



# Participatory research with children in conflict with the law

Addis Ababa and Dessie, Ethiopia

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# I. General introduction

The participatory research with children in conflict with the law in Ethiopia was conducted in two places – Addis Ababa and Dessie. The projects in both towns are run by the same partner of Save the Children Sweden, thus having similar programs of diversion in a community based correction setup and providing preventive services to children who are at risk of being in conflict with the law.

As much as possible, children from different backgrounds are involved in the workshops. The projects did not target children who have completed their time in the Remand Home therefore; children who have completed their sentences are not involved in the workshop.

The reports from each location are presented separately in order not to capture the feelings and ideas of children in each location. As much as possible the views of the children are recorded directly.

## 2. Addis Ababa

### 2.1 Organization of the workshop

#### *General context*

The workshop in Addis Ababa was held with children drawn from Addis Ketema sub-city. This sub-city is the market and business centre of the city. The largest market in the country, Merkato, is found in this sub-city. The sub-city also hosts the bus terminal, which is the departure and arrival point of the majority of buses to and from different parts of the country. Practically, the majority of passengers going out of and coming in to the city have to pass through this part of the city. As a market and transport centre, it is the most busy and crowded part of the city. It is also known for the high prevalence rate of social problems such as prostitution, trafficking in person including children, substance abuse and all sorts of crimes.

#### *Date of workshop*

April 15 - 16, 2005

#### *Sessions of the workshop*

Two sessions were held in the mornings with discussion time of four hours each.

#### *Location*

The workshop in Addis Ababa was held in the compound of the Community Based Correction Centre located in Addis Ketema Sub-city. The Centre is run by the partner organization, Forum on Street Children Ethiopia (FSCE) and most children are familiar with it.

#### *Facilitators*

A team consisting of two lawyers and a psychologist facilitated the session. All of the facilitators have considerable experience on working with children.

#### *Participants*

A total of 15 children participated in the workshop. Seven of them were girls and eight of them were boys. Five participants are currently taking part in the diversion program while five are discharged after completing the rehabilitation program. The cases of the remaining 5 children are pending in court. Nine of the children are in the age group of 9-14, while the remaining 6 children are in the age group of 15-17. Detail profile of each of the children that participated in the workshop is presented below.

## Profile of the children by assumed names

No	Nickname	Sex	Age	Education	Ethnicity	Nature and status of conflict with the law	Care providers
1	Tilahun (after a nationally famous singer)	M	15	8 <sup>th</sup> grade	Oromo	First time, completed diversion program	Single mother
2	Ronaldo (after the Brazilian soccer star)	M	13	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	Gurage	Repeated (5times), taking part in the rehabilitation program	Both parents
3	Ashenafi (after a national soccer star)	M	13	5 <sup>th</sup> grade	Amhara	First time, case pending in court	Both parents
4	Mulualem (after a famous national artist)	F	14	7 <sup>th</sup> grade	Amhara	First time, taking part in the rehabilitation program	Single mother
5	Victoria (after Mrs. Beckham)	F	15	7 <sup>th</sup> grade	Amhara	First time, completed diversion program	Single mother
6	Teacherye (my teacher)	F	15	6 <sup>th</sup> grade	Oromo	First time, case pending in court	Foster family
7	Lucy (the oldest human fossil ever discovered )	F	13	6 <sup>th</sup> grade	Amhara	First time	Single mother
8	Deyas (after a national goal keeper)	M	14	5 <sup>th</sup> grade	Dorze	First time, case pending in court	Both parents
9	Hirut (after a national singer)	F	13	6 <sup>th</sup> grade	Amhara	No record, completed diversion program	Single mother
10	Fikreadis (after a national singer)	F	14	No education (drop out from 1 <sup>st</sup> grade)	Gurage	First time, case pending in court	Relatives (parents live in rural areas)
11	Aster (after a national singer)	F	12	5 <sup>th</sup> grade	Amhara	First time, taking part in the rehabilitation program	Aunt with a repeatedly quarrelling blind husband
12	Arkebe (after the mayor of Addis Ababa)	M	17	9 <sup>th</sup> grade	Amhara	No record, taking part in the rehabilitation program	Both parents
13	Henry (After the French footballer)	M	14	5 <sup>th</sup> grade	Gurage	First time, taking part in the rehabilitation program	Both parents
14	Bin Laden (of Al Quida)	M	16	7 <sup>th</sup> grade	Amhara	First time, completed diversion program	Single mother
15	Meles (after the Prime Minister of Ethiopia)	M	16	7 <sup>th</sup> grade	Gurage	Repeated, completed diversion program	Grand Mother (mother living with new husband after the death of Meles's father)

All are able bodied. Only Fikreadis is a Moslem, while the rest are Christian

## 2.2 Opening of the workshop

### Participant Introduction

By way of introducing each other, each children was asked to give a nick name for himself that will be used for the duration of the workshop. The facilitators suggested that children could choose nicknames that are indicative of what they want to become in the future or choose names after the personalities that they admire or consider as role models. The children gave themselves nicknames, which are mostly names of football (soccer) players, artists and political figures. It was mentioned to the children that only the nicknames will be used for both oral and written communication during the workshop and that the facilitators do not want to know their real

names. Apart from its use for maintaining confidentiality, the process of giving nicknames was a good icebreaker.

### **Objectives and consent**

The children were given information concerning the objectives of the workshop, the main objective being the representation of the voices of children. They are also informed about consultations that are taking place in different countries and how the findings are going to be used. Finally, the children were told that they have the right to participate or not participate in the workshop and each participant was asked whether or not she/he is willing to participate in the workshop, to which all consented to participate.

### **Setting ground rules of the workshop**

The participants were divided into three groups and each group was asked first to discuss on the rules governing the workshop and then to list down them turn by turn on fillip charts posted on the wall. Participants set the following ground rules for facilitators and participant children.

#### **Rules for participants**

- Punctuality
- Trusting each other
- Respecting each other
- Discussing issues openly
- Listening each other
- Answering questions directed to us
- Considering facilitators as brothers and sisters and expressing views with out fear
- Providing support and encouragement so that ideas are well expressed

#### **Rules for facilitators**

- Should not prohibit the flow of ideas
- Being punctual
- Providing support
- Accepting children's ideas
- Listening what children say
- Providing appropriate answers to questions

## **2.3 Activities of the workshop**

**Activity 1: Understanding what children think about their community and whether they feel part of it.**

### **2.3.1 Community mapping**

Children formed 3 groups each with 5 children. One group is all boys, another group is all girls and the third one is mixed. Each group was asked to think about what constitutes their community and visually represent each entity that constitutes their community on a large paper.

