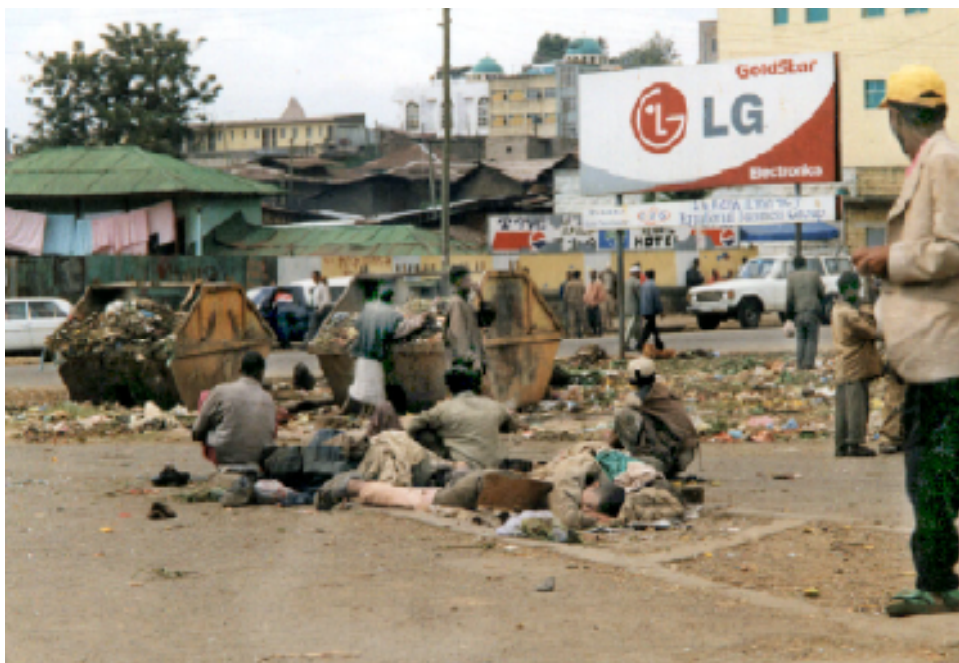# Neglected and forgotten: the Human Rights of street children

- Poverty reduction and development in Ethiopia -

Master thesis by

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Photo on cover: Globalization and inequality, Addis Ababa.

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Life on the street seen through the eyes of a street child

Abstract

Street children constitute an example of the globally deprived and poor. They are victims of an unequal economic and social system. The case study on street children in Addis Ababa serves as an example for the global intensification of economic and social marginalization. The scrutiny of their situation highlights the multidimensionality of development and poverty. The aim of this thesis is to understand the street children phenomenon and to seek sustainable solutions. What are convincing concepts and development strategies for solving the street children phenomenon? In addition to conceptualizing the street children phenomenon from a grass root perspective, the concepts of development and human rights are scrutinized. The street children phenomenon is a symptom for the underlying problem of poverty that is aggravated by the global relations of inclusion and exclusion. Poverty is not only measurable in terms of economic poverty but must be seen as social exclusion and hopelessness. Solving the street children phenomenon thus is about changing global and societal structures for the benefit of children. Human rights herewith have a crucial role to play by formulating needs into rights and by holding states accountable. NGOs have an important role as advocates for ensuring that the rights of the grass root are taken into account at the international and national level.

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Abbreviations

CAT – Convention against torture

CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women

CERD- Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination

CRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child

ECOSOC – Economic and Social Council

EHRCO - Ethiopian Human Rights Council

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization

FSCE - Forum on Street Children Ethiopia

HDI – Human Development Index

HFC – Hope for Children

HIPC – Heavily Indebted Poor Countries

ICCPR – International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ICESCR – International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

IFIs – International Financial Institutions

IGOs – Inter-governmental organisations

IMF – International Monetary Fund

LDC – Least developed countries

MDG – Millennium Development Goals

NGO – Non-governmental Organisation

ODA – Official Development Assistance

PRSP – Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers

SAP – Structural Adjustment Policies

SIDA - Swedish International Development Agency

TNCs – Trans national companies

UDHR – Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN – United Nations

UNDP – United Nations Development Program

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNICEF – United Nations Children's Fund

WHO – World Health Organisation

WSG – Win Souls for God

A. Introduction

Extreme poverty is increasingly a national and international challenge today. While globalization might be profitable for the 'connected', Africa is increasingly deprived of the benefits due to internal and external factors. The *Global* impacts on the *Local* and vice versa and it is decisive to be *in* or *out*. Uneven distribution of resources around the world exacerbates inequality among and within nations. For street children there has not been any "trickle down effect" of the promises of liberal economic global development. Street children represent 'the poor' and globally deprived.

The intention of this study is to see the relation between poverty and globalization. The point of departure is the assumption that there is a causality-link between globalization and the growing number of street children and people in extreme poverty who fall outside of the benefits of Globalizations. The hypothesis is that the prevailing paradigm of global economism negatively affects the way the phenomena of poverty and street children are dealt. The case study on street children in Addis Ababa serves to give a specific example of poverty and global marginalization. The scrutiny of their situation highlights the multidimensionality of development and poverty reduction.

The thesis begins with some background information on Ethiopia and the presentation of the case study, followed by a definition of street children. Part one of the thesis deals with the concepts of development and human rights. The impacts of globalization are scrutinized and concepts of poverty and development are presented. The World Bank PRSP-approach is referred to with a special focus on human rights and children, followed by a section on the Ethiopian PRSP and its relevance for street children. The succeeding chapter highlights the role of human rights for street children. It gives an overview on the various human rights instruments that are relevant for street children. Followed by a critical assessment of children's and street children's rights in Ethiopia. Part two of the thesis attempts to conceptualize the street children phenomenon from a grass root perspective. The approach of NGOs for helping street children is critically looked at and special reference is given to NGOs working with street children in Addis Ababa – in particular the NGO Hope for Children.

The angle from which the topic is dealt with derives from development studies and from studies in human rights and cultural anthropology.

1. The aim of this thesis

The aim of this thesis is to understand the street children phenomenon and to seek sustainable solutions for its alleviation. Two different perspectives are considered: the development- and the human rights perspective, and the NGO approach is examined. Which concepts and development strategies offer the most convincing, effective and sustainable solutions for the street children phenomenon? Are street children's most pressing needs reflected in the Ethiopian PRSP? What are the impacts of globalization, and the economic and social context on street children? Is the Human Rights concept a helpful tool for the improvement of the situation of street children?

2.Some facts about Ethiopia

Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world. While the average per capita GNI for least developed countries is 295$, it is as low as 100$ in Ethiopia. Huge populations have been exposed to displacement, insecurity, worsening poverty, and destitution as a result of the long-drawn war with Eritrea, the economic policy of structural adjustment, and the ethnic politics put in place after the fall of the military regime[1]. Ethiopia cooperates with the IMF and World Bank. The provided financial assistance is used for the consolidation of debt, to build up infrastructure and food security. Around 1 million lives survive only due to the World Food Program[2]. Ethiopia's foreign debt is 5.4$ billion, while the amount of yearly development aid is 693$ million[3]. Only 4.3% of public expenditure is spent on education and only 1.3% on public health, while the budget for military expenditure makes out 9.2% (in 1992)[4].

Ethiopia has a population of 65 million out of which 45% is under 15 years of age[5]. Life expectance of men is 41 years, of women 43 years[6]. In average a family has 7 to 8 children. Getting many children increases the likelihood of their survival since the under 5 mortality-rate is extremely high. In addition to that children are seen as a sort of life insurance and

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[1] Ethiopian Human Rights Council, 41st Special Report, *Inhuman and Cruel Violation of the Rights of Children*, 30 April 2001, http://www.ehrco.net/reports/special_report41.html.
[2] Spiegel almanach, *Welt-Jahrbuch 2003 – die Staaten der Erde: Zahlen, Daten, Analysen*, Hamburg, Spiegel Buchverlag, 2000, p.103.
[3] ibidem, p.103.
[4] ibidem, p.103.
[5] Ibidem, p.65.
[6] ibidem, p.65.

labour force. The majority of the population works in agriculture, with coffee being the dominating export product. Just 2% of the population works in industry.

In 1995 the government passed a policy to restructure the state by enhancing ethnicity as ideology of division. This transformed the country from a unitary state into an ethnic federation. The introduction of a federal system in Ethiopia promoted decentralization and thus also local participation[7]. The Ethiopian government calls itself democratic, but first of all the ethnic group in power, Tigray-Amharas, is dominating the political agenda, secondly elections are criticized for not being free and fair and thirdly, neither the press not the judiciary is independent. This needs to be had in mind concerning the relation between NGOs and the Ethiopian government. NGOs need to register, which can be seen as a political tool to control their work to be government-friendly. The Ethiopian government's own engagement for street children is very limited. It provides services for about 1,100 children in especially difficult circumstances but there are more than 100,000 street children in Addis Ababa alone. There is an overall impression that the government prefers to ignore the problem.

3. The case study

This thesis deals with street children as a particularly urban phenomenon. The numbers in Ethiopia have reached alarming proportions with an estimated 200,000 street children – and around 100,000 in the capital Addis Ababa alone. One quarter of them are girls who are particularly vulnerable to various kinds of abuse[8]. The ministry of labour and social affairs estimates another 500,000 children to be at risk of ending up on the street. There are a number of reasons for children living on the streets: family violence, family breakdown, rural-to-urban migration, poverty or death of parents from HIV/AIDS. Street children often run away from their homes to reduce the burden on the family or simply because the family cannot cope with another mouth to be fed. The problem is made worse by the current drought problem. Streetism is an inter-related phenomenon with complex roots. Street children rely on state assistance and require specifically targeted programs. In the Ethiopia these state programs still lack, leaving the responsibility for street children to the community or charitable NGOs.

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[7] Government of Ethiopia, *Ethiopia: Development Framework and Plan of Action 2001-2010,* presentation of the GFDRE on the third UN Conference on the LDCs, Brussels, 2001, p.58.
[8] UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, IRINnews, *ETHIOPIA: UNICEF concerned over round-up of street children,* http://www.irinnews.org, 26.7.2002.

4. Street children – a definition

Street children are children who are abandoned or neglected for whom the street has become their home[9]. Children living on the street can be distinguished into *street children* (who decide to stay on the street) and *abandoned children* (who have no alternative). Also they can be categorized into children *on* the street and children *of* the street. The use of such terms however clouds over the diversity of experiences of the children that populate the streets[10]. Although classified as a group, street children are heterogeneous. Instead of a uniform profile the different motives and backgrounds must be considered also in poverty reduction. Neither the poor in general, nor street children in particular, are a homogenous group. One has to be aware that a Western concept of childhood dominates most literature on the phenomenon of street children. Some cultures might view a child migrating to the city and working on the street as legitimate.

Many children been pulled out of school by parents who could not afford fees or needed the children's labour to supplement family income[11]. In particular the cultural constructions of the boy-child might enhance the likelihood of boys to become street children[12]. Most street children migrate from rural areas to the cities, but some also come from urban families. Poverty, family problems, war, droughts, the inadequacy of government social policy and urbanization are mentioned as causes for the phenomenon of street children, but also the transition to the market economy enhances in the emergence of street children[13]. The increasing number of street children is an expression for the negative impact of globalization on the poorest of the poor. Globalization fosters urbanization including the promises of a better life in the cities with less hardship than on the countryside. The loss of traditional family values and the adoption of individually shaped urban life and monetisation aggravate streetism due to the rupture of community bonds[14]. The subculture of the street can nevertheless in some cases become a substitute for community life for children. The street can be a place of exclusion and marginalization but also a place for socialization and integration. For some children the street is a place of identity, solidarity and belonging. The context is

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[9] G. Van Bueren, *The International Law on the Rights of the Child,* Boston, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1995, p.284.

[10] A. Invernizzi, *Straßenkinder in Afrika, Asien und Osteuropa – eine kommentierte Bibliographie,* Bonn, Zentralstelle Weltkirche der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz, 2001, p.79.

[11] B. Rwezaura, *Law, culture and children's rights in Eastern and Southern Africa - Contemporary challenges and present-day dilemmas,* in W. Ncube (ed.), *Law, culture, tradition and children's rights in eastern and Southern Africa*, Dartmouth, Ashgate, 1998, p.292.

[12] ibidem., pp.298-299.

[13] A. Invernizzi, op.cit.pp.88-89.

[14] Ibidem., pp.94-95.

different from place to place and from person to person. Therefore to listen to the conceptualization of the children on their situation themselves, their experience with and relationship to the street, is essential for understanding their needs.

The cause of streetism and the consequence of it have to be differentiated. Street children are frequently harassed by local security and are subjected to pressures they cannot influence. Many street children live outside official norms and regulations and often find themselves criminalized even though they did not commit any crime. Their "illegality" makes them subject to harassment and to the constant threat of eviction[15]. Discrimination creates problems and impacts on inter-personal relationships for street children[16]. It is predominantly the perception of the public that criminalizes and excludes the street child[17]. Stigmatization and violence against street children drives the child into identifying itself with the role of a delinquent. For understanding the complexity that causes the phenomenon a holistic approach is necessary, including poverty, discrimination, social relations and culture[18]. Poverty alone is not an explanation for streetism.

Part I

B: The development perspective

This chapter discusses development as an approach with potential for poverty reduction and for street children. In how far target development strategies and PRSPs really the most vulnerable and poor? Do they focus on the prevention of child poverty, which is fundamental for breaking the poverty cycle? How does globalization, and how does the economic and social context impact on street children? Are street children's most pressing needs reflected in the Ethiopian PRSP?

The chapter starts with discussing globalization as the surrounding context. Followed by conceptualizations of development and poverty, including the inherent link between street children, development and poverty reduction and human rights. Then Poverty reduction Strategy Papers are presented and critically scrutinized. The close link between children and poverty reduction is highlighted. The last part of the chapter looks at the implementation of the PRSPs in Ethiopia and its relevance for street children in Addis Ababa.

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[15] J.Hardoy, *the urban child in the Third World: urbanization trends and some practical issues*, Innocenti Occasional papers, Florence, UNICEF, 1992, p.3.
[16] ibidem., p.57.
[17] A. Invernizzi, op.cit., p.99.
[18] Ibidem., p.87.

1. Globalization as the context

Globalization is a dialectic process between the global and the local. It describes the increasing interdependence of markets, states and civil societies. Decisions and activities in one part of the world have significant consequences for other parts of the globe. Globalization unites and connects but also divides people as never before. Yet the benefits of globalization are highly unevenly distributed (the three richest people have assets exceeding the GDP of the 48 least developed countries[19]). Concentration of wealth and social exclusion are part of a single global process, fostering the polarization between rich and poor. The gap between the affluent North and the impoverished South has widened, and also new patterns of exclusion and inclusion transcending the North-South division have emerged[20]. Globalization has increased inequality within and between nations and 1 billion people cannot meet their basic consumption requirements[21]. Ethiopia is one of the affected countries by negative development in the global economy during the 1990s, especially due to unfavourable terms of trade[22]. The widening gap between rich and poor is also observable in social indicators, within and between nations[23]. Growing vulnerability characterizes the emerging global social order. The increasing number of street children is one example of the growing marginalization of the losers from globalization.

Globalization fosters the trend towards urbanization. In Ethiopia urbanization was 17% in 2002, but is expected to reach 30% by 2020, as the urban areas are currently growing at around 6% per year[24]. Rural living conditions, droughts, the loss of market value of crops, the lack of economic opportunities in the rural areas and political conflicts are the result of rural to urban migration. Addis Ababa had high urban population growth due to droughts and political conflicts but also the concentration of economic activity and employment expectations aggravate urbanization[25]. In 1950 the population of Addis Ababa only counted 209 thousand inhabitants, while it was 3.126 millions in 2000.

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[19] C.Thomas, *Global governance, development and human security –the challenge of poverty and inequality,* London, Pluto press, 2000, p.28.
[20] A.McGrew, *Sustainable Globalization? The global politics of development and exclusion in the new world order,* in Allan, T. & Thomas, A. (eds.), *Poverty and Development into the 21st Century,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp.349-353.
[21] Ibidem., pp.347-348.
[22] Government of Ethiopia, op.cit.p.11.
[23] UNICEF, A UNICEF policy review document: *Poverty Reduction Begins with Children,* New York, The United Nations Children's Fund, Division of evaluation, policy and planning, 2000, p.45.
[24] Ethiopia's PRSP: *Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP),* Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, 2002, p.125.
[25] J.Hardoy, op.cit.p.5.

Globalisation is a process of economic, political and cultural Westernization, which is dominated by liberal economism[26]. Three pressures on the nation state arise from this form of globalization: privatization, liberalization and internationalization, resulting in a weakening role of the state. This is bad for the adherence to human rights because an impoverished state and an impoverished UN are bad duty holders. Globalization has broken through the territorial boundaries of states. Therefore the creation of direct human rights obligations for all actors exercising governance is necessary. Especially the realization of economic, social and cultural rights is challenged by globalization. There is a need for a development with a human face and for a social analysis of the global economy.

2. Concepts of development and poverty

2.1. Concepts of development

Today development has become synonymous with poverty reduction. The World Bank emphasizes the link between debt relief and poverty reduction and now aims at improving consultation with civil society. It regards empowerment and economic opportunity for the poor as a new approach to poverty alleviation. There is consensus that SAPs during the 1980s and 1990s had detrimental effects on the poor and marginalized. The world's economy grew, but the gap between rich and poor and the number of extremely poor people increased[27]. Cuts in social welfare lead to a persistent increase in poverty and spending more on debt relief than on basic social services is economically inefficient and morally wrong. It is understood that poverty has many dimensions and should not be seen only as a lack of income, but also as a deprivation of human rights, and that unless the problems of poverty are addressed, there can be no sustainable development[28]. But opinions are divided as to which the appropriate path to take is, especially concerning economic and social rights[29]. The IFIs understand the free market as the regulator for development and poverty reduction through economic growth. Their perspective is dominated by macroeconomic thinking and seen through a lens of Western thinking. Economic growth alone however, will not bring improvements in education

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[26] S.Knauder, *Globalization, Urban Progress, Urban Problems, Rural disadvantages – evidence from Mozambique,* Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2000, p.30.
[27] Panos, *Reducing poverty – is the World Bank's strategy working?* London, The Panos Institute, 2002, p.1.
[28] The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Human Rights, Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development - a Background Paper,* World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, 2002, p.2.
[29] C.Thomas, op.cit.p.57.

and health nor address the social and political imbalances that trap people in poverty[30]. Economic growth needs to go hand in hand with social justice. Poverty reduction can only be met with an increase in economic growth along with access to basic social services and a just, more equal distribution[31]. Development needs to become responsive to human needs and rights.

