, there is no statistics about the number of girls who have domestic jobs from eight to ten hours a day, or any statistics about the percentage of homeless children who are working as occasional or permanent employes.

The 138th Convention considers the age of fifteen the minimum age to acceptance to work, but also stipulates that it can be reduced to the age of fourteen in the countries in transition.

_

⁸⁰ Hansenne, Michel, M., Plus de 13 pour cent des enfants de 10 â 14 ans travaillent, BIT/'96/18

⁸¹ Child Labor Today, Facts and Figures, BIT, Gènève, 10 june, 1996

⁸² Idem

In Romania, the legal right of working is stipulated beginning with the age of sixteen.

In U.S.A., children who work are very important. In U.S.A., most of the children who are working are involved in agriculture and some of them belong to the immigrant families, where also most of the homeless children come from. Many children are exploited in all activity fields.

"A study made in 1990 by the General Agency of Calculation showed that during 1983 to 1990 the penalties of labour legislation concerning minor's labour increased with 25 percent. In 1990, an action "coup de poing" co-ordinated by the Labour ministry for three days showed that " thousand of children are working clandestinely"⁸³.

The issue of exploiting children's labour was raised again all over the world in 1993. The case of South-East Asia perfectly exemplifies this matter.

In Sri lanka, a great number of homeless children are working as servants and they often constitute the object of sexual abuses.

India and Pakistan hold the highest percentage of children involved in the formal economy. Usually, these children work in conditions which are very injurius to health and badly exploited. They are often considered by employees as slaves.

Still in 1993 the United Arab republic have promulgated a law which forbid the using of children for races and have ordered that who came for this and should return home. The solution of this problem is not simple at all. These children, torn from their usual surroundings needed social assistance to come back home, as well as a special programme of social readjustment.

The exploitation of Indian and Pakistan children, used in weaving carpets leaded in Germany to an interpellation within Bundestag and to an initiative of work and social protection Ministry for estimation and consideration of the work carried out by children all over world.

Beginning with 1980, scientific papers which deal with the problems of homeless children and with children of the third world who are working, especially in the Latin-American area, increased.

In Brazil,most of the children who are living in the street, usually sell in the markets and on crossroads, clean shoes or the wind screen of the cars, pick up garbage, sing in buses, or chose prostitution. UNICEF defined this category of children as a group in need, because the acces to education, health and food is considerably below the necessities of normal growth.

Not by any chance, at the first Congress of homeless children, organized by some humanitarian organization supported by UNICEF, which took place in Brazil, between the 25th and the 27th of May 1986, one of the issues chosen by children themselves was labour. In the interviews they had given, those children showed the fact that they were working from an early age as thay had no other choice.

For example, one of them, of thirteen years old stated that he had been working since he was seven and that only sometimes that he got some money for what he did. Another one said he collected and sold paper and that sometimes he had no choice but stealing.

All of them shered the same belief: "This Congress is very important because Brazil will get to know us. Usually people think that we are nothing but a bunch of thieves, but the truth is we are forced to work in the street in order to survive"⁸⁴.

In Cote d'Ivoire the selling of children for exploitation is often practised.

In highly developped countries, too, many children are compelled to work. Italy is, no doubt, one of the European countries which counts the biggest effectives. Here, children's labour in the street

⁸³ Le travail dans le Monde, 30 Mai 1986

⁸⁴ Vandeche, Ch., Le Monde, 30 Mai 1986

is dubbled by other risks, for example they are used by Italian Mafia in different purposes (drugs and armes trade, prostitution),

In Germany, too, the rate of working children is increasing, although this phenomenon cannot be compared to what happens in the countries of the third world. According to an investigation made in Recklinghausen, Munster and Koln, 20 percent of the children under fifteen years old were considered not so be protected by law, being forced to work.

In the United Kingdom of Great Britain the sad destiny of the children who work on the blackmarket, especially small servants, can't be ignored. An inverstigation made in this country revealed that 40 percent of the inquired children were working mostly illegally.

The ex-communist countries are facing the exploitation of children, in different fields of the private sector, such as trade and services.

Unlike most of the Latin-American governments, nongovernmental organizations, such as UNICEF and I.LO encourage a way of work, where children could fit in, that their childhood shouldn't be completely shadowed, a way of work adaptable to their age which will exploit them, but at the some time should allow them the growth of their own personality; Thus, the labour offerts given to the children under fifteen years old by governments should represent an ordinary matter.

2. The slaughter of the homeless children

In Brazil, one of the most alarming facts of 1993 was the slaughter of the homeless children. Violent acts against homeless children were also pointed out in Colombia, Guatemala and Mexico.

The situation of Colombia represents a double concern because children are often used by the drug dealers to sell drugs or they are recruited as payed murders ("sicarios").

The street is a very cruel and dangerous place to work, often jeopardising the life of children themselves. They maybe killed by organised crime, by some other young men or even by the police.

"In 1993 the world retorted with horror, finding out that the caps of Rio de Janeiro had slaughtered six homeless children. In 1996, a police officer from Rio, who admitted his crime became the first police officer convicted for killing homeless children although the crime against this category of youth had begun in the Brazilian capital before 1990. According to a statement of the Minors jury, at Rio de Janeiro three homeless children on an average are killed every day, often at the authorities" request" 85.

3. Selforganization process

In the last years, a selforganization process of homeless and working children was started on in Latin America, Africa and Asia. This impulse of organization answers to their wish of organizing as well as possible in order to defend their rights and to increase their income.

More and more projects dedicated to the homeless and working children have been drawn up, projects which, by the orientation of their subject, offered a changing of perspectiv. At the initiative of the teachers within these projects a social solidarity movement has been developed, for the purpose of standing for the rights of working children. The children continously gathered in different forms of organization.

They considered themselves a part of the continental movement which was set up in 1978 in Peru, under the name of "MANTHOC". In 1985 a second national movement of the children came into being in Brazil, "The National Movement of homeless children". Today it gathers about one hundred thousand children in almost all the union countries and it is guided by three thousand grown-

⁸⁵ UNICEF, La situation des enfants dans le monde, 1997, p.43

ups.It is the very movement of Latin-American Children that illustrates that, despite the poverty, the violent conditions, the obstruction of a life perspective, the selforganization is still possible. Poverty, alienation can be controlled in this way.

Talking about the slaughter of the homeless children, we emphasized that in Brazil the most vulnerable children are those who live and work in the street. Permanently subjected to violence and repression by the cops and armed groups, they and their lawyers often stated the issue of a reform. In 1985, the Government established the creation of a National Committee of Child (composed of the officials of the ministries, of the varied nongovernmental organization or of the National Movement of Homeless Children) and of a constitution.

These events led to a far-reaching public campaign, including massive meeting of the children in many cities, as well as demonstrations in front of the National Congress headquarters.

Different organizations and nongovernmental organizations from all over the country proposed projects for two constitutional amendaments, which where guaranteed by 200,000 voters and were presented to the Constituent Assembly. These proposals have represented, at last, the article in Constitution concerning the rights of children and youth, voted with 435 against 8 votes.

The success was followed two years later by a much more important victory, when the Statute of Guild and of Teenagers was ratified by both members of the National Congress, legally compelling the Government to protect the Child's rights.

The statute defines as citizens who have the right to respect, dignity, freedom. A special attitude was guaranted to the important needs for children's existence, such as: health, education, sports and entertainment.

Like in the case of conventions and recommandations concerning to exploitation of children's labour, elaborated by ILO, as well as the putting into practice of these rights, mentioned above, stipulated in the Brazilian constitution, are not satisfactory.

Following the example of Peru and Brazil, there were initiatives of this type also in some other countries, especially at the end of eighties (Bolivia, Paraguay, Chile, Argentina, Ecuador, Colombia, Mexico and other countries of Central America).

But not all of them can be defined as independent movements which should base on the child's position as a subject in action. It is only to a certain extent that we can talk about children's movements for their rights, which are administrated by adults. In these countries, the child must be seen as a social subject, because, economically speaking, he is an important element of the society. The children from Nicaragua make a contribution of 15 to 25 per cent to their families' income, an aspect which can be generalized to all the Latin-American countries.

In Nicaragua, the presence of children in specific organization, involved in the political and social field, can not longer be neglected. The outcome was obvious: in Peru and Nicaragua the laws concerning children and youth"s protection were finally re-orientated and these children are given service of parliamentary assistance.

The labour within children's movements request a new kind of teacher. The german sociologist Manfred Liebel, who has studied the movement of Nicaragua children for six years, reached the conclusion that these children wanted a movement by and for the children, where they could initiative their own initiatives, which should be taken by mutual agreement with the adults involved in the projects. They don't want to follow in any way educational patterns and concepts carried out by adults. "More ways of regarding and approaching childhood can appear. To us, grown-ups, it would mean that the childhood would became a controversial space, the independent children" 86.

⁸⁶ Dewes, J., Dusseldorf, Neue Methoden der Arbeit mit Strassenkindern, in Theorie und Praxis der Sozialen Arbeit, No,1/96,p.17

The Mexican sociologist Carlos Gonzales Alvarez, from the Human Development Institute, evolved a methodical concept about the selfconscience at children and drew up a project. He based his theory on the idea according to which children must organise their life by themselves in the fight for survival, for they are independent. Even ten year old children are often seen in this position. They have their own "business", they organize the trade themselves, without any help from the adults. But the attitude of society is diametrically opposed. To put it better, their efforts are not given any credit.