#### **Children's Community: entities identified by each group**

No	Group 1 - A group of 5 boys	Group 2 - Mixed children (3 boys 2 girls)	Group 3 - All girls
1	Tej house(local bar where you get a local drink made of honey)	Residence of the poor	Church
2	House maid	Health centre	School
3	Waste disposal can	Shop	Tej House
4	Local liquor house	Prostitute	Bar

5	A biting dog	Tej house	Restaurant
6	Community shared piped water	Bar	Chat Chewing place
7	Informal Brokers	Chat house	Shoe shining children
8	Sport club	Shisha house (a place where mild and wet tobacco is smoked in groups sometimes mixed with hashish)	Street children
9	Chat quarters (places where green highly stimulating and addictive leaves called "chat" are chewed)	Video house (where children watch home video movies of all types in a residential setting and in rooms suffocated by cigarette smoke and where many young people chew chat)	Wood workers
10	City Bus Station	Villa of a rich person	Shops
11	Women in prostitution	Police station	Video houses
12	Street	Community pit latrine	Local liquor houses
13	Residential houses	Mosque	Bag sellers
14	Conflict between people	School	Dogs
15	Street children	Church	Parking service attendants
16	Local beer house	Office of the kebele administration	Police station
17	Shoe shining boy	Small community markets	Beggars
18	Office of the Kebele Administration (the lowest unit of administration)	Fruit shop	Office of the Kebele Administration
19	Bar	Milk shop	Outlaws/bullies
20	Playing field	Library	Residences
21	Video house	Soft drinks shop	Our home
22	Hotel	Barber	Waste disposal cans
23	School	Sport centre	Shoe repairing shops
24	Stadium	Playing field	Mosque
25	Theft	Pastry	Local beer shop
26	Trading transaction		
27	Fruit shop		
28	Tele centre		
29	Driving on the street		
30	Woodwork		
31	River		

### 2.3.2 Children's feeling towards their community

After identifying the parts/entities constituting their community, children in each group were asked to represent their feeling towards each entity by using a three level scale – good (green), neutral (yellow) and bad (red). Their feelings in each group are presented in the following tables.

#### Feelings of children towards parts of their community (group 1 – all boys)

No	Listed institutions/persons and services by a group of 5 boys	Children's rating in colors		
		Green (good)	Yellow (neural)	Red (bad)
1	Tej house (local bar where you get a local drink made of honey)		1	4
2	House maid	3	2	
3	Waste disposal can	5		
4	Local liquor house			5
5	A biting dog	1	3	1
6	Community shared piped water	5		
7	Informal Job Brokers	1	2	2
8	Sport club	5		
9	Chat quarters (places where green highly stimulating and addictive leaves called "chat" are chewed)			5
10	City Bus	2	3	
11	Women in prostitution			5
12	Street	5		
13	Residential houses	5		
14	Car accident (car hitting people)			5
15	Street children		1	4
16	River		4	1
17	Local beer house			5
18	Shoe shining boy	5		
19	Office of the Kebele Administration (the lowest unit of administration)	2	3	
20	Bar			5
21	Playing field	2	3	
22	Video house	1	1	3
23	Hotel	5		
24	School	5		
25	Stadium	5		
26	Theft and people crying "thief"			5
27	A girl selling roasted cereal adjacent to the street	2	2	1
28	Fruit shop	5		
29	Tele centre	5		
30	Driving on the street		2	3
31	Woodwork	4		1

*Feelings of children towards parts of their community (group 2 – 3 boys & 2 girls)*

No	Listed institutions/persons and services by a group of mixed children (3 boys and 2 girls)	Children's rating in colors		
		Green (good)	Yellow (neutral)	Red (bad)
1	Residence of the poor			5
2	Health centre	5		
3	Shop	5		
4	Prostitute			5
5	Tej house			5
6	Bar			5
7	Chat house			5
8	Shisha house (a place where mild and wet tobacco is smoked in groups sometimes mixed with hashish)			5
9	Video house (where children watch home video movies of all types in a residential setting and in rooms suffocated by cigarette smoke and where many young people chew chat)			5
10	Villa of a rich person	5		
11	Police station	5		
12	Community pit latrine	5		
13	Mosque	5		
14	School	5		
15	Church	5		
16	Office of the kebele administration	5		
17	Small community markets	5		
18	Pastry		5	
19	Fruit shop	5		
20	Milk shop	1	4	
21	Library	5		
22	Soft drinks shop	5		
23	Barber	5		
24	Sport centre	1	4	
25	Playing field		4	
Let's protect ourselves from HIV/AIDS !! End note added by the children rated with five green marks				

### Feelings of children towards parts of their community (group 3 – all girls)

No	Listed institutions/persons and services by a group of 5 girls	Children's rating in colors		
		Green (good)	Yellow (neutral)	Red (bad)
1	Church	5		
2	School	5		
3	Tej House			5
4	Bar			5
5	Restaurant	5		
6	Chat Chewing place			5
7	Shoe shining children	3	2	
8	Street children (streetism)			5
9	Wood workers	3		1
10	Shops	3	1	
11	Video houses			5
12	Local liquor houses			5
13	Bag sellers	2		
14	Dogs	1	1	1
15	Parking service attendants	2		
16	Police station	3	1	1
17	Beggars			2
18	Office of the Kebele Administration	3		
19	Outlaws/bullies			2
20	Residences	5		
21	Our home	5		
22	Waste disposal cans	1	1	1
23	Shoe repairing shops		2	
24	Mosque	3		
25	Local beer shop			3
<i>Let's keep ourselves away from addiction!! (Additional note put at the corner of their drawing)</i>				

#### 2.3.4 Children's views on good and bad things about their community

The facilitators invited the children to discuss their views on the good and bad things about their community. The discussions focused on parts/entities of the community considered having significant impact on children.

##### Children's view about schools

All the children in the Addis Ababa workshop see school as largely positive.

The positive aspects were thus elaborated as:

- Schools provide knowledge to children
- In schools children get to know other children whom they can be friends with.
- Be able to learn about good behaviors.
- Schools are generally good but sometimes children go to other places when they are supposed to attend schools. This is a disadvantage not only for the children but also for the country.
- Currently there are more strict rules concerning the behavior of children and teachers in schools. Therefore, things appear to be improved.
- Despite the fact that everybody thinks that schools are good, some teachers are unfair and also insult students. Sometimes, they insult us that we are poor.
- Currently, teachers are banned from punishing children, but some teachers, sneak into class with sticks that they use to beat students. They hide the sticks in their sleeves to avoid being seen by the school directors.
- Some teachers, since they cannot punish children, they ask students who disturb to go out of school. We prefer to receive some advice by the teacher, or even being beaten instead of being suspended from school.
- There is a lot of sex going on between boys and girls in schools.

- Payment of fees for schooling is difficult for some students, especially those of us who have older parents that do not work actively. If our parents cannot work, then we have to go to work and earn money.
- School toilets are not clean.
- When some students did not finish their home works, they go out of class before the teacher comes to class and hide at the back of the school.
- Sometimes, students have good ideas about the way the classes are conducted. For example, if math lessons are towards the end of the day, we tend to be tired sleepy. When we want to suggest changes, we are not heard or accepted. Sometimes we are beaten.
- Teachers tell us that we have got good chances of education that other children are denied and that we must concentrate on our studies. This is true but we want also those other children who are denied education to be given a chance. More classrooms must be built to accommodate all children.
- Playgrounds in our schools are getting smaller as more classrooms are built. This is something the teachers have to think about.
- The boys said that since girls are given chances such as everybody to respect their rights, they feel they can oppress us. If they report to the teachers the boys will be in trouble. The girls then said that it was not true and that the boys feel that the girls do not make a difference. The girls report that they are threatened and insulted by the boys.

#### **Children's views about drinking and smocking places and video houses**

- Opinions about local drinking houses, and smoking places are uniformly negative. They said that these places expose people to bad habits and illness.
- Video houses may be negative or positive. If they feature football films and historical films they may be used to improve knowledge and language of the children. But the kinds of films being screened in most video houses are usually sex movies, and films with a lot of fighting and aggression. They are not suitable to children of our age.
- The youth that frequent the video houses smoke cigarettes and chew Chaat. Therefore, younger children also copy those habits from them, by picking up leftover Chaat from the youth.
- Video houses are good because we do not have cinema halls in our surroundings.

#### **Views of children about police stations and Kebeles (the lowest unit of administration)**

Feelings of children are divided. All said that they have both positive and negative feelings.

##### **Police**

- Protect people and their properties by stopping fights among people and controlling theft and bringing culprits to justice.
- The police beat children without adequate reasons. A boy related a personal experience of a policeman making the child who reported and another child to punish each other.