Protests of civil society groups have unmasked the façade of legitimacy and universality of the global governance institutions and their neoliberal policies, which aggravated inequality between and within states and diminished the ability of the poorest to secure their families' basic needs[32]. The IFIs are criticized for not understanding the local situation of poor and vulnerable groups and they are increasingly under pressure from NGOs to make their reforms more accountable. There is a risk that donors set standards of development that are out of line with indigenous standards and needs, neglecting local ownership and initiative. Effective poverty reduction requires poor people's full participation and involvement from beginning to end to be responsive to their needs and thereby sustainable. The World Bank's operational directives (such as on poverty reduction) were one response; micro-credit and the HIPC initiative were others. In 2000 the IMF and the World Bank repackaged the former Structural Adjustment into Poverty Reduction and Growth[33]. But the lack of representation of Third World people's perceptions continues to be a problem in the practice of PRSPs.

UNDP has drawn attention to an alternative perspective on development, emphasizing the satisfaction of basic needs, including non-material needs such as human dignity, participation and respect[34]. The HDI measures development in terms of education, health and living conditions. But also empowerment, security, opportunity and participation are relevant aspects of poverty reduction, as Sen points to. The alternative approach calls for a more holistic view on development and for the transformation of people into agents of their own development. NGOs and grass-root development organizations adhere to this alternative and need oriented view on development, which emphasizes self-reliance, local ownership, community participation and equitable satisfaction of material and non-material needs[35]. In order to promote successful development it is necessary to ensure that the deprived become masters of their own development. Strategies have to draw on the understanding and

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[30] World Bank, World Development Indicators 2002, http://www.developmentgoals.org, 6.6.2002.
[31] Deutsche Welthungerhilfe and terre des hommes, *Die Wirklichkeit der Entwicklungshilfe, zehnter Bericht 2001/2002 Eine kritische Bestandsaufnahme der deutschen Entwicklungspolitik,* 2002, p.37.
[32] C.Thomas, op.cit.p.14.
[33] ibidem., p.56.
[34] ibidem.., p.112.
[35] C.Thomas, op.cit.pp.36-37.

experience of the poor themselves. A people-oriented approach to development is more promising than the exclusively macroeconomic, top-down focus on development of the SAPs[36]. Especially for marginalized groups, this offers a means for building up self-confidence and self-expression[37]. Popular participation offers a new chance for effective development, empowering people to take control over their destinies and finding locally appropriate solutions to their problems. Third World countries must find development strategies that are appropriate to their own needs and responsive to the complexity of the local conditions[38]. Different societies have different ways of defining people out[39]. This needs to be taken into account in order to ensure that there is in fact a relation between what is planned and what is locally needed.

2.2. Concepts of poverty

Even though the overall income poverty declined during the 1990s, unbalanced growth caused the already low living standards fall of the poorest of the poor[40]. Poverty is part of a broader global crisis. It increased in the past years because the benefits are unevenly spread[41]. In 2000 still 1.2 billion people live on less than 1$ a day - 600 million are children[42]. The World Bank predicts that the number of poor people in Africa will continue to rise and that 70% of the African population will live on less than 2$ a day in 2015. The proportion of poor is highest in Sub-Saharan Africa, where conflicts, slow economic growth and HIV/AIDS leave millions at the margins of survival[43]. 33 out of the 43 African countries have a low development index and include the ten countries with the lowest index. Ethiopia is one of them. While the number of extremely poor is decreasing around the world, this is not the case in Africa.

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[36] J.Brohman, *Popular Development,* Oxford, Blackwell,1996, p.189.
[37] ibidem., p.346.
[38] ibidem., p.327.
[39] A.Thomas, *Poverty and the 'end of development'* in T.Allen & A.Thomas, *Poverty and development into the 21ˢᵗ century*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, p.14.
[40] Deutsche Welthungerhilfe and terre des hommes, op.cit.,p.26.
[41] L.Sklair, *Globalization – Capitalism and its alternatives,* Oxford, Oxford University press, 2002, p.48.
[42] Deutsche Welthungerhilfe and terre des hommes, op.cit.pp.25-26.
[43] see http://www.developmentgoals.org,

Despite progress, millions remain in extreme poverty			
Number of people living on less than $1 a day (millions)			
	1990	1999	2015
East Asia and the Pacific	452	260	59
(excluding China)	92	46	6
Europe and Central Asia	7	17	4
Latin America and the Caribbean	74	77	60
Middle East and North Africa	6	7	6
South Asia	495	490	279
Sub-Saharan Africa	242	300	345
Total	**1,276**	**1,151**	**753**
(excluding China)	916	936	700

Source: World Bank, Global Economic Prospects and the Developing Countries 2002. [44]

To halve poverty by 2015, African countries need growth at 7% per year, which is highly unrealistic. ODA flow to Ethiopia was only 60% of LDCs average, in contrast to Ethiopian debt, which was twice that of LDCs average during the 1990s[45]. ODA to developing countries has decreased over the past years. While it was .33% in 1990 it decreased to .22 in 2001[46]. Without development aid, however, poorest countries will not be able reach the development goals. There is a need for debt forgiveness, a favourable trade system and the allocation of resources to basic social services[47]. Especially the satisfaction of basic human needs in urban areas still has a low priority for international development agencies[48].

Poverty has many faces. What is regarded as poverty is not absolute, but depends on the interpretation of what constitutes poverty and on the value system of a particular society[49]. One can be poor in terms of income or unmet basic needs. Poverty can be seen as deprivation in both a material and non-material sense. To define poverty in a quantitative way is insufficient. Instead the multidimensional, un-measurable aspects such as discrimination, social exclusion and deprivation of dignity have to be considered[50]. The basic needs definition of poverty takes into account the non-quantifiable dimensions of poverty such as lack of basic capabilities to live in dignity. It focuses on the strengths and capabilities of the beneficiaries

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[44] see http://www.developmentgoals.org,
[45] Government of Ethiopia, op.cit.p.13.
[46] Deutsche Welthungerhilfe and terre des hommes, op.cit.p.6.
[47] UNICEF, *finance development invest in children,* Division of Policy and Planning, New York, The United Nations Children's Fund, 2002, p.4.
[48] J.Hardoy, op.cit.p.51.
[49] A.Thomas, op.cit.p.21.
[50] UNICEF, *Poverty Reduction Begins with Children…*op.cit.p.5.

and seeks to empower them[51]. Poverty reduction is about providing people with the basic capabilities to live in dignity, which transcends any strictly material definition[52].

Poverty is a human condition characterized by chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living. It means powerlessness, exposure to violence, discrimination, exclusion, not having a voice to influence decision-making, living at the margins of society and being stigmatized. Poverty describes the exclusion from society and the lack of basic security, which prevents individuals to assume their fundamental freedoms and responsibilities. Sen points out that poverty is the deprivation of basic capabilities and the lack of choice rather than merely lowness of income. Enlarging people's choice and expanding their capabilities therefore is relevant for poverty reduction[53]. Mostly however, poverty is still referred to in terms of income poverty.

The World Bank approach to poverty aims at bringing the poor closer to the monetized economy. Poverty however is not only measurable by economic deprivation, but includes social, cultural and political aspects. It is wrong to see the African crises purely as a budgetary one. The African problem is not to "free" the non-existent market, it's to mobilize human and material resources [54]. A multidimensional approach is indispensable in devising sustainable solutions to poverty.

Streetism, as an expression for extreme poverty, is a particular problem of mega-cities in the Third World. The dramatic concentration of urban poverty in the Third World is a great challenge[55]. Even though Africa is still a predominantly rural continent, the urban population continues to grow rapidly because the factors of urbanization are not likely to change[56]. 600 million urban inhabitants of the Third World live in "life and health threatening" circumstances. Living conditions for the urban poor in the Third World get worse and children make out as much as 45% of the worst off[57]. Nobody knows how many street children there are exactly around the world today, but some estimates put their number as high as 100 million. The fact that children turn to the street and remain there is a reaction to various negative situations: rural or urban poverty, lack of future perspective, family rupture,

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[51] UNICEF, *Poverty Reduction Begins with Children…*op.cit.p.6.
[52] ibidem., p.39.
[53] A.Sen, *Development as freedom,* New York, Anchor books, 1999, p.20.
[54] T.Mammo, *The Paradox of Africa's Poverty – the role of indigenous knowledge, traditional practices and local institutions – the case of Ethiopia,* Asmara, the Red Sea Press, Inc., 1999, p.61.
[55] J.Hardoy, op.cit.p.40.
[56] ibidem., p.41.
[57] ibidem., p.54.

violence or abuse in the family etc.[58]. Poor urban management, lack of infrastructure, inadequate service delivery, high rates of unemployment and the inaccessibility of services for low-income groups exacerbate urban poverty[59]. Governments, development agencies and the private sector have still not found effective solutions to increasing urban poverty. There is need for a change in policies of governments and attitudes[60].

2.3. The link between poverty reduction, development and children

Poverty has many dimensions. It manifests itself in low income, poor health, missed education, social- and political marginalization and deprivation. Poverty has an undermining effect on children and is the main reason for children leaving their homes and becoming street children. Poverty, discrimination and exploitation aggravate the marginalization of street children and certain solutions lie in economic and social reform. Existing social politics and the equipment of children and their caretakers with basic capabilities to escape poverty have been insufficient to compensate this negative trend[61]. Social security and justice in chances for children and especially disadvantaged groups is a pillar for sustainable development[62].

UNICEF estimates that 40% of children in developing countries live in extreme poverty. They are disproportionately represented among the poor. The poverty of children is increasing, especially in sub-Saharan African states. A child born in sub-Saharan Africa is more likely to be malnourished than to go to primary school and is as likely to die before the age of five as to attend secondary school[63]. Poor children are likely to pass on poverty to their children, perpetuating the poverty cycle[64]. Children are hit hardest by poverty, because it causes lifelong damages to the development of their mind and bodies. There is no second chance for child development.

At the World Summit for Children in 1990, the international community pledged for the protection of children from abuse and exploitation. The declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children, adopted by the states says that whether a child is to survive and to be protected from exploitation should not depend on whether interest rates rise or fall. In reality however, the poorest and most vulnerable children have been the most

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[58] A. Invernizzi, op.cit.p.98.
[59] Ethiopia's PRSP, op.cit.section 10.4.1.
[60] J.Hardoy, op.cit.p.58.
[61] Deutsche Welthungerhilfe and terre des hommes, op.cit.p.28.
[62] ibidem., p.38.
[63] A.Shorter and E. Onyalcha, *Street Children in Africa*, Limuru, Kolbe Press, 1999, p.20.
[64] UNICEF, *Poverty Reduction Begins with Children,…* op.cit.p.1.

exposed to the lash of debt and recession. At the UN Special Session on Children in May 2002 countries reaffirmed their commitment to promote and protect children's rights through national and international cooperation and with the participation of children. They declared that meaningful participation of children contributes to growth, development and democracy. "The survival, protection and development of Children are key elements in the socio-economic development of all countries and human society"[65]. The MDG seek a new partnership between adults and children, taking their opinion into account. If governments do not address children's well-being, national- and international agencies, development goals will never be met[66]. Six of the eight MDG are directly related to children. The authentic participation of children requires a shift in adult behaviour from an exclusionary towards an inclusionary approach to children and their capabilities[67].

In order to reduce poverty it is necessary to create a secure and tolerant environment to enable children to make use of opportunities and to live with dignity[68]. Without the realization of children's rights, poverty cannot be reduced. This means ensuring access to basic education, health care, nutrition, water and sanitation and human rights – such as freedom from want and discrimination, which is the basis for social protection and effective participation[69]. Basic and quality education is a vital element in eliminating discrimination and exploitation of children and part of the solution to reducing poverty and the failure to reach this goal means that poorest children remain in the risk to continue living in situations of exploitation [70]. Reducing poverty means creating opportunities to lead a long, healthy, creative life, to enjoy an adequate standard of living, freedom, dignity, self-esteem and respect[71]. Economic, social and cultural rights are just as essential for their development, as civil and political rights. From a development perspective it is an enormous benefit, in moral and economic terms, to invest in child-specific development.

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[65] United Nations, *Compilation of family-specific recommendations of the global conferences of the 1990s,* Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, 1995, p.5.
[66] UNICEF, *The state of the world's children 2003,* official summary*,* New York, The United Nations Children's Fund, 2003, p.3.
[67] ibidem., p.1.
[68] UNICEF, *finance development invest in children,…*op.cit.p.3.
[69] UNICEF, *Poverty Reduction Begins with Children,…* op.cit.p.3.
[70] ibidem., p.28.
[71] ibidem., p.1.

2.4. Poverty, Development and Human Rights

Poverty has been described as the worst form of violence and as a denial of human rights and human dignity [72]. People living in absolute poverty are deprived of their basic human rights. Illiteracy, malnutrition and deprivation constitute an abuse of human dignity and prevent persons from autonomy[73]. The human rights understanding of poverty addresses the daily assaults on human dignity and vulnerability. A human rights based approach means not only viewing poor people in terms of welfare, but in terms of obligations to respond to violations of their rights[74]. Since poverty means a denial of human rights and human dignity, poverty reduction obviously involves more than crossing an income threshold[75]. The integration of human rights norms into anti-poverty strategies is essential.

The right to development calls for a new international order and expresses the need for a legal obligation to transfer economic power from industrialized to developing countries but is still unspecific in defining what kind of cooperation is meant. Trade barriers and subventions still cost developing countries more than they gain from development aid[76]. Income does not trickle down, but only circulates among elite groups. The liberalization of trade, investments and deregulation institutionalizes competition, instead of guaranteeing basic needs and including poverty reduction goals that focus on children as a specifically affected group of poor. Therefore resolving the unfair relations is essential for resolving the conditions of national and international disorder[77].

The components of a human rights normative framework, such as accountability, the principles of non-discrimination, equality, and participation, and the recognition of the interdependence of rights, can contribute to the empowerment of the poor. Empowerment occurs through the concept of rights. The adherence to human rights thus is the foundation for sustainable human development[78]. When human rights are introduced in policy making, poverty reduction no longer only derives from the fact that the poor have needs but is based on the rights of poor people – entitlements that give rise to obligations on the part of others

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[72] UNICEF, *Poverty Reduction Begins with Children,...* op.cit.p.3.
[73] M.McMorrow, *Global Poverty, subsistence rights, and consequent obligations for rich and poor states,* in E. McCarthy-Arnolds, D. R. Penna, D. J. C. Sobrepena (eds.), *Africa, Human Rights, and the global system*, Westport, Greenwood Press, 1994, p.1.
[74] UNICEF, *Poverty Reduction Begins with Children,...* op.cit.p.3.
[75] ibidem., p.39.
[76] Deutsche Welthungerhilfe and terre des hommes, op.cit.p.28.
[77] M.McMorrow, *Global Poverty, subsistence rights, and consequent obligations for rich and poor states,…* op.cit.p.6.
[78] UNICEF, A UNICEF program policy document: *Human rights for children and women: How UNICEF helps make them a reality,* New York, The United Nations Children's Fund, 1999, p.1.

that are enshrined in law[79]. The human rights perspective therefore adds legitimacy to poverty eradication as a primary goal of policy-making. Where governments are responsible for discrimination, they are under an obligation imposed by international law, to end it. Where discriminatory attitudes result from deeply rooted attitudes of the population, governments should induce change through education and enforce laws prohibiting. The lack of awareness of children's rights among social-, judicial- and police officers, doctors and teachers has devastating consequences for children. Governments must take special measures for effective protection against discrimination of the most vulnerable, discriminated and socially excluded groups, including street children.

2.5. Summary

Poverty reduction is relevant for street children because poverty is the main cause for children ending up living on the street. The phenomenon of street children is a symptom for larger problems of poverty. The majority of people are excluded from the economic benefits of globalization and experience powerlessness and chronic insecurity due to dependency on global market prices. Globalization has lead to the growing concentrations of wealth but also to uneven development and the intensification of deprivation. The relative number of people living in extreme poverty decreased in the 1990s, but the absolute number remained stable, due to growing inequality and population growth. Ethiopia belongs to the least developed countries in which the reaching of the MDG is very unlikely.

For long it was believed that economic growth would automatically lead to poverty reduction. But there has occurred a shift in the perception of development in economic terms towards the concept of sustainable human development. Sustainable development implies expanding people's choice and creating equality. Poverty does not just mean lack of income but about the denial of human rights. A human rights approach to poverty reduction provides a framework for promoting and protecting the human rights of people living in poverty. The alternative development approach takes the link between economic growth and social justice serious, nevertheless the inclusion of human rights thinking for development is still not setting the tone. Yet the focus on basic needs, empowerment, local ownership and popular participation is an expression for the necessary shift into that direction. Expenditure, not only on economic growth, but also on human development is a sound economic investment for sustainable long-term development. Especially a pro-poor child approach is necessary for a

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[79] The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights,… op.cit.p.4.

sustainable reduction of poverty. Poverty reduction must begin with children, because investment in children is the best way to break the cycle of poverty and the best guarantee for future sustainable development.

3. The World Bank PRSP-approach

3.1. Poverty reduction strategy papers

A Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) is a national strategy drawn up by governments of low-income countries, for targeting measures to reduce poverty. In 1999, the World Bank and IMF presented the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers as a new instrument for poverty reduction to challenge poverty in low-income countries. They describe a country's macroeconomic, structural and social policies to promote growth and to reduce poverty and part of an enhanced Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. In adopting the PRSP process, low-income countries are putting poverty reduction at the centre of their development strategies. Their assessment aims at the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The strategies are in line with the principles of the Comprehensive Development Framework and based on six principles: country-driven, results-oriented, comprehensive, long-term in perspective, and foster partnerships. [80]. These broad-based, country-led processes have helped promote a more open and inclusive national dialogue on the most effective policies and public actions for poverty reduction. The PRSPs are a mechanism to link debt relief to development. PRSPs are expected to serve as a framework for development assistance beyond the operations of the IMF and World Bank[81].