The fact that they are not appreciated and repudiated by the society decisively makes the own value conscious, directing self conscience in a negative way. "It is at this point that Human Development Institute comes with his project: methodically reflecting their individuality, children are shown their position in society, their positive image, their economical contribution and thus the ego is differently shaped"⁸⁷.

Together with the children, they analyse the exploitation forms experienced by themselves and also the cases of abuse. It was also drawn attention about the consequences individually experienced by the victims and about the behaviour rules of communities.

A second step in the methodic ("the awakening") of selfconscience is organizing the working children in order to give them the possibility of changing the actual situation. These children's concrete life conditions are examined. It is not about the supression of children" s labour, but only about the changing of some negative aspects relating to health and growth which, by their nature, are restricting the access to cultural education, allowing the exploitation of children's labour.

The strategies are directy applied in the social environment where children carry on their activity (street, market, neighbourhood), reaching at the same time the political forces on the local and national scale. At the end of this chain there is the autonomy of children and youth organization which make decision independently, according to necessities, interest and expectations. Teachers play the part of intermediary. They plan new projects, but, above all, their pedagogical role is to reflect together with the children.

It is certain that by the project co-ordinated by Carlos Gonzales, children have succeded in making the townhall publish an annual report by which they try to obtain the recognition of their situation, as well as the respect for their importance in the society.

In Africa, as a result of realising their difficult conditions of life, children and teenagers who are working created an organization named: "Enfants et Jeunes Travailleurs" , and chose the way of selfoganization in order to be listened, to inform themselves, that their rights and interests should be stood for. By attending the parade of the first of may 1994, they opened a new perspective to the selforganization process. A few representatives of these organizations gathered at Bouaké, in Cote d'Ivoire, in July 1994. During this first meeting they established and proclaimed twelve prioritary rights that would improve their situation and defined a programme of actions in order to promote them. The twelve rights are:

- -the right to education in order to learn a trade
- -the right of remaining in their villages (to stopmass migration)
- -the right to appeal and to a fair judgement when certain problems may appear
- -the right to medical leave
- -the right to be respected
- -the right of being listened

⁸⁷ Idem, p.21

⁸⁸ Les enfants, l'ècoute et les animateurs, Programme African de Formation des animateurs urbains, ENDA, tiers monde, Jeunesse action, Février, '96

- -the right to an easy work, with schedule (adjusted to their age and to the individual 's capacity)
- -the right to medical assistance
- -the right of enjoying and playing
- -the right of expressing and organizing
- -the right of practising their activities in conditions of security.

A campaign was initiated to sustain these rights claims. A pursuit pattern has been created, by way of calendaristic dates. The conclusion was that it was not easy at all to survey and stand for the rights of those who defended themselves.

In 1995, at Bamako, 133 reprezentatives of working children and youth organization's, coming from 21 cities, from nine countries of South Africa, have discussed the strategies of putting into practice, so that these twelve rights should be recognised and above all that they should be applied accordingly.

The occasion was used one more time to denounce the inhuman and degrading treatments that children and young workers had to face in the street, to which we can add the rejection and contempt that some fiels of society express towards these young persons, considering them bandits, malefactors, deserving to be expelled. They insisted on pointing out that young workers made their own contribution to the global development of the country, just like the rest of the socio-professional categories. EJT decided at the same time to exercise its right to give a good example, by changing its behaviour and mentality in a positive way.

The national meetings, all forms of selforganization, as well as the strong publicity of their need to have rights that should be recognised, made the population and the authorities change their mentalities.

In some countries, young persons began to dialogue with the communal and police authorities, regarding their association. In some other states, children in need negociated with the district health centers in order to benefit of assistance at a very low price. A few association created their own educational courses.

The solution is far from being the same all over the world. Sometimes "the social insecurity" and the interdiction of gathering do not allow those children to organise themselves.

But it is very obvious the fact that the validity of young person of helping one another brings a new perspective only if it is backed up by the fight for defending their personal interests, for selfdefending.

VII. Modalities of approaching street kids'problems

1. The non-governmental organizations offer

In Romania, according to the statistics made by the Department for Child Protection (DPC), Who and Where in child protection field, Index 97' 98 are 606 NGO-s active in this field.

Laudable is the preventive activity at family level, concerning children in risky situations, as the activity of forming and improving of the social assistants and social workers, developed in appoximately 35 per cent of organizations.

In Index are estimated in Bucharest 141 NGOs active in child protection field. Protection the general meaning of the word, including education, informing, forming, recreation/amusement, gifted and very gifted children, health children in difficulty, etc.

From these NGOs, 25 have as activity the resocialisation of the street children and 20 NGOs want to help the families of the kids in difficulty and in different risky situations, such as becoming a street child.

The number of nongovernmental organizations who take care only of the street children or have a longer activity object, including the street children, increased from year to year, as an answer to the social demand.

In March 1998, as a result of my research I' ve dicovered that in Bucharest are active 35 NGOs (the figure can be bigger) which take care of the street kids also. The capacity of containing the street children is 330 places in the centers with permanent programme (day and night) and over 230 places in the day centers. Totally the number of places from the permanent centers, no matter if they are established by state or nongovernmental organizations is of over 760 (at the end of 1992, in the state centers with permanent programme and NGOs, were 180 places. At the numerical estimation made in November 1995, the centers with permanent programme - of state and private- had, in all, a capacity of 400 places; the doubling of the number of places can be explained by the permanent establishing of new centers).

I have classified the centers (of state and private) from Bucharest, for street children, after the following criteria:

I MEMBERSHIP (affiliation to)

Centers set up by state

- 1. Ciresarii 1
- 2. Ciresarii 2
- 3. Mogosoaia
- 4. Pinocchio 1
- 5. Pinocchio 2
- 6. Pinocchio 3
- 7. Gavroche.

Centers set up by NGOs

- 1. Save the children
- 2. Pigmalion (Family and Child Protection Foundation)
- 3. Oliver (idem)
- 4. Saint Ioan House

- 5. The Open House Association
- 6. Social Integration Support Association (ASIS)
- 7. Saint Andrei House (The humanitarian organization Concordia)
- 8. Saint Paul House (idem)
- 9. Saint Dominic House (idem)
- 10. Saint Dimitrie House (idem)
- 11. Helping the street kids Foundation
- 12. Help and Socio-medical Retrievement Foundation
- 13. Saint Stelian Association
- 14. City of hope
- 15. Hope
- 16. The humanitarian Foundation for Solidarity with orphans and abandoned kids
- 17. Blanca House
- 18. MARANATA Foundation
- 19. Ioana House
- 20. ANANDA MARGA Universal Relief Team (AMURT)
- 21. The Ecumenical Association of Churches from Romania (AID-ROM)
- 22. The Romanian Society for Charity CARROM
- 23. Point-Coeur
- 24. Nazariteanul
- 25. Parada Foundation
- 26. The Romanian Angel Appeal
- 27. Mother of Life Association
- 28. Matia Association
- 29. The Romanian Foundation for protecting the old men and children
- 30. Life and Light
- 31. SOS! Kids' s Villages
- 32. Robin Hood
- 33. SOS! Childhood Foundation
- 34. Phillip Foundation
- 35. Christian Mission International Association

II. THE DEVELOPED PROGRAMMES

<u>Pilot centers - for solving (permanent programme)</u>

- 1. Ciresarii 1
- 2. Ciresarii 2
- 3. Gavroche
- A. Resocialisation centers (permanent programme)

Orphanage system:

- 1. Pinocchio 1
- 2. Pinocchio 2
- 3. Pinocchio 3
- 4. Oliver
- 5. Mogosoaia

<u>Family system (domestic, structures and semidomestic)</u>:

- 1. SOS! Children villages
- 2. St. Ioan House
- 3. Mother of Life Association
- 4. St. Paul House
- 5. St. Andrei House
- 6. St. Dominic House
- 7. A temporary Life Place ASIS

Social flat-system:

- 1. Blanca House
- 2. The Open House
- 3. Matia Association
- 4. MARANATA Foundation
- 5. ASIS
- 6. Robin Hood
- B. Resocialisation centers-day day centers
- 1. Pigmalion
- 2. The Open House
- 3. Hope
- 4. Ioana House
- 5. Phillip Foundation
- 6. St. Dimitrie

C. Social centers:

<u>-Socialworkers in the street</u> (detecting, councelling, medical. juridical. social assistance, medical help)

- 1. Save the children
- 2. ASIS
- 3. Helping the street kids Foundation
- 4. St. Stelian association
- 5. FUSCO
- 6. The Ecumenical Association of Churches from Romania (AID-ROM)
- 7. The Romanian Foundation for protecting old men and children
- 8. The Romanian Society for Charity CARROM
- 9. Help and Socio-medical Retrievement Foundation (ARMS)
- 10. Nazariteanul
- 11. Point-Coeur
- 12. Children International Association
- 13. ANANDA MARGA Universal Relief Team AMURT
- 14. SOS! Childhood
- -<u>Transit centers</u> (emergency medical and social help, teaching to read and write, making shows, professional and school reintegration)
 - 1. Romanian Angel Appeal
 - 2. ARMS Foundation
 - 3. Parada Foundation

In Romania, NGOs are at the beginning. Their activity is guided in curing the effects. The NGOs who included kids into families can be counted. Few are those who support material and give social assistance to families in crisis so they could surpass the moment and keep their children besides them.

