

Anne Hatløy
Anne Huser

Identification of street children

Characteristics of street children in Bamako and Accra



Fafo

Research Program on Trafficking and Child Labour

Anne Hatløy and Anne Huser

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Foreword

The Fafo Research Programme on Trafficking and Child Labour

Over the past seven years, Fafo has developed a research profile on child labour and policies to combat it. Studies of work life are a core research area for Fafo, and our surveys of living conditions have targeted children and youth as a particularly important group to be examined. Fafo's origins in the trade union movement have resulted in a particular interest in developing institutional frameworks for regulating work and labour rights issues in the best interests of national economic development and the work force.

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs drew upon Fafo's expertise to assist in preparing and hosting the International Conference on Child Labour in Oslo in 1997. Since then, Fafo has been commissioned by the International Labour Organisation, the World Bank, and others to provide applied research of interest to those combating child labour. The studies have been multifaceted and have addressed such issues as child labour and international trade, child relocation and domestic work, how to identify and measure child labour in national statistics, and how to identify and study child soldiers and the trafficking of children.

In 2002, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs generously agreed to finance a Fafo program on child labour, enabling us to collate and consolidate our research on the subject. International efforts to combat child labour must be knowledge-based; that is, they require a good empirical understanding of its causes, forms, and extent. One challenge is to develop methodologies that can strengthen the planning and efficiency of national programs to counter child labour. It is Fafo's aim to contribute to this goal by providing knowledge and methods to map the challenges and measure results. The specific objectives of the program are to:

1. Help improve the empirical understanding of the variations of child labour, including their social and family contexts;
2. Improve and validate qualitative and quantitative methods to study and map child labour, with a particular focus on its worst forms;
3. Explore how an understanding of children as actors may help develop preventive measures aimed at improving living and working conditions for children and reducing the prevalence of child labour.

We are pleased to present the third in a series of working papers from this program, which is coordinated by Anne Hatløy. This report attempts to develop methodologies to reach street children, with an additional aim of giving the characteristics of this population group. Previous reports include Achievements and setbacks in the fights against child labour. Assessment of the Oslo Conference on Child Labour October 1997 by Lise Bjerkan and Christophe Gironde, and Travel to Uncertainty by Kari Hauge Riisøen, Anne Hatløy and Lise Bjerkan. Forthcoming is the report Child labour and Cocoa Production in West Africa by Morten Bøås and Anne Huser.

Acknowledgements

This report attempts to develop methodologies to reach street children, with an additional aim of giving the characteristics of this population group. Fieldwork was carried out in Mali in June–July 2004 and in Ghana in September–October 2004. I would like to thank the authors of this report Anne Hatløy and Anne Huser, and Jon Pedersen, who provided valuable input during the work. Special thanks also to the country experts Mrs Sidibé Aminata Diallo from Bamako and Mr Stephen Afranie from Accra, without whom the fieldwork would not have been possible. The field team in the respective countries did an excellent job identifying and interviewing the street children. In Accra, Sylvester Kyei-Gyamei and Susanna A. Mahama supervised the fieldwork, and the fieldworkers were Florence Ayisi Annor, Irene Bruce, Elizabeth Cadjue, Isaac Osei Boahene, Grace Kombian, Yvonne Serwah Gambrah, and Emmanuel Darko. In Bamako, Augustin Bomba, Nouhoum Yattara, Soungalo Coulibaly, and Alima Konare supervised the fieldwork, and the fieldworkers were Boubacar Demba Traore, Gouro Oumarou Sidibe, Niarga Salif Kamissoko, Abraham Kone, Jean Gabriel Coulibaly, Lamine Camara, Boubacar Coulibaly, and Demba Kamissoko. Special thanks also to all the persons and organisations in Mali and Ghana who were willing to share their experiences and histories with us.

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Jon Hanssen-Bauer
Managing Director
Fafo Institute for Applied International Studies

Executive summary

This report presents the results of a quantitative study of the street children population in two West African cities: Bamako in Mali and Accra in Ghana. The main aim of this study was to develop methodologies for difficult to reach populations, with an additional aim of giving characteristics of the population group chosen. Street children are probably the most visible face of child labour. In most cities around the world children can be observed trading, carrying goods, shoe shining, begging, and collecting garbage. Despite being very visible, street children are difficult to study. They are not found within household structures or schools, thus collecting samples of street children upon which statistical estimates can be made, is a challenging task. The work carried out by street children may easily be defined as worst forms of child labour, not necessarily because of the character of the work itself but because of the environment where the work is carried out, which typically includes exposure to insecurity, harassment, violence, traffic and exhaust.

Street children are an extremely vulnerable group in all aspects of life, not just the nature of their work. Some of the children might be victims of trafficking, but, more likely, the fact that they live in the streets make them more vulnerable to trafficking than other children. They are children living without a safety net, often seeking new challenges or trying to escape their present circumstances.

Both in Accra and in Bamako, we used Responded-driven sampling (RDS) as a method to collect the characteristics of the street children. This is a kind of a network sampling, based on a dual incentive structure where the respondents are rewarded for being interviewed and additional rewarded for recruiting new respondents. In Accra, 1,341 children were interviewed, while in Bamako, 238 children were recruited through the RDS. In addition another method was used in Bamako to estimate the total number of street children, namely the Capture-recapture technique. In total 217 different children were interviewed by this method. The estimation of the total number of street children in Bamako in July 2004 based on this methodology, were 322 children. This number is very much lower than any other estimates done by the NGOs in Bamako. However, it is a number that was said to be closer to the reality than any of the former higher estimates.

Fieldwork in these two cities was carried out in close collaboration with organisations working with street children on a daily basis. This was important in order to ensure that the children being interviewed belong to the target population of street

children. Moreover, collaboration with local partners is necessary to get a rough estimate of the total number of street children in the city, and to obtain reliable information concerning the habits of street children and the locations where you can find them.

Comparing the street children in Bamako and Accra, shows some remarkable differences. In Bamako, 96 percent of the street children are boys, while in Accra, 75 percent are girls. While the street children in Bamako are mainly beggars, the children in Accra are engaged in a variety of activities including porting goods for people, and street vending.

The age structure of the street children of Bamako and Accra is similar. The majority of the street children are between 14 and 17 years old. Another common feature is that the street children are not orphans: a large majority of them have at least one of their parents alive, and most of the children have regular contact with their parents. A large share of the children had been living in the streets for less than three months. The children say that life in the streets is worse than life at home. Still, most of them do not want to go back home – instead their hope for the future is to get a better job.

Illiteracy is widespread among the street children both in Bamako and Accra. However, in Accra, many boys had completed primary school and even junior secondary school. It is likely that these boys come to Accra to find jobs because it is difficult for their family to continue to finance their education. These boys are unemployed youth who seek their fortune in the city.

A distinctive characteristic of the street children in these two West African cities is that they are “target working”, they have an explicit goal of making a certain amount of money, and when they have reached this goal they will leave the streets. Whether or not they succeed remains an open question, but compared to some other groups in the society, they have a relatively high income.

The street children population of Accra differs from street children elsewhere by the fact that the majority of them are girls. Girls, especially from the northern regions of Ghana, are found in large numbers in Accra. It seems as the economic hardship these regions face, affects girls more than boys. At the national level, there are only minor differences in the enrolment rates of boys and girls. However, among street children, 70 percent of the girls have never attended school while the same is true for only 9 percent of the boys. This means, that if girls attend school, the likelihood that they become street children is substantially reduced.

This project shows, that the Responded-driven sampling and the Capture-recapture technique can successfully be used to reach population groups outside ordinary structures. The methods allow calculation of the total population in addition to give the characteristics of the population groups. This information is appreciated both by policy planners and program managers.

1 Introduction

Street children are found in most cities around the world. They live in the streets, they sleep in the open or in empty buildings, and they have no one to support them in their daily struggle for survival. Street children are probably the most visible face of child labour. Most of them are involved in petty trade or carrying goods, shoe shining, begging, or collecting garbage. Despite being very visible, street children are difficult to study, and nobody knows exactly how many street children there are in the world today. The children's way of living makes them difficult to count, as they will not be found within ordinary family structures nor in schools or other institutions. Most statistics on street children are merely estimates, or "guesstimates". Like other "hidden populations", street children are difficult to deal with within ordinary statistics.

The purpose of this report is twofold. First, we test sampling techniques not previously applied to reach street children. These sampling techniques can also be used to identify other hidden population groups. Second, we provide the characteristics of the street children population in two African cities: Bamako, the capital of Mali, and Accra, the capital of Ghana. Fieldwork was carried out in Bamako in June-July 2004, and in Accra in September-October the same year. Finally, we discuss the implications of our empirical and methodological findings for understanding the situation of street children.