##### **Kebele**

- They are corrupt.
- They chase away poor people when they are engaged in petty trading on the streets.
- They prohibit us from playing football in the places where old houses are demolished.
- They do not understand the idea of children's rights. They do not listen to us. We, as children, have good ideas about the housing development in our Kebeles, and we want to share our ideas with the Kebeles. The housing development projects affect our lives, because our parents are asked to pay for school renovations and at the same time saving for housing developments. This is difficult for some parents.
- The Kebele people reconcile people who have conflicts because of land.
- Good because they facilitate for orphans to be provided with assistance.

### **Children's views about families**

Feelings of children about their families are both positive and negative.

What they like about their families are:

- We like our families because they feed us, clothe us, educate us and show us ways to be good persons. They try to make us happy and they love us.
- As much as possible, they try to provide for what we asked of them.
- Our families try to make sure that we are not over worked.
- They are impartial.

What they dislike about our families:

- Unfair treatment among siblings.
- The boys complained that they were not treated as good as their older siblings. During the discussions, they also said that they were treated better than their sisters.
- Insult by the parents
- They do not listen to us, especially those that are younger siblings. They respect older siblings and those who contribute income to the family.
- Our parents want us to grow up in the conditions that they grew up in.
- They say proverbs about children that are not good.
- They insult us. Insults cannot correct the behaviour of children. They only hurt our feelings.
- Most of the times we are considered at fault when somebody from outside our family report to our parents that we have done something bad. They do not take time to listen to our side of the story.

### **Children's views about their neighborhoods**

Children's discussion about their neighbourhoods focused mainly on the bad parts

- Smoking cigarettes and chewing chat in the presence of children.
- People in our neighbourhood want to send children to run an errand, and if the child refuses, they beat the child.
- Adults tend to exaggerate the faults of children and they curse children. We are afraid because we believe that the curses would come true.
- Raping of girls.
- They discriminate against girls that want to play like boys. For example when girls want to play football, they discourage them by calling them with different names.
- There are lots of insults that are heard from commercial sex workers in our neighborhoods.
- We do not want to see dilapidated houses in our neighborhood. We like people to live in better houses.
- Brokers are sometimes good because they get jobs for people who have no jobs. Sometimes, they go to parents and tell that they can get very good jobs for their children, mostly for the girls. Sometimes they convince the children to run away from their homes with a promise of good jobs. These promises are false and the children end up being exploited for free. A boy reported his own experience of being employed in a shop and being asked to drop out of school
- In the current campaigns for election, one could hear a lot about youth but nobody talks about children's issues.

### **2.3.5 Changes in the community proposed by children**

- We want to live in surroundings where there are no drinking and smoking places. We want to live in a community where children are represented and where we can have our opinions heard about playgrounds and other matters.
- We like to live in a neighbourhood where we can earn money quite easily by doing small tasks.

- Commercial sex work, ‘smoking’ shops and chat selling places to be closed. We realize that the persons who get income from such places will be hesitant to close their businesses, but it may be possible to find out alternative businesses for them.
- The class sizes in schools are large. We would like to see less number of children in class and attend schools full day, instead of the shift system.
- We realize that it takes time for people to get rid of their habits and addiction of chat and other stuff. So what we ask for is for adults not to continue their habits in the presence of children.
- Selling of chat, cigarettes and alcohol to children must be prohibited. Parents must be taught not send their children to buy chat and cigarettes.
- Video house owners must be brought together to open good cinema halls, which do not allow addictive substances.
- Children of elderly parents need support. The parents need support too because they can not work and the children have to work to make a living and support themselves to pay for their educational expenses. Sometimes, children have to stop going to school to help their elderly parents.
- We would like to have museums and other recreational places in our surroundings.

### ***2.3.6 Children’s feeling about being valued and respected in their community***

#### **Role Play**

A brief discussion was made with children on the concept of being valued and respected. After children were clear about the concept, they were divided into two groups and each group was invited to present two role plays one that depicts an ideal situation of being valued and respected by a part of the community (for example, families, schools, police stations, etc.) and another that portrays a worst situation of being valued and respected by a part of the community. The children presented a total of five role-plays. As the themes are similar the stories of the two role-plays are presented below.

#### **Role-Play 1**

The play is about a situation in a family. The mother is sitting in the home with her 3 children, 2 girls and a boy. The father is not home yet and the mother expresses her worry, as it is getting late. Finally the father comes drunk. Immediately he starts to verbally abuse every one in the home. The boy shows to the father his exercise book and the father tears and throws it. He makes a negative remark about education. Then the father asks the mother to give him dinner. The mother says she does not have. The father gives cents to his boy and orders him to bring a bottle of tej (a local alcoholic drink). On the way to the tej house, two vagrant boys take the money forcefully from the boy. The boy comes home and reports what happened. The father gets angry and starts to insult and beat the child. The mother and the other children get in the middle. The father orders the boy to get out of the home.

#### **Role Play 2**

This play is also about a situation in a family. The husband and the wife are sitting in a house. A boy and a girl come in from school. The father stands up and receives his children warmly. Then he looks into their exercise books and expresses appreciation how they are neat and well written. He turns to his wife and politely asks her to give lunch to the children. While the children are eating, the father and the mother talk how their children are performing well in school. After the children finished lunch, the father sits with his children and asks them some math questions and encourages and appreciates the children when they provide answers. In the middle of this the third child comes in home. The father takes his exercise book and looks into it. He looks disappointed and asks the child why he is not performing like the other two children. The girl intervenes and tells her father that it is not good to scold a child, as he will improve in the future. The father listens to what the girl said and he says that he is only trying to advise his child. The father politely tells the two children to assist the third one with his education.

### **Plenary Discussion**

After the role-plays were presented, plenary discussion was also held on the issue of being valued and respected.

#### **Things that make children feel valued and respected**

- When we are listened to
- When parents give us advice
- When we are encouraged
- When we are supported to concentrate on education
- When adults set good examples

#### **Things that make children feel disrespected**

- When we are insulted and beaten
- When adults fail to properly respond to our demands and questions
- When adults are not listening to us
- When people are partial.

#### **Do you feel valued and respected in your community?**

Children have mixed feelings as to whether they are actually valued and respected in their community. Most of them said that they are valued and respected conditionally - eg. if they are obedient or can generate money, etc.

- When we are obedient we are praised and respected, otherwise we are not respected.
- We are not respected because we are children, because we do not generate money

Children were asked to think and form opinions about being valued and respected. Then they were asked to stand around a scale on the floor, which is marked with scales most respected and valued (green), averagely respected and valued (yellow) and least accepted and valued (red). From this exercise it is observed that most children feel averagely respected in their community, family and school.

#### **Changes required to make children feel better respected and valued?**

- Improve our behavior
- Listen to our parents
- Parents should be taught about children
- Elders should be informed about children
- If we follow our education as expected
- Encouraging those students who are also medium and low performers.
- Boys have to be extra clever, because these days, the girls get more support from the teachers.
- Abusive behavior of boys on girls has to be reduced

## 3. Understanding the experience of children in conflict with the law and what might have helped

### 3.1 What got you into trouble and how has it affected your life?

#### *A 'cause impact tree' exercise*

Children formed three groups and each group was asked to prepare a cause impact tree representing their ideas as to what led them into trouble, the kinds of trouble they have been in and how the trouble affected their life.