Overcomed by number of problems and the clients, the NGO-s seem to inefficient.

In reality, I stress, they are a prompt answer, an offer of various activities and services to a big demand of socio-economic problems, impossible to solve by the state.

2. Strategies proposals to combat the street children phenomenon

Ways of action:

I. Prevention

1. The diminution and even the stoppage of the unwanted children's birth, with the risk of being abandoned soon after the birth or later on, after having experienced the familial abuse.

Ways of action:

- 1.1. Sexual education in schools, with the aid of teachers, non-governmental organizations and of mass-media.
 - 1.2. A permanent process of informing, the publicity of birth control modern methods.

- 1.3. The extension of the family planning services and the publicity of their existence and importance.
- 1.4. The development of social assistance, in the way of preventing unwanted pregnancies, the change of the irresponsible attitude towards a child's future, especially in the high risked environments.
- 1.5. The assistance and councilliation of the mothers who intend to abandon their children, in order to make them be aware of the importance of the family for a child.
- 1.6. Legislative measures (an efficient system of penalties) those mothers/parents who abndon more then one child in maternities soon after their birth or later on (abrogation of the 770th Decree for 1966, no woman is obliged to give birth to a child against her wish or against a rational family planning).
- 1.7. The strong publicity of the legislative measures with the purpose to inform and hold responsable the future parents about the importance of being a parent and about the value that a child represents for his family and for his society.
 - 2. The elimination of the financial and social reasons which cause the

marginalisation of families and children, by offering a material, social, legislative protection coresponding to a decent living by offering a specialized and efficient social assistance.

- 2.1. The construction of civilized social shelters which can be placed at one or more children families' disposal, in a conditioned way (keeping the children within their families, sending them to school, qualification, normal treatments etc).
- 2.2. The adjustment of equal rights for every family, no matter which the type of family and its structure may be: legally organised, legally disorganized (separation), incompletely structured (concubinage), one-parent family etc.
- 2.3. Significant financial support for allowances of sums which are really reported to the purchasing power and increasingly in age groups.
- 2.5. The appropriate social assistance (the state should provide material help till the families manage to have a decent living) provided to the families with children, till the child reaches eithteen, or till they are twenty five if they complete their studies.
- 2.6. The extension of non-governmental organizations whose activity is the material and social support offered to the disadvantaged families which are on the point of falling down
- 3. The foundation of the some social centers (district centers, or as part of the Public Service Specialized in Child's Protection, set up after come the 26th Emergency Injustition, regarding protection of a child in need, within the school or within the non-governmental organizations).
- 3.1. The assistance of unemployed parents, their informing about the rights they have according to our legislation and about the qualification possibilities. Their councilliation and support in order to obtain a much higher flexibility and mobility concerning the request and the offert of labour
- 4. The achievement of a fundamental reform of children justice by founding the Courts for Children.
- 4.1. The protection of the children in need and in danger first by taking some protection, assistance, supervision and educational measures.
- 4.2. The informing of the parents about their child's fundamental rights, and the importance of respecting these rights.

- 4.3. The foundation of a permanent telephonic service (similar to "the green telephone" in France or to the one for "the abused child" in USA), which can be used by abused or in risky situation children, as well as by persons who find or guess that a child is being ill-treated.
- 4.4. The informing of children about their fundamental rights and about the services and centers that they can appeal when they are abused or in danger.
- 4.5. Legislative measures (an efficient penalities system) for the parents who abuse their children.

II. Intervention

- 1. The foundation of some centers which already exist in other countries and which Romania still lacks.
- 1.1. **Prognosis centers** where all the children with behaviour disorders, those who abandoned school, who ran away from home/institutions many times, or those who attempted suicide can be hospitalized for a couple of months in order to be tested, analysed. After the identification of the real causes of their behaviour problems, those children will be directed towards the resocialization family centers or other family alternatives, will be taken good care of etc. The services of those centers will be offered by interdisciplinary specialits teams which will stop considering the child just "a medical case", as they usually do in the psychiatric hospitals, in the handicaps centers, the only places where children with behaviour disorders are being boarded at the present moment.
- 1.2. **Emergency centers** (a kind of asylum) permanently opened, where street children can take a bath, can eat, can get medical assistance and especially where they can be councelled by psycho-social specialits which can influence, make them wish to change their way and life style.

An emergency center for street children implies very high costs, but also a direct intervention measure in their environment, through which they are provided with their basic rights: food, shelter, hygiene conditions, medical assistance, psycho-pedagogical supervision, stipulated by the national and international legislation.

- 1.3. **Special centers** for the permanent street kids having spent a longer period in the street. These minors have been frequently psysically and emotionally abused, they have been subjected to all kind of risks, generally having adopted a diverging behaviour (glue-sniffer, prostitution, delinquency). "The veterans" of the street are usually not received any longer in the resocialization centers. They are the most difficult to resocialize and require a special assistance and protection.
 - 2. The co-ordination, completion and co-operation of the social services.
- 2.1. The extension of the social assistance service as well as the service assured by the interdisciplinary teams (doctor, psychologist, pedagogue, social assistant, etc.) in order to investigate and analyse the client as complete and complex as possible and also in order to propose the most efficient intervention measure for resocialization.
- 2.2. The foundation of a genuine street assistance network which should be the missing link between street-children resocialization centers-family.

Ways of action:

- 2.2.1. The immediate tracing out of the new homeless children, the consideration of the reasons which led them to this choice, the determination of the intervention way: family reintegration, the hospitalization in a social center or in a diagnosis center, if the child has behaviour disorders etc.
- 2.2.2. The prevention of children in the street (who presents a high risk of family's total abandon) turning into permanent street children by: councilliation and the informing of the parents and children about their rights and obligations, presenting them the alternatives of school reintegration

- (limited frequency classes) and qualification/requalification (qualification and requalification centers for unemployed persons), information about job offerts.
- 2.2.3. The informing the street children about their rights, presenting them some other alternatives to the life in and on the street, their accompaning to the emergency or special centers.
- 3. Flexibility and promptitude of the social and juridical services of those institutions which generally work with children and especially with children in need.
- 3.1. The immediate acquirement of the permanent or temporary identification documents (birth certificate, identity card), in the case of the children who:
 - are not declared at the time of their birth;
 - are lost, who forget/refuse to give their name;
 - who lost their identification documents.
- 3.2. The lack of identification documents shouldn't be a handicap for the street kids concerning:
 - the school integration/re-integration;
 - their transphers from the minors resocialization centers to special handicaps centers;
- the transpher/placement of the children from the minors receiving centers to the resocialization centers, to family substitute etc.
- 3.3. The strict respecting of the period fifteen days established by the 26th Emergency Injustition in order to solve the causes concerning the children in need.
- 3.4. The separation of the delinquent children, hospitalised in the minors receiving centers for a penal examination, from the children who are hospitalized in the same center for social, financial reasons or for vagrancy.
- 3.5. The transformation of the minors receiving centers which most of them, look like small-scaled prisons into some transit centers, where the children wouldn' feel sufocated.
- 3.6. The creation of some programmes, textbooks and examplified examination tests for the children with school reintegration problems (for social, economical reason school abandon).
- 3.7. The creation for the street children, within those qualification and professional reconvertion centers of same professional training programmes, which will not be conditioned by the graduation of elementary school.
 - 4. The involvment of the society and mass-media.
- 4.1. The fair publicity of the causes which engendered the street children phenomenon, the informing of the community about the way that it could involve in solving this issue:
 - communication with the street children;
 - financial support;
- informing the Police and the Public service Specialized for Child's Protection when it has been found that these children are jeopardized.
- 4.2. The publicity of the resocialization cases in order to consolidate the power of the positive example, both among street kids, who should be motivated to rise above their condition of homeless children, and also among the public opinion which could change its mentality that there is not hope anylonger concerning these alienated minors.

4.3. The stronger involvement of the church and women organizations in the preventing and diminution of the street children phenomenon through financed support and combination given to all the families and children in trouble and in different risky situations.

3. The chances of the street kids

What's best for a street child? To be taken out of his environment - which is now represented by the street-, or, on the contrary to be helped to keep living in the street, but in better conditions?

The opinions of the adults who are more or less involved in the programmes and the projects for homeless children are divided.

Some of them think that social protection assistance should take place in the street because the problems started from there. Besides, they say, if children find in the street what they have been looking for, a better environment than the one they had left, the adults 'duty and also the organizations' one is to provide them specialized help in order to help them to organize, to protect themselves, to improve their work tools, to amuse themselves and to inform them about the resocialization opportunities all the time.

They get to the conclusion that, by adopting this way of action, a street child will be the one to give the only legitimate answer and will choose what is "right for him"; either the street that he is "trained" to face in front of all kind of dangers as well as to survive more easily, or another form of resocialization.