The work carried out by street children is defined as child labour by international conventions. There are three international conventions regulating child labour: the International Labour Organization (ILO) 138 Minimum Age Convention, the ILO 182 Worst Form of Child Labour Convention, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. ILO Convention 138 defines 15 years as the minimum age for admission to employment (14 years in developing countries). Children above 13 years (12 years in developing countries) may carry out light work, while the minimum age for carrying out hazardous work is 18 years (ILO 1973). Work that is defined as household chores, assistance in family undertakings, and work undertaken as part of the education is excluded from minimum age legislation.

ILO Convention 138 defines and regulates child labour on the basis of where the work is taking place, and for whom. Yet the thinking around child labour has changed over time. In the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (adopted in 1989), the definition of child labour is based on the effect that the work has on the

child (UN 1989). The parties to the convention spell out the basic human rights of children everywhere, and recognize the right of the child to be protected from “*economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development*” (UN 1989).

ILO Convention 182 reflects this new way of thinking, also focusing on the effect that the work has on the child (ILO 1999). It calls for immediate action to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, defined by Article 3 as slavery, the use of children in armed conflict, pornography, prostitution, trafficking of drugs and “*work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children*” (ILO 1999). The work carried out by street children may easily meet the standards of worst forms of child labour, not necessarily because of the character of the work itself but because of the environment where the work is carried out, which typically includes exposure to insecurity, harassment, violence, traffic and exhaust (ILO 2002).

Multiple definitions of street children exist, and many practitioners fail to specify which group of children they are addressing. In this report we define a street child as a person younger than 18 years of age, living separated from parents, other tutors or guardians, who slept on the streets previous night. Street children are an extremely vulnerable group in all aspects of life, not just the nature of their work. Some of the children might be victims of trafficking, but, more likely, the fact that they live in the streets make them more vulnerable to trafficking than other children. They are children living without a safety net, often seeking new challenges or trying to escape their present circumstances. The fact that they live in the streets shows that they are courageous. They have made a decision to change their situation, by leaving their place of origin and trying to make a living on their own.

Children leave home for various reasons. Some leave voluntarily, searching for an adventure or for a way to make a living. Other children are rejected by their family, or may feel unwanted due to a strained family situation. Others are encouraged by their parents to find work in the city in order to contribute economically to the household. Whatever the reason, there may be complex underlying causes why children live on the streets.

Determining who the street children are is the first step in designing policies to identify them, understand their needs, improve their life in the cities, or reintegrate them into their home communities. Deciding which approach to pursue is the responsibility of policymakers; our task is to provide the information necessary to help them make these decisions and find a lasting solution for the children. Experiences from these two countries have shown that efforts to reintegrate children in to their communities often fail: many children who have taken part in reintegration programs return to the streets within a few months. This indicates that such programs

were not based on a sufficient understanding of the children's background, their motivations to leave their family, their everyday needs and the pertinent incentives for making them return to their homes of origin. Only by understanding these aspects of the lives of street children can we find a long-term response to the challenge of a growing number of street children in cities around the world.

Before presenting our methodology and findings, we will briefly sketch the existing definitions of and knowledge about street children, and outline the methodology and findings of previous surveys of street children throughout the world.

1.1 What do we know about street children?

Street children can be classified as a group of children in especially difficult circumstances. UNICEF emphasises that life on the streets impinges upon the inherent right to life, survival, and development of the child. It adversely impacts upon the child's right to live in a family environment, access to health, right to education, rest and appropriate leisure, and protection against economic and sexual exploitation. It has a negative effect on the child's right to participation and access to information (UNICEF 2001d). ILO is concerned with street children because they represent one of the largest and most visible groups of child labourers. The circumstances of the work and the risks involved in many cases make these activities worst forms of child labour, which, according to ILO Convention 182, must be eliminated as rapidly as possible. The ILO views the informal economy in general as a source of job creation fraught with serious potential for exploitation. Often outside the reach of regulatory institutions and labour law, the informal economy provides an environment that allows child labour and, in particular, street work to thrive. According to ILO, sustainable abolition of child labour on the streets or elsewhere requires the reduction of poverty through the creation of quality jobs for adults, improved access to quality education, good governance, and the effective enforcement of labour laws (www.ilo.org).

Stemming from its concern for the rights and welfare of children in especially difficult circumstances, UNICEF has carried out surveys of street children, mostly in the developing world. These surveys look into the situation of the street children and the dangers to which they are exposed. The ILO and independent researchers have also carried out surveys on street children. The methods applied vary, from focus group discussions to surveys with different types of convenience samples, or sampling through snowballing (survey without samples). The findings and methods of some of these surveys are discussed below.

A UNICEF study on street children in Zimbabwe found that there are more boys than girls among the street children – only 40 of the 260 interviewed were girls. The sample's average age was 13 years. In general, they found that the children have poor access to shelter, water, sanitation, and health facilities. The children said that they feel hopeless, that life in the streets is tough and without a future (UNICEF 2001a). Children in five urban areas were interviewed, only children that consented were interviewed, and, at the end of the interview, they were given USD 15. In addition, focused group discussions were carried out with street children; street adults, and childcare workers. The initial contact with the children was established with assistance from childcare workers, and further recruitment of children was done through snowballing, where the children interviewed refer their friends and colleagues. Initially the research team contacted 450 street children, but not all could be interviewed. Some children said that other researchers on other projects had interviewed them previously, and that they could not see that there were any benefits for them; other children left during the interview to attend to customers. If children were drunk or high, they were not interviewed. Moreover, the study was conducted during a time of political tension in Zimbabwe, and the children were generally tense. The researchers claim that all these factors probably affected the participation, and that more time would have been needed in order to build trust and overcome these challenges (UNICEF 2001a).

A rapid assessment carried out in Lusaka, Zambia, also found that the majority of the street children are boys (80 percent) with a median age of 14 years (UNICEF 2001b). Although life on the streets exposes them to health risks, violence, and sexual abuse, 63 percent of the children did not know where to seek help. Several centres or shelters for street children have been established in Lusaka, but they are generally not well known among the children. Asked what kind of assistance they most needed, the majority wanted help getting an education, while a considerable number, especially among older children, wanted assistance finding employment. The aim of the study was to provide information on basic demographics and background characteristics of the street children. The initial children to be interviewed were identified by local NGOs working with street children. Eight local NGOs took part in the project, and each was assigned a zone of the city. Within this zone, they visited sites where street children were known to congregate, and all the children found in the sites at daytime were interviewed. Street children were identified using criteria such as appearance, language, and activities. Selected street children, gang leaders, and shop owners were also used to identify additional children. In total, 1,232 street children were interviewed. The researchers report that errors and inconsistencies in the data caused problems for the analysis. Many questions were omitted in the questionnaires and, in several cases, the interviewers had not followed the “skip instructions”. Also, a number of questionnaires were not completed – the reasons

for which were unclear. Some of the respondents were interviewed more than once. These problems demonstrate the importance of adequate training of the data collectors and sufficient supervision in the field (UNICEF 2001b).

A similar rapid assessment of street children was carried out in Cairo and Alexandria in Egypt. The study found that the children are exposed to real or constant threats of violence from employers, hostile community members, or their peers. They are often malnourished and lack access to medical services. Two-thirds of the children have a sense of what they would like their life to be like (including stable work), but few have a strategy for how to get there (UNICEF 2001c). The aim of the study was to assess the overall situation for street children in these two cities. Interviews were conducted with 50 street children at three drop-in centres. Nine focus group discussions with street children were held at the drop-in centres, using a convenience sample. In addition, interviews were carried out with 20 street children and 20 children residing at a government institution to identify the rate of psychological adjustment among street children. Again, a convenience sample was used in selecting the children. The research team also visited areas where street children congregate and did informal interviews with children on substance abuse, health, and nutrition. It is stressed in the report that the rapid assessment does not allow for in-depth or “longitudinal” research techniques. The purpose of the rapid assessment was to develop interventions in Cairo and Alexandria, and generalizations for the whole country were not generally made (UNICEF 2001c).

A 2004 Brazilian study attempted to estimate the size of the street children population of Aracaju, a city in northeast Brazil, and describe the characteristics of this population (Gurgel et al. 2004). The study found that the street children of Aracaju have similar characteristics to street children from other cities in Brazil: most are male, maintain contact with their families, and attend school. The children work in the streets in order to contribute to the family budget. It is difficult to estimate the number of children in the streets because this is a highly mobile population. Gurgel and colleagues applied Capture-recapture (CR) to estimate the number of street children. Three independent lists of street children were constructed from an NGO and from cross-sectional surveys in the streets, and the frequency of appearance of the children in more than one list was used to estimate the total population size. Based on this method, the estimated number of street children was 1,456. The reproducibility of this method makes it more acceptable than estimates from interested parties (Gurgel et al. 2004). The interviews carried out in the surveys were also used to describe the characteristics of the children.