A PRSP starts from a diagnosis of the causes of poverty, identifies the poverty reduction outcomes a country wishes to achieve and the policy changes, institutional reforms, programmes and projects needed to achieve these outcomes. Therefore it has to establish targets, indicators and a monitoring system[82]. Governments prepare the PRSPs in a participatory process involving civil society and development partners, including the IFIs. While the Bank and the Fund will play a catalytic role in launching PRSPs, the success of countries' strategies aimed at improving the lives of the poor will ultimately depends on the actions of countries themselves and the concerted aid of all their development partners. It is

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[80] Panos, op.cit.p.8.
[81] International Development Association and IMF, *Review of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) approach*, approved by Gobind Nankani and Masood Ahmed, The World Bank and IMF, 2002, p.3.
[82] Panos, op.cit.p.3.

only through such concerted actions that the challenge of meeting the MDGs for 2015 can be addressed[83]. Therefore the international community has a critical role to play by increasing aid, opening its markets to developing country exports and removing subsidies.

There are two stages to the PRSP process. Countries must first draw up an Interim PRSP (I-PRSP). This is intended as a 'road map' for developing a full PRSP – including a plan for civil society participation, which is not a requirement at this stage. I-PRSPs are short documents that describe a country's poverty situation and policies, and present a plan for preparing a full PRSP. While the quality of I-PRSPs has varied, the shift away from policy framework papers from the IFIs to country-authored I-PRSPs has been an achievement[84]. The second stage is the development of the full PRSP, in which the active involvement of civil society influences the PRSP content. It aims at understanding poverty in the country, strategy design, World Bank/IMF Joint Staff Assessment, implementation, monitoring and annual progress reports. Every three years there is a review and revision of the PRSP[85]. The development and implementation of PRSPs is an ambitious challenge for low-income countries, both in terms of analysis and organization. Besides managing a complex policy dialogue with development partners, low-income country governments have to put together an integrated medium-term economic and poverty reduction strategy, complete with short- and long-term goals and monitoring systems. Once a PRSP has been approved by the IFIs (after one year's successful implementation) the country qualifies for debt relief and lending. The nature of this conditionality is characterized by privatization, deregulation, increasing of the free market and decreasing of the state.

The process of elaborating PRSP is innovative in that it involves the participation of civil society. The idea is efforts to reach out to traditionally marginalized groups and involving all significant stakeholders such as civil society. Therefore there should be active and informed participation of the poor in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of PRSPs. Many NGOs and civil society organizations welcomed the launch of the PRSP as an opportunity to move away from one-size-fits-all approaches to economic strategies for developing countries. Never before had the involvement of civil society groups in national policy-making been formally legitimised. Due to its comprehensiveness the PRSP-approach promises to make

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[83] International Development Association and IMF, op.cit.p.28.
[84] Ibidem., p.8.
[85] Panos, op.cit.pp.6-7.

development assistance more effective[86]. The challenge for most countries yet is to move away from *ad hoc* consultations to more institutionalized forms of dialogue.

Many countries have identified and started to fill important gaps in their data about poverty and inequality, and have begun to strengthen the institutional arrangements for on-going data collection and analysis. All the PRSPs have included short-term and longer-term targets for economic growth, for reductions in the number of poor (in terms of income poverty measures), and for improvements in education and health[87]. While PRSPs represent a significant effort to bring together into a single document the full set of public actions that countries intend to pursue to reduce poverty, they are however generally weak regarding the *prioritization* and *specificity* of these actions.

3.2. Criticism of the PRSPs

Considering the developments of the past 10 years it is questionable that the goal to halve poverty by 2015 can be reached[88]. UNDP criticizes that an increase of 50 billion US$ of the ODA would be necessary to reach the goals in the areas of primary education, water and health care. A problem is that the calculations of the PRSPs are too optimistic, ignoring increasing income disparities[89]. NGOs criticize that PRSPs are based on the same liberal economic principles that have failed in the past and do not address the disadvantaged position of poor countries in the world trading system. Concerns have been expressed to whether civil society can extend its role in the decision making process beyond the macroeconomic policy and the structural reform agendas of trade liberalization and privatization. NGOs criticize that no alternative development approaches are taken into consideration and that the PRSPs as being merely a new name of SAPs, failing to reduce poverty. Many NGOs are disappointed because neither the IFIs nor governments are open to debate the macroeconomic framework of the PRSPs. It is questionable if the poor really benefit from economic growth or if the PRSPs are just a new form of the same conditionality. The problem is that the recipient country bends projects so that they suit donor's yardstick rather than their own needs neglecting indigenous knowledge and local traditions of development[90]. Africa's fixation on

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[86] International Development Association and IMF, op.cit.p.3.
[87] Ibidem., p.13.
[88] Spiegel almanach, *Welt-Jahrbuch 2003 – die Staaten der Erde: Zahlen, Daten, Analysen*, Hamburg, Spiegel Buchverlag, 2003, p.506.
[89] Deutsche Welthungerhilfe and terre des hommes, op.cit.p.26.
[90] T.Mammo, op.cit.p.55.

Westernization discourages the development of local institutions and negatively affects indigenous self-confidence and ability to solve one's problems[91].

Civil society groups have expressed their frustration that their concerns are not being addressed in the PRSPs[92]. Many groups remain ill informed and are still not aware that they have the right to participate in policy making. The behaviour of both the IFIs and national governments is currently preventing the full participatory potential of the PRSP process from being realised[93]. PRSPs are to be assessed in participation with civil society, but the quality of participation is not specified and the involvement of poor people in drawing up policies and writing PRSPs has been minimal and superficial[94]. The term participation has been used too broadly, including events and processes that are mere consultations or information-sharing, rather than genuine influence by stakeholders. Civil society contributions have had very little impact on the assessment of the PRSP documents. A devastating consequence has been that civil society groups have started to opt out of PRSP processes[95]. The experts on poverty issues, the poor themselves, are ignored even though they should be at the heart of the process[96]. Clearer parameters need to be set at the outset of participatory processes and the top-down way of communication has to be turned into a bottom-up one.

3.3. Children in the PRSPs

Do the poverty reduction measures respond to the concerns of poorest children? Child-poverty is a topic, but it is not connected to concrete political instruments and poverty reduction strategies[97]. Children and youth only get little consideration in the PRSPs. In many poverty reduction strategies, children are considered as a vulnerable social group, because such a disproportionate numbers of children live under the poverty line [98]. But only few countries are prioritising childhood poverty reduction, despite its important contribution to reducing both current and future poverty. It also remains unclear, which specific political

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[91] T.Mammo, op.cit.p.70.

[92] Ethiopian Social Rehabilitation and Development Fund, *Papers from Ethio-Forum 2002 Conference - NGO/Civil Society Perspectives of PRSP*, 2002,
http://www.waltainfo.com/esrdf/paper/Civil_Society.htm.

[93] Christian Aid, *Ignoring the experts - Poor people's exclusion from poverty reduction strategies*,
http://www.christian-aid.org.uk.

[94] see http://www.christian-aid.org.uk.

[95] see http://www.christian-aid.org.uk, 18.5.2003.

[96] http://www.christian-aid.org.uk, 18.5.2003.

[97] Deutsche Welthungerhilfe and terre des hommes, op.cit.p.41.

[98] R. Marcus & J. Wilkinson, *Whose Poverty Matters? Vulnerability, Social Protection and PRSPs,*
Working paper No.1, Childhood Poverty Research and Policy Centre, 2002, p.37.

instruments shall contribute to the implementation of the goals[99]. Differences between extreme and less extreme poverty are not discussed and identification of particularly poor and vulnerable groups is partial so that children as a special target-group cannot be identified[100]. Monitoring that children are represented in the assessment of the PRSP is very important because participation of and listening to children enhances the legitimacy of decisions taken. The involvement of the groups concerned (e.g. street children) will encourage self-reliance and empowerment of them and therefore is an essential source for development [101]. It is now widely recognized that effective poverty reduction is not possible without empowerment of the poor. They have to be the primary stakeholders in PRSPs.

3.4. Human Rights and PRSPs

The human rights normative framework contributes to the empowerment of the poor with the notion of accountability, the principles of universality, non-discrimination and equality, the principle of participatory decision-making processes, and recognition of the interdependence of rights - all essential characteristics of a human rights approach to poverty reduction. Genuine participation must make poor people central to policy making, because it is their right[102]. Human rights empower individuals and groups who are vulnerable, marginal, disadvantaged or socially excluded because it requires participation by the poor and otherwise marginalized groups in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of poverty reduction strategies. The introduction of the concept of rights itself underlines the fact that the poor have needs and rights – entitlements that give rise to legal obligations. Poverty reduction then becomes more than charity or a moral commitment – it becomes a legal obligation[103]. The human rights approach to poverty reduction requires that laws and institutions that foster discrimination against specific individuals and groups be eliminated and more resources devoted to the benefit of the poor. Proper monitoring and accountability is an essential feature of the human rights approach, in order to identify when the State should be held responsible when rights are not fulfilled. Another feature of the human rights approach is that responsibility for poverty reduction becomes a universal obligation[104].

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[99] Deutsche Welthungerhilfe and terre des hommes, op.cit.p.27.
[100] R.Marcus & J. Wilkinson, op.cit.p.47.
[101] T.Mammo, Tirfe, op.cit.pp.220-223.
[102] See http://www.christian-aid.org.uk.
[103] A Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies, http://www. unhchr.ch/development/povertyfinal.html, 22.5.2003.
[104] ibidem.

The human rights approach broadens the scope of poverty reduction strategies as it addresses the structures of discrimination that generate and sustain poverty. The integration of human rights into the national poverty reduction strategies attempt to increase their effectiveness and sustainability, ensuring accountability mechanisms and legal obligations towards the beneficiaries. The access to basic rights and resources are more central to poverty alleviation than just pushing for economic growth. Yet a human rights dimension has not been integrated to a satisfactory degree in the PRSP process and only few countries have produced convincing approaches that truly benefit the poor.

4. The case of Ethiopia

4.1. Poverty in Ethiopia

Poverty in Ethiopia is among the highest in the World. The average Ethiopian lives on half a dollar a day. In 2000 44% of people in Ethiopia lived under the poverty line (out of those 33% in urban areas and 47% in rural areas[105]). Thus, poverty eradication must be the central development agenda for the Ethiopian government[106]. Most of the poor live in rural areas but urban poverty is also a growing problem - households in Addis Ababa have a 15% higher probability of being poor[107]. Urban poverty and inequality increased from 33.3% in 1995 to 37% in 2000[108]. Social poverty, such as access to education, safe water and health care, is increasing and the HIV/AIDS prevalence is high. 40% of all children below 5 suffer under-nutrition and 1.2 million children are orphaned due to HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia. The probability of reaching the MDG for children is most unlikely[109]. Ethiopia has been continuously devastated by poverty because of a lack of careful analysis of realities and of learning from experience[110]. Ethiopia is faced with complex poverty, which is broad, deep and structural.

4.2. Implementation of PRSP in Ethiopia

The Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP), prepared by

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[105] Government of Ethiopia, op.cit.p.15.
[106] Ethiopia's PRSP, op.cit.pp.1-2.
[107] Ibidem., p.18.
[108] Ethiopia's PRSP, op.cit.p.7.
[109] Spiegel almanach, op.cit.pp.512-513.
[110] Panos, op.cit.p.44.

the Ethiopian Government was delivered to the World Bank in August 2002 and received the support of the Board of the International Development Association. The objective of the government's poverty reduction strategy is to reduce poverty through macroeconomic stability. Economic growth is the principal, but not the only, means to this objective, the SDPRP claims. In order to reduce poverty by half from its current level, the Ethiopian economy must grow in real terms by 5.7% per annum until 2015, which is highly unlikely to happen. Growth in Ethiopia depends on investment, level of education, terms of trade deterioration and peace and stability both in Ethiopia and in the region. The structure of export reflects heavy reliance on primary commodity - coffee alone accounting for about 60 percent of export earnings. The decline in the price of coffee in international markets witnessed during recent years has contributed to the deterioration in Ethiopia's terms of trade. This points to the fact that the structural factors of globalization determine future pro-poor growth pattern. The fundamental Ethiopian development objectives is to build a free-market, which enables the economy to develop rapidly, the country to free itself from dependence on food aid and poor people to be the main beneficiaries of economic growth. Whether economic growth benefits the poorest however is questionable. It is important to ensure, that rapid economic growth does not lead to higher levels of inequality.

There has unfortunately been a positive correlation between economic growth and income inequality in Ethiopia. The Gini coefficient for urban inequality rose from 34 in 1995 to 38 in 2000. Therefore a pro-poor growth strategy, promoting growth with equity, actually gaining the poor, is essential for rapid poverty reduction[111]. It is the government's overriding objective to ensure that growth is achieved in such a manner that ensures a positive social impact and that the poor people are the prime beneficiaries of economic growth and development[112]. This is achieved through decentralization to the lower levels and by participation and ownership of civil society. The intention is to shift decision-making closer to the grass root population and thereby improve responsiveness and service delivery, as well as to improve empowerment of the poor and provide an enabling environment for private sector growth and development[113]. How the goals are to be implemented in practice however remains uncertain. There is no established culture of consulting the poor, so the participatory assessment of the PRSP is a chance for acknowledging poor people's rights. Civil society should play a more important role, adding to the credibility and ownership of monitoring through independent observation. There is a pressing need to institutionalise participation of non-state actors in policy, planning

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[111] Ethiopia's PRSP, op.cit.pp.25-26.
[112] Ibidem., p.36.
[113] Ethiopia's PRSP, op.cit.Executive Summary.

and monitoring development.

The IMF/World Bank comment that civil society organisations, private sector representatives and individual citizens actively participated in the Ethiopian PRSP consultation process, but recognize that they had little impact on the policies proposed. Various consultative forums were organized at district-, regional- and federal level in which 450 participants from government officials, journalists, religious leaders, representatives of the donor community, NGOs, and the business community were involved in PRSP-consultations - but the public at large is not aware of PRSP[114]. Whilst the PRSP offer non-state actors a role in monitoring and evaluating, the nature of this role is left unclear[115]. The role for non-state actors should be more clearly defined. "People have been asked to agree on the document rather than discussing strategies to solve their problems"[116]. This is not a genuine participatory approach. NGOs demand that participants should receive feedback on their contributions and explanations as to why they were or were not included in the final document[117].

4.3. The Ethiopian PRSP and its benefit for street children

Aspects of Ethiopia's strategy relevant for the prevention of streetism include the focus on the welfare of rural population - where most street children come from, access to elementary education for all citizens (the best tool for poverty prevention), shifting the decision-making process closer to the grass root population to improve responsiveness and service delivery and to improve the empowerment of the poor. Concern has been expressed however that the government is not paying attention to the rapidly growing urban population in Ethiopia, which goes along with globalization[118]. To address urban poverty, the promotion of community based rehabilitation programmes for disadvantaged groups, such as street children is mentioned, but not specified. Street children are only referred to in the context of HIV/AIDS (which has a particularly devastating effect on street children) and alleviating the problem of urban unemployment. The Ethiopian PRSP neither specifically targets children nor an urban policy that aims at the prevention of streetism.

Children and childhood poverty are not discussed explicitly in the Ethiopian PRSP. The

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[114] Ethiopia's PRSP, op.cit.p.29.
[115] Development Assistance Group, Joint Partner Review of the Ethiopian *Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Programme,* 2002.
[116] Panos, op.cit.p.50.
[117] see http://www.christian-aid.org.uk, 18.5.2003.
[118] Panos, op.cit.p.44.

Ethiopian PRSPs suggest the promotion of community based rehabilitation programmes for disadvantaged groups such as street children and orphans with full participation of the target groups, NGOs and the communities. Streetism however is not identified as a particular poverty problem in the PRSP. A strategy suggested by the Ethiopian PRSP states that beggary and working poor should be discouraged and stigmatized. And traditional means of giving alms to poor, such as street children, should be transformed into a fund that creates employment for street children[119]. The institutionalization of the stigmatization of street children, as suggested in the Ethiopian PRSP must be criticized because it fosters the severity of marginalization already experienced by street children. And instead of creating alternative job opportunities for street children, education, rehabilitation and social inclusion should be invested in.

5. Findings

The PRSP process is coloured by many promising words but ways of concrete implementation are still missing. Fundamental improvements need to be made in order for poor people to genuinely participate in the PRSP processes. Accountability and transparency must be improved within the World Bank and IMF and the poor people must be listened to in a genuine and transforming way[120]. Solutions to poverty must come from poor people themselves. Participation processes must be improved, to genuinely involve grassroots communities in policy making and implementation. Decision making within the IFIs and within developing countries have to be transformed, so that the people who are affected by their policies are able to shape them. PRSP theoretically offer such a transformation.

The preparation of PRSPs has involved useful steps toward better poverty data and diagnostics, helped to clarify national targets and indicators for poverty reduction, and increased attention to monitoring and evaluation. The goal of PRSP is pro-poor growth, but most PRSP do not specifically ensure that the poor benefit[121]. Poverty and social impact analysis of policies and programs has not been undertaken as part of PRSPs. It is criticized that the PRSPs need to go further by making safety-nets and the provision of essential social services to vulnerable groups a requirement. NGOs hoped that the PRSP process would be a key step towards reorienting government spending towards providing basic services that benefit the poor but the concerns of poorest families and children are not considered

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[119] Ethiopia's PRSP, op.cit.pp.126-127.
[120] see http://www.christian-aid.org.uk.
[121] Panos, op.cit.p.16.

enough[122]. A focus on the prevention of child poverty, is not dominating the PRPSs, even though it is fundamental for breaking the poverty cycle. Street children's most pressing needs are still not targeted enough in the Ethiopian PRSP. It is problematic that the Ethiopian Poverty analysis is too narrowly focusing on income poverty. A more multidimensional poverty analysis would be better, because the phenomenon of streetism is complex. In order to combat poverty of street children, in the sense of being socially excluded and discriminated against, the government should educate the police, administrative and judicial authorities, as well as the public at large to fostering tolerance and respect for the poor and thereby realising the right to appear in public without shame. This would constitute protection of the poor against unlawful attacks on their dignity, integrity, honour and reputation – which are central dimensions of their poverty. The Ethiopian PRSP still needs to include a pro-child-dimension, specifically targeting the needs and rights of children, including street children. This would at the same time be a long-term investment in future sustainable poverty reduction and development.