I will oppose to this opinion, above all the fact that the problems have not started in the street, but they have closer or more far-off origins, in the family and social deficiencies. In time these deficiencies in the social macrosystem and in the family microsystem became more serious and turned into the causes of many unwanted effects, among which the street children. Then, a social assistance and protection taking place in the street in order to prepare these children to became stronger end more experienced in the life on the street, can be a justification for the countries of the third world, for the countries in which the climate is not a strong ennemy by the great temperature differences and where the number and the situation of these disadvantaged people became impossible to control anymore.

In the developed countries social assistance turns the street in one of the action dirrections. Its part in the street should be taking out those children from the street and not teaching them how to live more "confortable" out here.

Other adults say that letting these children in the street is an ungodliness, because according to the national and international legislation, their fundamental rights which they should uncondionally benefit by are violated.

The solutions suggested by the adults of this last category require important national strategies, especially preventive, which act directly upon the causes. An explanation of the fact that governments don't encourage the initiation of such strategies is that their cost is impossible to be beared by the social protection budgets of the countries of the third world.

Romania, having been a developing country in 1989, is nowadays somewhere between the states of the third world and the less developed countries of the developing ones. The false support given by the social assistance programmes to their clients only in the street, under the pretext that it was there that their problems started, actually hides the governmental incapacity of achieving a real social assistance and protection.

In our country, like in most ones where the number of street kids is much higher (from a few tens to a few hundreds) than the real possibilities of offering them a permanent shelter, associated with all the necessary conditions for a normal recovery and education, protection and social assistance are given at random and discriminatingly.

To put it better, they choose to present the opportunities some areas, considered to be "hot" have, as well as to select and especially to self-select their clients, according to their age, sex, years of loafing, motivation, health, handicap, etc.

Regarding strictly Romania, beginning with the outburst of the phenomenon, street children were offered various chances, both by the governmental organizations and especially beginning with 1992 by the non-governmental ones.

Some children, after two - four years of suspending school, attended one or two more classes or they finished the secondary school. Other came in those centers for illiterate persons and learned to write, to read and to calculate.

Other children were guided towards some qualification classes and they were sustained, more or less, to finish them, some of them getting a job, sometimes having no connection with the qualification. The answer is very simple: as long as they attended those classes they began to learn to respect a time table, to be motivated in gaining money otherwise than by begging and stealing and the most important thing, they gained their self-confidence and they understood their value.

Some other street kids were helped to reconsider the relations with their families (unless the family represents a danger for them).

Some of the families with great financial problems but being well-disposed for their children's return were supported by certain organizations to find a job, to gain some rights sanctioned by the law, about which they didn't know much, as well as financial support.

In spite af all chances given by all kind of organizations the number of street children knew a permanent evolution.

This increase is a sign that the applied treatment implied some concealing actions of the effects. In order to lead to the causes, it is prophylaxis that should be first emphasized.

The 770th Decree for 1966 which forbade and punished the abortion was one of the first decrees abolished after the events of December 1989.

Then why still are unwanted children born, some of them (very few) being killed by their mother soon after their birth, others being abandoned soon after birth or later on, most of them becoming the usual clients of the hospital, of the shelter institutions or of the street.

The causes depend on some deficiences: the lack of education and information about contraceptive methods and about family planning, to misunderstanding of the parent part and of the value that a child should represent, the lack of social assistance in maternities and last but not least, the mother's native environment which may be a "bag of poverty".

It was found that many children become street kids after having abandoned the school, on the background of some social and financial deficiencies in the family.

A cure for preventing school abandon, as well as discovering in time some family - crisis situations which push those children in the street would be the foundation of some diagnosis centers, such as in Czech Republic.

These centers would represent one more chance for the disadvantaged children, in various risky situations of not ending up in the street, because this way the causes of some behaviour disorders, of some suicide attempts, school regressions, school or home abandon, would be easily found out. In this kind of centers, children are kept for one or two months so that they should be tested, analysed, guided towards resocializing centers, family or other family alternatives and taken good care of.

The services of these centers are offered by interdisciplinary specialits teams, which do not consider the child only a "medical case" as it is usual to do in the psychiatrical hospitals, in the handicap centers, there where are sent especially children showing behaviour deviations, forgetting

the fact that aggressivity and violence are, in fact, the main effects of the deficient relationships between parents and children or children and pedagogues.

It is statistically prevealed that, up to now, both the governmental and non-governmental organizations couldn't stop the evolution of the street children phenomenon by any measure and succeeded in resocializing only a small number of these extremely ignored children.

Most of them seem to be sentenced to an existential misery and to receiving a permanent homeless person status. In the countries where homeless people are an indisputable reality, being included in statistics, both the state and also the private organizations act first of all by intervention programmes, providing them with a minimum of conditions in those social emergency centers.

In Czech Republic, for instance, "Nadeje" (Hope) non-governmental organization - financially and budget supported! - helped right from its foundation, from 1990 to April 1997, over three thousand disadvantaged persons. This organization created five emergency centers only in Prague: a daily one where they provide food, clothes, cleaning conditions (shower), councilliation, medical assistance for almost two hundred people daily; a center for the resocialization of young people and adults who got out from dezintoxication centers (for alcohol, drug abuse); three sleeping centers containing 50 vacancies (places).

In each sector in Prague, the state founded asylum - like houses. In Czech Republic, the homeless persons are taken care also by the "Army of Salvation" organization.

In Bucharest, there were two social emergency centers for street children, both founded by "Caritas-Concordia" organization, turned into the "Humanitarian Concordia" organization. "Saint Andrei" center initially functioned as an emergency home for about 50-60 street kids, between 1992-1993. The social emergency center "Saint Dumitru" daily offered its services for about 150 street children, from September 1993 to December 1994, when it was closed, at the order of the Sanitary Police.

At the emergency full programme centers all the street kids can take a bath, can eat, sleep and can get medical and social assistance. Those children who have just escaped from home or from other institutions can be helped much more promptly, here the councilliation is made in a different manner than in the street, where human dialogue is hard to achieve from many reasons, well-known to the street workers.

The foundation of the emergency centers will be certainly considered, as well as the charitable persons, an indirect encouragement for the children to remain in the street. What are actually these charitable persons do? They sporadically and preferentially offer what the state should permanently do for people, accordingly to the valid legislation. But it's the state that should be blamed for its incapacity and not those charitable persons.

The emergency centers would legally assure at least a few rights that extremely alienated children should enjoy, when the governmental concern becomes demagogical and is always behind legislation.

Some of the street children commit crimes, frequently, because of the overlapping of the competences, a child is punished twice for the same mistake and sometimes the police accuses them of somethings they didn't do. Besides, the Romanian justice tradition relies on punitive sanctions. The child is locked up in a reeducational center (a kind of prison), where the reeducational is similar to the improvement of the ways of surving, delinquentially speaking.

The fact that most of them relapse soon after they got out shows that the "instructive" measures, punitevely applied, are not the best solution and that maybe a change of style would be proper, laying on the western patterns where the instructive measure is on the top.

Maybe a proper change for the children in need would be the foundation of a Court for Minors, which first of all should protect children and young people in danger by protection, assistance, supervising and educational measures.

In the second place, by creating some specialized trial instances and a proper legislative environment, Romania would achieve something that France has already done, back in 1945, and namely admitting that a justice applied to the adults can't be adjust also to the minors. In this way a fundamental reform for the minors' penal justice would be achieved also in our country.

In France, the Courts for Children are based on instructive measures, considered to be the most appropriate for a minor's correction and education, but also the cheapest ones. An instructive measure is thirty French francs a day, and a child's institutionalization is from 500 to 800 francs a day.

In our country, the price of an instructive measure hasn't been established yet, but some sources state that a child's institutionalization costed 1,5 milion lei a month, in November 1997 (according to the National Statistics Board, in 1997, the net nominal monthly wages was 636.821 lei).

In conclusion, the evolution of the street children's phenomenon may be stopped by the preventive measure which lead straight to the causes. Street children's chances of reintegrating depend on the programmes, on the projects and the interventions strategies, on the quality, the goodfaith and the intervention of the staff which is remunerated in this respect, as well as on the structure, the potential and the motivation of the clients, and last but not least on the political will of our leaders, on the devepolment and the civilization degree of the whole community.

The relationship between a street child and the society, like any other one, is bivalent. The child's desire of social readjustment should be stimulated and the society should support him to make this insertion come true. The society must understand that it is the one to blame because it impartially created the situation that characterize a homeless child and that it is totally unfair to express any prejudice, hostility or contempt regarding him.