Similar studies have been carried out in other countries around the world. Although attempts to estimate the population size are few, many studies provide background information on the street children, including their health and nutrition status, the extent of drug abuse, and knowledge of HIV/AIDS and other sexually

transmitted diseases (Karabanow 2003; Kilbride et al 2000; Lalor 2004; Trussel 1999). A problem with many of these studies is that they do not thoroughly describe the methodology they use. Most studies that attempt to give the characteristics of hidden populations such as street children apply techniques called “street outreach”, which involve sending fieldworkers into the streets to find and recruit members of the hidden population. This sampling technique clearly does not give a random sample. In many cases, the researcher will collect a sample with some non-random sample design and then present summary statistics. Although there is never an explicit claim that this sample can be generalized to the population, that claim is often implicit (Salganik and Heckathorn 2004). This way of designing a sample and interpreting the results can lead to extremely misleading conclusions.

Before presenting the methodology applied in our studies, we will first examine the studies that have previously been carried out on street children especially in Accra and Bamako.

1.2 Surveys of street children in Accra and Bamako

In Accra and Bamako, NGOs, researchers, and government bodies have carried out studies on street children. Some of these surveys aim at providing information on the children’s background or the situation for the children in the streets. Other surveys have attempted to estimate the number of street children.

In 1992, a survey on street children was carried out in Accra (Apt Van Ham et al. 1992). Five locations in and around Accra were selected and 200 children in each place were interviewed, giving a total sample of 1,000 children. In addition to quantitative interviews, in-depth interviews were carried out with six children. The survey includes both children who live with a parent or relative, and children who live alone on the streets. The aim of the survey was to produce comprehensive data on the size, characteristics, and conditions of vulnerable children in Ghana.

A report from 1997 provides characteristics of street girls living in Accra, and on the social processes which lead them to the streets (Apt and Grieco 1997). The report is based on individual in-depth interviews with street girls, supplemented by and focus group discussions. The study seeks to actively involve street girls in the identification of the problems they face and in the development of solutions to these problems.

Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS), a non-governmental organization founded in Accra in 1993, has also conducted surveys of street children. CAS runs a refuge in Accra where street children are provided with health care, basic education, vocational training and counselling. All the children that visit CAS are regis-

tered, with basic registration data including name, age, hometown, abode, and date of first visit. In 1996, CAS and a partner NGO, Street Girls Aid, carried out a headcount of the street children in Accra. Over a period of three weeks, 30 fieldworkers visited different areas of the town doing a headcount by giving street children an “invitation card”. The survey distinguished between street children and urban poor children; thus, the cards were not given to children living with parents. In 1996, CAS estimated that the number of street children in Accra were 10,400. The headcount was repeated in 2000, 2001, and 2002. The latest headcount in 2002 estimated that there were 19,196 street children in Accra (CAS 2002).

Due to the increasing flow of children coming to Accra from the rural areas of Ghana in the 1990s, CAS and UNICEF decided to undertake a survey to explore the reasons why children travel to the city to live on the streets. The CAS team visited more than 50 towns and villages in five different regions: Northern, Upper East, Ashanti, Western, and Eastern. These regions were selected because most of the street children registered by CAS come from these areas. The towns and villages were selected randomly. CAS carried out qualitative interviews with 282 parents, 805 children in junior secondary school, and 227 children that had dropped out of school¹, in addition to teachers and local authorities. The report, entitled “The Exodus: The Growing Migration of Children from Ghana’s Rural Areas to the Urban Centres”, was published in 1999.

The Exodus report offers extensive qualitative data and life stories to help NGOs and policymakers understand why rural children leave their families. The report provides insights into the rural economy of contemporary Ghana; the role of family and traditions; the educational system; and various push and pull factors. The main push factors are the harsh economic conditions in the agricultural sector, poor infrastructure in rural areas, breakdown of the nuclear family, large family size, and the low quality of schools in remote areas. The main pull factors are the urbanisation experiences brought to the children through television or stories from peers or relatives living in the city, and the prospects of income that the city offers (CAS 1999). The survey team did not apply scientific sampling techniques. The selection of regions was based on knowledge from the field and the selection of communities was done randomly, but the report does not reveal how the team selected the respondents.

In 2003, the Ghanaian Ministry for Women and Children Affairs commissioned a rapid screening of street children in Accra. The screening was carried out by five

¹ This figure includes 53 street children in major towns other than Accra. Since there are so many street children in Accra, children in other towns tend to be overlooked. The research team did not do a representative survey, but applied an arbitrary convenience sample.

organizations jointly². Five markets in Accra were selected and 60 street children were interviewed about their background, reasons for coming to Accra, current occupation and place of abode, and future plans. Since this was a pilot project and a rapid screening, the team did not develop a sampling procedure, but interviewed the children they met in the selected locations. The results of the screening were to be used by the government to provide appropriate assistance to street children and their families (Ministry for Women and Children Affairs 2003).

A study of street children has also been conducted in Bamako. In 2002, a census of drifting children in Bamako was carried out for the “Direction nationale de la promotion de l’enfant et de la famille”, in collaboration with SAMU Social, Caritas, and UNICEF by SERNES – SARL (Magassa et al. 2002). The objective of the first phase of the study was to quantify the population of children on and of the streets in Bamako.³ In the total census which included all the children “in need of special protection”, 83 percent were boys. The total number of children found was 4,348 (Magassa et al 2002). However, in the quantification of the total number of street children, it was not distinguished between children *on* the street and children *of* the street. In the second phase, in-depth interviews with a sample of children of the street were carried out to get information on family structure, education, and evaluation of their living conditions. In this sample, 71 were boys and 3 were girls, implying that 96 percent of the street children in Bamako are boys (Magassa et al 2002).

1.3 The concept of street children

Of the studies on street children mentioned thus far, few defined the concept of street children yet; in order to discuss the population size and the characteristics of street children, it is crucial that we understand who they are.

A common definition of a street child was formulated by Inter-NGOs in Switzerland in 1983:

“Any girl or boy who has not reached adulthood, for whom the street (in the broadest sense of the word, including unoccupied dwellings, wasteland etc.) has

² The organisations were Family Health Foundation, Assemblies of God Development and Relief Services, Department of Social Welfare, African Centre for Human Development and Today’s Choices.

³ “Children of the street” are homeless children who live and sleep on the streets in urban areas. “Children on the street” earn their living or beg for money on the street and return to their home at night.

become her or his habitual abode and/or source of livelihood, and who is inadequately protected, supervised or directed by responsible adults” (Inter-NGO, 1985 in UNICEF 2001a).

Whereas this broad definition is widely accepted, the concept of street children is sometimes divided into sub-groups, and different actors tend to apply different definitions of street children.

UNICEF distinguishes between “children of the street” and “children on the street”. Children of the street are homeless children who live and sleep on the streets in urban areas. For these children, family ties may exist, but they are tenuous and maintained occasionally. Children on the street earn their living or beg for money on the street and return to their home at night. They are likely to hand over all or part of their earnings to the family, thus contributing to the economic survival of the family unit. The parents often encourage their being in the streets. The distinction between the two groups is important because children on the street have families and homes to go to, whereas children of the street are alone and lack the emotional and psychological support normally provided by parents (UNICEF 2001a).

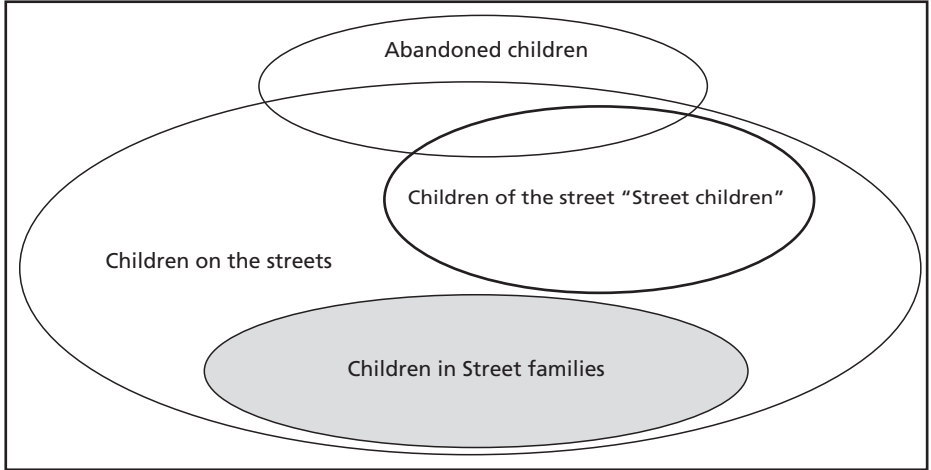
While the concepts of children of the street and children on the street usefully and reflect the different circumstances children are living under, the complexity of the phenomenon means that overlaps and grey areas remain. The activities of the children of the street and the children on the street are often similar, while the extent to which the children have contact with their family varies considerably. Some children of the street are abandoned and rejected by their families; other children of the street left their family due to prevailing circumstances, but maintain regular contact and may visit the family for a while before returning to the street. Meanwhile, the category of children on the street includes a grey area of children who sometimes sleep on the streets and sometimes sleep at home. There are also children within this category who are staying with distant relatives or employers. Children on the street often live in poor households, and many of these children are candidates for becoming children of the street. Although it may be helpful to maintain these two main categories, it is important to acknowledge that there is great variation in the living arrangements and family situation of both categorizations of children.