C. The Human Rights perspective

This chapter intends to look at the potential of human rights for street children in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. There the street children find themselves in a situation without protection, supervision or direction from responsible agencies, such as parents or the state. They face social exploitation. What is the purpose of a human rights approach on street children? How can human rights help give street children a voice? Is the Human Rights approach a helpful tool for the improvement of the situation of street children? The first part of this chapter explains the relevance of human rights for street children. The second part presents relevant human rights instruments and mechanisms and the third part analyses the adherence of the Ethiopian state to the human rights of street children.

1. Human Rights

1.1 Why Human Rights?

Having rights means having entitlements. Rights go hand in hand with duties that have to be fulfilled in order to ensure protection of the rights. Therefore the concept of human rights implies a government that is activists, intervening and committed to economic-social

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[122] Deutsche Welthungerhilfe and terre des hommes, op.cit.p.21.

planning in order to satisfy the rights of the individuals in society[123]. States party to the human conventions assume obligations to protect the rights of their people. Human rights are an instrument for the legal protection of neglected groups in society. It is sensible to talk about rights, since they go along with positive duties (to aid the deprived), negative duties (to refrain from depriving) and intermediate duties (to protect from deprivation)[124].

States are also obliged to protect children living on the street, which includes reviewing law and policies in order to ensure that children are not penalized merely for being street children or detained as criminals on charges of petty crime[125]. Ratifying the international human rights conventions, states agree to be accountable for the needs of the people within their jurisdiction. Not only governments however but all partners in society: the media, NGOs, schools, development partners etc. commit to ensuring that the rights are realized and respected. UNICEF and the agencies of the UN system have the responsibility to support country's effort and remind states of implementing the treaty obligations and the international community as a whole is responsible for the implementation of the human rights provisions.

Human rights are a tool to formulate basic needs into rights. The CRC recognizes that children have specific needs that have historically been neglected by societies, which is both cause and result of discrimination. Human rights aim to respond to the needs by establishing rights in terms of *the highest attainable standard to health, education and the protection from abuse and neglect* (CRC). The satisfaction of needs only, is not enough however. This is evidently so for street children. Instead the underlying structural causes such as chronic poverty need to be addressed. A human rights lens is therefore highly suitable for improving the visibility of street children because human rights go beyond the fulfilment of needs. Via advocacy human rights also contribute to the non-material aspects of children's right. Human Rights do not mean charity but entitlements and participation, which is the foundation for sustainable human development[126]. Participation of children in examining their problems is both a means and an end to eradicate discrimination and increases the likelihood to find more sustainable solutions[127]. Human rights enhance a more effectively implementation of the protection of their dignity as human beings. To spell out rights for street children helps

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[123] P.E. Veerman, *The Rights of the Child and the Changing Image of Childhood,* Boston, Marinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1992, p.25.
[124] ibidem., p.20.
[125] G. Van Bueren, op.cit.p.285.
[126] UNICEF, *Human rights for children and women...*op.cit.p.1.
[127] ibidem., pp. 20-22.

uncover the fact that their situation constitutes an inhuman state of living. It gives them a voice and visibility.

1.2. Why rights for children?

The fact that children are given special rights does not mean that generally recognized human rights do not apply to them[128]. Not all adult rights however apply to children (e.g. the right to vote). Why is there a need for a separate child rights convention? Children have specific protective rights because of their immaturity and their particular physical, emotional, moral, biological and psychological vulnerability[129]. Children need guidance and education and appropriate information for their healthy development. Parents, the community and states failing to take this responsibility contribute to fundamental human rights violations, which can have devastating effects on the development of the child and of society.

Children's rights are different from those accorded to adults, because some children's rights need to be respected, protected and fulfilled in a different way than adult rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) makes the child an individual bearer of rights, specific to children's needs. But children's rights remain closely linked to the protection of parents' rights on whom the child depends. Especially women's rights and children's rights are closely interconnected. Children are in a phase of development. Therefore time is a crucial factor concerning the child and its human rights. Childhood needs to be valued for it's own sake because it affects the individual as an adult and consequently society as a whole. Therefore some children's rights are different from those accorded to adults. Children need special care and extra protection.

1.3. Human Rights for street children

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights constitute the background for child right protection. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Declaration & Plan of Action from the World Summit for Children as well as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child however more clearly mention street

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[128] M.deLangen *The meaning of Human Rights for children,* in M. Freeman, P. Veerman (eds.), *The Ideologies of Children's Rights*, Boston, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1992, p.257.
[129] E.Verhellen, *Convention on the Rights of the Child – background, motivation, strategies, main themes,* Leuven-Apeldoorn, Garant Publishers N.V., 1997, p.20.

children and add to the specific understanding of their human rights. The UN Declaration on the right to development and the treaties on the elimination of discrimination mention street children within their contexts.

From a Human Rights perspective, the phenomenon of street children in itself is a violation of a wide range of fundamental human rights. In particular the right to life, survival, development, the right to be cared for by parents and assisted by the State, the right to protection from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, the right to a standard of living adequate for the physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development including the right to food, clothing, housing, medical care and social services. Factors like poor access to education, poor health care, war, displacement, HIV/AIDS, family break-up and severe poverty increase the vulnerability of children to human rights abuses[130]. It is therefore important to recognize the interrelatedness and indivisibility of all rights to the human dignity of the child[131].

The child must grow up in an atmosphere of affection and moral and material responsibility. Education and play are essential for the full development of the child's personality and for discouragement from adopting anti-social modes of behaviour[132]. Parents have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child but the State is obliged to take measures to protect the child from all forms of maltreatment. (art 18-19 of CRC). The Convention strongly emphasizes the importance of the home environment for children[133]. Children deprived of family life, like street children, need protection. Public authorities are responsible for the provision of care to those children. The child's protection against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation is an obligation, which falls on parents, the State, organisations, individuals - on each member of society. UNICEF recognizes that the wellbeing of children is heavily determined by what happens in the private spheres of the family, households and communities[134]. The alliance with civil society organizations therefore can foster effective private/public collaboration for implementing the CRC.

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[130] United Nations, *Training Manual on Human Rights,* New York, United Nations, 2001, p.251.
[131] UNICEF, *Human rights for children and women…*op.cit.p.7.
[132] P.E.Veerman, op.cit.pp.176-177
[133] E.Verhellen, *Convention on the Rights of the Child…* op.cit.p.114.
[134] UNICEF, *Human rights for children and women…* op.cit.p.21.

2. Human Rights instruments

2.1. Protection of street children in the Convention of the Rights of the Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the first global instrument to recognize the child possessing rights and the state to respect and ensure them. It defines universal principles for the status of children, providing them with fundamental human rights and freedoms. The CRC was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 20.November 1989 and entered into force on 2.September 1990 - from then on it was considered to be binding. It is a unique international human rights treaty because it has nearly universally been ratified (except for Somalia and USA) and because it reflects the indivisibility of civil, political, cultural, economic and social rights and emphasizes their mutually reinforcing nature[135]. Structural inequality and discrimination are equally problematic as the lack of essential services for health, education, food and care. Especially economic, social and cultural rights are essential for the well being of street children, but civil and political ones, such as the access to appropriate information, play a role.

Upon ratification, States commit themselves to fulfilment of the rights. The Convention does not however establish directly enforceable rights but it obliges States to undertake measures to implement the Convention's rights. States have to report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, which monitors the State parties obligations. The CRC lists both direct and indirect obligations of states towards the child. The meaning of the Convention however is not primarily legal but above all political. It has the potential to give rise to changes in the public attitudes towards children and serves as a starting point for more extensive national and international standardization and coordination of children's human rights[136].

The Convention on the Rights of the Child reflects international consensus on children's rights. It is innovative in that it introduces participation rights for children, including that children themselves are informed about their rights. It expresses a new attitude towards children in terms of inherent rights and not in form of charity[137]. The child no longer merely is a part of family, but a person of its own. The international community however is far from agreeing on a universal definition of childhood. Childhood is a cultural construction –

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[135] L.LeBlanc, *The Convention on the Rights of the Child – United Nations Lawmaking on Human Rights,* Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press, 1995, p.76.
[136] J.V. Lanotte & G. Goedetier in Verhellen, *Monitoring Human Rights: formal and procedural aspects, in* E. Verhellen (ed.), *Monitoring Children's Rights,* The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1996, pp.110-111.
[137] M.D.A. Freeman, *The Limits of Children's Rights,* in M. Freeman, P. Veerman (eds.), *The Ideologies of Children's Rights*, Boston*,* Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1992. pp.4-5.

children are not children "by nature"[138]. Child-images change through time and from culture to culture[139]. Regarding children as a separate category is a very recent development, also changing our relationship with children.

Four fundamental principles guide the CRC: 1. *The best interest of the child*, which supports a child-centred approach and makes sure that basic services for children are protected at all times. 2. *Non-discrimination*. 3. *Right to life, survival, development*, which calls for positive measures to be taken to ensure access to basic services and equity of opportunity for children and is based on the principle of distributive justice[140]. 4. *Respect for the views of the child*. Street children cannot participate in the decisions that affect their lives. They are deprived of the convention's general principles and are particularly vulnerable to be invisible, not listened to and not taken into consideration.

Many articles of the CRC are relevant for street children. The most centrally important are articles 19, 20, 27 and 39. State Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation (art 19). The State is obliged to give attention to children in exceptionally difficult conditions and to establish social programs to support the child and to provide special protection for a child deprived of the family environment and to ensure special protection and assistance (art 20). Children should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding and shall not be separated from their parents. Parents are the primary caregivers and protectors of children. Street children are deprived of this fundamental condition for their healthy development. Every child has the right to a standard of living adequate for his or her physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. Parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that the child has an adequate standard of living. It is the State's duty to ensure that this responsibility can be and is fulfilled and shall in case of need provide material assistance particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing (art 27). Non-material assistance is not mentioned however, except for that the State's obligation to ensure physical and psychological recovery and social integration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery shall take place in an

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[138] G. Van Bueren, op.cit.pp.33-38.
[139] E. Verhellen, *Convention on the Rights of the Child…* op.cit.p.11.
[140] UNICEF, *Human rights for children and women…* op.cit.pp.9-10.

environment fostering health, respect and dignity of the child (art 39). To be given respect, to be heard and to be taken seriously reflects well the core needs of street children.

2.2. Strengths and weaknesses of the CRC

The CRC for the first time speaks in terms of rights and entitlements and is a definitive body of international law for children's rights[141]. The great number of states ratifying the convention implies a great number of government's commitment to meet the standards of the Convention. Given the interdependent character of international relations today, the rights of the convention are linked to economic and social needs and problems, which are global in nature. It recognizes the importance of international cooperation for the welfare of children, in particular for developing countries. Freeman mentions that it is doubtful that poorer countries can implement the CRC by themselves since they have larger populations and smaller incomes and since a high percentage of their populations are children. He criticizes that international justice is likely to remain a pious aspiration and concludes that partially implemented or badly implemented laws may do children more harm than good[142]. The CRC has achieved international legality, but the task for it to achieve legitimacy is not fulfilled yet. It is not enough that the Convention is legally binding on States unless the citizens hold the provisions as valid. Implementation means its incorporation into the structure and procedures in the everyday affairs of state and society. The Convention requires and presupposes changes in political, economic, social and cultural realities of children[143].

Strength of the convention is its formulation on the right to survival and development. It expresses the understanding that physical survival and social development are interconnected[144]. The child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development is the goal and not simply day-to-day survival. Another strength of the CRC, especially crucial concerning disappearances of street children, is the protection of the child's identity: the fundamental right to a name and nationality.

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[141] H.-J.Heintze, *The UN Convention and the Network of International Human Rights Protection by the UN,* in M. Freeman, P. Veerman (eds.), *The Ideologies of Children's Rights*, Boston, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1992, p.74.
[142] A. G.Mower, *The Convention on the Rights of the Child – international law support for children,* London, Greenwood Press, 1997, pp.40-41.
[143] G.Lenzer, *Children's studies and the human rights of children: towards a unified approach,* in K. Alaimo & B. Klug (eds.), *Children as equals – exploring the rights of the child*, Lanham, Oxford and New York, University Press of America, 2002, p.215.
[144] A. G.Mower, op.cit.pp.31-33.

A weakness of the CRC is its practicability. It does not clearly define reliable indicators informing on the actual living conditions of children[145]. Abandoned children shall be entitled to special protection provided by the state but the explicit protection of street children is not formulated in the Convention. Many provisions and commitments are formulated in an imprecise and subjective way, as the terms "appropriate", "maximum" and "available resources" indicate[146]. This can be a weakness for the realization of economic, social and cultural rights, because the vague formulations can provide a "good" excuse for a merely pro forma implementation. Particularly in poor countries like Ethiopia, the negative economic conditions can be used as a scapegoat for non-implementation of the rights. Having been accepted by consensus itself, the convention stresses the need for dialogue rather that punishment and this is the attitude of the Committee. The approach is not punitive but developmental and encouraging. A convention whose rights were spelled out in great detail however, would be inflexible and restrict its practical implementation and adaptation.

Despite the weaknesses of the CRC, the complaint mechanism has its strengths, since the regular reporting of states implies regular monitoring and familiarizing with common solutions [147]. Van Bueren therefore suggests that children should become members of the state delegations and presenting evidence to the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the grounds of their own experience[148]. This could be very effective for the improvement of the situation of street children.

2.3. Monitoring, implementation and accountability of children's rights at the UN

A convention is only as effective as its monitoring system[149]. Having ratified human rights treaties, states are accountable and assume obligations towards the people within their jurisdiction. The UN has the responsibility to support efforts of countries to implement their treaty obligations and to remind states of such obligations[150]. Therefore states have to submit regular reports to the independent Committee on the Rights of the Child, which examines the progress made by states in realizing their obligations.

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[145] A. Saporiti *Evaluating the process of monitoring children's rights,* in E. Verhellen (ed.), *Monitoring Children's Rights,* The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1996, p.371.
[146] A. G.Mower, op.cit.pp.25-26.
[147] G., Van Bueren, op.cit.pp.393-394.
[148] Ibidem., p.399.
[149] E. Verhellen, *Convention on the Rights of the Child…* op.cit.p.83.
[150] UNICEF, *Human rights for children and women…* op.cit.p.23.

The UN offers special procedures, such as the mechanism of the Sub-Commission- and the Commission on Human rights, which are important for the protection of children's rights. Also activities undertaken by special rapporteurs are important. There is however no special rapporteur on street children (only on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography).

A deep-rooted problem of the UN human rights protection system however is the incompatibility between the increasing number of international law instruments and the untouchable sovereignty of states, which hinders effective implementation. Due to the lack of an intergovernmental body monitoring the implementation however, the international law remains binding only on paper. The reporting system is weak but it has nevertheless the capacity to strengthens the awareness of human rights protection in that it builds up jurisprudence for the interpretation of human rights treaties and provides basis for criticism of state policies and practice[151].

The UN treaty monitoring bodies play an important role for human rights protection. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, analyzing country reports and writing concluding observations, contributes to the practical implementation of children's right. It is the major monitoring mechanism for the implementation of street children's rights. The Committee examines the progress made by states in achieving the obligations of the CRC and assists states to get help for the full implementation of rights. Ten independent experts monitor the domestic legal implementation of international human rights treaties on the basis of state reports as well as other reliable information. In comparison with other UN instruments, an important progress is that the Committee can intensively cooperate with NGOs, which enables more effective implementation procedures[152].

A lack of attention toward street children in the reports can however be criticized. The State is given too much freedom to decide what is relevant to report on. One has to be aware that the suggestions and recommendations do not have the force of a legal verdict. The Committee on the Rights of the Child can above all exert political pressure on the national authorities to implement the convention. The increase of cooperation with NGOs could contribute to a more effective human rights implementation, especially since civil society may be able to bear more specific fruit for the concrete improvement of children's situation[153].

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[151]L. LeBlanc, op.cit.p.227.
[152] H.-J.Heintze, op.cit.p77.
[153] G., Van Bueren, op.cit.p.393.

The CRC permits the assistance by UNICEF and specialized agencies, but this innovative monitoring and enforcing structure is incomplete. To copy the international monitoring structure and to install a national Committee on the Rights of the Child domestically could be a step forward in giving a voice to children in areas relevant to them[154]. The monitoring body must learn to really take the views of children into account, in order to give justice to its claim to be the voice for children. Human Rights officers can be a useful link by providing information to the Committee and supporting states and NGOs in implementing the Committee's recommendation.

Extra-conventional international agencies such as the media, professionals working with children, development organizations and the families also play a significant role for the realization of human rights. In particular for the implementation of economic, social and cultural right, the WHO, UNESCO, FAO, UNICEF and NGOs related to the UN are significant contributors. National measure, however have the most direct effect for the realization of the Convention into practices[155]. Only through mobilization of all sectors of society, significant progress can be achieved for children's well being.

2.4. Other human rights instruments for street children

The CRC is the main legal instrument of international law, specialized in the needs of the child, but also other instruments deal with the human rights of street children. Specifically targeting Street Children are the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice, the UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Also Security Council resolutions have contributed to the legal protection of children as part of "soft law", which could have a significant impact on the improvement of the situation of street children.

Only the General Assembly resolution (G.A. res. 47/126) on the Plight of street children, from December 1992 however, explicitly focuses on street children. It expresses concern about the growing number of street children and the squalid conditions in which street children are forced to live and reaffirms that street children deserve special attention, protection and assistance from their families, communities and as part of national and international efforts. It mentions street children's right to an adequate standard of living in freedom from violence

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[154] E.Verhellen, *Convention on the Rights of the Child...* op.cit.p.97.
[155] A. G. Mower, op.cit.pp. 145-147.

and harassment. It recognizes the government's responsibility to investigate all cases of offence against street children and to punish offenders and urges governments to take measures to combat violence and torture against street children, to restore the full participation of street children in society and to provide adequate nutrition, shelter, care and education[156].