79 Bibliography

Bibliography

- 1. Aries, Ph., L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'ancien regime, Editions du Seuil (reedition), 1973
- 2. Bruner, Jerome, S., Pentru o teorie a instruirii, Bucuresti, Editura didactica si pedagogica, 1970
- 3. Bureau International Catholique de l'Enfance (BICE), *Dans la rue, avec les enfants*, JEUNES PLUS, Editions UNESCO, 1995
- 4. Child Labour Today, Facts and figures, BIT, Geneve, 1996
- 5. Conference Report, *European Conference on Street Children Worldwide*, 20-23 June 1996, Amsterdam, Foundation European Network on Street Children Worldwide, Brussels, October, 1996
- 6. Conventia ONU cu privire la drepturile copilului
- 7. Dimitriu, C., Constelatia familiala si deformarile ei, Editura didactica si pedagogica, Bucuresti, 1973
- 8. Dragan, J., Aproape totul despre...droguri, Editura militara, Bucuresti, 1994
- 9. Fundatia "Copiii României", Cartea Alba a Copilului, Romania, 1997
- 10. Ghidul lucratorului social si al educatorului in Romania, Copiii strazii, Municipalitatea Bucuresti, 1998
- 11. Gilbert, G., Des jeunes y entrent, des fauves en sortent, Editions Stock, Paris, 1982
- 12. Gitau, K., Street children with special reference to girls: a kenyan experience, African Academy of Sciences, Nairobi, 1995
- 13. Hansenne, Michel, M., Plus de 13 pour cent des enfants de 10 a 14 ans travaillent, BIT/96
- 14. Joachim, K., Mobile Jugendarbeit/streetwork /ISMO, Stuttgart, 1997
- 15. Laborit, H., L'homme dans la cite, Paris, Editions universitaire, 1972
- 16. Le travail dans le monde, BIT, Geneve, 1992
- 17. Lebas, J., Veber, F., Bucher, G., Medecine-humanitaire, Medecine-Sciences, Flammarion, 1994
- 18. Lemay, M., *J'ai mal a ma mere. Approche therapeutique du carence relationnel*, Collection "Pedagogie psychosociale", Editions Fleurus, Paris
- 19. Les enfants, l'ecoute et les animateurs, Programme Africain de Formation des animateurs urbains, ENDA, tiers monde, Jeunesse action, fevr., 1996
- 20. Les Mbindaan sans Mbindou, etude avec les petites bonnes a Dakar, ENDA, tier monde, Jeunesse action, fevr., 1996
- 21. Les problemes demographiques, Dossier d'information, FNUAP, 1995
- 22. Ligue Roumaine pour la Santé Mentale, *Raport final du programme Enfants des Rues*, 1 Nov.1992 30 Avril 1993, Bucarest, 1993
- 23. Miftode, V., Metodologia sociologica, Editura Porto-Franco, Galati, 1995
- 24. Mills, W., Imaginatia sociologica, Editura Politica, Bucuresti, 1975
- 25. Montessori, M., *Copilul, fiinta divina dar neinteleasa*, Centrul pentru Educatia si dezvoltarea Creativitatii, Bucuresti, 1991
- 26. Organization de Cooperation et de Developpement Economiques, *Integrer les services pour les enfants a risque*, OCDE, 1996
- 27. Osterrieth, P., L'enfant et la famille, Editions de Scarabee, Paris, 1967
- 28. Porio, E., *The National Project on Street Children: Outcomes and Lessons a Summary Evaluation Report*, Department of Sociology-Anthropology Ateneo de Manila University, 1995
- 29. Rapaille, G., Breugnot, P., Bouthier, B., Si vous ecoutiez vos enfants? 36 reponses aux problemes capitaux des relations parents/enfants, Editions Manges, Belokopi, 1978
- 30. Rapport du Comite special sur les jeunes, Jeunes: un plan d'action, Montreal, fevrier, 1986

80 **Bibliography**

31. Reseau d'Echange de Projets et de Programmes en faveur des Enfants de la Rue (REPPER), No 3, 1996

- 32. Symonds, P., The Psychology of Parent-Child relationship, Appleton-Century, 1939, New York
- 33. Tall, Moulaye, H., *Droits des jeunes vivant et travaillant dans les interstices du milieu urbain*, communication, UFO'95
- 34. Teclici, V., Vina de a fi copil al strazii, Editura Oscar Print, Bucuresti, 1996
- 35. Theorie und Praxis der sozialen Arbeit, nr.1/96
- 36. Comitetul National Roman pentru UNICEF, UNICEF, Romania, nr.1, 1992
- 37. Vlasceanu, L., Metodologia cercetarii sociologice, Editura stiintifica si enciclopedica, Bucuresti, 1982
- 38. Zamfir, C., Structurile gindirii sociologice, Bucuresti, Editura politica, 1987
- 39. Zamfir, C., Pop, M.,-A., Zamfir, E, *Romania '89-'93, Dinamica bunatarii sociale*, Editura Expert, 1994, Bucuresti
- 40. Zamfir, E., Situatia copilului si a familiei in Romania, Editura Alternative, Bucuresti, 1995
- 41. Zamfir, E., Zamfir, C., (coord) *Politici sociale, Romania in context european*, Editura Alternative, Bucuresti, 1995
- 42. Zamfir, C., (coord.) Dimensiuni ale saraciei, Editura Expert, 1995
- 43. Zamfir, C., (coord.) *Pentru o societate centrata pe copil*, Raport, Institutul de Cercetare a Calitatii Vietii, Bucuresti, 1997
- 44. Zarifopol, P., Localismul esential, in Paul Zarifopol, Pentru arta si literatura, Bucuresti, Editura Minerva, 1971
- 45. Weihs, Thomas, J., Sa-i ajutam iubindu-i, Editura Humanitas, Bucuresti, 1992
- 46. Weiss, J., Les loubardes de banlieu qui sement la terreur, Editions Garanciere, Paris, 1986
- 47. What Government Can Do, Seventh Annual report on the State of World Hunger, Hunger, Bread for the world Institute, 1997

Publications and collections:

- -Journal du Droit des Jeunes (1994-1996)
- -Travail, Le magazin de l'OIT (1995-1996)
- -Le Monde (1996)
- -Time (1997)
- -T.V, Horen und Sehen (1997)
- -Expres (1994-1995)
- -S.O.S. Copiii strazii! (1995-1997)
- -Romania libera (1996-1997)
- -Libertatea (1998)
- -Ziua (1997)
- -Republica (1997)

Annexe 1

1.WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE STREET CHILDREN?

(survey)

In the project "Resocialization of the Street Children" I have include questionnaire. Your honest opinion is very important for my project.	ed and the following
Please encircle your age and profession	
the letter/letters which contain the answer you consider right or, if neces opinion.	sary, express another
1. Who is the street kid?	
a) a handicaped child, a misfit;	
b) an abused child, neglected by institutions;	
c) a little adventurer;	
d) a child with serious family problems;	
e) I don' t know;	
f) another definition; Which is?	
2. The street kid is in the street because:	
a) he/she likes to be free;	
b) he/she comes from a poor family, with many members;	
c) he/she was beaten, neglected by family or institution;	
d) he/she is sent on the street by parents to begg;	
e) other reasons: which are?	
f) I don' t know.	
3. A street kid needs:	
a) drugs (cigarettes, drinks, glue-sniffer);	
b) affection, communication;	
c) existence assurance (permanent shelter, food);	
d) freedom;	
e) hygiene;	
f) education:	
g) something else: What will be this?	
h) I don' t know.	
4. Street children secure their incomes by:	
a) exploiting the smaller children;	
b) begging;	
c) stealing, robbing;	
d) working;	
e) prostitution;	

- f) the offers from charitable organisations or persons;
- g) other ways: Which are?

5. What do you feel for the street kids?

- a) pity, compasion;
- b) disgust, scorn;
- c) understanding;
- d) nothing, indifference;
- e) something else: What will be this?
- f) I don't know.

6. How do you help the street kids?

- a) with advice;
- b) material (cloths, food);
- c) financial;
- d) help in case of emergency (hospitalization, boarding in a centre);
- e) I don't help them;
- f) by other ways: Which are?
- g) I don't know.

7. Who must take care of the street children?

- a) the community;
- b) the family;
- c) the church;
- d) the state;
- e) the police;
- f) non-governmental organisations(NGO-s);
- g) others: Who?
- h) I don't know.

8. Street kids can be resocialized by:

- a) street social assistance;
- b) imprisoning them in reeducating centres;
- c) school integration/reintegration;
- d) family or defence organisations integration/reintegration;
- e) training professional integration;
- f) they can not be resocialized anymore;
- g) other ways: Which are?
- h) I don't know.

The questionnaire was applied with the help of a team made up of three students, on a sample of 300 subjects in April 1998. The questionnaires have been filled in the students' presence. The subjects have circled one or more answers.

The sample was made up of: students 97, pupils 54, intellectuals 52, workers 43, another categories 22, pensioners 32.

I have obtained the following results:

At the question; Who is the street kid?

45 answers were encircled: a handicapat child, a misfit;

196 - encircled: an abused child, neglected by institutions;

61 - encircled: a little adventurer;

238 - encircled: a child with serious family problems;

1 answer was encircled: I don't know;

3 - encircled: another definition: which (a homeless, an orphan).

To notice that first the street kid is defined as a child with serious family problems (238 answers) and secondly bad treatments (196 answers).

At the question: The street kid is in street because?

83 answers were encircled: he/she likes be free;

197 - encircled: he/she comes from a poor family, with many members;

248 - encircled: he/she was beaten, neglected by family or institution;

185 - encircled: he/she is sent on the street by parents to begg;

2 - encircled: other reason: which (orphan);

1 answer was encicled: I don't know.