Other categories of children sometimes referred to in the debate are abandoned children, children at high risk, and children of street families. Abandoned children are children without a family who either live on the street or in institutions. Children at high risk are children living in absolute poverty in households that are not able to satisfy their basic human needs. These children often spend a considerable time in the streets and are at risk for becoming street children, are thus similar to children on the streets. Children of street families are children who are living on the

streets with one or both of their parents. They are either born on the streets or they have moved to the streets with their family. These children are sometimes referred to as second-generation street children, and they are a growing concern for authorities and NGOs working to promote the social conditions for children. Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between the most common definitions of street children and how some of them overlap. Whereas “children on the street” is a broad definition, “children of the street” is a more narrow definition, and these children are considered by many to be the most vulnerable group.

Due to the plethora of definitions, our first task in the study was to discuss the concept of street children with all actors working with street children in Bamako and Accra. In Bamako, these included the National Directory for Promotion of Women, Children and Family; international organizations such as UNICEF and ILO/IPEC; NGOs such as Save the Children, Caritas, ENDA Terre Monde, Jeunesse et Developpement, MaliEnJeu, and SAMU Social; and finally, local authorities such as the police. In Accra, we met with the relevant government authorities,⁴ international organisations such as UNICEF and ILO/IPEC, and NGOs working with street children including The Street Academy, Catholic Action for Street children (CAS), and Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services (AGREDS). We also met with the police to inform them about the study and obtain the necessary permissions.

Figure 1 Relationship between children on the street, children off the street, children in street families and abandoned children



⁴ Relevant authorities were the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment, the Department of Social Welfare (a semi- autonomous body under the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment), and the Ghana National Commission on Children (GNCC).

In Bamako, it became clear that different actors used different terminology. Some were talking about children in difficult situations, others of children on the street, or children of the street, drifting children, vulnerable children, children in family and social rupture, children in conflict with the law, or children in need of special protection. Asking the actors to estimate the number of children in the various groups, the answers were clearly related to how they defined those groups. The study “Recensement des enfants errants. District de Bamako” (*Census of drifting children in Bamako*), carried out in Bamako in 2002 (Magassa et al 2002), was cited by many of the actors. In that study, 4,348 children were identified as drifting children or children in need of special protection. The different actors cited this number as the best estimate of the number of street children in Bamako, regardless of their definitions. However, some NGOs claim that the number of street children is as high as 13–14,000, while others say that 4,348 is far too high.

In Accra, we also found that different actors applied different definitions of street children, and that the categories were often blurred. Some actors distinguish between three groups: children living in the streets unsupported by anybody, children of street families, and the urban poor children. The Catholic Action for Street Children estimates that there were 19,196 street children in Accra in 2002 (CAS 2002). This figure probably includes all three categories. Other actors often referred to this estimate. Conversely the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment (MMDE) distinguishes between four groups: children of the streets, children on the streets, abandoned children, and children involved in crime. They estimate that the total number including all four categories is 33,000 (Interview with Mary Dei-Awuku, assistant director).

The official definition of street children in Mali is found in “Code de Protection de l’Enfant, Ordonnance n°02–062/P-RM du 05 juin 2002”, article 60:

“Is regarded as “street-children”, all minors, with urban residence, less than 18 years of age, who spends all the time in the street, work or not, and which maintains little or no relationship with his/her parents, tutor or the person in charge of his/her guard or protection. The street remains the exclusive and permanent framework of life of this child and the source of his/her means of existence. The street means unspecified place other than a family or a institution of reception, such public or private buildings, squares, pavements.” (Code de protection de l’enfant, 2002).

In Ghana, neither the Children’s Act (1998) nor the 2003 Ghana Child Labour Study present an official definition of street children. From the text, however, it seems that the government of Ghana distinguishes between street children and urban poor children, but does not distinguish between children living in the street alone and children living in the street together with one or both of their parents. A draft re-

port on street children from the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment acknowledges the distinction made by UNICEF between children on the streets and children of the street. However, the report argues that it is difficult to establish a clear definition of street children in Ghana due to the multiple circumstances surrounding the phenomenon (MMDE 2004). In the report, a street child is defined as “a person under the age of 18 who works in the street regularly for economic gain. These include those who regularly spend a significant proportion of their time in the streets and those for whom the street is home” (MMDE 2004).

Based on the official definition in Mali, when this report uses the terminology *street children*, it means a person younger than 18 years of age, living separated from parents or other tutors, who slept on the streets the previous night. Not included in our definition are children belonging to *street families*, as when children sleep in the streets together with their parents or other guards, as these children live under a form of adult protection. We also don't include *beggars* who spend most of the day-time in the streets, but are attached to a marabout, the head of the Koranic school, or their parents/tutors. A third borderline group that are not included are children that slept in a *reception centre* the previous night. These children get benefits such as dormitories, breakfast, soap, health care, etc. by organisations such as Caritas and Kanuya in Bamako or AGREDS and Street Girls AID in Accra. However, as many of the children use these reception centres from time to time, only the ones that used it the day preceding to the survey were excluded.

2 How to study street children

A scrutiny of existing literature revealed that street children are difficult to study because, as a group, they are rare and elusive. Their way of living means that, unlike other children, they are not registered through the household or the school. It is particularly difficult to estimate the total number of street children within a given area. In this study, we test different sampling techniques to see if they can successfully be used to reach street children.

Two sampling techniques were used to collect information on the street children in Bamako. The first, Capture-recapture, is mainly used to estimate the number of street children; the second, Respondent-driven sampling (RDS), mainly gives the characteristics of this population group. In Accra, we planned to combine the two sampling techniques over a period of two weeks. After an initial mapping of the city, we would select two locations and conduct interviews using RDS. This would represent the Capture. One week later, we would carry out a second round of interviews using RDS at the same locations and use this as a recapture, in order to estimate the total number of street children in Accra. However, the first sample turned out to consist almost exclusively of street girls from the Northern region of Ghana. If we were to carry out a recapture, we would get the number of street girls in Accra from this group, not the total number of street children in Accra. For this reason, we decided to carry out just the RDS in Accra, giving the characteristics but not the number of street children.

2.1 Capture-recapture (CR)

Capture-recapture (CR) aims to estimate the size of a population for which there exists no sample frame, and produce data that are representative for this population (Jensen and Pearson 2002). The underlying approach for this sampling technique is taken from the wildlife sciences, going back to 1889 when C.G.J. Peterson introduced the method for estimating mortality rates in fish in Limfjorden in Denmark (LeCren 1965). The first known use of this method for counting a population was done by Dahl, who counted trout in Norway in 1917 (LeCren 1965). The researcher captures a number of fish, e.g. 100 from a fishpond, paints their tails blue,

and puts them back into the fishpond again. The following day or week, the researcher recaptures a number of fish again, e.g. 110, from the same pond and counts the fish with blue tails. If 15 of the recaptured fish have blue tail, the estimated number of fishes in the pond is: $100 \times 110 / 15 = 733$ fish. To get a more robust estimate, the recapture may be conducted several times.

The method has been brought from the wildlife sciences to human sciences, and has been used for counting many types of “hidden” populations ranging from street children in Brazil (Gurgel et al 2004), to homeless in Westminster (Fisher et al 1994), alcohol and drug users (Gemmel et al 2004; Corrao et al 2000), AIDS cases in France (Bernillon et al 2000), prostitutes in Norway (Brunovskis and Tyldum 2004), lesbians in the United States (Aaron et al 2003), and traffic-related injuries in Scotland (Morrison and Stone 2000).

Some of the studies carry out surveys to get information for the captures and recaptures, while others use the method by comparing registers of the subjects they want to study. Most of the studies use different existing lists of the population to be studied, and try to get a better estimate of the total population (Aaron et al 2003; Bernillon et al 2000; Fisher et al 1994; Gemmel et al 2004; Gurgel et al 2004; Morrison and Stone 2000). Using existing lists might be a good idea if such lists capture the population group under survey. However, for the street children in West Africa, basing an estimate of the street child population on existing lists made by NGOs would lead to wrong estimates, giving only an estimate of the street child population that has been in touch with the NGOs and leaving out a group that is probably even more vulnerable: those that have not been in contact and do not get any support from NGOs.