#### *Causes for getting children into conflict with the law*

- Lack of parental control
- Group fighting
- Lack of awareness about the consequences
- Poverty
- Watching movies
- Getting used to getting money and other addictions

#### *The kinds of conflict with the law*

- Stealing
- Different kinds of fighting

#### *Impacts of being in conflict with the law*

- Imprisonment
- Being beaten by police and families
- Loss of being trusted
- School interruption

Children also mentioned the following positive impacts;

- We got lesson not to do wrongs again
- We are in a better life now
- We are obedient to our families now
- We are corrected and we follow our education properly

### 3.2 Things that could have prevented children getting into conflict with the law

- Discussing our problems openly with our parents or families
- If preventive actions were in place. There was no preventive action; we were blamed only after we did an offense.
- If parents could not fulfill our demands, they should have explained things to us patiently. They think that it is enough only if they feed us.
- Community members should have advised children when they are moving in the wrong direction
- We need people that could have reconciled us with our families when we go out to the streets. We prefer that than being given food while on the streets.

### ***3.2.1 Things that could help children now***

- Other children should also be given a chance to discuss their problems
- We need to be engaged in useful activities such as entrepreneurship
- To spend time in the Community Based Correction Centre is a good thing in itself (girl)
- We have to be assisted to do something useful
- Focus on preventive programs. If I can not carry things to earn money, then I steal (boy 14 years, from the CBCP)
- Parents have to follow up their children
- We are not allowed by the Kebeles to sell small stuff on the streets. This is a problem for us.

### ***3.2.2 The way the conflict/crime was handled***

When asked about how the conflict they were in handled, children expressed a mixed feeling. Some said that the police treated them properly. Some, however, showed reservations about how the police handled their case. Most of them appreciated the treatment they received in the community based correction center. They suggested the following to be improved:

- Police is equivalent to law. They should not beat children
- Police do not listen to our views. They should listen to children's views also
- Police should have done preventive works. They should study the causes and take preventive measures
- Neighbors should be partial to every child in the community

## 4. Case stories

### *Nickname*

Ronaldo

Ronaldo, 13, lives with his parents, a brother and a sister. Ronaldo's father, who worked as a shoeshine saved up enough money to go to the countryside to marry Ronaldo's mother. The marriage brought forth Tariku and his sister. Tariku was born in the countryside but grew up in Merkato—a busy market area.

After Ronaldo's sister was born, his parents were separated for three years, in which time the children lived with their father in Addis. Their father used them for begging by taking them to different places. In the mean time, Ronaldo's father went to the countryside married another woman and had a baby. During this time, Tariku was left in town with relatives.

Ronaldo's father then returned to Addis with his second wife and baby. Of his father Tariku says, "My father never seems to think that we children do get hungry."

Tariku resorted to stealing money from his father's pocket when he was too drunk to notice. He planned to run away to the countryside with his friend in search on a better life. Since the age of 10 he kept stealing money from his father and saving it.

One day, on returning home, Ronaldo's mother accidentally found her children and their father at a bus station being used to earn money as beggars. The mother then decided to live with the family to ensure that the children are not engaged in begging any more.

Tariku dropped his plans of running away and gave the money her had saved up to his mother, who is trying her best to take care of her children, by baking injera for sale.

Two and half years ago, at the age of ten and a half, Tariku was referred to the Community Based Correction Program for theft. Some neighbours reported him to the police for stealing. Tariku thinks it was his younger sister who told the neighbours about his habit of theft.

Ronaldo's parents quarrel almost everyday. The father is unemployed and always drunk. He was once jailed for fighting. The father is jealous of his wife; recently he started to talk to himself.

### *Nickname*

Teacherye

Teacherye, 15, was born in Eritrea when it was still a part of Ethiopia. Both her parents were soldiers. When EPLF controlled Eritrea and declared its independence in 1991, her parents had to come to Ethiopia. Her father disappeared on the way to Ethiopia and she has not heard of him since then.

Teacherye and her mother made it to Addis Ababa, rented a house in Addis Ketema sub-city and started to live there. Shortly after, however, her mother got sick and died.

Upon her mother's death, Teacherye continued to live with the family that rented them the house and she still lives with them. Her foster family have 4 children of their own. Teacherye does not feel that she receives equal treatment with the other children. She thinks that she is considered more of as a domestic servant than a member of the family.

Teacherye goes to school and is in grade 6. She has 3 close friends, two from school and one from her neighbourhood. She lives in one the poorest neighbourhoods where prostitution, alcoholism are rampant.

About 15 days ago, while Aster was playing a game with a friend, a lady from the neighbourhood interfered in their game; they quarrelled and insulted each other. On the following day, when Teacherye was returning from the latrine, the lady beat her with a large stick. Teacherye then threw a stone and hit the woman's forehead and she started to bleed.

She called the police and they came. The police punched and kicked Teacherye and took her to the local administration office where she was beaten again with a plastic tube. After that she was taken to the police station where she stayed for 4 days with other adult female detainees. She was, then, taken to the remand house for young offenders where she stayed for 7 days. She was then released on bail.

## 5. Understanding whom children turn to for help and where they feel safe

### 5.1 Children's feeling about being safe in their community

#### *Places where children do not feel safe*

- Courts
- Places where commercial sex work is ongoing
- Places that we do not know
- Police stations
- Chaat houses (mixed responses)
- Video houses (mixed responses)
- Streets (mixed responses)
- When we go to far away places outside our community (mixed response)
- Since our neighbourhood is full of vagrant or bad boys, we do not feel safe (most of the girls)

#### *Places where children feel safe*

- Market places
- Sport places
- Religious places
- Cinema
- Library
- Clinics and hospitals
- Hairdressers

### 5.2 Who and where children go for support and help

- Usually we do not go to the police for help. Because we might face even greater problem from our abusers if we report to the police. Our abuser may be released on bail and attack us again.
- Some times we go to our teachers for help
- Some times we tell our parents to get help
- I do not tell to my parents when I got problem, because they will blame me that I initiated the problem or caused it (several children agreed with this view)

### 5.3 Who and where children like to go to get support

- We would like to go to the police, if the police stop beating offenders and start advising them and discussing problems with parents
- We would like to go to our families if they listen to children and if instead of blaming children they try to understand children when they tell the problem they faced

## 6. Further understanding the solutions suggested by the children

### Actions/measures recommended by children from the previous activities

- Closing “chat”, “shisha”, video and drinking places (houses)
- Reducing the number of students in a class room
- Not ordering (as messengers) children to places of addiction
- Having recreation centers
- Let our voices be heard
- Children and parents should dialogue
- Protecting children going to bad/unsafe places
- Not spoiling children by giving out money
- Parents should be models of good conduct
- Parents should change their position in upbringing children in the ways they have been brought up
- The police should adequately protect children from abuse
- The police should respect the rights of children

### *Priorities*

The children were asked to identify the five most urgent and priority measures from the above listed solutions. The results are as follows:

- Closing down “chat”, “shisha”, video and drinking places (houses)
- Not ordering (as messengers) children to places of addiction
- Reducing the number of students in a class room
- Let our voices be heard
- Children and parents should dialogue

### *Evaluation of Process*

At the end of each of the two sessions, children were asked to rate the workshop process using a three scale: excellent (green), average (yellow) and poor (red). All the children rated the process as excellent. Community mapping, Role-plays and A cause impact tree were cited as the most interesting parts.

## 7. Dessie

### 7.1 Introduction

Dessie is a commercial and communications centre, 16 miles (25 km) northwest of Kembolcha, which is at the junction of roads to Addis Ababa and Asmara and Asseb in Eritrea. Dessie is a long-established market for grains, oilseeds, hides, skins, honey, and beeswax and a distribution centre for imported goods. It also has artisan industries and flour mills. Pop. (1994 est.) 117,268.1

Dessie is also one of the towns in Ethiopia identified as having a high rate of HIV/AIDS, as a result many children live with grand parents and extended family members.