The subjects considered main reasons for living in the street: bad treatments (248 answers), a poor family, with many members (197 answers) and being exploited by parents (185 answers).

At the question: A street kid needs?

13 answers were encircled: drugs (cigarettes, drinks, glue-sniffer)

146 - affection, communication;

147 - existence assurance (permanent shelter, food);

32 - freedom;

95 - hygiene;

141 - education;

1 - something else: What will this be? (positive company)

1 - I don' t know.

Noticeable is that to the question "A street kid needs" the subjects stressed equally an existence assurance (147 answers), affection, communication (146 answers) and education (141 answers).

At the question: **Street children secure their incomes by**?

116 answers were encircled: exploiting the smaller children;

275 - begging;

```
209 - stealing, robbing;
      70 - working;
      135- prostitution;
      93 - the offers from charitable organisation or persons;
      1 - other ways: Which (specialized institutions).
      The subjects consider that street children secure their incomes frist of all by begging (275),
theft, robbing (209), prostitution (135). Only 70 answers refer to securing incomes by working.
      At the question: What do you feel for the street kids?
      234 answers were incircled: pity, compasion;
      29 - disgust, scorn;
      66 - understanding;
      22 - nothing, indifference;
      2 - something else: what will this be (worry);
      9 - I don' t know.
      Most of them (234) feel pity, compasion towards street kids; only 22 answers specified nothing,
indifference and 29 disgust, scorn.
      At the question: How do you help the street kids?
      60 answers were encircled: with advice;
      91 - material (cloths, food);
      120 - financial:
      21 - help in case of emergency (hospitalization, boarding in a centre);
      72 - I don't help them;
      4 - by other ways (publication, publicized);
      11 - I don't know.
      At the question to notice is the financial help (120 answers), actually money offered to kids
who beg.
      At the question; Who must take care of the street children?
      148 answers were encircled; the community;
      149 - the family;
      90 - the church;
      190 - the state:
      49 - the police
      136 - non-govenmental organisations (NGO-s);
```

A great importance is given to the state (196 answers) - the maintaining of the outlook from the previous stage when the states' role was preponderent, but also NGO-s (136 answers) who imposed quickly after the Revolution.

4 - I don't know.

To the question: Street kids can be resocialized by?

77 answers were encircled: street social assistance;

- 60 imprisoning them in reeducating centres;
- 149 school integration/reintegration;
- 223 family or defence organisations integration/reintegration;
- 159 training professional integration;
- 20 they can not be resocialized anymore;
- 2 other ways: there are (adoption, national strategies);
- 4 I don' t know.

To the question "Street kids can be resocialized by ?" most answers consider that street kids' chances would be family or defence organisation integration/reintegration (223). Only 20 consider that they can not be resocialised anymore.

The importance of the survey is first because subjects learned about the complex problematic of the street kids and many of the subject only after filling in the questionnaire began to think to street children situation.

Annexe 2

PUBLICATIONS

-The asylum for homeless people, article published in "Republica" daily, on 22nd of November 1997.

-La legislation ne protege pas les enfants de la rue, article mailed to the publication "Journal du Droits des Jeunes", Paris, in January.

-Street kids, at their "home", interview for the "Viata libera" ("Free Life"), daily, Galati, 4 May 1998.

-Street solution or escaping from anonymity, interview for the "Viata libera" daily, Galati, 7 May 1998.

-NGOs and their saving centers, interview for "Viata libera" daily, 11 May 1998.

-Street kids legislation has, as Ianus, two faces. interview for "Viata libera" daily, 26 May 1998.

-The guilt of being a street child, "Oscar Print" Publishing House, Bucharest, June 1998.

-Diagnosis and fighting strategies, informative material for mass-media, with the occasion of a round table with the same name. The materials were more publicized in the articles: Romania has almost 6000 street kids ("Azi" daily, 9-10 June 1998), and After 1989, the street kids number increased from year to year ("Transilvania Journal" daily, 14 July 1998).

Publications - selections

"A sociological study about the multiple causes and problems involving the street children at us, in Romania, and in other countries, based on three years of documentation and research, can't be achieved by one author, but by a community of persons and institutions, as it has happend with the present work.

To this community I now thank for the different kind of help they offered.

I thank professor Catalin Zamfir, the coordonator of my doctor's degree thesis and professor doctor Elena Zamfir, head of the department of social assistance, for the quality and the promptness of their guidances as well as for the information and the documentary material they supplied.

I want to adress special thanks to the SOROS Foundations for an Open Society, which as part of the Research Support Scheme programme, has approved my research project, allowing me to undertake, due to the grant I obtained, a profitable trip to Czech Republic, Germany and France and gave me the chance to study, in a most exhaustively way, the street kids phenomenon in our country.

I have to mention the generosity and the transparence in offer of information and documentary materials of some foreign establishments and centres, like: the Ministry of Work and Social Protection and the Nadeje Organisation from Praga, Stadtjugendarm Kinder und Jugensozialarbeit from Munich, Diaconisches Werk der EKD (ISMO) from Stuttgart. CIDEF and OCDE from Paris, The Court for Children and the Association Jeunes Errants from Marsilia.

A substantial support in the documentation process and in the completion of the bibliography, I received abroad, in Praga, from the student Madalina Turcanu, in Munich from the lawyer Vlad Negreanu and the journalist Raluca Negreanu and in Marseille, from my brother Vlad Teclici.

The "Open House" Association and the "Family and Child Protection" Foundation from Bucharest had an important role in the elaboration of this book, as they allowed me to conduct

my research programme in the day centres and as they have helped with documents, informations and other types of needed support.

Mr. Dan Popescu, chief of the Centre of Training and Retraining for the Prevention of Unemployment in Romania, has been extremly responsive and has understood the importance of the project, definetely supporting over 20 street kids in order to experiment the way of social reinsertion by professional training and I also thank him for what he intends to do for these extremely marginalized children.

A dear thought to my family, who believes so much in my work and who supports me, considering it a natural thing to share me with the libraries, the research trips and the investigator and writer activity.

And last but not least I am grateful to Mrs. Angelica Moldovan and Mr. Ioan Radu, chiefs of "Oscar Print" Publishing House for the special working conditions they offered, which allowed me to finish this book and for all cost of editing and printing, without which 'The Guilt of being a stret child" would have never got into the readers' hands".

(Valentina Teclici: Foreword of The guilt of being a street child)

"Valentina Teclici's study brings into question, for the first time, the homeless problem in Romania in its true dimension and related to the world situation. Thus, the solution appears too - more or less successful - solutions which have been applied from the cognition of the phenomenon to its publicization and to its true state.

In these conditions, the very mediated problem of the homeless children does not appear any more as the most disastrous image in the world and it can contribute in making work, as efficient as possible the numerous NGO-s which have "popped out like mushrooms after rain" and which "through their mediatic buzzing" do not solve the situation but infinitesimal.

The author presents permanently, in parallel, two such hypotheses with their plans and achievements, meaningless but real and feasible! Only the consultation of this serious study by qualified state organizations could create the basis for an efficient guide in measures they can and have to take.

The study succeeds in reestablishing things in their true light, in presenting homeless children in the real dimension of the problem, including it in the same time in the world situation. The study spotlights - as mentioned before - the situation in our country in comparison with the one from the advanced countries and the one from the third world countries and brings not only the arguments of the numbers, but also the one of already experimented solutions by charitable, non governmental or state organizations.

The author convinces us that there is still something to be done if the NGO-s would do their work with a little more enthusiasm and with the material support, more or less necessary, if they would go from mediatic theorizations of all kind to useful solutions that would lead to the real saving of same homeless children to integrate them in the world they were expelled or marginalized for a period of time from.

The study makes us think and makes us realize that it takes just a litle to offer the hand to these poor creatures found on the edge of the precipice. Can we deny it to them?

What really surprises is the fact that our Orthodox Church couldn't find ways to offer its support and protection with the pulpit prestige and the mercy it's preaching..

Valentina Teclici has exhaustively investigated the causes of the appearance and persistance - even evolution - of the homeless phenomenon. She succeded in presenting them to us in the places they "wander", in the street's agitation - their home - and she presents to us the official documents which are destined to protect them but which remain, most of them,only "on paper". The author used previous studies and continued them to a prognosis that can be taken in consideration.

In the end I would like to stress once more the seriousness that she presented in this study partly from our world, world that those who are generating it will never see the way it really is because they don't have access to the information about them and about their descendants".

(Psycho-sociologist Valentina Negritoiu: "A few thoughts" in *The guilt of being a street kid*)

"The Secretary of Transport, Mr. Traian Basescu, considered that if he provided "the bell pepper" (as Mr. Traian B sescu called them) with shelter, in a three-stared hotel, plus other services (clothes, food) he would work out immediately the situation of the homeless children and adults from Bucharest and would "clean" the image of the Northern Station.

The initiative of launching two lists: one consisting in some tempting material promises and the other one containing the names of those who chose the new "outlook", without a previous diagnosis and without the slightest strategy, proved that not even the surface goal, the "cleaning" of the Northern Station could not be attained. Precisely, after two weeks, among those 180 homeless children and adults transported in a bus and sheltered at Metrorex hotel, about 100 of them returned in the Northern Station area, simply proving that they were persons with psychology, who had to face a lot of problems and not some "trashes" who must remain in a settled place just because somebody decided so.