In Bamako, we therefore chose to use CR by counting the street child population on specific identified spots around the city twice and comparing the lists from the two registrations. We will describe the details on how the sites were selected below. To conduct a survey using CR, there are certain assumptions that must be taken into consideration (Jensen and Pearson 2002):

1. The population under study must be closed and the study area complete;
2. Being captured does not change the likelihood of being captured in future samples;
3. It is possible to accurately identify which individuals have been interviewed previously;
4. All individuals have non-zero likelihood of capture;
5. All individuals have an equal likelihood of being captured. (However, this restriction might be lifted, as we shall see later).

A modification of this method was used in Bamako. A step-by-step description of the fieldwork is presented below, including how it accounted for the assumptions built into CR.

Field staff and training

The fieldwork in Bamako started out with three teams, each with one supervisor and two interviewers. The supervisors were all affiliated with NGOs working with street children; the intention was to use their knowledge to get better access to the children. The interviewers were recruited through Caritas. In total, three supervisors, six interviewers, one Malian researcher, and one Norwegian researcher were in the field each night of the fieldwork. In addition, two to three cars with drivers were used.

A one-day training was given to the field staff by the researchers. The training program consisted of:

1. An explanation of the aim of the study;
2. Identification of the study sites using a map of Bamako;
3. A thorough look at the questionnaire, including explanation of each question, translation to Bambara, role-play, and testing of the questionnaire on children in a reception centre.

The supervisors received a one-hour training session prior to the training of the interviewers on the first day, and also had half-hour summary sessions on each of the interviewing days. They also followed all the training of the fieldworkers. Each interviewing day started with a one-hour repetition and training for the whole field staff (except drivers).

Study population and area

The first assumption for CR, as noted above, is that the population is closed and the study area complete. One of the characteristics of a street child is the instability: by definition, they have no stable place to sleep. However, the organisations Caritas and SAMU-Social, both NGOs that circulate in Bamako during nighttime and work directly with street children, said that there are quite fixed places in the city where the street children usually spend the nights. The same was confirmed in the census from 2002 (Magassa 2002).

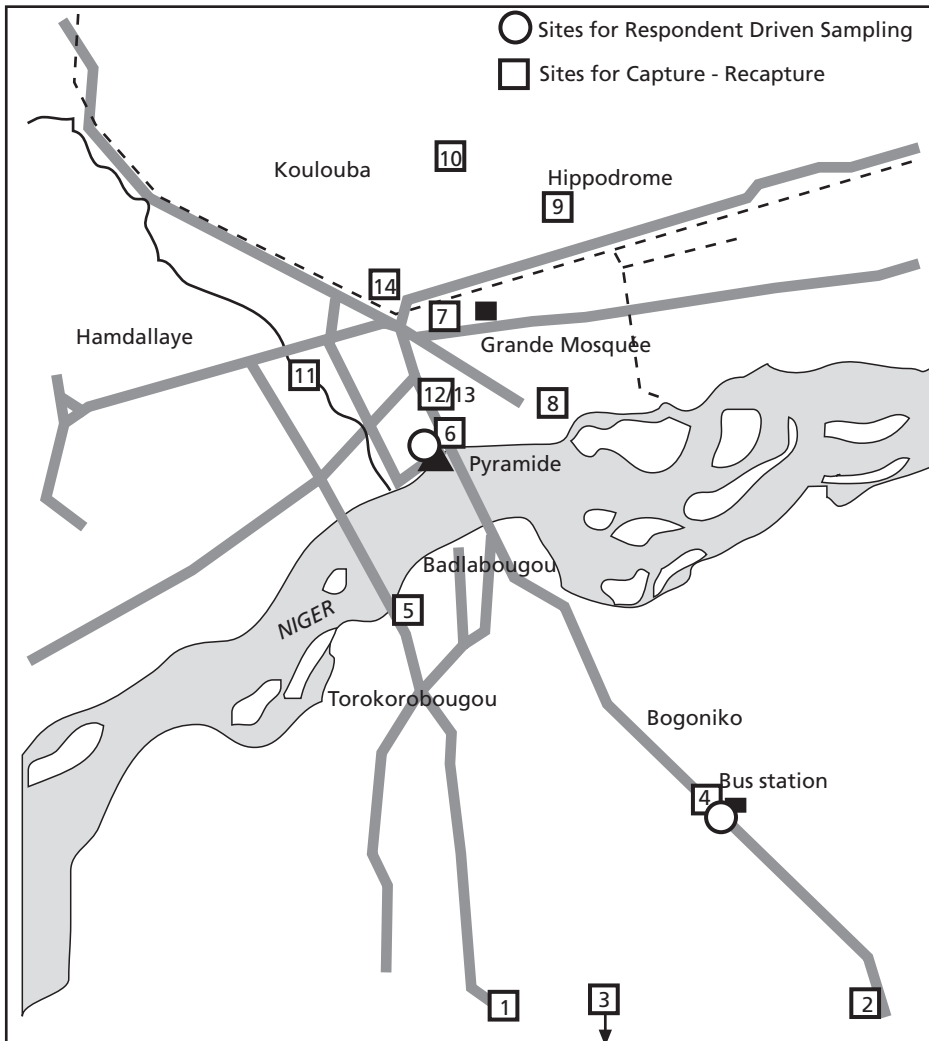
Over a very limited period of time, we can assume that the population of street children is rather closed. On one single day, few new children will come, and few children will leave; however, over a period of a year, or even a shorter period like a

month, the flux of children will be too large to fulfil the criteria of a closed population. We therefore chose to conduct the entire operation within a period of 11 days, from June 30 to July 10, 2004. The results thus reflect the number of street children in this period.

The study area was the city of Bamako and, based on the above information, a number of specific sites were selected as the places most likely to find the children. Bamako was divided into three zones, with the following sites used as study sites:

1. Zone 1: Ecole Cendrillon (1), Nouveau poste de police Yrimadio (2), Aéroport Senou (3), Gare routière de Sogoninko (4), Pharmacie du 2ème pont (5);

Figure 2 Bamako



2. Zone 2: Square Patrice Lumumba (6), Grande Mosquée (7), Marché N'Golonina (8), Route Koulikoro (9), Marché Medine (10);
3. Zone 3: Babemba (11), Marche Dibida (12), Centre Commercial (13), Rond Point du Gabriel Touré (14).

These sites cannot be seen as fixed places over a sustained period of time because the police tidy up certain places, restricting the activities. This was the case at Aéroport Senou, a place where children used to congregate, but where no children were found during the survey. According to people working at the airport, restrictions had been introduced and children were no longer allowed to be there.

To ensure that all possible locations of the children were covered, information from the CR and the RDS was compared. In the RDS, the children were asked about their exact sleeping location the previous night. The RDS in Bamako was carried out in parallel with the CR, and lists of all the locations from RDS were discussed with, and used by the CR team.

It was not feasible for the field-staff to cover the entire city during one night; the capture phase was therefore divided into two nights. To ensure that one child was not registered twice during the capture phase, all the data from the first day was entered, and a list was made with the children's name, age, sex, place of origin, interview site, and identification number. All the children interviewed during the second night of capture were asked if they had been interviewed before and if a child responded positively, they were not re-interviewed.

Thus, the first assumption of a closed study population and a complete study area was insofar as possible, fulfilled.

Likelihood of being captured

The second assumption that must be fulfilled for the CR is that being captured once does not change the likelihood of being captured in further samples (Jensen and Pearson, 2002). Conducting the fieldwork once should not change the likelihood that the children could be interviewed in a second round, either by frightening them away from new interviews or by enticing new children to follow the interviewers. To fulfil this assumption, two major conditions were taken into consideration:

1. The questionnaire was short, the interview time limited, and the interviewer avoided provocative questions. This was done to avoid scaring the children away from a second interview;
2. No gift or any form of donations was given to the children. This was done to avoid attracting new children to later interviews.

The two-page questionnaire used for the survey was thoroughly discussed with the participating NGOs, supervisors, and interviewers before the start of the survey. In addition, the questionnaire was tested out in street children currently staying on a day centre. Comments were taken into consideration, to ensure that the questionnaire did not contain sensitive or provocative questions. Observations from the field and reports from the interviewers confirmed that none of the children seemed upset by the questions; nor did they refuse to answer the recapture questionnaire. The mean time for conducting the interview and filling out the questionnaire was 6 minutes for the capture questionnaire, with a maximum of 15 minutes. None of the recaptured children refused to respond to the questionnaire in the second round, which indicates that the length and content of the questionnaire did not scare the children.