### 7.2 Organization of the workshop

The workshop with the children in Dessie was conducted in April 19 - 20, 2005. The sessions lasted over two afternoons with discussion time of four hours each. A total of 19 children participated in the workshop. 3 were girls and 12 were boys. 6 are currently taking part in the diversion program while 6 are discharged and 3 girls and 4 boys are identified to be at risk. The age of the children ranged from 9 to 16 years.

#### *Location*

The workshop was held in the compound of the Community Based Correction Center, which provides rehabilitation services to first time and petty offenders that are diverted from going through the formal justice system after having committed offenses. The Center is located in the compound of a police station and was set separately in a hall that is used for meeting with the children who are diverted.

#### *Facilitators*

The session was facilitated by a team consisting of a sociologist, a lawyer and a psychologist. A Volunteer who works with the children also assisted in the workshop by encouraging the participation of children. The Coordinator of the Child Protection Program helped in organizing practical arrangements such as snacks for the children and payments for the children at the end of the workshop.

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from Encyclopedia Britannica, 2005 edition

## Profile of the children by assumed names

No	Nickname	Sex	Age	Educational status	Nature and status of conflict with the law	Care providers
1	Bradley	M	12	Grade 3	None, included in preventive program	Has no adult care provider
2	Doctor	F	9	Non formal education	None, included in preventive program.	Mother
3	Mel Gibson	M	14	Grade 8	Attends the diversion program due to fighting.	Mother
4	Ronaldo	M	12	Grade 4	Second time offender, both times for stealing money.	Mother who works as a housemaid.
5	Salman	M	15	Grade 7	First time offense of causing injury to a person. Enrolled in the diversion program.	Lives with both parents.
6	Zidan	M	15	Grade 8	Fighting with another person. Completed the diversion program.	Lives with both parents.
7	Henry	M	16	Grade 9	Enrolled in a preventive program, because he is identified to be at risk.	Orphaned, lives with an elder brother and works on the streets by selling lottery.
8	Sharun	M	14	Grade 6	Referred to the correction program due to fighting.	Lives with both parents.
9	Bruce Lee	M	14	Dropped out after grade 3	Enrolled in a preventive program, because he is identified to be at risk.	Lives in the streets and works around the city bus terminal.
10	Lampard	M	12	Grade 4	Referred to the diversion program by the police.	Both parents are dead and lives with grandmother.
11	Mandela	M	14		Enrolled in a preventive program, because he is identified to be at risk.	Both parents are dead and lives with grandmother, whom he supports financially.
12	Assefa	M	12	Grade 6	Completed his time in the diversion program and is discharged. He was enrolled due to fighting with a boy.	
13	Roony	M	13	Grade 7, is currently dropping out of school.	Was caught stealing money from a shop. He is discharged from the diversion program.	Both parents are dead and he lives with his grandmother, who has a bad health.
14	Ephraim	M	14	Dropped out of school	Receiving stolen money from a friend.	Lives with mother and three sisters. He sells small items on the streets.
15	Vans troy	M	13	Grade 7	Fighting with children, causing injury.	Lives with father and step mother, largely supports himself through shining shoes.
16	Secretary	F	12	Non formal education	Enrolled in a preventive program, because she is identified to be at risk.	Lives with aunt.
17	Driver	F	12	Non formal education	Enrolled in a preventive program, because she is identified to be at risk.	Lives with grandmother.
18	Ashley Cole	M	14	Grade 7	Discharged from the correction center, committed for group fight.	Lives with father
19	Habtamu	M	8	Grade 2	Identified as risk.	Lives with both parents.

**Note: None of the above children have disabilities**

### Incentives

At the end of the two days workshop the children were given small sums of money as a reward for their participation, and also to compensate for the loss of income caused as a result of the children attending the workshop.

## 7.3 Opening of the workshop

### *Ice breakers and introducing one another*

The children gave themselves nick names, which are mostly names of foot ball players and film actors. The boys were more creative in this respect, obviously due to their exposure to films and the media. The girls had difficulties to identify characters, thus they identified professions, such as secretary, driver, etc.

### *Objectives and consent*

The children are given information concerning the objectives of the workshop, the main objective being the representation of the voices of children. They are also informed about consultations that are taking place in different countries and how the findings are going to be used. The four activities... were taken as the main directions...

### *Ground rules*

The following ground rules were set by children for facilitators and participants.

#### **Expected behavior of participants**

- Trusting each other
- Not disturbing
- Being punctual
- Respect rules and regulations
- Being open
- Tolerance
- Being focused
- Helping each other
- Respecting each others ideas

#### **Expected behavior of facilitators**

- Being punctual
- bringing up issues that are important to children
- accepting children's ideas
- providing necessary materials for the workshop
- Showing love and respect to children
- Showing good behaviour

The above ground rules were referred to by the facilitators at various times during the workshop.

## 8. Activities of the workshop

### 8.1 Activity 1, Understanding what children think about their community and whether they feel part of it

#### Thoughts and feelings of children about their communities

The children were grouped into three groups selected randomly. As a result the groups were fairly distributed by age, gender and groups of children. This was done because many of the children in the workshop were from a more or less similar background and the represented from each group are not enough to make up a group for the discussion. The groups represented are from those diverted and those involved in preventive programs, thus making the composition of the group more or less uniform.

The children were supervised during the group work in order to ensure that the voice of all children is represented.

The parts of the community that were listed by the children in the three groups are presented in Table 1 below:

*Table 1: Components of the community as identified by different groups of children*

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Church	Church	Church
Karagutu Mosque	Mosque	Mosque
Chaat Houses	Chaat houses	Chaat houses
Residence houses	Residence houses	Residence houses, families
Women		
Ball		
Garbage collection point		
Toilets	Toilets	Toilets
Streets		Streets
Shops		Shops
Courts		
Football field	Football field	Football field
Tukul		
Video house		Video house
Hyena		
Haji Mohammed Forest	Forest	Hote Forest
Asmamaw Field		Asmamaw field
Business college		
Prison		
Tigil Fire School	School	Hote school
Cemetery		
Museum		
Cars		
Police station	Police station	
Bus station		Bus station
Horses		
Water ditch	River	Borkena river
Back yard		
Menen School		
Tea room	Tea room	Tea room
Flower		
Tossa gorge		Gorge
	Garage	
	River & bridge	
	Flour mill	
	Bars	
	Administration office	
		Hotel
		Electricity & Power authority
		Workers
		Traditional healers

Once the children completed their drawings a brief discussion was conducted about what each group included in their community mapping exercise. The children were then given a chance to include parts of their community which they may have forgotten earlier.

**Table 2: Feelings of children about their communities**

The children were given small pieces of green, yellow and red papers to paste on parts of their communities where they have good, neutral and bad feelings. Each child was encouraged to represent his/her feelings about each part of the community. The results of the exercise are as follows:

	<b>Have good feelings</b>	<b>Have neutral feelings</b>	<b>Have bad feelings</b>
Church	11	5	1
Chaat Houses	1	4	13
Residence houses	8	1	2
Women			
Ball			
Garbage collection point			2
Toilets			
Streets			
Shops	6		1
Courts			
Karagutu Mosque	12	1	1
Foot ball field	9	4	1
Tukul			
Video house		1	5
Hyena			1
Haji Mohammed Forest	8		
Asmamaw Field	6	5	7
Business college			
Prison	2		
Tigil Fire School	12		
Cemetery			
Museum			
Cars		1	
Police station	6		
Bus station	5		2
Horses		1	
Water ditch/river	4	1	1
Back yard			
Menen School	2	1	
Tea room/ recreation	7	5	
Flower			
Tossa gorge			2
Garage	5		1
Flour mills	6		
Bars		1	5
Administration office	6		

The posters of the community mapping was put up on the walls and children discussed about their feelings about significant parts of their communities. The following are the outcome of the discussions:

### ***Children's feelings about schools***

At the beginning of the discussions, the children expressed their feelings about schools being largely positive, and eventually, when details were discussed the children expressed a lot of negative feelings about their schools.