The idea of gathering in a single place a significant number of psicho-socially handicapped persons, aging from 8 to 48, with a different period of loafing, from a few months to more than 10 years, and having different problems is totally uninspired. It's more than a naivety to think that some persons who have actually lived on the street for years, some of them for more than 10 years will be able to adapt themselves suddenly to the terms and to the conditions imposed by a certain environment, just because it's closer to normality and because somebody thinks it's exactly what has been missing.

A hotel will consolidate the power of the leaders who imposed themselves here like in any other colectivity. Those who are small and weak can be easily controled, subdued and exploited. Better than on the street, leaders do and undo laws, freequently underwining the authority of those 5 or 6 social assistants and students who look after them during the day, however an extremely small team comparing to the member and to the peculiarity of the clients in order to be able to deal individually with their problems.

All over the world, they no longer emphasize on quantity, on those attempts to work out the difficulties "in the lump".

In Marseille, for example, "Les Jeunes Errants" organization deals with homeless children, most of them being emigrants. A pluridisciplinary team, leaded by 6-7 specialists (psychologists, sociologists, social assistants, teachers) work every day with 12-14 young people, emphasizing on the quality of communication. Those persons are helped to understand who they are where they come from, what their potential is, where they go to. In Munich, like anywhere else, homeless teenagers, divided in group of 10-12 are shetered in different boarding houses for 3-6 months, according to their problems. Some of these houses shelter those who reached the stage of counselling and self-discovery. Others shelter young persons who already found their ways and who are attending a qualification class.

The space offered by Ms Traian B sescu to the rejected persons, facing different degrees of confusion is a highly risky territory (robbery, rows, "prostitution-making") far too expensive for a false social reintegration.

The absense of any outlook is the same as on the street. The ship will drive to nowhere.

Maybe the use of the hotel in an eficiently economical way and the reinvestment of money in familial centers, boarding houses for social flat would be a more realistic solution which would grant many chances of resocialization to those who still could be helped to help themselves.

(Drd. Valentina Teclici : *The Asylum for homeless people* article published in "Republica" daily, on 22nd of November 1997)

Talking to VALENTINA TECLICI, candidate for doctor" s degree in sociology,

chief editor at "Oscar Print" Publishing House, Bucharest

We all know Valentina Teclici, the writer, by the time she was living in Galatzi and worked as an editor at "Porto Franco" Publishing House, by the time she walked into the children literature world with some wonderful books. Her talent of approaching childhood universe didn't stop here. She sought deeper and she was shocked to find out that for some, childhood was not a fairy land. There is a world of uncertainty, a world without affection, in which frost, misery and every at step dangers are realities who lack normality. It's the street children world, to whom Valentina Teclici dedicates her book, The guilt of being a street kid (in course of being published at "Oscar print" Publishing House.

The book is a study of the phenomenon itself, approached with scientific rigour, having an important point to start her sociology doctor's degree written work.

-How did you meet them?

-In different hypostases, in the permanent and day centers which try to assure them a part of the rights they should benefit through legislation. I met them in their cruel world, on streets, in ducts, because I had to understand as well as I could their way of living.

-You studied them?

-For six months I made a detailed investigation, on a sample of 100 street kids sample, who were frequenting the day centers "The Open House" and "Pigmalion" from Bucharest. I wanted to know their psychology, their problems, which are the reasons for them living in the street and which are their chances to be social reintegrated. Thanks to the grant I received from abroad, as part of Research Support Scheme (SOROS) Programme, I extended my research in the towns where the phenomenon is more obvious, as well as in Czech Republic, Germany and France.

_Which is the street children statute abroad?

_In Czech Republic, the phenomen is almost absent, but I was interested in the prevention and intervention strategies which can be adopted to our problems. Germany has a large number of street kids (one of the causes being the unification): 5.000-7.0000 after some sources and after others 20.000-40.000. They are dressed like hippies, they have long hair and they walk on streets on roller skates. They are cleaner than the Romanian streetkids which are miserable.

-Is this the only difference?

_While Romanian street assistants deal with glue-sniffer, the German assistants deal with marihuana, hashish, cocaine and with juvenile delinquency in serious forms.

-Are there street kids in all countries?

-According to the study I' ve made in the International Centres from Stuttgart and Paris, the phenomenon is spread almost all over the world. The oldest is in Latin America and Africa. The latest is in the countries of the former communist camp. If in Bucharest there are now 2.000 - 2.500 street children, in Moscow therewill be over 20.000.

-What about developed countries?

-In USA (the figures are 10 years old) over one million children, between 11 and 17 years old, are leaving home in a year time. In London, 50.000 kids are sleeping in refuges, in shelters, on benches, in hotels, in abandoned waggons, in underground stations.

In Marseille are 400, most of them immigrants. There I met a 17 years old Romanian boy, from Iasi. Some of them are coming from good families, but they are suffering of roadmania (tendence of travelling a lot).

-Are there the same causes?

-Their motivation is diverse. The phenomenon is, in fact, an effect of a causal chain - in our case, half century old. The main cause is the most distant in time: the industrial civilization. It led to an excessive urbanization, to peasants migration to towns, to the distroing of traditions and the impossibility of their adjustment. On the other hand, the demographical policy put the accent on quantity in the detriment of quality, while state social protection diminished. All these had as effect the institutionalisation of an increasing number of children and the decrease of parental responsability".

(Violeta Ionescu - Street kids, at their "home", interview for the "Viata libera", daily, Galati,

4 May 1998)

"We learned, in the first part of our dialogue with Valentina Teclici, that the main cause of children's going out in the street in Romania was and still is the industrial civilization. Most of the families which are alienated from the rural environment have lost their traditional marks and haven't succeeded in getting used to the city conditions. They seem to be like those plants whose roots are withering, for their children often choose the golden mean: they go out in the street, as an escape from obscurity.

Following the investigations that our interlocutor made in order to establish "the guilt of being a street child", she reached the most sordid places.

-Where do these children come from?

-I held an inquiry at a kind of "ghetto" in Bucharest, where I met a few families having children who were dirtier than those from the ducts. I went to three flats of one room which were inhabited by thirteen persons. There was such a promiscuity out there... A few beds improvised against walls; in the middle of the room there was an oil lamp for cooking, electricity was cut off (an improvisation was flickering on the hall, as if there were some fireworks), they had no matter. I met two eleventwelve year old girls who didn't possess birth certificates because their mother didn't bother to declare them when she left the maternity. And these cases are quite frequent.

-What do these families do for leaving?

-Most of them are disorganised families, some of them very degraded, being a real danger for their children. Because of the alcohol consumption, their behaviour oscillates between physical harm and emotional indifference, between abuse and exploitation (by sending them to beg). There are some parents who work occasionally: they sell seeds, they clean staircases, wash glasses, beg and steal. It is interesting that most of the street kids consider begging and stealing to be real "jobs" like any others. They come from those "poverty bags" where promiscuity is an accepted way of living. They are willing to live from hand to mouth without working. If we analyse the fact that 49 per cent of the homeless children are gypsies, we come to the interesting conclusion that not even them can take care of their children anylonger, which represents an unprecedented issue. It's a matter of degradation also on their level. They were divided into "very rich" and "very poor" and they don't help one another anymore.

-How does the state involve in the protection of street children?

-The state couldn't provide protection at the family level, so it sheltered them into some school houses for children. This is the way that other category showed up, the one of semiorphans, of social orphans, children who are deprived of the family climate and patterns.

-Do you mean the "Houses" that made these children go out in the street again?

-In a hotel space these children become anonymous. They don't feel protected, they are beaten by their older mates who are deliberately trained to "discipline" them.

That's why those who can't face this kind of "treatment" choose the street. They are searching among other street children what they really miss. They want to represent something in these groups, they want to be remarked.

-How was this issue perceived before '89?

-The problem existed even then, but it was very well concealed by the actors of the former system, especially by the policemen who were gathering the children from the streets, in some permanent police raids, they were keeping them at the Minor Centers and then they were taking them by force to the "Houses" that they fled from. Mrs. Luminita Cioroiu, the headmistress of the Minor Center in Constanta, told me that she was sheltering about 500 children yearly. After '97, their number decreased to 300. Mrs. Constanta Matei, from the Minor Center in Galati, told me she had 700 children yearly, and they are only 500-600 of them. The police was more efficient at that time, but it didn't succeed in stopping the phenomenon, because the system was and still it deficient precisely in these "Houses". Although the measure of restriction by institutionalizing them failed, it still continues nowadays, with similar results. In Bucharest, at the "Aaron Florian" Minor Center there are no vacancies, but beginning with '92, six more similar centers have been created.

The state took action only at the effect level. But concerning the causal level the state should give its attention to those strategies with governmental implication which involve contraceptive education and preventive custody. In the case of an unwanted birh, social and financial assistance should be given, and the abandoned child should be adopted or placed into a family. For example, a few governmental institutions, such as "Pinocchio" and "Ciresarii" have 30-40 vacancies(places). So, it came out that anonymity does a lot of harm to the child's mental condition. The national strategies should take strong action on the family level, through counciliation and social assistance. But unfortunately, in our country social assistance has just begun to take shape".