During the training of the field personnel, it was stressed that interviewers should never offer gifts or anything else that could attract new children to the sites where the interviews were conducted. In one case, however, a sick child was taken to the hospital. Because the children are accustomed to aid workers circulating in the streets during nighttime offering food or medical aid, they often asked for a gift during the interview. During the recapture phase, the children at one site refused to answer if they did not get anything for it. They were given some bread and cakes. By and large, the impression was that interviewing them repeatedly without a reward was difficult, and a third round would have been tricky to do.

Identify which persons have been interviewed previously

The third assumption for CR is that it is possible to identify which people have been interviewed previously. The fish in the fishpond had their tails painted blue; this is, of course, not possible to do with human beings. Different options were discussed for the street children in Mali. One option was to take a photo of all the interviewed children in the capture phase, and bring a list of all the children interviewed to the recapture. However, this was not done, for two main reasons. First, there are ethical issues involved in making identification lists with photos of all the street children that centre on concern for their rights, privacy, and safety given that such information could easily be misused. The second reason was the reaction of children to the photographing. We knew from former experience in Mali that people easily are attracted to photographers, and were concerned that taking photos of the children could easily attract other children to the field team, and thereby are in conflict with the second assumption. This latter argument was also used when we considered giving small identification marks, such as bracelets, to the respondents.

In the end, we used the tactic proposed by Jensen and Pearson (2002), which was simply to ask the children whether they had been interviewed before, and rely

on their answers. The interviewers had a list of all the children interviewed in the capture phase with name, age, sex, place of origin, interview site, and identification number. If the child said he/she had already been interviewed, the name and identification number was found and noted on a separate questionnaire (see the Recapture questionnaire in Annex). For the children, it was not a problem to answer this question. However, in some cases a child said he/she had been interviewed before, but was not found in the lists. The main reason for this was that some of the children were afraid to give away their name to strangers, and therefore gave a false name in the first interview, which they later forgot. In such cases, the interviewers tried to find the child on the list, comparing possible names with the site for interview, age, and place of origin. If it was not possible to identify the child in the field, the child was re-interviewed and by using all the variables, it was then possible to determine the child during the data processing and delete the duplicate. To reduce this problem, it might have been an idea to also ask for the child's nickname, and to ask the other children around for his/hers nickname and real name.

Non-zero likelihood of capture and equal likelihood of being captured

The fourth assumption of CR is that all individuals have a non-zero likelihood of capture. This assumption is closely linked up to the first assumption: that the study area is complete. In the case of Bamako, all the children sleeping in the streets had non-zero likelihood for being captured. However, our results showed that there were very few girls in the sample – only 8 out of 217 children. It can therefore be questioned whether all the street girls had a non-zero likelihood of being captured. Due to our definition of street children, only children sleeping in the streets were included in the survey. However, informants told us during the survey that street girls often work as prostitutes and spend the night with their customers. Similarly, another group of children that was not included in our survey was those occupying empty buildings. None of our respondents, neither from the Capture-recapture nor from the Respondent-driven sampling, said that they had slept in empty buildings. We must therefore consider this group as not included in our calculations, and cannot give any estimates for this population.

The fifth, and last, assumption of CR is that all persons have an equal likelihood of being captured. For the fish in the fishpond, the top-swimmers and the bottom-swimmers, the fast fish and the slow fish, have an unequal likelihood of being captured depending on the fishing gear – so too with the children on the streets in Bamako. It is obvious that some children are more willing to speak with interviewers than others. The problem of heterogeneity in the population is possible to overcome. In Bamako, questions were included on how often the children came to the

interview place, during which days, and at what time of the day. Based on this, probability weights are estimated for the children. However, these weights did not make any significant differences on the results, and were therefore not used in the analysis.

2.2 Respondent-driven sampling (RDS)

RDS is a form of chain-referral sampling that has been used to identify hidden population groups like injection drug users, jazz musicians, and young adult ecstasy users (Félix-Medina and Thompson 2004; Frank and Snijders 1994; Heckathorn et al 2001; Heckathorn and Jeffri 2001; Heckathorn et al 2002; Salganik and Heckathorn 2004, Wang et al 2004). The method is suitable for populations where no sampling frame exists, or such a frame is impossible to establish. RDS is based on a dual incentive structure, in which respondents are rewarded for being interviewed and for recruiting new respondents (Heckathorn 1997; Heckathorn 2002; Heckathorn et al 2002).

A weakness of chain-referral sampling is that it is not a random sample where all people have the same probability of selection. The initial respondents recruit their friends; thus, those with many friends are more likely to be included in the sample than social isolates (Salganik and Heckathorn 2004). It has been a common view that chain-referral sampling is biased and cannot be used to make reliable estimates about a population. However, Salganik and Heckathorn have shown that this problem can be solved. Previous chain-referral sampling techniques have treated members of the hidden population as discrete, atomized units. They fail to recognise that hidden populations are made of real people connected in a network of relationships. Rather than attempting to estimate directly from the sample to the population – as in traditional sampling and estimation – RDS uses an indirect method. First, the sample is used to make estimates about the social network connecting the population. This information is then used to derive the proportion of the population in different groups (Salganik and Heckathorn 2004). In order to make such estimates, the researchers need information about the network structure connecting the population. The respondents are therefore asked to describe the relationship to the person that recruited her or him, e.g. if this person is an acquaintance, friend, closer than friend, or a stranger. The respondents can also be asked how many other people in the population they know (Salganik and Heckathorn 2004).

In Accra and Bamako, we applied RDS to reach the street children. The sampling begins with a set of initial participants who serve as “seeds”, and expands in waves. Wave one consists of participants referred to as the seeds; wave two consists of participants referred to by the first-wave participants; the third wave are the ones

recruited by wave two; and the fourth wave are the ones recruited by wave three – so each of the recruitments are a link in the recruitment chain (Heckathorn et al 2002).

The dual incentive structure is key in RDS. The respondents in Accra and Bamako were given a packet of biscuits after they had responded on the questionnaire. They were then asked to recruit peers to respond, with a maximum of six persons, and they were rewarded according to the number of peers responding to the criteria of inclusion in the study.

The main reason to use RDS in this study were to get a sample of street children proportional to the population, and to give accurate characteristics of the street children population in Bamako in the first two weeks of July 2004 and in Accra during a two-week period in September-October 2004. This method is good at drawing representative samples, but it is more difficult to use it as the basis for estimating the total number of the population.

Field staff and training

Bamako

In Bamako, one team of two interviewers and a supervisor carried out the fieldwork over a period of twelve days in two sites. The supervisor was recruited from Caritas, while the interviewers were young students. The researchers were present in the field each day, but not the entire time.

The RDS team followed the first day of training of the CR teams, as nearly all the questions included in the CR questionnaire were included in the RDS questionnaire. However, the RDS questionnaire included more questions, primarily on education and contact with relatives (Appendix 2). The RDS team had additional training on the specific part of the questionnaire separate from the CR teams.

During the fieldwork, the researchers observed the interviews, controlled the questionnaires, and gave feedback to both the interviewers and supervisor. The feedback was based both on observations in the field and on the data that were entered on a daily basis. Problems were discussed as soon as they were discovered, something that was important in order to avoid systematic errors due to interviewer techniques and misunderstandings in the questionnaire.

Accra

In Accra, we assumed that the street children population was much larger than in Bamako, and that the children stayed within defined areas of the city. We therefore needed more field staff than in Bamako. Two supervisors were recruited, one from the Ghana National Commission on Children (GNCC) and one from Assemblies

of God Relief and Development Services (AGREDS). AGREDS works with street girls in the Agbogbloshie area, the largest slum in Accra. AGREDS has staff that come from the northern regions of Ghana and can speak *Dagomba*, the language that street children from these regions speak. In addition, six interviewers were recruited: four from the University of Ghana, one from AGREDS, and one from GNCC.

One day of training was given. The methodology was presented, and the questionnaire was explained in detail. An adapted version of the Bamako RDS questionnaire was used in Accra. All the questions were orally translated to *Twi*, which is the most commonly spoken language in Ghana. If the interviewers anticipated a problem with a certain question, it was discussed and modified to ensure that the children would understand it. Each morning before the interviewing started, there was a meeting with the field staff. Problems were raised, and experiences exchanged.

Study population and recruitment process

The study population for the RDS was street children in Bamako and Accra, defined as children less than 18 years of age who spend all their time in the streets on their own or with peers. The recruitment process starts with some initial subjects, or “seeds”. Former studies have shown that biases introduced by the selection of initial respondents are progressively weakened with each recruitment wave (Heckathorn and Jeffri 2001). Both in Accra and in Bamako, the whole data collection period took less than two weeks, a relatively short period compared to how the method has been used before; for example in his work with HIV positive people, Heckathorn used a one year data collection period (Heckathorn 1997).