#### **Positive aspects**

- Schools provide knowledge,
- Shape us for the future,
- Useful to be employed and get good life in the future
- Enable us to help families in the future and fulfill our basic needs.

#### **Negative aspects**

- Teachers do not answer our questions properly. Sometimes they tell us not to ask questions.

- Teachers' do not set good examples to children through their behavior. Some teachers smoke, therefore they can not tell their students not to smoke.
- Many teachers insult and beat students.
- Teachers are not sensitive to the needs of orphans. For example, when orphans are asked to bring parents/ guardians to discuss with teachers, they tend to drop out of school as they do not have anyone to bring to school.
- Teachers give a lot of attention to high achievers and discourage those who are low performers.
- Teachers tend to be late to classes. As a result of this, they fail to complete the expected lessons and would want to make up for lost class time. These extra times may not be convenient for all children, especially to working children.
- Contributions for school improvements (such as improving...) creates a burden to some children, especially orphans. The money is not spent well.
- Older students rape girls.

## ***Police***

### **Positive aspects**

- Police protect people from theft and fights. They make sure that people respect law and order.
- They also protect those who commit crimes from being beaten harshly.
- They provide corrective services thus others take lessons from those persons.

### **Negative aspects**

- Police beat people without listening to all sides of a story.
- When they question children, they threaten, beat or say harsh words.

## ***Flour mill***

### **Positive aspects**

- Flour mills are important in the communities to grind grains that help families prepare food.

### **Negative aspects**

- The flour mills are places where children feel frightened. There are lots of electricity on the walls so they are dangerous places.
- When children are sent to flour mills they are afraid that they will be endangered, afraid that they may fall into parts of the mill and cut themselves or lose their limbs.
- The staff operating the flour mills are not fair - they do not give honest prices for their services – sometimes they overcharge some people and give free services to others.
- Small children who go to the flour mills with their mothers are endangered because they might crawl into dangerous parts of the mills while playing.

## ***Garages***

### **Positive aspects**

- When children are given chances to work in garages, they get good practical skills.
- Spending time in garages is better than spending time elsewhere where children are exposed to bad habits. It is better than being sent to the flour mills.
- The skills children get from the garages may help them to earn their living in the future.

### **Negative aspects**

- Things/equipments might fall on children and hurt them.

## **Bridges**

### **Positive aspects**

- Bridges are important to travel safely from one place to another.

### **Negative aspects**

- Smaller bridges near the villages are not constructed well and are dangerous.
- Garbage thrown under the bridges pose health hazards, as they are grounds for flies to reproduce.
- Garbage in rivers may block the flow of water thus overflowing, and endangering those who use the bridges.

## **Football fields**

### **Positive aspects**

- Football places are useful in preventing children from going to bad places.
- Children who are good in football will have good future as players for the country.

### **Negative aspects**

- Children gamble in football games. If the team they support wins, they get money, otherwise they lose their money. This happens both with local and international games. This leads to fights between the children who won and lost.
- Children may be so absorbed in football games and spend too much time in the fields that they are detracted from their education.
- Children may break their legs while playing football and this may result in disability.
- People do not support new teams being set up by children. Very few people are willing to support and contribute to the growth of children's teams.

## **Families**

### **Positive aspects**

- Families provide shelters, basic needs and cultivate us to grow up with good conduct.
- If children have families, they feel comfortable to bring parents to school to discuss school performance with teachers. If children do not have families, they feel bad and lonely. Therefore, they may stop going to school.
- Families provide advice and guidance that prevent children from going to dangerous places or meet with bad people.
- Families who are strong and educate their children are helped by their children in future.

### **Negative aspects**

- When there are too many children the food in the family gets scarce.
- When children are born close together, the older children have to take care of the youngest. There will not be enough attention to the older children.
- Quarrelling between parents disturbs children. Sometimes one parent may feel that the children take sides with one parent, and the children may be beaten or insulted due to that.
- Parents get drunk and fight with their children, and chasing their children out of the house.
- Sending children on errands to bad places such as drinking houses or sending children to run errands when it is near their school time.
- When children are sent out, they are scared of cars hitting them when they cross the streets.
- Step mothers do not treat their own children and their step children fairly in terms of food distribution or doing work.

- When some parents are asked to go to school to talk to the teachers, they consider it as a humiliation.
- Parents not fulfilling the basic needs of children.
- Beating of children, cursing and threatening.
- Behaviors of adults that result in children getting into addictive behaviors. For example, they may let children taste alcoholic beverages, smoke in front of their children, etc.

### ***Community/ neighborhood***

#### **Positive aspects**

- Equal treatment of children.
- Provide support to those who are in problem.

#### **Negative aspects**

- Drunk neighbors disturbing families.
- When children fight the mothers fight too.
- Partiality between children. Certain children are always considered as good.
- Fierce dogs in the neighborhood.
- Children not participating in cleaning their neighborhood because mothers fear that their children shall get ill.

### ***Rivers***

#### **Positive aspects**

(no positive aspects are identified by the children).

#### **Negative aspects**

- Children may drown accidentally in rivers while they play or swim. They may also be bitten by small creatures that live under water.

### ***Video houses***

#### **Positive aspects**

(no positive aspects are identified by the children).

#### **Negative aspects**

- Children steal to get money to enter the video houses.
- Children spend a lot of time watching videos and they do not attend schools. They eventually drop out of school altogether.
- Older children tend to bully younger children in the video houses.
- Many children do not select the type of movies they want to watch. They just go into the video houses to watch what is available. It is difficult to sleep after watching horror movies. A lot of children get nightmares due to films.

### ***Things to be changed in our surrounding***

#### **Families and communities**

- The cleanliness in communities to be improved and waste disposal places to be available.
- Roads to be better maintained to minimize accidents.
- More schools to be built.
- Big cinema halls to be established instead of the small video houses. In the cinema halls, it must not be allowed to bring in cigarettes, chat and other stuff.
- Harmful traditional practices on children to be discouraged.
- The use of chat and addictive substances to be prohibited.
- Prostitution to be prohibited.

- Other children to be made aware on the consequences of being in conflict with the law, so that they do not grow up to be adult criminals.
- Parents and families to be provided advice on how to raise and support their children.

### **Schools**

- Students to express their ideas about the behavior of teachers confidentially so that teachers will be able to improve their behavior towards students.
- The arrangement of Student Police<sup>2</sup> in schools should be expanded. They help in ensuring that girls are not harassed or kept out of school by older boys.
- Students who are high achievers should be seated together with the low performers so that the latter get to learn how to behave and study.
- Children to respect their teachers.
- The behavior of teachers to be improved so that they set good examples to their students.

### **Partiality**

Children are better treated based on good achievement, or their ages. Older children are better treated. Boys were seen positively before; now after the introduction of civic education the tendency is to be positive to girls. Classroom rules may be overlooked for the benefit of high achievers. This partiality must be improved in all aspects.

### ***Feeling of being valued and respected***

Concepts of children feeling valued and respected were defined. Then the children prepared role plays to show situations where children were valued and respected. The themes of both role plays portrayed situations where they did not feel valued and respected and where the children felt valued.

### ***Role Play I***

The theme of the first role play focused on situation of a family. The father is a civil servant who is addicted to cigarettes. In the play, the father asked his son to buy cigarettes for him. The child asked also money to buy a pen. The father insulted the child and insisted that there is not enough money to spare for a pen.