(Violeta Ionescu: *Street solution or escaping from anonymity*, interview for the "Viata libera" daily, Galati, 7 May 1998)

"Bucharest: -Glue-sniffers, little tramps are the terms we use when we refer to those kids for whom the street is the only "home". These terms, with a slight derogatory shade, show the feelings we have for the street children. Immediately after 1990, when the phenomenon's impact was maximun most of us felt sympathy for them.

Slowly, the sympathy turned into indifference.

Some are annoyed by the presence of dirty kids inhaling glue-sniffer in the underground, buses or trams. We pretend we don't see them, convinced that they are not our responsability. "The state should solve this problem" answered most of the quetionned grown-ups in a survey about street children

Fewer mentioned among the responsable factors community, non-governmental organizations, family, church or police.

Almost half of the questionnes do not give one chance of social integration (283 from 600 subjects answered that these street kids can not be resocialised). And still there are chances, showed the results obtained by the non-governmental organizations active in child's protection field.

A generalized phenomenon

Street kids aren' t just a Romanian specific feature. They have became a component of the urban landscape from all over the world, especially in the poor areas from the Southern hemisphere. New UNICEF statistics show that almost 150 millions kids and young people under 18 do not have a stable home and they are forced to survive on the street. In Argentina, the number of street kids is estimated to few millions, in Brazil over 30 millions kids live in misery from whom 7 millions are

completely abandoned. In Rio de Janeiro are aproximately 10,000 kids living on the street. In Bolivia, their number is of 20,000, and another 60,000 kids under 14 are working on the street. In the United States of America over one million young people between 11 and 17 run away yearly from home. Most of the disappareances aren't denoncted by parents at police. A statistics from 1987 shows that in London 50,000 teenagers lived in refuges, pensions, abandoned waggons, parks and underground stations. In France, official sources estimate that there are over 10,000 street kids and in Germany between 5,000 and 7,000. The phenomenon doesn't avoid Russia: from 200.000 persons without shelter who live in Moscow, 20.000 street kids. In Sankt Petersburg the number pendulates between 10,000 and 20,000.

In Romania, street kids drawn the attention after 1991. In 1993 a social investigation ordered by the Government and financed by the European Council established that in Bucharest there were 1.400 street kids.

In 1997, The Inner Ministery and The Department for Child Protection estimated that in Romania there are between 4,000 and 6,000 street kids, from whom 1,500 - 2,500 only in Bucharest.

Only 35 per cent are Bucharester, the rest migrating from big cities but also from rural areas.

The numerical estimations are very hard to make because of the of mobility of kids in the areas of the same city but also because of the migration from one area to another. Sure is that in the last period the number of street kids increased. And more alarming it increased the number of kids from the gypsy ethnie.

Alarming statistics of countries level

In Hunedoara county, the number is estimated at 400 and 500 street kids. In 1997 in the Under age Reception Center from Deva transited 260 kids, from whom 152 street kids were boarded for vagrancy. In Deva only 50 per cent from the street kids are from the county, the rest being from others. Almost 80 per cent are boys. The main reasons they prefer life in the street, despite its dangers, are bad treatments applied by parents or pedagogues, disorganised families, behaviour disorders.

In Timisoara, there are 180 and 200 street kids. They are very dirty and inhale ostentatious toxic substances, in large groups of almost 10-15, especially in crowded places. The under age Transit Center "Saint Nicolae" (set up in 1996 by the Mayoralty has a capacity of only 15 permanent places. In 1997, 125 kids have transited the center, from whom 117 come from other counties. 65 per cent had ran away from defence institutions. From the whole number only 28 have been reintegrated - 10 in families and 18 in orphanages.

Over 200 street kids it is estimated that there are in Bihor county, from whom 50 (permanents) in Oradea. A police statistics regarding street kids situation in this county showed that in 1995 a hundred came from rural area, over 60 per cent having between 12 and 16 years old.

In Arad county the estimations made by Police show that there are almost 100 street kids. Comparing to last years we notice a decrease of the street kids. In the Under age Reception Center from Arad have been boarded, in 1997, 180 kids. 50 per cent having the age between 8 and 12 years old. 20 per cent ran away from orphanages. The Under age Reception Center from Arad has a better regime than others in the country, endowed with security systems and looking like prisons. In Arad county there are 20 houses family type with a capacity of 10-12 places each.

In Cluj county there are over 100 street kids, from whom 80 are in the county 's capital. Here the Reception Center has a capacity of 20 places. As the one from Arad it is an open center where kids can play and walk. In 1997 the center was transited by almost 300 kids, from whom only 10 per cent ran away from defence institutions.

A big number of street kids are registered in Bacau (360 in 1995-1996, according to Police estimation) and Galati (250).

The state's institutions couldn't stop in any way the evolution of the kids number who live in the street. In their help came the non-governmental institutions. In this moment there are 140 NGOs active in child protection field. A study made by the sociologist Valentina Teclici in two under age reception centers ("Pigmalion" and the"Open House", Bucharest) shows that 56 per cent from the questionned kids are in the street for four to ten years. This proves, in the author's opinion, the inefficiency of the centers set up by the state and even by NGOs for children resocialisation. Their perspectives continue to remain gloomy: they will join to "arbourers" without shelter who live from one day to another or will become permanent clients of jails. Specialits say that their integration chance depends on programmes and intervention strategies, on the good faith of the staff who works in this field, but also in the outlook of the entire society.

"Society should understand that it carries the guilt for creating objectively the street kid's situations and that it is totally unfair to mentain towards him an attitude formed of prejudices, hostility and scorn", says Valentina Teclici in her book *The guilt of being a street child*.

(After 1989, the street kids number increased from year to year in "Transilvania Journal" daily, 14 July 1998)

Romania has almost 6000 street children

Bad treatments and being neglected by the parents are the main reasons why street children are running away from home, sustains the sociologist Valentina Teclici. She studied for a period of time street kids behaviours and ascertained that the guilt doesn't belong to the transition we are crossing over but that there are many causes which lead to choosing this way of life, one of them being the community indifference next to excessive urbanisation and industrialization.

"The phenomenon existed also before 1990, but it was camouflaged by the authorities of that time" showed Teclici.

Carmen Raicu, chief of The Direction of Social Assistance of the Capital's Town Holl, considers that after December 1989 "the phenomenon exploded, on one hand because of the desertion of the authorities from their obligations and on the other hand because of the euphoria created by the freedom feeling".

Alarmingly big is the number of children who live in the street with age between 3 and 10, and the number of kids between 4 and 7 is also very big, which shows that the programmes applied during the last years didn't give the expected results.

The sociologist Valentina Teclici sustains that in their majority, those who live in the street end up tramps or delinquents.

The state with its rigid and heavy mechanisms can not ensure their reintegration, the first step being school reintegration.

The ones present reached the conclusion that the reception centers whether of state of private should have a small number of children and not like now when the children houses have hundreds of kids which amplifies their frustrations and makes them give up the steps towards social reintegration.

It was ascertained that almost all kids from orphanages when they reach the age of 18 don't even know to shop because they never did something like this. "They keep waiting for somebody to give them what they need unlike the kids who have families where they learn how to live every day life", also said Teclici. The problem of those who reach 18 is much more serious; they have to begin a life without a guaranteed house or place to work. "At their departure from schools they are not competitive, not even if they are hired, because they are not prepared for this", said the sociologist Teclici, adding that the system should be changed.

The manager Carmen Raicu believes that the state should interfere at the family level to prevent child abandonment, promoting the idea that parents who abandoned several kids should be sanctioned by society and laws. Teclici believes that in the last period have appeared two new phenomena which

94 • Annexe 2

should worry the office workers from the Ministry of Work and Social Protection: it had alarmingly growed the number of kids who leave the children school houses, also the number of Gypsy abandoned kids. This information proves that recently mutations have produced, meaning a tradition degradation of the Gypsy family level who, before, no matter the living level would have never abandon its children.

In the presented study results that the total number of street kids is of 5-6,000, but they are migrating a lot through the country.

70-80 per cent of these are boys and most of them are between 11-18 years old (57 per cent are over 15 years old). 65 per cent street kids come from Bucharest. Most of them left their families because of bad treatments (61 per cent), or because of poverty (25 per cent). 14 per cent get in the street out of curiosity, roadmania(tendence of travelling a lot) or because of the influence of an older brother or another child.

A survey made by non-governmental organizations shows that average citizens never thought if they have any kind of obligations towards these kids or if, lacking an efficiencious reaction of the community these kids can became delinquents. Pupils and students consider that the main need on the street kids is affection and communication, while the pensioners stress more on education.

The first survey applied on the adults proved that the population thinks too little to the street kids' problem considering that solving it is the duty of state, church, police, non-governmental organizations and the effects of this indifference are totally neglected.

(Romania has almost 6000 street kids -"Azi" daily, 9-10 June 1998)

95 • Appendix

Appendix
When we are playing, our life is fine!



Christmas at the OPEN HOUSE Association



96 • Appendix

No comment!



We have free time, but we have a lot of problems