This method has, to our knowledge, never been used on street children before, and we did not know how they would react or how fast the new subjects would be recruited. The RDS work in Bamako can be seen as a pilot project for the Accra study. Due to the limited time available for the survey, we chose to start with a relatively big group of seeds; in Bamako, we started out with ten children. We limited the number of waves to four, meaning that none of the children recruited in the fourth wave got tickets for recruiting new children. A maximum theoretical sample based on these figures is: 10 children in the first wave, 60 in the second wave, 360 in the third wave, and 2,160 in the fourth wave, giving a total of 2,590 children.

The “seed children” were identified and recruited by people from the NGOs, so as to ensure that they fell within the definition of street children. The children were asked to meet the interviewers at a specific and easy-to-identify location. They were also told that they would get a packet of biscuits for responding to the questionnaire, and that they would get a higher reward if they recruited some of their peers.

Once the child had been interviewed, he/she was given the biscuits and six tickets with a unique registration number. The child was told that if he brought back a maximum of six children, he would get the maximum reward – a tin of sardines and a tin of corned beef (see Table 1).

Table 1 Rewards for recruiting

Number of peers recruited	Reward
1	Biscuits, one packet
2	Sardines, one tin
3	1 Sardine + 1 Biscuits
4	Corned beef, one tin
5	1 Corned beef + 1 Biscuits
6	1 Corned beef + 1 Sardines

The choice of rewards was made after long discussions with both NGOs working with street children, and with the fieldworkers in our team. The choice was made based on several aspects. First, the value of the reward was considered: it was important to find rewards with a certain value for the children, and that also had an increased value as an increased number of children were recruited. Secondly, with a limited budget, the rewards could not be too expensive. Our choice of rewards cost 0.7 USD for persons only responding the questionnaire, and a maximum of an additional 2.5 USD if a person recruited six new children. It turned out that the reward for being interviewed was equivalent to half a day's income for the street children, and that the reward for recruiting six children was equivalent to two day's income. This we did not know at the start of the fieldwork. Finally, the logistical aspect had to be taken into account: the rewards had to be easy to store outdoors in a hot and rainy climate, and the stock should be easy to refill whenever needed.

Even with all of these aspects taken into consideration, it remains the case that when the sample size is large, the administration of the rewards demands a certain amount of work.

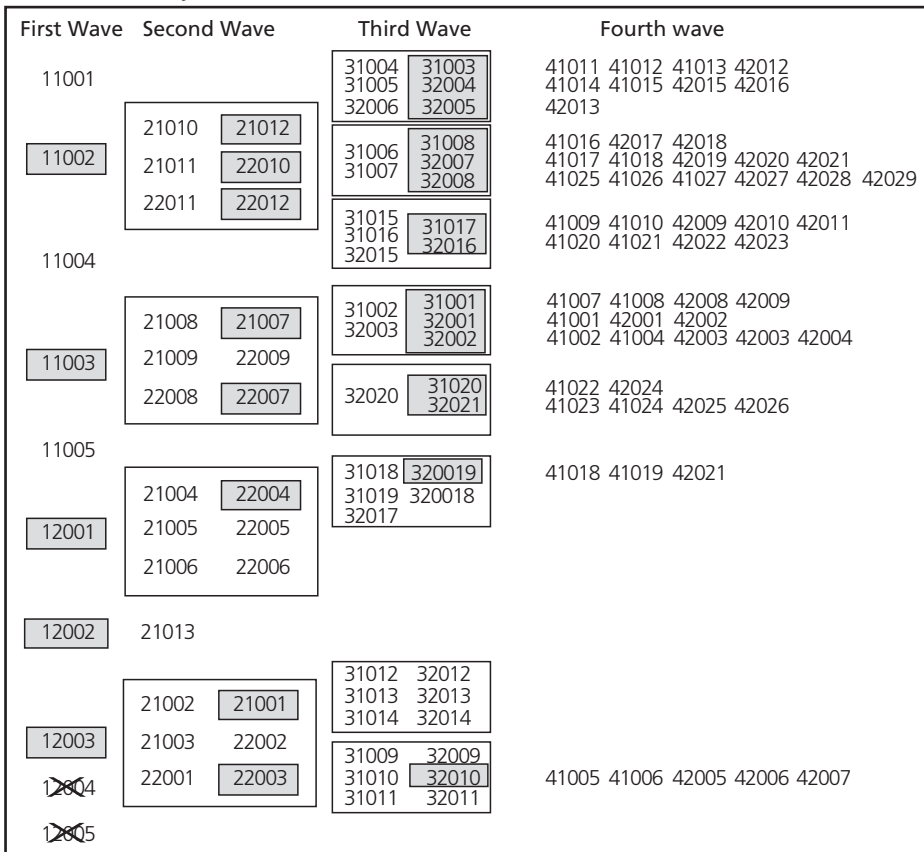
Bamako

In Bamako, the initial subjects for the survey were selected in a centre for street children that was open only during daytime, and did not offer food to the children. Ten tickets with a unique stamp for the project were given to ten children known to be street children. The children were asked to meet the interviewers outside the "Pyramide", a well-known building near the Niger river, Centre Bamako, later the same day as the tickets were distributed. It was explained to the children that they should answer some questions, for which they would get a small reward, and that they would get a bigger reward if they afterwards recruited new children. However,

no children were forced to participate, and it was made clear to the children that they could withdraw from the interview, whenever they wanted.

As Figure 3 shows, out of the ten initial children, eight showed up. These children were interviewed, and received a packet of biscuits and six tickets to recruit new children. Five of them returned with new children, four of them with the maximum of six children each; the other recruited only one child, giving a total of 25 children in the second wave. Eight of these recruited children for the third wave, and, out of the 41 respondents in third wave, 15 recruited children for fourth wave. Altogether, 132 children responded to the questionnaire. The first wave was instructed to bring the second wave children the next day. The second day, the interviewers told the children coming after noon to bring their peers the day after, and so on. The result was that on the first day, eight children were interviewed, the second day 33 children, the third day 65 children, the fourth day 21 children, and then the number subsided, with only five new children showing up on the fifth day. We then

Figure 3 Recruitment process of Respondent-driven sampling Centre Bamako. Each box represent a child, only the ones with borders recruited new ones.



concluded that we had reached all the street children that were willing to be interviewed in that area. Plotting the respondents to a map of Bamako, it showed that the recruitment had been from the centre of Bamako. Even though the site for interviewing was only a few meters from the bridge crossing the Niger River, nearly none of the respondents had crossed the river.

Knowledge both from the NGOs working with street children, and from the Capture-recapture study that was carried out in parallel, told us that there were quite a number of street children on the other side of the river as well, primarily centred around the bus station. We therefore chose to move to the bus station to carry out a new RDS. However, it was difficult to locate the children on the day of recruitment, and tickets and instruction were therefore given to people that knew the street children and knew when they would show up. The distribution of the tickets failed, and no children showed up. After a while, the fieldworkers themselves managed to recruit some street children. However, there was a misunderstanding in the recruitment procedure, the children were not given clear enough information on which children they should recruit, which made the children recruiting not only street children by our definition, but also street beggars and Koran school children, as shown in the discussion of the results. This experience shows how extremely important it is to be clear in the first wave of the recruitment procedure, so that the children understand what other children to recruit. However, for our purposes, the children from the bus station were let out of the analysis.

Accra

The street children in Accra are located at many different places around the city, usually near a market, bus station, or train station. Local NGOs working with street children helped us map out the main areas where the children reside. Based on this information, we selected four different locations. In order to reach different groups of children, we wanted a certain geographical distance between the locations. Based on information from the NGOs, we knew that the street children move around, but usually within a limited area of the city.