At the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, States accepted to combat the grave problem of children in extreme poverty. National and international mechanisms and programmes should be strengthened for the defence and protection of street children. Also the Copenhagen Declaration of the World Summit for Social Development demands that urban poverty should be addressed by ensuring that special measures are taken to protect children in special and difficult circumstances including children who lack adequate family support, urban street children and abandoned children. To ensure that they are integrated into their communities and that they have access to food, shelter, education and health care and are protected from abuse and violence, as well as provided with the necessary social and psychological assistance for their healthy reintegration into society and family reunification[157]. The World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children, adopted by the World Summit for Children 1990, realizes that millions of children around the world live under especially difficult circumstances and deserve special attention, protection and assistance from their families and communities and as part of national efforts and international co-operation. Efforts must be made to ensure that no child is treated as an outcast from society[158], which is especially relevant for street children. This Declaration is innovative in that it mentions rising global inequalities and increasing of extreme poverty and vulnerability of those who are excluded from the benefits of globalization. Poverty reduction and the adherence to children's rights are closely connected.

Many of these human rights documents more clearly express the multidimensionality and global nature of extreme poverty and the phenomenon on street children, than the CRC does.

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[156] G.A. res. 47/126, *Plight of street children*, U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 49) at 200, U.N. Doc. A/47/49, http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/resolutions/47/126GA1992.html, 18.December 1992, pp.2-3.
[157] United Nations, *Compilation of family-specific recommendations*...op.cit.pp.40-41.
[158] Ibidem., pp.5-6.

3. Ethiopia

3.1. Children's rights in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is one of the oldest members of the UN with its admission in 1945. In 1993 Ethiopia acceded to the ICESCR and the ICCPR and in 1994 to the CAT. Ethiopia has ratified the CERD and CEDAW as well as the CRC in December 1991. The only Committee, that has received state reports from Ethiopia until today however, is the Committee on the Rights of the Child[159].

On the rights of street children, provisions of the Ethiopian Constitution underline that it is the State's duty to prepare and implement economic and social development policies, plans and strategies: "The State shall, within the limits permitted by the economic capability of the country, care for (…) children deprived of their parents or guardians" (Article 41,5). On the right to development it mentions that: "The main objectives of development activities shall be the citizens development and the fulfilment of their basic needs" (Article 43,3-4).

Regional and national standards applying to children in Ethiopia are the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. These represent a common regional commitment to children's rights and have the advantage of being tuned to the specific cultural setting and conditions but can also be used as an excuse for not adhering to international standards[160]. According to Van Bueren, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which entered into force in November 1999, is the most progressive of the treaties on the rights of the child[161]. Its Committee of Experts receives state reports as well as communications from individuals, groups and NGOs. The Commission is entitled to give recommendations to governments and to formulate principles for the protection and promotion of the rights of the child[162]. This means that in theory children can petition the Committee on alleged violation of their right. Concerning violations of street children's rights, this has not become practice yet however. Since children are able to lodge complaints only through their parents or legal guardians, the right to adequate

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[159] The UN Human Rights System: *For the record 1997 – Ethiopia*, http://www.hri.ca/fortherecord1997/vol2/ethiopia.htm, 2.5.2003.
[160] P.E. Veerman, op.cit.p.273.
[161] G. Van Bueren, op.cit.p.402.
[162] ibidem., p.403.

complaint procedures for children victim of abuse, neglect or ill treatment within their families, does not seem to be secured[163].

The Committee on the Rights of the Child has expressed a strong concern about the status of the CRC in Ethiopia. In Ethiopia there is still a gap between the convention and national law and also between practice and theory. Considering the Ethiopian government's initial report in 1997, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child criticizes urban-rural disparities hampering the full implementation of the CRC[164]. Less than 1% of street children receives treatment or has access to facilities, the NGO Defence for Children International reports. Even though the government mentions economic, social and cultural difficulties, the lack of national resources is never an excuse for not protecting human rights[165].

Concerns of relevance for street children in Ethiopia identified by the Committee are: the lack of awareness and understanding of the principles and provisions of the CRC, the lack of adequate training of law enforcement officials, judicial personnel, teachers, social workers and medical personnel, the negative effects of child poverty (including low level of school enrolment and education and high drop-out rates) and the situation of children in especially difficult circumstances. The Committee expressed particular concern with the persistence of discrimination against vulnerable groups of children, such as disabled, HIV/AIDS-infected, orphans and children living and /or working in the streets[166].

Commenting on Ethiopia's second periodic report in 2001, the Committee on the Rights of the child criticizes that little progress had been made since the consideration of the initial report and that the recommendations made by the Committee have not been fully taken into account[167]. The Ethiopian government's rehabilitation and prevention project for street children provides services for about 1,100 children in especially difficult circumstances. The Committee criticizes however that there are about 100,000 street children in Addis Ababa alone and questions whether the Government is working hard enough to provide urgent medical and educational services to as many of those children as possible. The Committee also wonders whether children's freedom of expression was or was not part of Ethiopian

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[163] Concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: *Ethiopia initial report*, CRC/C/8/Add.27, Geneva, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 9-10/01/1997.
[164] see http://www.hri.ca.
[165] UNICEF, *Human rights for children and women...* op.cit.pp.11-12.
[166] DCI Newsletter, *CRC Report – Ethiopia*, vol. 3 no. 1, April 1997, http://www.defence-for-children.org, 8.5.2003
[167] UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Summary record of the 675th meeting: Ethiopia*, CRC/C/SR.675, 15/11/2001.

culture and recommends that Ethiopia make a greater effort to ensure that children participated at all levels and that their opinion is respected. The Committee notes the State party's continuing serious socio-economic problems but is deeply concerned that the State party has not sought to implement the Convention to the maximum extent of available resources. It notes the absence of a government body with the capacity to coordinate and develop State policies with regard to children's rights. The current Department for Children, Youth and Family Affairs has insufficient financial and human resources to accomplish its task[168]. The Committee is concerned at the large numbers of children living or working on the streets of the main cities in the State and recommends the State party to make urgent efforts to protect the rights of children currently living and/or working on the streets, including through the provision of education, health care, nutritional aid and alternative care. It also recommends the State party to address the causes of children falling into a situation of street life[169]. The Committee suggested the establishment of an independent mechanism for the observance of children's rights, data collection on children in especially difficult circumstances, such as street children, and demands the realization of economic, social and cultural rights of children including the right to health, education and rehabilitation. The Committee suggests public information campaigns, to improve the participation of children in family, school and social life and the adoption and implementation of special protection measures for street children.[170]. This is a good approach because it builds on participation, which can be a means for empowerment and for raising awareness.

3.2. Ethiopian street children deprived of their rights

The international provisions of the CRC have not yet been implemented to a satisfying degree in Ethiopia. The current practice of soft law can nevertheless strengthen human rights and bring about a change in perception. This is crucial because the way street children are perceived in society makes a concrete difference to their daily lives; especially since part of the tragedy of street children is that they are not very attractive for compassion.

This makes clear that it is not enough to change law. One has to change the mentality and the perception of the population. E.Verhellen states: "The attitudes of the public at large are of immense importance in determining whether and how children's living conditions can be

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[168] Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, op.cit.
[169] UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, op.cit.
[170] see http://www.hri.ca.

improved"[171]. Children have the right to express themselves and to be heard, but in reality without adults to interpret and advocate, children would be left on their own. It is crucial for children to know about their rights, so that they can claim the exercise of them. E.Verhellen is very right in mentioning that "first and foremost children wish to be respected"[172]. M.G.Flekkøy states that: We must re-set our sights, to include the views, perceptions, experiences and opinions of the children themselves. Participation of the child is important for the development of the child's sense of self as well as for the democratic development of society. A child with a positive self-esteem can more easily manage stressful experiences and is less prone to depression, hopelessness and suicide[173]. They must not simply be protected but must be empowered to act and to lead autonomous lives[174]. People are active, creative beings, struggling to shape their lives. This is ever more important in regard to street children and underlines the usefulness of a human rights approach for street children.

Economic, social and cultural rights deal with the minimum condition for welfare and wellbeing, which is crucial for street children. But also civil and political rights such as the protection from arbitrary arrest are important. Street children often find themselves criminalized even though they have committed no crime. A difficulty is that children living on the street most often do not have legal status. Especially the lack of birth registration is especially harmful for child right's monitoring[175]. Street children explain that they are not listened to and that the police do not want to hear that their families do not have any money or that they were abused. Street children say, that they feel as if they are not heard, as if they are not human, but just garbage from society that people ignore.

4. Findings

Human rights are a useful tool for the empowerment of street children and for the reduction and prevention of extreme poverty. Consequences of a human rights approach for street children are firstly state obligations to promote, protect and fulfil basic human rights and secondly accountability for violations of fundamental human rights. States have the duty to promote the physical and psychological recovery and social integration of children who are

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[171] E. Verhellen, *Monitoring children's rights,…*op.cit.p.12.
[172] ibidem., p.10.
[173] M.G.Flekkøy, *Children's participation and monitoring children's rights,* in E. Verhellen (ed.), *Monitoring Children's Rights,* The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1996, pp.58-62.
[174] J.Donnelly & R. Howard cit. in G., Van Bueren, *The International Law on the Rights of the Child,* Boston, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1995, p.157.
[175] see http://www.defence-for-children.org.

neglected and can be held accountable for it. In light of the particular risk of lasting negative consequences posed by child right violations, the assessment, monitoring, reporting and intervention to address the violations is especially urgent[176].

The CRC is the most comprehensive human rights treaty on children's rights. Its nearly universal ratification can be seen as an expression of the sincere concern for children but can also point to loopholes concerning economic, social and cultural rights[177]. Of central importance for street children are the articles on special protection for neglected and abandoned children, the right to an adequate standard of living for the child's development and the state's obligations to provide programs of recovery for exploited children, which shall foster the child's dignity. An improvement has been the recognition that children's rights are important for the future economic and social health of world society. There is nevertheless need for a more specific formulation of human rights that specifically target the protection of street children. It is necessary to convince the human rights bodies to look more concretely at the protection of the rights of street children. A Convention for abandoned and neglected children could be a more targeted starting point as well as the establishment of an Ombudsman Office and the appointment of a special rapporteur on street children, in order to improve giving children a real voice in society.

Poverty is the major underlying cause for streetism. To focus on human rights can be an effective long-term tool for the improvement of the situation of street children, because it also addresses the dimensions of poverty and social exclusion. A rights-based approach better guarantees the sustainability of development programmes because it entails the involvement of neglected people in assessing and analysing their own situation.[178]. The holistic and multidimensional approach of human rights, combining civil, political, economic, social and cultural aspects, reflects that psychosocial aspects weigh equally important as economic and physical ones for street children. Often non-material aspects weigh even more than material ones, as the grass root perspective will point out to. Having rights means being entitled to respect and dignity, without having to beg for them. Compassion or benevolence cannot be an adequate substitute[179]. From a human rights perspective participation is both a means and an end, which helps street children determine their lives. Human rights imply 'entitlements' and above all enable street children to stand with dignity.

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[176] United Nations, *Training Manual on Human Rights…* op.cit.p.272.
[177] A.G.Mower, op.cit.pp.14-15.
[178] UNICEF, *Human rights for children and women…* op.cit.p.4.
[179] M.D.A.Freeman, op.cit.p.29.

Does the complaint mechanism work? In Ethiopia, implementation of children's rights has not sufficiently happened, as the case of street children shows. In theory human rights instruments ensure accountability, but in practice the state is failing to provide an adequate complaint procedure for child victims of abuse, ill treatment and neglect. Street children in Addis Ababa do not receive any particular care from the state but are predominantly left to their own destinies. An improvement has been the start of thinking in human rights terms for children, as the state reports to the Committee reflect. Violations against street children have however insufficiently been addressed so far. The implementation system can have a trickle down effect to make the Convention known to the public at large and it can (ideally) become a means to involve children in political consideration. At large though, the issue of children's participation in the implementation of the Convention has received insufficient attention and street children are still deprived of a range of fundamental human rights. There is need for recognition of the inter-related reality of children's rights and economic, social and political developments. A new strategy for children's rights requires a new perception of children as whole human individuals with needs, capacities and rights. Representation of children facilitates a more comprehensive human rights approach for children[180].

All levels of society have to realize that they contribute to the situation of streetism by neglecting the phenomenon. Only if grasped multi-dimensionally it is possible to change it – including the fulfilment of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. There have been significant improvements in the protection of children's rights, but still the survival and development of children is not given sufficiently high priority. The thinking in human rights terms has to become part of Ethiopian culture and practice. Law and practice have to be harmonized, otherwise the concept of human rights for street children remains hollow. After having scrutinized existing standards and instruments the conclusion has to be that they are not sufficiently focused on street children but nevertheless constitute the frame for something that yet has to be implemented.

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[180] G.Lenzer, op.cit.p.222.

Part II

D. The NGO approach

The aim of this chapter is to understand the impact of NGOs on street children. What are the strengths and weaknesses of an NGO approach towards the phenomenon of street children? What kind of NGO work makes what kind of difference? The chapter starts with a conceptualization of the phenomenon of street children. The second part continues with facts and definitions of NGOs also highlighting their relation to human rights, but above all scrutinizing their relevance for street children. The last part focuses on NGOs working for street children in Addis Ababa. In particular a presentation of the work of the NGO Hope for Children enables a view from within on the street children phenomenon and offers a good example for the different characteristics NGOs can have: advocacy, service-providing and capacity-building.

1. Conceptualizing the phenomenon of street children

Street children need to be considered among the most vulnerable social group in our world. Street children can be survivors of war, hunger, eviction or lack of perspective. They are victims of an uncaring community, which is increasingly characterized by poverty and economic hardship[181]. Street children originate from very poor families. They are pushed to the streets because of family poverty, abusive parents, violence or HIV/AIDS. Once on the street they lack the basic necessities for their growth and development: food, shelter, parental love, clothing, health care and education. The phenomenon of street children is not new, but the magnitude of the problem is escalating. The growth in number of street children is related to increasing levels of poverty in a country. Therefore the presence of street children demonstrates the deeper reality of poverty especially in developing countries. Street children are a reflection of the contemporary global human condition. Increasing numbers of street children in urban East Africa are the manifestation of external forces and politics[182]. The phenomenon of street children occurs in poor countries undergoing rapid urbanization and a general socio-economic, cultural and political transformation, which breaks down the traditional family and community support system. Urbanization and industrialization in Africa

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[181] Kopoka, P., *The problem of street children in Africa: an ignored tragedy,* in Lugalla, J. and C. Kibassa (eds.), *Poverty, AIDS and street children in East Africa,* Lewiston, The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002, p.265.
[182] J.Lugalla, and C. Kibassa, *Poverty, AIDS and street children in East Africa,* Lewiston, The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002, p.21.

enhanced individualism and undermined the communal lifestyle, with devastating consequences for homeless children. Rapid urban growth has enhanced rural-urban migration and the mushrooming of slums. Although rural poverty levels are generally higher, urban poverty has more severe consequences[183]. Street children are the consequence of urban and rural poverty and of urbanization.

Street children are a typically urban phenomenon of big cities, which got increasingly serious in the urban areas in 1990-2000. There are an estimated number of 100 million street children worldwide (variations in numbers are due to differences in defining street children)[184]. They stay in market places, railway stations, parks, and crossings or on waste heaps. They are signed by poverty, violence and criminality, which make them be perceived as a public scandal. Dirt, drugs and sickness arouse a reaction of repulsiveness and make them be associated with *garbage of society*. Thus to esteem these children and give them back their human worthiness must be the foundation of any aid to them. Most of all they need a perspective and respect. Without this the future of a street child is not very promising – trapped in the circle of poverty and criminality. The problem is their exclusion from society, which prevents reintegration into their family and into the community. Until today an integrative concept of re-socialization of street children into society is missing[185].

Besides the failure of leadership, war and HIV/AIDS, poverty is the root cause of the street children phenomenon[186]. The social consequences of globalization have exacerbated the gap between rich and poor regions and have created new poverty zones. Especially HIV/AIDS constitutes a time bomb, destroying the local social support network system and killing parents who leave behind their children. SAPs have generated the conditions of poverty in rural and urban East Africa and thereby exacerbated street children[187]. The economic crisis, high debt repayment and the decreasing social state count for the structural, economic and political roots of the problem of streetism.

There are many reasons why children end up on the streets. Various push and pull factors lead to children coming to the streets. Most of them who come from rural areas share the conviction that urban life is easier. The pull of the glamour of living in a city and raising one's living standard is one of the illusions. In other cases, children dropped out of school or were sent to the cities by their families to earn money and escape the intolerable conditions of

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[183] A.Shorter and E. Onyalcha, op.cit.p.105.
[184] Terre des hommes, *Straßenkinder,* 3.Auflage, Osnabrück, terre des homes, 2002, p.1.
[185] ibidem., p.8.
[186] J.Lugalla, and C. Kibassa, op.cit.p.4.
[187] ibidem., p.9.

poverty in their homes[188]. After the wrecked family experience, the street becomes the only place of socialization in which solidarity among the kids becomes a kind of family substitute. The street is also a hiding-place for those who committed a crime. It is a place to escape violence or hardship. The street environment in turn hardens the children, harms them physically and morally and deprives them of their childhood.

2. NGOs

2.1 NGOs – a definition

Non-governmental organizations are independent, non-profit-making, non-violent organizations that do not seek political power but help articulation and empowerment of the weak and poor in society[189]. NGOs describe an alternative channel of communication to the state relations. They promote people's participation in development and give a voice to the poor. Their projects are small-scale and stress the needs of the local population. They are preoccupied with development and combating poverty in a culturally sensitive way. Equity and social transformation are their main objectives. NGOs often make a concrete difference to local circumstances and identify gaps and provide services where government services are weak or not adapted to local needs.