The child went to school and was told to write. When the teacher learned that the child does not have a pen, he punished the child and sent him back home to bring his father. The child told this to the father and said that he does not want to go to school.

The father got angry at the mother and blamed her for not properly using the money that he gives her. The parents went to the neighbors who tried to reconcile the husband and wife. Eventually, the father insisted and they got divorced, and shared the household items. The child chose to live with the mother and continued to attend school. The neighbor helped the child continue going to school.

The father got into more problems. He still suffers from his cigarette addiction and complained that he does not have enough money. The child had started to work as a shoe shine boy and met the father on the streets. The father asked money from his son and the son refused to give any money.

The child went into trouble in school and the teacher asked the child to bring the neighbor who assists the child, and the divorced parents. The teacher reconciled the parents and they started to live better.

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<sup>2</sup> Student Police are older children who volunteer to keep order in and around schools. For example, they help students to cross streets, stop fights among children, etc.

## ***Role play II***

The teacher takes attendance. Some of the children are late for class. When they arrived, they were made to kneel down in class, before they were allowed to join the rest of the class.

The teacher started asking questions and insulted the children that did not answer the questions correctly. He asked them to bring their parents. The good students were appreciated while those who did not do well were insulted. The teacher compared those students who had parents and who did not do well in class, to those students who do not have parents but still do well in class.

At home both parents are present. The mother gave them food and checked what the children did at school. The father got angry at the children because of the low performance of some of the children. The father went to school to discuss the children's performance with the teacher. The children were advised by the teacher and their father. The father promised to follow up the children's education.

The students were given exams and they were encouraged by the teacher to study more. The results from the tests were better than before, although they needed to study some more. They were told to study with their younger brother.

## ***Discussions***

The children brainstormed about what it means to be valued and respected by their communities. The discussions concerning feeling respected and valued focused on defining the concepts in general terms. Children are respected when they:

- help elders
- participate in class
- respect traditional values such as not discussing equally with elders.
- run errands
- feel that they made their parents proud of them
- feel listened by their parents
- do not do things that are not approved by their communities
- feel supported and encouraged in education by parents
- are treated fairly regardless of who they are, or how they are dressed
- see that adults are neutral in solving conflicts among children.

The children were then asked to stand on a three graded scale to express their ideas about being valued and respected. 7 children did not feel respected and valued; while 10 children feel that they are valued and respected sometimes and not valued and respected the rest of times. Only 2 children, both girls, feel respected and valued.

The consequent discussions with children in the three groups helped to bring out specific and personal examples of situations where the children feel respected.

Then children discussed when they feel respected and valued:

- when I perform tasks that I am asked to do by my parents/ neighbors.
- When I get educated
- Because I earn money and contribute to the family.
- Because I make coffee for my mother

They feel not respected and not valued when:

- father married another wife
- after mother died
- eating alone
- being a street child
- not being strong
- making mistakes

- I did not manage to sell lottery tickets because I spent time playing
- I did not have adequate educational materials in class.

## 8.1 Activity 2, Understanding the experience of children in conflict with the law and what might have helped

### *Cause Impact Tree Exercise*

The groups discussed the cause and impact of their status of being in conflict with the law. The findings of the three groups are summarized as follows:

#### *Causes of being in conflict with the law*

- Children being in the habit of using money;
- Fighting with friends; family economic problems; families' lack of control,
- When families give children money without adequate guidance.
- Used to watching films, disrespect to families.
- Not adequate guidance by parents and family members
- Spending time with bad friends
- Not thinking of the long term consequences of ones actions.
- Not having a good personal strength.

#### *Type of offenses committed*

Offenses identified as committed by children are fighting, theft, spending time in video houses and other places which are not suitable to children.

#### *Impact of the offenses committed*

Impacts identified by children are fines; being imprisoned, beaten, not being trusted, being sent out of home, humiliation, counseling, being sent to correction center, death, people talking bad about us.

#### *What might have prevented you from being in conflict with the law?*

- Children should be advised by parents.
- Parents should improve their child rearing and parents must be given advice by professionals.

#### *What are the things that could help you now?*

- Correction Centers are too far away from where we live.
- Once a child is labeled as having committed an offense, he is always under suspicion. This must be changed.

#### *Do you think the way the offenses were handled was the right way?*

The children answered the above question in the negative.

- No because the police abused me physically and verbally when they caught me.
- Correction facilities in the police stations are not good.
- If we are in a place where crimes are committed the police beat us to get information about the crime.
- The way the police question children is threatening/ is not comfortable. Too many police men question a single child.

- When girls are raped they get psychologically distressed. Therefore it is not enough only to send the person to jail, but also to help the girl to improve her living situation, as she gets isolated by her community.
- Police do not give enough attention to children. They do not protect children from being abused.
- The police are corrupt especially by older youth that threaten the police or bribe them, therefore when the older youth commit offenses the victims do not get justice.
- 11 children feel that organizations in their communities do not support children adequately, and 6 children said that the organizations provide enough support.

## 9. Case studies

### *Nickname*

Vanstroy

Vanstroy's, 13, mother died when he was a baby. The 7<sup>th</sup> grader's father is a daily labourer living in Dessie. Following his mother death, Vanstroy's aunt took care of him until he turned six. Then Vanstroy went to the countryside with his father who wanted to settle there. His father re-married. Two years later when Vanstroy was 8 there was drought in the rural village causing the whole family to migrate to Dessie. Vanstroy was unhappy with the way he was mistreated by his stepmother. Problems arose as he felt discriminated against with his stepsister and brothers.

When Vanstroy became 12, he got into a fight with children in order to help his friend. A girl was pushed and was injured on her back during the fight. The mother of the girl reported Samuel to the police and he was referred to the CBCP.

While enrolled in the CBCP, Vanstroy started a shoeshine business. He said that he wanted to start shoe shining because his stepmother continued to treat him harshly. He said that the problem with his stepmother was not due to economic problems but due to unfair treatment. For example, he said that his stepmother was not willing to give him money for school contributions, thus he has to raise the money on his own by asking from well-to-do neighbours.

Currently, he earns 10-20 birr per day from shining shoes, while he still continues to attend school. In the evenings, he does his homework at home. He eats alone while his step sister and brothers eat with their parents.

Vanstroy spends some of his earnings to fulfil his needs and saves the rest of the money with a college teacher that helped him to buy the materials for the shoeshine. He uses his savings to buy clothes, school materials and school contributions when required.

Two months ago, the family moved into their own house which was built for them by the brother of Vanstroy's father. During that time Vanstroy helped the family by contributing 100 birr so that the family gets to be a member of a community based self-help group in the new neighbourhood. He was also discharged from the CBCP two months ago, but continues to visit the centre. He said, 'I go to the CBCP to watch films rather than paying entrance fee to video houses'.

The college teacher and some students help him pay up school contributions and they also encourage him to continue his education. Vanstroy wants to complete his education and become a good citizen.

### *Nickname*

Ronaldo

Ronaldo, 12, was born in Dessie town. At the time of his birth his mother worked as a housemaid for a certain family. Ever since he remembers, his father has been married and living with another woman.

Three or four years ago, his mother stopped working as a housemaid. She rented a house to live in and started baking injera (a kind of Ethiopian bread) going to the homes of different families. She earns very little and there is always shortage of every thing including food in their home. She spends most of her time going from one house to another to bake injera and rarely stays at home especially in day times. After school, he is mostly by himself and goes anywhere he wants, as there is no one to supervise him at home.