NGOs are autonomous actors in development cooperation and a strong force as advocates and providers for services. They mainly engage in relief activity, capacity building or advocacy. Relief and self-reliance activities have limits however. Helping people to survive in crisis situation does not address the roots of poverty. Therefore above all advocacy at the state and IGO-level is important. It is relatively recent that NGOs activities include policy influence and advocacy[190]. NGOs provide alternative services to groups whose needs are not adequately met by the system. Instead of putting street children into institutions, NGOs have community- and street-based projects[191]. NGOs question existing practices and develop new innovative approaches and give examples for successful initiatives. NGOs follow a bottom-up approach, focusing on the marginalized groups in political and economic terms. In contrast to states,

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[188] L.Ochola, *The Undugu Society Approach in dealing with Children at Risk to Abuse and Neglect,* in E. Verhellen (ed.), *Monitoring Children's Rights,* The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1996, p.858.
[189] K.DeFeyter, *World Development Law,* Antwerpen, Intersentia, 2001, p.213.
[190] Thomas A. and T. Allen, *Agencies of Development,* in T.Allen & A.Thomas, *Poverty and development into the 21st century*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, p.210.
[191] I.Rizzini, Irma Rizzini, M. Munhoz, L. Galeano, *Childhood and urban poverty in Brazil: street and working children and their families,* Innocenti occasional papers, no. 3, Florence, 1992, p. 50.

which usually apply a top-down perspective, NGOs are well equipped to take into account the local view. Their aim is to build self-reliance of local communities, strengthening communities to define their own development goals and to build projects on indigenous know-how rather than on external skills. Empowerment and participation are tools to ensure that decision-making is accountable to community needs. Especially economic, social and cultural rights underline this obligation. Many NGOs fill a traditional service delivery role, while others are involved primarily in advocacy and political action, which shifted their focus from *needs* to *rights*; their mandate being to "fight for rights"[192].

Most NGOs are plagued by financial problems, since depending on uncertain funding makes long-term planning difficult. It is essential for good NGO work, that dependence on donor funding is replaced by financial sustainability, also to preserve their independence.

NGOs benefit from worldwide and more effective international communication and cooperation. NGOs are thus also part of the globalization trend. They have become synonymous with civil society and are a subgroup to the wider civil society. While this is a positive trend towards grass-root involvement and more effective implementation, the multiple causes and interests of NGO activity should not be ignored[193]. Legitimacy of international civil society implies independence from state and market forces. Their expertise on grass root concerns does however not overshadow the widespread lack of their downward accountability, and the question of whom they say they represent. The difficulty is that this needs to be monitored by the NGO community itself.

2.2. Facts about NGOs

At the international level the number of NGOs rose from 1,000 in the 1950s to 29,000 in the 1990s. Also the number of NGOs with consultative status to the ECOSOC increased from 200 in 1950 to 1500 in 1995[194]. The NGO sector expanded – especially during the 1990s, which is directly linked to the decline of the nation state and NGOs taking over some of the states' former roles[195]. In fact the increase in provision of services by NGOs is part of the privatisation of state services. Due to the neoliberal politics, cutting down the state as much as possible, an increasing amount of ODA was deployed directly to NGOs. Where

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[192] I.Rizzini, Irma Rizzini, M. Munhoz, L. Galeano, op.cit.p.50.
[193] G.Lenzer, op.cit.p.221.
[194] A.Thomas and T. Allen, *Agencies of Development,* in T.Allen & A.Thomas, *Poverty and development into the 21st century*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, p.212.
[195] ibidem., p.213.

states are obliged to reduce as part of SAP or donor-promoted 'reforms', NGOs become the gap-fillers for state services[196]. After the negative effects of SAPs on poverty alleviation, the World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF and UNESCO changed their official attitudes toward NGOs in the 1990s, which lead to a re-channelling of many funds to NGOs[197]. Transferring ODA to NGOs was seen as a guarantee that the poor benefit. NGOs have become increasingly important due to the decline of the state and the increase in their funding. It can be questioned however what right NGOs have to speak for the impoverished and to decide what is best for them? Yet the same could be asked concerning the World Bank or governments, who are even less accountable to the poor than many NGOs, due to their geographical distance and disinterest in the specific needs of a marginalized group in society. Their focus is more on the well functioning of society at large. This lack of legitimacy calls for services provided out of good will to become rights[198].

NGO engagement in relief and self-reliance activity is a response to the malfunctioning of the state in fulfilling its development mission[199]. NGOs find themselves in a dilemma: they are filling the gaps and providing services, which in fact the state is responsible for. Therefore their engagement in relief and self-reliance activities should depend on the analysis of the State's capacity to engage in such activities in the first place. It would be justified to fill the gaps if the state truly lacks capacity, but not, if it is due to lack of political will. If it is a lack of political will of the government, to provide for services, then an NGO should primarily engage in advocacy to exert pressure on the state. Another dilemma is that development NGOs set up for human right advocacy often end up providing welfare services instead. NGOs have expertise in relief and self-reliance activities at the grass-root level, which is of interest for the government that increasingly depends on NGOs as implementing agencies. This however presupposes that NGOs enjoy legitimacy and are accountable to their beneficiaries[200]. NGOs accountability toward the beneficiaries is not always given. NGOs are commonly more accountable to their donors than to their beneficiaries[201]. Ensuring ownership of development by the beneficiaries is hard to reconcile with accountability to official donors - southern NGOs tend to have little influence on decision-making in the North[202].

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[196] A.Thomas A. and T. Allen, op.cit.p.213.

[197] G.Lenzer, op.cit.p.219.

[198] A.Thomas and T. Allen, op.cit.p.215.

[199] K.DeFeyter, op.cit.p.241.

[200] ibidem., p.222.

[201] A.Thomas and T. Allen, op.cit.p.213.

[202] K.DeFeyter, op.cit.p.221.

There are different types of NGOs. Some emphasize the provision of services while others conduct advocacy for human rights. NGOs have three main roles: consultation, implementation and disputing. NGOs can be differentiated into service-providing and campaigning NGOs. They vary in scope and scale, working at local, national or international level. National NGOs often represent the concerns of a particular group or are service-providing. Their work is based on trust, charity, private initiative, aimed at social goals and development. Many international NGOs work through partnership with them. Local NGOs are grassroots organizations that may work for member benefit or for public benefit. At the domestic level it is NGOs main concern to monitor and ensure that the state fulfils its responsibility for development. At the international level, NGOs are in a position to act for development as a goal in itself, which is an advantage over states[203]. States nevertheless have the primary responsibility and accountability for people on their territory. The state is perhaps best suited to tackle the street children problem, but government policies have tended to be highly unsatisfying and the responsibility of solving the street children dilemma has been left to charity organization[204]. The traditional response of governments to the phenomenon of street children is repression. Many times governments take ruthless steps of *clearing* the streets and street children are arrested for minor theft and detained in harsh circumstances. Not only governments, also the community is failing to address the problem, if there is no community pressure to force the governments to find lasting solutions to the street children phenomenon.

The main important role of NGOs is, and should be, their role as watchdog and advocacy: to monitor that states and IGOs take the rights and needs of the beneficiaries into account[205]. In the international legal system NGOs however primarily have an informal role [206]. They can engage in consultations through the ECOSOC by getting consultative status at the UN, which enables them to observe and to submit statements. Therefore NGOs have an indirect impact on government positions[207]. Increasingly often, NGOs engage in support of people adversely affected by development activities and challenge the negative consequences of action taken in the name of *development*.

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[203] K.DeFeyter, op.cit.p.240.
[204] P.Kopoka, op.cit.p.267.
[205] K.DeFeyter, op.cit.p.240.
[206] ibidem., p.231.
[207] ibidem., p.228.

<div align="center">Typology of NGOs</div>

Advocacy NGO	Observer role, policy influence, advocacy for human right, awareness raising, ensuring that decision-making is accountable to community needs, addressing roots of poverty, disputing, predominantly international.
Service providing NGO	Relief activity, help people to survive in crisis situation, gap-fillers for state services, implementing, predominantly local.
Capacity building NGO	Self-reliance activity, empowerment, participation, partnership, consultation, national and international.

2.3. How NGOs and human right help street children

NGO projects have managed to improve the lot of many street children. Street children are in need of parental love and the security of a home, which they are deprived of. This also means that love must be the basic motive underlying the projects of an NGO[208]. Instead of love and comfort, usually street children experience repulsion, violence and harassment from city authorities as well as physical and verbal abuse from members of society[209]. Street children are often imprisoned and taken to juvenile court without any legal representation, being perceived as an eye sore by many city officials[210]. To the public they represent the lowest human beings, dirty, diseased and a source of embarrassment to be despised and avoided[211]. The public does not seem to want to understand the plight of street children.

The NGO approach reveals that it is above all the restoration of street children's dignity, which means alleviation from *poverty*. They are hopeless and have given up. Food is not street children's main problem. They are not starving. The worst problem is that they are

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[208] A.Shorter, and E. Onyalcha, op.cit.pp.100-101.
[209] L.Ochola, op.cit.p.859.
[210] ibidem., p.853.
[211] ibidem., p.856.

treated, and therefore also feel, like outcasts. Poverty is experienced as invisibility and lack of dignity. Discrimination is street children's biggest problem. They are amongst the most disliked and deprived sections of the population. They are disrespected, abandoned, maltreated and harassment by the police and the general public. The use of derogative terms such as worthless- and delinquent children, point to the stereotypes attached to how they are perceived by society. Street children do not receive compassion but aggression. This subjective experience of violation of one's human dignity, which rights entitle to, is crucial for the implementation of children's rights[212]. It is the aim of Human Rights NGOs to move away from the dehumanization of the street child image. Non-discrimination clauses of the human rights treaties entitle street children to the same rights as everyone else. A human being's basic human rights, such as physical integrity and the protection from discrimination aim at ensuring a life to be lived in dignity – which street children are deprived of. A central problem remains that children from disadvantaged backgrounds are highly sceptical toward their "rights". Therefore the change of attitudes towards street children along with the improvement of living conditions describe the agenda of most NGOs working for street children. To denounce the phenomenon goes hand in hand with concretely improving street children's daily situation.

So that street children are no longer perceived at the margins of society, NGOs put them at the centre of their attention. On the micro-level, NGOs are teachers and social workers. On the macro-level they influence decision-makers and policies on children. Even if NGOs do not have direct decision-making power, they can set guidelines and reinforce coordination to improve the social and political scene for children[213]. Important for their accountability is that NGOs are accessible to the communities and interact with children of the streets.

There are no quick solutions and success stories. To get away from the street usually takes four to five years[214]. Giving food and shelter is no sustainable help. It is important to provide consistent help of duration, including aftercare, but also to find solutions for every day problems. Therefore it is useful to build up a relationship of trust and to make a plan with the children with short- and long-term goals, to show the youngster that the results are achievable. Education, consultation, respect and employment are essential. It takes time for street workers to get street children trust because they are highly sceptical towards adults, since the common

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[212] G.B.Melton and S. P. Limber, *The meaning of human rights for children- a view from within,* in M. Freeman, P. Veerman 1992, pp.168-172.

[213] L.M.Aguilar, *the role of the NGOs in monitoring children's rights,* in E. Verhellen (ed.), *Monitoring Children's Rights,* The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1996, p.506.

[214] Terre des hommes, op.cit.p.1.

experience is that they insult, beat or drive them away. Therefore often a child-to-child approach has been adopted, where rehabilitated children educate street children, because they trust them more easily.

The children do not need alms or a place in an orphanage, they need respect of their personality and their experiences taken seriously. Street workers dialogue with the street children; they pay attention, listen to their needs and encourage them in their capabilities, which they normally do not receive. The work of Capacity-building-NGOs is a chance for street children: to give them a perspective, hope for the future, training, counselling, basic needs, education, medication and awareness. Creating awareness on their rights and capabilities has potential to change their destinies[215]. They need education in order to take the future into their own hands. Information, education, guidance, rehabilitation, healthcare and services are needed for breaking the poverty cycle that street children find themselves in. Creating small employments and skill trainings in addition to providing shelter, healthcare and nutrition can have a significant impact on the socio-economic situation of street children. Offering social activities and legal assistance are further steps towards possible rehabilitation. It is necessary that the programs help the people in a sustainable way. Many NGO therefore focus on education as a sustainable way for children to be encouraged and to take responsibility. Especially the participatory approach of Capacity-building-NGOs is promising for finding a sustainable way out of streetism, by encouragement to take responsibility over one's own life. It is important that their self-esteem and self-respect is regained, because many street children lack a sense of self worth, due to the way they are treated by society in their daily life. NGO activities stimulate self-confidence of street children. The children thereby acquired self-esteem and a sense of purpose, which was lacking before[216]. Terre des homes points out that it is important for street children to overcome seeing themselves as victims but as worthy persons with capabilities[217]. Therefore it is good to start from the potential a street child has, in order to find solutions out of the situation. Most important is to foster the child in his capabilities and not to focus on the negative points. To listen to the points of view and expectations of the child are the precondition for any improvements.

Why human rights? Article 22 of UDHR enshrines that everyone has the right to social security and is entitled to the realization of economic, social and cultural rights indispensable

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[215] L.Ochola, op.cit.p.855.
[216] A.Shorter, and E. Onyalcha, op.cit.p.90.
[217] Terre des hommes, op.cit.p.1.

for dignity and development of personality, through national and international efforts[218]. Human rights can also be derived from fundamental human needs, such as food, shelter, water, rest, health, education and companionship[219]. This underlines the relevance of NGO work for street children. Human rights constitute the protection of our human personhood, which involves being able to choose and to know what possibilities there are. Thus education and information are fundamental prerequisites[220].

Increasing instances of child neglect are becoming a problem in many countries around the world today[221]. Although nearly all countries have ratified the CRC, the provisions are not incorporated into law and there are no policies for children in especially difficult circumstances, such as street children. The NGO-group for the CRC criticizes that government reports do not consider the practical implementation of the laws. Advocacy-NGOs have a watchdog role to ensure that states fulfil their HR obligations. Parallel to state reports, NGOs can write shadow reports to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural rights. They advocate for improved policies at international level. Therefore especially advocacy has to be NGO's central area of activity. The Committee has recognized the significant role that NGOs can play in the monitoring process. The non-governmental information to the Committee on the Rights of the Child is essential for the monitoring process, since it helps identify key issues. It is in the hands of NGOs to keep children's issues on the national agenda and the Committee thereafter can pressure governments for change, since these must come from national level in the end. Thus, civil society, such as NGOs, has a responsibility to take for the protection of children's rights.

2.4. Summary

NGOs are playing an increasingly important role for development at the local level. They have made significant contributions to participatory development, innovative methods and project implementation. They seek to alleviate poverty and inequalities by empowering the poor, strengthening their capabilities to become masters of their own destinies, building on indigenous know-how and cultural sensitivity, promoting self-reliance and self-

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[218] United Nations, *A Compilation of International Instruments,* New York and Geneva, United Nations, 1994.
[219] J.Griffin, *Do children have rights?,* in D.Archard, C.M.Macleod (eds.), *The moral and political status of children,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp.25-27.
[220] Ibidem.,.21.
[221] L.Ochola, op.cit.p.853.

sustainability[222]. Capacity-building NGOs are not providers of development but partners. Development workers are catalysts for change instead of decision-makers. The anthropological approach of NGO projects has made them more socially and locally appropriate, stressing human resources and encouraging the poor to participate in economic growth[223]. Changes at the political level are just as important, but results become visible only in the long-term, while NGOs can make short-term improvements. The advantage that Service-providing-NGOs have over other development agencies is their flexibility and speed in operation and their ability to adapt to changing local circumstances. This enables them to develop appropriate, bottom-up responses to local problems.

In Africa, increasing poverty, family violence, wars and the breaking up of traditional family structure, as well as unfavourable global economic relations and the decline of the social state contribute to the rising number of street children[224]. The street is a place for those who don't have one in 'normal society'. To aim at the prevention of children taking to the streets, it is most promising to break the poverty-cycle. Therefore successful rehabilitation of street children means not rehabilitating children in isolation, but rehabilitation of the family and the strengthening of family-life in general. The solution lies in understanding and addressing the societal factors that lead to child abuse and neglect. The sad fact remains that street children remain invisible. Therefore it is essential to identify attitudes and practices that cause the invisibility.

The provisions of the CRC have to become legally enforceable rights instead of remaining metaphorical. NGOs try to fill the gap between the provisions of the CRC and reality. This action is necessary to obtain political commitment of governments towards children's rights[225]. Non-governmental organizations are making significant contributions to the alleviation of some of the problems of street children. But they alone cannot solve such fundamental urban problems. They need support and cooperation from the government and the general public[226].

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[222] J.Brohman, op.cit.p.254.

[223] J.Brohman, op.cit.pp.255-257.

[224] Terre des hommes, op.cit.p.3.

[225] L.M.Aguilar, op.cit.p.503.

[226] Voice of America, *Street children in Ethiopia part III,* Hilletework Mathias, WASHINGTON D.C., http://www.fas.org, 1.6.2000.

3. Ethiopia

3.1. Addis Ababa street children

Between 60,000 (estimation of UNICEF and the Ethiopian government) and 100,000 (estimation of SIDA) children live on the streets of Addis Ababa[227]. The NGO Forum on Street Children estimates that the number of street children continues to increase by 3% each year, because the conditions that give rise to the phenomenon do not improve[228]. The Child Care Unit at Addis Ababa Police Commission confirms that more and more children are abandoned and many of them also die. During 2002 for example 62 babies, who had been abandoned, were found alive and 40 dead[229].

In Addis Ababa there are children *on* the street (they live on the street all the time) and *of* the street (meaning they sleep at home during the night and work on the streets during the days). Some 15,000 children in Addis Ababa are believed to children *of* the street, which means they work 12-14 hours a day and then go home[230]. The majority however lives their entire lives on the streets[231]. The most common places where street children hang out in Addis Ababa are Churchill road, Merkato, Stadium, Bole road, La Gare and Piazza. Why live on the street? Because the street is a public market place and offers an ideal opportunity to beg.

The majority of street children are between 8- 14 years old, but some are much younger or even born onto the street. Around 80% of the street children are boys and 20% girls (estimation of the NGO Hope For Children). The numbers are different due to socio-cultural reasons. Girls usually stay at home and work in the mother's household. If girls run away from home they are at a particular risk of becoming victims of sexual abuse[232]. And they are partly aware of this likelihood to be exposed to violence. It is more normal that boys look for work outside their homes. Some relatives even encourage boys to look for work in the city. It is an ideal, a dream, a romanticized picture of a more *modern* life, which is synonymous with job opportunities and making money. They leave their miserable family situation (characterized by lack of food, lack of perspective or also lack of love and care) and follow their illusion about a better life in the city[233]. The majority of street children come from the

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[227] Interview with Gizachew Ayka, director of the NGO Hope For Children, 19.4.2003.
[228] Addis Tewlid, *the lost generation?,* Abebe, M., http://www.addistewlid.com, 15.4.2003.
[229] UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, IRINnews, *Ethiopia: more and more children forced onto the streets,* http://www.irinnews.org, 30.4.2002.
[230] ibidem.
[231] G.Van Bueren, op.cit.p.284.
[232] see http://www.addistewlid.com.
[233] Interview with Gizachew Ayka, op.cit.

countryside, because families do not have enough food for their children and the work in the subsistence agriculture is very hard.

The problems that lead to become a street child in Ethiopia are inter-related and complex. One reason can be that children's parents have died from HIV/AIDS - there are up to one million AIDS orphans in Ethiopia[234]. Another reason is that youngsters move from the rural areas into the urban centres in search for a job opportunity and end up wandering the streets. There is a limited access to educational opportunities and to recreation and sport centres. Teenagers in Ethiopia are vulnerable to becoming street children because of a lack of educational- or job opportunities in the country, the Ministry of Labour and Social affairs acknowledged[235].

Ethiopia's unresolved economic, social and political problems deepen the poverty and the government has not taken adequate measures to alleviate the problem, NGOs criticize. The Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO), the most prominent human rights group in Addis Ababa, demands the government to stop the inhuman acts that violate the rights of citizens who have been exposed to problems for economic, social and political reasons. The EHRCO has issued a number of reports on human rights violations, including on forced roundups of street children. The Addis Ababa police have been trying to *clean up* the city by indiscriminately rounding up homeless and street children at night, and temporarily detaining some of them at police stations until the next morning. Others were forced onto police trucks and taken out of Addis Ababa, dumping them in a forest at the outskirts of the city where they were exposed to attacks by hyenas[236]. Apart from the fact that these actions are illegal (violating article 3 of the UDHR, article 6 (1) of the ICCPR and article 14 of the Ethiopian Constitution, which provide that "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person" and violating the provisions of article 9 of the UDHR, Article 8 (1) of the ICCPR and Article 17 of the Ethiopian Constitution, which provide that "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention"), the Ethiopian Human Rights Council criticizes that the dumping of street children outside of Addis Ababa does not resolve the problem but is again an expression of the brutal, inhuman and illegal treatment of street children in society[237]. Instead of mobilising the public and other humanitarian organisations to help rehabilitate the destitute children, the government prefers to get rid of the street children. As a "justification" of the human rights violations the police mentioned, that the street children have become an

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[234] see http://www.irinnews.org.
[235] UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, IRINnews, *Ethiopia: lack of opportunities driving youth to drink*, http://www.irinnews.org, 14.3.2003.
[236] Ethiopian Human Rights Council, *Atrocities committed against street children and the homeless*, Urgent Report no. 2/1996, May 6, 1996, http://www.ethiopians.com/spec6.html.
[237] Ibidem.

insult to the government. As Addis Ababa is the seat of the Ethiopian government street children should not be seen, since they damage the city's good reputation by begging from diplomats[238]. Why is society not taking care of street children? Ethiopians are really generous and helping each other. But concerning the phenomenon of street children, they simply accept the situation. Part of the reason is that they are too poor themselves and thus street children easily become an outlet for aggression for the problems of poverty and helplessness experienced by the people themselves in society at large.

Children are abandoned for various socio-cultural and economic reasons. Ethiopian poverty has national but also international roots. It is created inside and outside, Gizachew Ayka from the NGO Hope For Children explains. In the country there is a strong Orthodox Christian tradition, which is an inherent part of the general Ethiopian culture. Beggars are aware of the Orthodox promise that if you give you will get and take advantage of it. Depending on the holyday people worship different saints and go to the churches and give alms to the poor. This alleviates the short-term experience of poverty but aggravates the structures of poverty. Begging has become a system with mutual benefit. Mr.Ayka expresses the dark side of this religious pro-poor system. He says: "giving is good, but the way the Orthodox give creates dependence and poverty in the long run". The same system can also be found in the structures of international development aid.

Ethiopia obtains debt relief from the World Bank and Western countries. The promised debt relief however only makes out ten percent of Ethiopia's external debt burden of 10.3 billion U.S.$[239]. As part of the arrangement, Ethiopia is required to revise its tax structure, carry out privatization, cut defence spending, and reorganize the banking sector. Under pressure from the World Bank and IMF, many developing countries have reformed the provision of their basic services and resorted to depending upon the private sector. The problem with private provision of services is that the primary motive is to maximise profits rather than to guarantee equitable access. NGOs criticize that these international relations do not encourage a debt free future. Mr.Ayka says: "You can see the shadow side of development aid in Ethiopia. It is problematic that Ethiopians expect development aid to come from outside. The *ferengis* (foreigners) have no understanding of how Ethiopians want their development. They want to hold the steering wheel of development instead of handing it over to the locals. Once the foreign experts are done they leave the locals behind with something they did not even ask for

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[238] See http://www.ehrco.net/reports/special_report41.html.
[239] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2003,* http://www.hrw.org, 24.4.2003.

and which does not help their development inside, and international dependence is growing. The way in which one is giving makes all the difference"[240].

There are different reasons to become a street child. Shorter and Onyancha refer to five fundamental causes: the cost of education, poverty, declining of the family, lack of public attention and lack of appropriately implemented legislation[241]. HFC refers to four different categories of street children groups and gives examples of concrete cases[242]. The first group ends up on the street due to lack of love, care and protection at home. These are families that treat their children as labour, and violent punishment is common. Children ran away from home to escape the hard work but they are hit even harder when they realize that living on their own in Addis Ababa is not easier. Many kids who end up on the streets stop believing in the good of life in general. "They *give up* and live a life in desperation and hopelessness without any perspective of a good life", Mr.Ayka reports [243]. Michael for example grew up in Addis Ababa. His father died in the war with Eritrea and his mother worked as a collector of firewood. The wage however was too small to feed the family, so Michael also had to help carry firewood when he was 8 years. The mother was a believer in witchcraft – which is very common – and she forced Michael to assist her. When he refused to or complained about the work, she beat him. When he was 10 years old he could not stand the burden any more and ran away to live alone on the street. The mother tried to take him back but he preferred his independence living as a street child[244]. For this group of street children, human rights advocacy is especially crucial. Human rights hold parents and – if this is not possible – the state accountable for the care taking of their children.

The second group lives on the street due to cultural-religious reasons. The inherent relation between Orthodox belief and begging is already referred to above. The institutionalization of begging gets another dimension in the seduction of children to become *kollo-tamari*, which is a common practice in some parts of Ethiopia. (*Kollo* is a combination of grains that last for a long time and that you can eat when travelling, *tamari* means student.) Deacons from the Orthodox Church select children from their congregation to go to the city and become *kollo-tamaris*, which means to wander around and beg in order to have a spiritual experience and ideally return and become a deacon. But most of the children end up living on the streets as

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[240] Interview with Gizachew Ayka, op.cit.
[241] A.Shorter, and E. Onyalcha, op.cit.p.102.
[242] Interview with Gizachew Ayka, op.cit.
[243] ibidem.
[244] Interview with Yonas Tsefaye, worker at the NGO Hope For Children, 18.4.2003.

street children[245]. For this group NGO-awareness-raising on the bad-practice of exposing children to harmful circumstances becomes a task.

The third group, which is the largest, lives on the streets for socio-economic reasons. Many children lose their parents due to HIV/AIDS. 990.000 children were orphaned due to AIDS by the end of 2001[246]. The state does not provide for a social security net, so the only option for the orphans is to survive on their own, which means on the street as street children [247]. Another problem in Ethiopian society is family planning. The use of contraception is not very common and to have many children is the hope of most Ethiopians. In the family of G.Ayka they were 14 children and he says there was neither enough food nor enough care and love for everyone. Mistreatment was common and all had to work extra to support the family financially. Some of his brothers and sisters were given to adoption abroad, because the family was too poor to feed all. The economic situation of Ethiopia is dreadful. Most families cannot sustain themselves economically. The majority of people go hungry – even with a job. The average monthly salary is 150Birr (around 20€). The value (purchase power) of the money is much higher than in Europe but it is still too little for supporting a whole family[248]. Due to the hardship of poverty, Rosa for example left her home in Harar and came to Addis Ababa to work as a housekeeper when she was 13. After working in a household for two years she was sexually abused by a neighbour. This was of course a traumatic experience of violence and vulnerability. When she realized that she was pregnant she ran away and stayed on the street. There the social workers of HFC found her. Rosa gave birth to her baby in the office of HFC (because the financial means to get medical help were limited). The child was given to adoption. Now her psychological situation has stabilized with the help of counselling of HFC. She is living in her own flat now, provided for by HFC[249]. This group who got street children for reasons of poverty, makes clear the importance of national and international responsibility for poverty reduction and social security.

The fourth group of children ends up on the streets because of their idealization of Addis Ababa as the place to become rich in. Toffik for example grew up in the region Gurage. He heard many fantastic stories about Addis Ababa from people who had been there and he saw the material acquisitions of people who came back from there. This made him create an idealized picture of Addis Ababa, which became a symbol for his dream of a better life. At

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[245] Interview with Yonas Tsefaye, op.cit.
[246] UNICEF, *The state of the world's children 2003*...op.cit.p.42.
[247] Spiegel almanach, *Welt-Jahrbuch*... op.cit.p.103.
[248] Interview with Gizachew Ayka, op.cit.
[249] Interview with Yonas Tsefaye, op.cit.

home in Gurage he did not like the hard work. There was no time for leisure or play. His life was a struggle because the way to school meant a walk of two hours every day – apart from the herding in the afternoons. Toffik hoped for Addis Ababa to be a place to have a relaxing life. G.Ayka from Hope for Children underlines that the mis-information about Addis Ababa as a better place is highly problematic. One day Toffik decided to run away from home and leave his hardship in order to start a better life in the capital. Once there though, reality was different. He did not have a place to sleep, did not understand the language (Amharic) and had to beg for food. Addis Ababa promised to be an illusion. After living as a street child for 5 years he got to know the social workers of HFC. They convinced him to return home. In contrast to his expectations, his parents got happy when he came. Now Toffik is going to school, which HFC organized. He has the plan to teach and thereby open the eyes of the people in his region[250]. The street children of this category underline the importance of information and education, which awareness-raising NGOs aim at.

HFC explains that some street children are worse off than others. One has to differentiate between them. HFC differentiates the children into categories of severity: The least desperate street children, are those who look for an opportunity to make a little bit of money - to assist their families financially to get enough food on the table. Other reasons could be freedom from the experienced violence at home or the burden of the hard life on the countryside. The problem is the eventual realization that the 'freedom' on the street does not overweigh the hardship of it. The role and reaction of the parents is crucial for the child's decision to return home at this stage.

The 'normal' street children are typically children who are abandoned due to quarrel or alcoholism in their family. They still have the choice between a life at home and a life on the street. After they spent some time on the street they are vulnerable to fall for drugs or mistreatment themselves.

The most desperate street children are those who gave up any hope in a brighter future and see no good in living and more. They do not want to return to "normal" life, because that is the negative one from which they escaped. They have no perspective and simply want to stop living[251].

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[250] Interview with Gizachew Ayka, op.cit.
[251] ibidem.

3.2. NGOs working for street children in Addis Ababa

In Ethiopia the majority of direct actions to help street children are undertaken by NGOs and religious organizations. Many NGOs have ethical or religious motivations for their work. While religion and NGO-work do not necessarily contradict, the mixing up can have a manipulative affect on the beneficiaries of aid. NGOs and groups of young Ethiopians who go out and talk with street children are those who concretely do something for street children. Many NGOs do not attempt to take the children off the street, but aim to bring sympathy. Some organizations work through the children's own organizations while others work with the local community that surrounds the street kids. In spite of good intentions of numerous programs for street children, the attitude of the public however remains largely negative. The hostility towards street children explains to a large extent why the public is not committed to solving the problem. Thus advocacy, aiming at the education of the general public has to be central to NGO activities. Therefore human rights NGOs have an especially crucial role to play.

Currently 458 NGOs are registered with the Ministry of Justice - 242 local and 216 international ones[252]. There are many examples in Ethiopia of NGOs helping to build the capacity of community based organizations and of government services[253]. Before 1991 NGOs were mostly working in the areas of relief and development. After the government change in 1991 a new type of NGOs emerged, focusing on democratisation, civic education and human rights monitoring. Some of them were denied registration on the grounds that they had "political" goals. Amnesty International reports that many peaceful political activists, Human rights activists and journalists have been harassed and imprisoned for criticizing the government. The former General Secretary of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) for example was arrested for political reasons[254]. Registration of NGOs with government ministries is still a means to restrict NGO activities. In the past, the government had a separate agency (the Children's Commission, which was in charge of children issues). Under the government-restructuring program, it became a department within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. NGOs criticize that the restructuring of the children commission is a disadvantage working with street children due to a lack of focal organization at the ministerial level. Children need an agency of their own that can speak for their rights[255].

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[252] see http://www.waltainfo.com/esrdf/paper/Civil_Society.htm.
[253] ibidem.
[254] ai, *Amnesty international Jahresbericht 2002*, Frankfurt am Main, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2002, p.93.

As the registered NGOs in Ethiopia are major partners of the Ethiopian government in development, they have well founded reasons and legitimacy to participate in the process of preparing the country's PRSP[256]. Civil society, such as NGOs, can monitor whether the PRSP principles are truly being upheld. This kind of monitoring still needs to be improved. Civil society could compare the outcomes of the participatory process to the PRSP document, and evaluate whether the PRSP had truly been influenced by the government consultations. It would be more effective monitoring also, if their results were submitted directly to the donors. Even though a law was passed in 2000 to create a Human rights commission and an ombudsman to investigate government abuse, neither organization has yet been installed[257].

Main NGOs working for street children in Addis Ababa: [258]

1. African Development Aid Association	13. Godano (which means street child in Amharic)
2. African Network for the Prevention of and Protection Against Child Abuse & Neglect	14. Hope Enterprise
	15. Hope for Children
3. Cheshire Foundation for the Relief of Suffering	16. Integrated Holistic Approach-Urban Development Program
4. Children and Youth Forum	17. New Life
5. Christian Children s Fund Inc.	18. Organization for Social Services for AIDS
6. Development AID for Youth	
7. Ethiopia Gemini. Trust	19. Pestalozzi Children s Foundation
8. Ethiopian Human Rights Council	20. Rädda Barnen
9. Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia	21. Redd Barna
10. Forum on Street Children Ethiopia	22. Save the Children Federation (USA)
11. FOCUS on Children at Risk	23. Save the Children Fund (UK)
12. GOAL-International	24. 505 Children s Village
	25. World Vision International Home

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[255] Voice of America, *Street children in Ethiopia part III,* Hilletework Mathias, Washington D.C., http://www.fas.org, 1.6.2000.
[256] see http://www.waltainfo.com/esrdf/paper/Civil_Society.htm.
[257] ai, op.cit.p.92.
[258] African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect - Regional Office, *Ethiopia,* http://www.crin.org/reg, 14.6.2003.

In order to understand the diversity of NGO activity, a presentation of some organizations is following. The Forum on Street Children Ethiopia (FSCE) is an indigenous NGO, established in response to the increase in the number of orphaned and abandoned children in Addis Ababa caused by the drought and famine of 1984/85. It is FSCE's vision to see the rights of urban disadvantaged children respected by society and to build up the capacity of a child oriented government[259]. As a child-oriented and right based organization, the mission of FSCE is to work for the respect of the rights of street children, sexually abused and exploited children, physically abused children, and children in conflict with the law. Advocacy is the main strategy, which means lobbying for the proper implementation of the CRC and child related aspects of social service and social welfare policies of the government. FSCE does public awareness raising (through workshops, seminars, publications, meetings and the media to reach the general public) on the problem of urban disadvantaged children, street children, sexually abused and exploited children, children in conflict with the law and child labour. The FSCE also conducts action-oriented research to understand the cause of the magnitude of urban disadvantaged children and implements community based, child focused projects to support low-income children, their families and communities.

The objective of the FSCE Child Protection Program is to involve the police in the alternative treatment of young offenders. To this end, Community-Based Correction Centres, serving as an alternative measure to the prosecution of young offenders have been established. The idea is to correct minor and young offenders without removing them from their families and without confining them in reformatory institutions as well as to increase the collaboration of the police and the local communities in the prevention of young offenders from problems. The project has resulted in a decrease in number of children detained, and an attitudinal change among the police officers, resulting in a better treatment of the children[260]. FSCE thus is the example of an NGO that started as a service providing agency and later moved to capacity building and advocacy.

Save the Children supports the child protection programme of the Forum on Street Children. The collaboration with the local communities has raised awareness among both the police and the community of the situation for children at risk. Extensive training programmes for professionals are essential for promoting an attitudinal change and to increase their knowledge of international standards as well as national regulations governing their decision-

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[259] Forum on street children – Ethiopia, http://www.telecom.net.et/~fsce, 12.6.2003.
[260] Committee on the Rights of the Child *State Violence Against Children,* Submission by Save the Children Sweden, Geneva, OHCHR, 2000, p.3.

making and day-to-day behaviour towards children in conflict with the law. Save the Children recommends to put pressure on States to focus on existing gaps between law and its implementation in order to identify areas for improved protection of children. There is a need for policy changes that lead away from the criminal justice system and that promote non-custodial sentences[261]. Therefore a legal reform, decriminalising so-called "antisocial" behaviour such as "streetism", begging and vagrancy, is necessary. Save the Children in this case therefore is a typical advocacy NGO.

The African Network for the Prevention of and Protection Against Child Abuse & Neglect is a regional NGO coalition that carries out advocacy for children rights and encourages the creation of national organizations for the promotion and defence of children's rights. It emphasizes research, advocacy, training, education and participatory approaches towards child protection. Members of the network in Ethiopia are among others: World Vision Ethiopia, UNICEF, Save the Children, Plan International, Medical mission sisters, Kindernothilfe, International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and neglect, Hope Enterprise, GOAL, Forum on Street Children, Christian Children's Fund, NGO-Group for the rights of the child, Children and Youth Forum, Christian Relief and Development Association. Hope Enterprise has a breakfast program for street children and provides 500 needy people with daily food. Individuals can buy a meal ticket and distribute them to street children.