Around a year ago he became friends with a boy who has bad behaviour and whose mother was a prostitute. Ronaldo started spending most of his time with that boy. The boy is engaged in different activities including stealing. One day, the boy convinced Ronaldo to steal some skins and hides from a store. He agreed and they stole 4 skin and hides, which they sold for 76 Birr. On the second day, the police first got the boy and then they came to Ronaldo's house. They took both boys to the Community Based Correction Centre and Berhanu went through the diversion program.

Recently, Ronaldo was reported as stealing Birr 100 from the home of a relative and he is again admitted to the correction program. He blames his actions on the inability of his mother to fulfil his needs.

Ronaldo goes to school and is now in grade 4. But he says he would have been in grade 8, had he not repeated several grades. He repeated once in grade one, twice in grade two and once in grade four. In the first semester of this year, he ranked 19 out of 50 students and he noted that he has improved a lot. He attributes this improvement to the assistance he gets in the correction program.

### **Nickname**

Zidan

Zidan is 15 and attends 8th grade. 10 years ago, his parents got divorced. His mother is a teacher and father works as an accountant.

Zidan is very close to his mother. His father drinks frequently and when he gets drunk becomes offensive and insulting. Zidan would have liked to live with his father, but is afraid that his insults would hurt his feelings.

Zidan's younger brother has traced their father and left to live with him.

His mother remarried after five years to a carpenter. The stepfather is now unemployed. Zidan said that his worst experience in life was when his parents got divorced.

A month ago Zidan was brought to the Community Based Correction Centre, after being caught engaging in a group fight. The fight started while playing football and they had made bets with money. All four boys in the group are referred to the Centre. Zidan had been involved in fights before and was injured once and has twice caused injuries to other children.

Currently, he feels that his mother has too much burden. She works as a teacher at school and also works at home. He tries to help his mother as much as he can with household chores. The house in which the family lives belongs to the stepfather, and they are discussing to sell the house to buy a taxi for the stepfather.

# 10. Understanding whom children turn to for help and where they feel safe

## Places where children feel safe

The following are identified as places/ situations where children feel safe in their communities:

- Library
- School
- Church
- Police station
- Where we are together with friends

Where children do not feel safe

- I do not feel safe anywhere.
- When police are harsh
- Video houses
- Flour mills
- Places where there are too many vagrants
- Bars and chat houses

Where do you go when you have problems?

- Clinic, hospitals
- Police stations, Child Protection Unit in police stations
- Families, relatives
- Neighbors
- Adults nearby
- School director
- Parent Teacher Associations
- Teachers

## II. Further understanding the solutions suggested by the children

The following are things that the children wanted to be changed from their communities.

- We want our surroundings to be clean
- Construction of roads
- Expansion of schools
- Abolition of harmful traditional practices
- Stop prostitution
- Undertake different developmental activities in our communities
- Educating children
- Create opportunities to express our opinions about teachers
- Expansion of student police in schools
- Respecting teachers
- Arrange sitting arrangements of students in classrooms so that high and low achievers are mixed.
- Expanding child care institutions
- Expansion of correction institutions
- Assisting children who have problems
- Supporting children through advice
- Creating awareness among families about child rights
- To sensitize children about the importance of education
- To expand recreational centers for children.

### Priorities

After considering their suggestions, they were asked to prioritize the 5 most important changes in their communities. The results are as follows:

- Assisting children who have problems
- Expanding child care institutions
- Expansion of schools
- Creating awareness among families about child rights
- Expanding recreational centers for children.

## 12. General observations

The children in both locations participated very actively in the workshops. They respected the ground rules they set at the beginning of the workshops. The following are the general observations made by the facilitators while conducting the workshops in both locations:

- Dessie children focused more on their natural environment, while the Addis Ababa group focused more on other aspects of their environment such as houses, facilities, etc.
- Flour mills, which are discussed in depth by children in Dessie may be an indication that food is prepared in the children's households in Dessie. The children in Addis did not mention issues relating to household food preparation. This may be because their families buy ready made food rather than preparing at home.
- Shisha houses are not identified as part of the children's surroundings in Dessie, while in Addis they were major features of the children's communities.
- The observations of the Dessie children about their surroundings are isolated and they discussed less of the inter relations between the different parts of their environment.
- Violence in families and beatings of children featured less in Dessie than among the Addis Ababa group.
- Dessie children spoke of family composition / large family size as being a problem. This was not raised by children in the Addis Ababa group.
- The condition of being orphaned was more emphasized by the Dessie children.
- Harsh verbal abuse was not emphasized in Dessie. This was, however, presented as a major problem by the Addis Ababa group.
- Money was seen by the Dessie children as a push factor towards conflict, while the Addis Ababa group even went to the extent that they prefer to live in surroundings where they are able to earn money.
- Voice of girls attending formal schools are not represented in Dessie. Those represented were from a non formal school. This may be a reason for low reporting of violence in schools towards girls.
- Lack of recreational places were emphasized in Addis.
- The children in Dessie did not mention Kebeles (the lowest level of administrative units), as part of their communities. Even when they were asked about Kebeles during the discussions, they said they had no contacts. The Addis Ababa group discussed that they wanted to give their opinions about housing development and also expressed wishes that candidates to the upcoming election should have covered the issue of children more seriously.
- Major points commonly discussed by the children in both locations were:
  - Teachers and parents to set good examples to children.
  - Children feel unprotected in their immediate environment. Schools are identified as relatively safer than the children's neighborhoods.
  - Children expressed their understanding that addiction of parents may take time to get over.
  - Partiality on the basis of academic performance, gender and age hurt children a lot.
  - The changing situation of girls in schools. Recently, girls are getting better treatment, and this is attributed by the children to civic education in schools.
  - Children have high expectations of families to support the education of the children, even in difficult times.
  - More consultation is needed with children concerning being in conflict with the law. Adults and parents should focus on preventive measures.
  - Parents need to be educated in skills of how to raise their children.

## Save the Children Sweden in Eastern and Central Africa

Save the Children Sweden started working in Eastern and Central Africa in 1965. Today, the organisation has offices in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Nairobi, Kenya; and Khartoum, Sudan. Save the Children Sweden has long-term child-rights based development programmes in Ethiopia and Sudan, and it supports local partners in Kenya, Eritrea, Somaliland and Uganda.

The organisation focuses on building the capacity of local people, community-based structures and organisations. In Eastern and Central Africa, it works with more than forty different non-governmental organisations and government bodies. In addition, it has adopted a direct implementation approach in southern Sudan and in the refugee camps of western Ethiopia and North Darfur.

All of the work in the region focuses on children's rights, and tackles issues that affect marginalised children. The core of the work focuses on children affected by conflict, discrimination, abuse, exploitation, and HIV/AIDS. Save the Children Sweden's focus also includes education, child participation and good governance in the best interest of the child.

The major task facing child rights advocates today is making the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child a reality for all children. The exchange of experience and know-how are proactive ways to work towards this goal, which is why Save the Children Sweden makes its books and reports available for the world. Welcome to visit our child rights bookshop on the internet, [www.rb.se/bookshop](http://www.rb.se/bookshop)

Save the Children Sweden is a non-governmental organisation. It is an active member of the International Save the Children Alliance – a global movement for children's rights.

Through 18 offices around the world, the organisation contributes ideas, experience and funds to 500 projects in more than 60 countries. Welcome to visit the Save the Children website, [www.savethechildren.net](http://www.savethechildren.net)

Save the Children Sweden fights for children's rights. We deliver immediate and lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide.

Save the Children Sweden works for a world:

- which respects and values each child
- which listens to children and learns
- where all children have hope and opportunity

More information about Save the Children Sweden and our projects worldwide can be obtained from our head office.

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