GOAL has been working in Ethiopia since the famine in 1984 and is one of the leading NGOs dealing with street children. Its street children programme started in 1990. GOAL addresses the rights and needs of street children and aims at their rehabilitation into the community. GOAL has two drop-in centres that provide health care, education, counselling, meals and washing facilities as well as night centres that give 100 children shelter. In total, GOAL cares for about 700 street children between ages 7 to 18. It constitutes a typical service-providing NGO.

Despite the many philanthropic NGOs, less than 2% of the estimated 5.5 million Ethiopian children in "especially difficult circumstances" have access to social services according to the government[262]. This underlines that it still is in the hands of the Ethiopian people and government, but also everyone else of the international community, to change the future of the street children of Ethiopia.

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[261] Committee on the Rights of the Child, op.cit.p.2.
[262] see http://www.addistewlid.com.

3.3. Hope For Children – a view from within

Hope for Children in Ethiopia Relief and Development Association (HFC) was founded by a group of young Ethiopians in 2000. The primary objective of Hope for Children is to develop the future life of children through education and basic supports[263]. HFC predominantly works with children *on* the streets since they are hit hardest. The NGO funds itself through contributions from various individuals and Christian groups from abroad (mostly Scandinavia), but sets its agenda independently. The objectives of the NGO are to give food, shelter, vocational training, education, health support, financial- and material support, and counselling for street children[264].

Due to the Christian roots of the organization, the NGO started under the name Win Souls for God (WSG). This was in May 1997 when ten boys aged 19 to 21 discussed poverty and came up with the idea to help street people. They went out on the streets and made contact with the most needy (war victims, prostitutes, widows, orphans). By showing them respect, by seeing them, listening to them and by establishing a friendship, the boys achieved an understanding for their concrete needs. Then they saved some money for which they bought food for the street children and organized a small house (shelter) as a meeting place. WSG realized that Western donors in sometimes had hesitations to sponsor their project due to the mixing up of religion and relief work. Therefore the work was separated into two NGOs. Win Souls for God now deals with the spiritual part of rehabilitation, while Hope for Children takes care of the development aspects. This makes the aid more transparent to the donors and to the beneficiaries as well. The two programs combine community health, empowerment and evangelization. Education is seen as a tool for empowerment while evangelization is seen as a means to reflect on life and to know about oneself and to question, understand and discover the spiritual part of health[265]. HFC understands that health and social aspects go hand in hand, which implies community awareness raising on the rights of the child, including teaching parents that they are obliged to give the child love and care. The approach of HFC is to restore hope by working from below and responding to the individual needs of a child. Some children are in need of shelter, others of a job. HFC is a mix of a service-providing-, capacity-building- and advocacy NGO.

Hope for Children rejects an institutionalized solution for street children and instead engages

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[263] Hope for Children in Ethiopia Relief and Development Association, http://www.hfc-ethiopia.org.
[264] Hope for Children Relief and Development Association in Ethiopia, *Development Objectives,* Addis Ababa, 2003.
[265] Interview with Gizachew Ayka, op.cit..

in 'street education'. This implies listening the children and thereby learning what is best for them. Street workers of HFC go to the places where street children stay and ask permission in their 'street language' to sit down with them. To physically and mentally be at the same level with them, enables a dialogue about why they live on the street and how they came there. In the beginning the street children try to defend themselves and their lifestyle, but once friendship has been established they talk about their problems and needs. Their poverty, they explain, feels like vulnerability, helplessness and shame. It is physical and psychological pain. By ranking what they need most, street children mention first of all respect, then food and play, followed by education, shelter and clothes. HFC thus understands that street children above all lack dignity, identity, peace and perspective.

The street educators play an important role model for the street children, who are usually confronted with violent and repressive adults[266]. After the relationship with the street educators grows, HFC provides support for the children to reintegrate into society, such as returning to their families if possible. HFC has a self-supportive program in which kids are provided with shoe-shining material or sweets, which they can sell in order to become self-sustaining or live free from begging on the streets.

HFC consists of ten full time workers and thirty volunteers. Many of them have themselves been street children before and now apply a child-to-child approach. HFC has two prevention centres for streetism where about 150 children are given schooling. In addition to that there is a prevention program for teaching parents and a program for criminals and prostitutes to get advise and counselling. HFC has a permanent shelter in which eight boys and three girls are living at the moment. In addition to that there are four temporary shelters. In the mornings the street workers prepare bread and give counselling for about 100 street children. In the afternoons they give out lunch in the form of meal tickets from the NGO Hope Enterprise. In the evenings two to three street workers go out and talk to the children on the street. Since 1997 the HFC staff made contact with about 9000 street children and about 320 street people came out from street life. About 75 have been living in the permanent shelter and 41 children were reconciled with their parent. During 2002, daily 135 street people got a free meal ticket and counselling, six children were reconciled with their families and returned home, 24 children started their own business and 12 started living on their own, off the street[267].

Most dominating reasons to become a street child, which HFC refers to is poverty and lack of

[266] I.Rizzini, Irma Rizzini, M. Munhoz, L. Galeano, op.cit.p.51.
[267] Hope for Children, *General Report on Gospel distribution and the Rehabilitation program from January 2002—December 2002*. Addis Ababa, 2002.

education. Another common reasons to end up on the street are social problems like HIV/AIDS, violence or drugs. Yet another group perceives street life as a life, at least in independence and free from hard work at home, followed by the disillusionment that Addis Ababa is not what it promised to be.

Short-term measures to overcome poverty, which HFC mentions, are to first of all realize and accept that the street children problem exists. Then to build up a social relation of trust with the street children, which is already a help and a tool to eventually be able to ask "how can we help change your life"? Answers include the provision of food, shelter, clothes, education, medical treatment and recreational activities. It is most important to build up their talents and their self-esteem, to restore their dignity and personality and to make the invisible person visible, HFC mentions[268]. Therefore the NGO does advocacy in churches and organizes awareness raising seminars, so that the public sees street children as equals and stops treating them as outcast.

Long-term measures to overcome the poverty of street children are more difficult, HFC mentions. They imply finding a shelter, education and the reconciliation with the families. Access to education and the nature of education are crucial. Knowledge is power and illiteracy causes poverty. Education is an important human right to break the poverty cycle that street children experience. For street children to "return" to the normal life - like washing yourself, cleaning clothes, eating properly - is most difficult[269]. They have to learn to household instead of living for the moment. By creating small-scale business, such as providing shoe-shining material or sweets for sale, HFC pursues the aim of self-sustainability and independence – a typical characteristic of a capacity-building NGO.

On the question of whether they think that the Ethiopian government fulfils its responsibility towards its street children, the workers of HFC mention that it is positive that the government does not block NGOs, but criticizes that the government's own development policies are not put into practice and that the courts are not independent. G.Ayka explains that: "in general children in Ethiopia still do not have human rights. Children in Ethiopia usually don't have the right to be children, such as the right to play. There is no child-specific environment or child-friendly culture in most parts of Ethiopian society. Parents love their children but they perceive them as useful 'helping hands' and not so much as individuals with specific rights. Children first of all have duties: they are expected to work and to behave like 'small adults'. There are no free public kindergartens or playgrounds and the quality of the district schools is

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[268] Interview with Gizachew Ayka, op.cit..
[269] ibidem.

miserable. There is punishment and a very low educational standard. The alternatives to go to privately financed schools or kindergartens are few. Usually parents also need their children to help with the work at home or to financially assist the family – for many therefore school is not a priority"[270]. The illiteracy rate of men is 54,5% and 74,7 of women. Only 24% of the 7-13 year olds go to school and only 1% goes to university[271].

Society has gotten used to the street children phenomenon and thinks it is normality, HFC explains. They have gotten blind and do not see the misery any more. They perceive them as lower, non-human and non-worthy; as thieves and criminals and treat street children like garbage. The dumping of street children outside the city, which human rights groups criticize, it is just the peak of mistreatment, Y.Tsefaye from HFC says[272]. Worse is the daily neglect and disrespect by society and the perception of street children as outcasts, delinquents and disturbers, which result in depression and suicidal thoughts on the part of street children. Thus to overcome the feeling of neglect and helplessness, of *I am not useful anymore* is essential[273]. In fact the people in society fear street children. They see them as a danger and threat to their own well being and security and want to protect themselves against them. Street children for their part perceive that everything belongs to the one in the car passing by. They identify with the place they live at and see no way out. The lack of perspective and the mutual "non-of your business" attitude is highly problematic and aggravates the phenomenon. The way in which street people are approached therefore is crucial. Not to accuse them but to first of all respect their perceptions and accept their way of life must be the starting point of any aid work.

4. Findings

The locally run projects mostly have a direct impact on poverty reduction. Service-providing- NGOs offer shelter, food, clothing, health, parental and brotherly love and a sense of belonging. These aspects well reflect the importance of street children's both physical and spiritual needs, which HFC and WSG try to combine. Street children above all need emotional support and a new opportunity to change their lives. Hope for Children has a promising concept towards resolving the street children problem, due to its multidimensional and person-oriented approach. It makes a contribution for changing the situation for a significant number of street children who would otherwise be neglected and forgotten.

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[270] Interview with Gizachew Ayka and Yonas Tsfaye, of the NGO Hope For Children, 19.4.2003.
[271] Spiegel almanach, *Welt-Jahrbuch…* op.cit.p.103.
[272] Interview with Yonas Tsefaye, op.cit..
[273] Interview with Gizachew Ayka, op.cit..

The problem is that the phenomenon of street children has not been understood as a social problem in need of multidimensional community strategies. Policies that attempt to aid street children must build on the experiences of the street children themselves and their voices must be listened to and taken into consideration. The aim of the programs has to be to soften punitive attitudes towards street children and to empower them. Without involving the street children, there is little likelihood to find lasting solutions. A social program for street children can fail simply because people do not share the ends of it. Therefore it is important that the targets are defined together with the street children and that the socio-cultural context is understood. HFC does so.

NGO work can achieve a great deal, empower the poor and make a difference, but they nevertheless do not have enough financial power for large-scale changes. None of these excellent NGO-initiatives does more than offer a palliative for this immense social problem, as Shorter and Onyancha mention[274]. The projects are coping with the consequences, rather than looking at the causes of the problem itself. NGOs make the life of street children endurable but do not remove the cause of their situation. In addition to address the symptoms, it is above all essential to change the relations that cause them.

5. Finding solutions

It becomes ever clearer that solutions for the problem of streetism consist in addressing the causes of the migration to the street. Since street children are an urban phenomenon, urban poverty must be targeted. Rural poverty causes the rural populations to move to urban areas in the hope for employment and a better future. But the unexpected challenges of city-life enhance the breakdown of many families[275]. Thus to prevent rural-urban migration, rural life has to be made more attractive.

In African social tradition the whole community was responsible for children's upbringing. Today's children are the responsibility of individual parent, ignored by the rest of the community. The collective responsibility for the upbringing of children has to be reintroduced into African societies[276]. At the local level therefore to re-establish parents and the local community as the primary duty-holders for their children's development would be most promising for changing the societal structures in the long run. NGOs herewith can be a tool

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[274] Shorter, A. and E. Onyalcha, op.cit.p.91.
[275] ibidem., p.12.
[276] ibidem., p.34.

and a mediator for development. At the state level the government has to create conditions (democracy, transparency) and provide for employment and social safety to break the poverty trap. NGOs herewith have a role as advocates and watchdogs, to ensure government's accountability. It is crucial that the Ethiopian civil society realizes its full potential to monitor and criticize the (non-) investment of the government in the social sector of development. Currently Ethiopian civil society largely lacks this capacity[277]. The NGO group for the CRC encouraged the creation of national NGO coalitions to improve coordination and cooperation[278]. Greater coordination between agencies working with street children would prevent more children falling through the net[279]. A consortium of street children organizations would constitute a powerful pressure group for policies on poverty alleviation and for legislative and educational changes (in front of national and international bodies). Networking is a means also to control accountability and to prevent corruption[280]. Above all it offers a chance for NGOs to work more efficiently and effectively, but this has not become a common practice yet.

E. Conclusion

This paper has analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of the development and human rights concepts and highlighted the NGO-approach. Having scrutinized the different levels, the initial question of: 'What are convincing concepts and development strategies for solving the street children phenomenon' shall be answered. The street children phenomenon cannot be considered in isolation, but must be seen as a consequence of other underlying problems. It is a symptom for underlying poverty that is aggravated by the global relations of inclusion and exclusion. Street children are not a mono-causal phenomenon but an example of the intensification of economic and social marginalization and are victims of an unequal economic and social system. Thus only if grasped multi-dimensionally changing the street children problem is possible. Due to the complexity of the streetism phenomenon, various levels and factors that impact on street children have to be considered and both national and international relations have to be addressed for finding sustainable solutions.

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[277] Government of Ethiopia, op.cit.p.18.
[278] NGO group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, *A guide for non-governmental organizations reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child,* Geneva, Defence for Children International, 1998, p.3.
[279] see *Ethiopia: more and more children forced onto the streets,* http://www.irinnews.org, 30.4.2002.
[280] Shorter, A. and E. Onyalcha, op.cit.pp.108-110.

While World Bank development strategies have a large-scale approach towards poverty reduction, NGOs (such as HFC) address the concrete needs of the deprived. It can and should however not be a matter of choice between these two approaches because both address essential factors for the reduction of poverty. While the Development concept offers a long-terms solution for the street children phenomenon and the NGO approach predominantly offers short-term solutions, the human rights perspective makes clear that neither approach can be successful if the thinking in terms of rights and duties is not adopted.

Poverty of street children needs to be understood as a violation of basic human right, above all in the sense of being socially excluded and discriminated against. The human rights concept is helpful because it defines neglect as a human rights violation. The Preambles of the ICCPR and ICESCR underline that human rights derive from the inherent dignity of the human person[281]. For street children, having rights above all means being entitled to respect and dignity. Human rights are a tool to formulate basic needs into rights and duties. Human rights can be an effective long-term tool for solving the situation of street children, firstly because they address the various dimensions of poverty and social exclusion. Secondly because they hold states accountable for the promotion, protection and fulfilment of basic human rights for street children. This accountability towards basic human rights can be a tool for breaking the poverty cycle. The eradication of wide spread poverty entails the full exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms – especially non-discrimination towards the poorest. Human rights are a also useful tool for the empowerment of street children. Especially the human right to basic education of women and girls is crucial for breaking the poverty cycle (the more educated women are, the fewer and healthier children they have[282]). Targeting the needs and rights of children would thus constitute a long-term investment in future sustainable poverty reduction and development. But human rights still have to become *peoplelized* and truly *globalized* to become a framework for lasting social transformation.

It is decisive that development targets are defined together with the street children themselves in order to be legitimate and really respond to their needs. The development perspective is useful because it makes clear that poverty is not only measurable in terms of economic poverty but must be seen as multidimensional: social exclusion, stigmatization and hopelessness. A child-focused development is determining for sustainable poverty reduction, and also for alleviation of the street children problem. But a focus on the prevention of child poverty, is not dominating the PRPSs, even though it is fundamental for breaking the poverty

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[281] United Nations, *A Compilation of International Instruments,* op.cit.p.8, p.20.
[282] UNICEF, *Human rights for children and women…op.cit.15.*

cycle. And the most pressing needs of street children are still not targeted enough in the Ethiopian PRSP. Above all urban child-poverty must be targeted specifically and parallel, rural life has to be made more attractive for preventing children taking to the streets in Ethiopia.

For street children the restoration of dignity, to have a perspective and the reintegration into society are the most urgent needs to be answered. The NGO approach is relevant for giving hope for the future and regaining self-esteem by addressing capabilities, empowerment, giving education and responding to basic human needs of the poor. NGOs promote people's participation in development and give a voice to the otherwise marginalized. The advantage that NGOs have over large-scale development projects is their adaptation to local circumstances, which enables them to develop appropriate, bottom-up development responses to local problems. NGOs make the life of street children endurable but do not however remove the causes of their situation.

Because the street children phenomenon is the expression of a complicated web of social and economic problems that forces people to live on the edge of society, it is essential to find structural solutions of the problem. These include also changes in culture, mentality and attitudes. The public opinion has a strong impact on children's living conditions. Poverty depends on the perspective and context and is above all a cultural construction. This needs to be considered in the design of development strategies for street children. All levels of society (government and civil society) have to realize that they contribute to the situation of streetism by neglecting the phenomenon. It is thus important to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the socio-cultural context. The reintroduction of collective responsibility for the upbringing of children into African societies for example can be promising for the prevention of streetism. Therefore the advocacy work of NGOs in raising awareness on street children in the community at large is a promising approach for finding sustainable solutions. Solving the street children phenomenon is about changing societal structures that produce neglect into structures that value children.

The phenomenon of street children is a symptom for the larger problem of poverty, being the main cause for children ending up living on the street. Alleviation of poverty and socioeconomic inequality is the final remedy to the root of the problem of street children. Thus finding effective poverty reduction measures is crucial for preventing and solving streetism. To alleviate the poverty of a few, like NGOs do, can be criticized as being a "drop in the bucket", while long-term poverty reduction implies improving the structures that cause

poverty. It is necessary to apply a holistic approach towards the street children phenomenon. Neither the top-down nor the bottom-up approach can be successful by itself. Both complement each other. Above all large-scale development strategies have to become compatible with grass-root needs, for poverty reduction to be effective and for development to be sustainable. Poverty reduction and development need to be formulated according to the ideas of the affected. NGOs and civil society thus should improve their role as mediators and advocate so that the rights and needs of the grass root are truly taken into account at the international and national level.

A new national and international shared-responsibility-compact for the street children phenomenon would constitute a convincing approach for tackling it, since many layers are part of the problem and of the solution. Human rights herewith can serve as a very suitable framework. The actions of all power holders: the government, IGOs, TNCs, NGOs and civil society need to become formulate in the best interest of the child, focused on the protection of children and the prevention of child-poverty. Societal- and global structures that aggravate poverty and inequality, and thus also the street children phenomenon, need to be addressed. This includes that unfavourable international trade-relations and negative impacts of globalization but also harmful national- and socio-cultural structures that promote discrimination, exclusion and stigmatization, have to change fundamentally.

carrying firewood

sleeping on the street

street life in Addis Ababa

Hope for Children at work

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