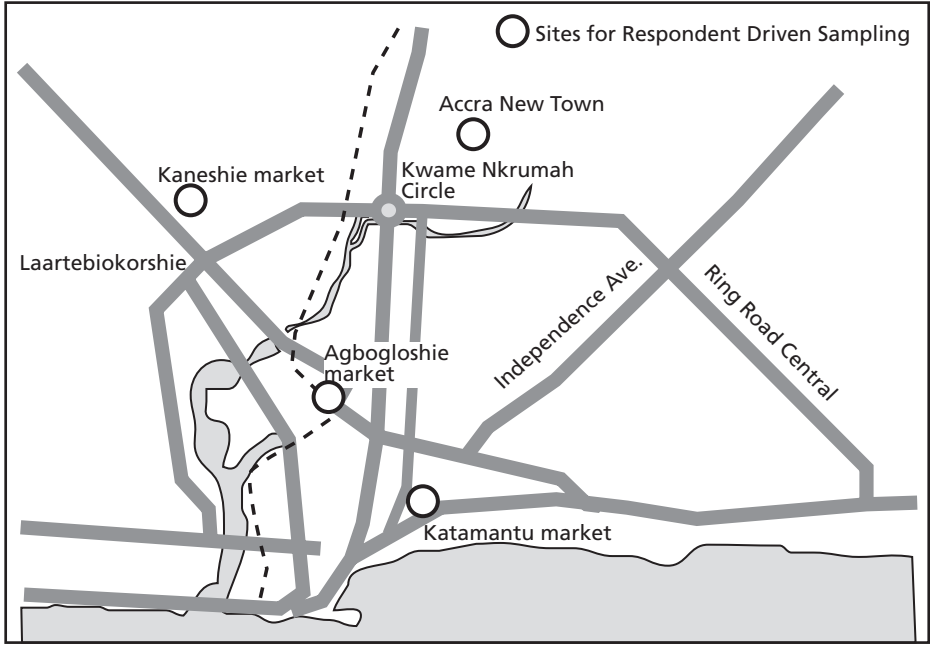
The four locations selected were Katamantu market, Kaneshie market, Agboghoshie market, and Accra New Town. We spent three days at each location, running four waves of recruitment. At Katamantu market, field staff from AGREDS and one person working for the Street Academy identified and recruited the children. The field staff explained the purpose of the study and, if the children agreed to participate, they were asked to meet us at Rawlings Park, near the market. We started with 10 children as seeds, five girls and five boys, but it turned out that only seven of them could be interviewed, as the rest were not street children according to the definition.

The four girls in the first wave were very fast at recruiting new children and each of them came back with six of their peers within a few minutes. The three boys in the first wave did not come back at all. The reason for this is probably that the person working for Street Academy got the information wrong and told the boys that they were to be enrolled in a school programme. We managed to sort out this misunderstanding, and this person did not participate in the recruitment process at the following three locations.

The biscuits and other items became very popular, and a large number of children were recruited. It was a challenge for the field team to register the children, conduct the interviews, and hand out the correct reward without the children having to wait too long. The large crowd of people also drew attention from street boys above 18, young mothers with children, and other curious spectators. Another challenge was the language. The girls from the Northern region speak Dagomba and very few of them could speak Twi, which is the most spoken language in Ghana. Only two of our field workers could speak Dagomba. Engaging street children who could manage both languages as interpreters solved this problem. A total of 299 children were interviewed during the three days at the first location, of which 296 were girls. The majority of the girls were Mole Dagbon from the Northern region.

At the second location, the recruitment followed the same procedure but, due to the above-mentioned challenges, we decided to start with six children in the first

Figure 4 Accra



wave. We intended to start with three girls and three boys, but could not find any street girls at the Kaneshie market that morning. Other children we spoke to explained that the girls sleeping in this area got up by the break of dawn and travelled to the city centre to sell various items along the streets. We ended up starting with four boys. Again, the biscuits and other items effectively motivated the children, and the boys came back with six new children within short time. The boys in this area mainly recruit other boys, but there were also some girls in the sample. During three days we interviewed 311 children: 278 boys and 33 girls. The boys in our sample were mainly Akan and Ga, whereas the girls were mainly Ewe.

At the third location, Agboglobshie, we recruited three girls and three boys in the first wave. The field staff from AGREDS, who work in this area and know it well, tried to recruit girls from Upper East or Upper West regions. Apparently, Agboglobshie is frequented by many different groups of street children, although the Mole Dagbons from the Northern region seem to form the majority. Agboglobshie is a notorious slum area in Accra and, when it rains, it becomes muddy and quite impassable. It had rained that morning and the search for the first wave seeds was a muddy challenge. We did not succeed in finding street girls from Upper East or Upper West regions, so the three girls were from the Northern region. The three boys were Akan. During three days we interviewed 565 children: 3 boys and 562 girls. The majority were Mole Dagbon girls, although there were also some Mamprusi girls from the Upper East. The boys in the first wave did not come back with peers to be interviewed. There may be several explanations for this, and the information from the interview does not reveal any particular reason. One reason could be that they did not know many other street children in this area, so that, in order to recruit other street children, they would have to travel to another part of town. Given the cost of transportation and the time this would take, it might be that the reward we offered was not enough to compensate.

Because we had many girls from the Northern region in our sample, and because these girls recruited mainly among themselves, we wanted to start with other groups of children at the fourth location, Accra New Town. People who knew the area said that we would find street girls originating from the Upper East or Upper West regions. The fieldworkers searched for these girls on the first morning but could not find any, so we recruited three boys in the first wave. These boys recruited both boys and girls and, in a total sample of 152, 54 were boys and 98 were girls. The boys were mainly Akan, while the girls were a mix of Mole Dagbon from the Northern region and Mamprusi from the Upper East region.

During our work with the RDS, we discovered that we could neither predict which groups of children we would find in each area, nor foresee the number of children we would be able to interview over the three days, nor predict the mix of boys and girls in the sample.

Findings from our survey, combined with the experience of local NGOs, suggest that the community of street children in Accra is quite segregated. Children of the same ethnicity and gender, originating from the same regions, stay together in groups. They sleep and socialize in groups; they look after each other and often have a group leader to protect them.

The children we interviewed in the first wave tended to recruit other children that were mainly from their own group. At the first location, all four girls in the first wave, were Mole Dagbon from the Northern region and, in the total sample, we got almost solely this group of children. The same pattern seemed to repeat itself at the other locations, although varying somewhat depending on the size of the ethnic group in the area. Only when there were no more children from their own ethnic group did the children start recruiting from other groups. As mentioned previously, the items we offered as a reward became very popular and were perceived as luxury goods, which the children would rarely buy themselves. This was probably the reason that the children kept the opportunity to participate in the survey within their own group.

How do we know that children are not interviewed twice?

When applying respondent-driven sampling the way we did, there is a risk that a child is interviewed more than once. Although it is not possible to eliminate this problem completely, we tried to minimize it in several ways.

In Bamako, the sample size of children was limited, thus making it possible for the field workers to remember the children and, when in doubt, compare questionnaires.

In our field team in Accra, two supervisors registered all children that had been interviewed, gave them one packet of biscuits and six tickets, and explained how they should go about recruiting others. The supervisors did not set up separate tables, but worked together. When the child returned with the group of children (s)he had recruited, (s)he had to wait until the group had been interviewed, then (s)he brought the group to the supervisors who controlled questionnaires, at which point the supervisor gave the new children biscuits and tickets and the recruiting child the corresponding reward. In this way, the supervisors talked to each child two times, except for the children in the fourth wave. This process was thorough and made it possible for the supervisors to remember the children. On some occasions, the supervisors discovered children who tried to be interviewed for a second time. At Kaneshie, one boy who had been interviewed and had recruited six new street children and received his reward, came back later in the same day wearing a hat. He was recognized by the supervisors and told to leave.

Another control mechanism was the children themselves. The children would generally make sure that everybody played by the rules, and if someone tried to cheat, they would get upset and tell the field workers. One boy at Kaneshie claimed to be 17, but the interviewer thought he looked older. The other boys that knew him argued that he was at least 20. The boy gave himself away in the end, because when the interviewer asked him when he was born, he said 1984.

3 Who are the street children?

3.1 The street children in Bamako

As discussed, two methods were used to study the street children in Bamako. Nearly all the questions asked to the Capture-recapture sample were also included in the questionnaire to the respondent-driven sample. However, some additional questions were included in the RDS questionnaire. For the results from Bamako, we use findings from the Capture-recapture and supplement with RDS.

How many children sleep in the streets of Bamako?

During the two nights of capture, all the known sites where street children sleep were visited between 9 p.m. and 3 a.m. One hundred and forty-six children fit to the criteria of street child and agreed to be interviewed. As the capture phase was carried out during two nights, the children interviewed the second night were checked to ensure they had not previously been interviewed, so as to avoid duplicates. This was necessary because it was likely that some children had moved from one site to another.

The recapture phase was carried out in exactly the same manner as the capture phase, with the same teams visiting the same sites. The recapture phase was also carried out during two nights. In total, 130 children were interviewed in the recapture phase. Of these children 59 children were recaptured and 71 were new children.

An estimate of the street children population in Bamako during the two first weeks of July 2004 is based on this calculation: $(146 \times 130) / 59 = 322$ children. With a confidence interval of 95%, the street children population in this period is calculated to be between 276 and 367 children. An estimation of the street child population only in central Bamako, gives a population there of 214 children (90 children in the capture phase, 88 children in the recapture phase and 37 children recaptured). A similar estimation for the area on the other side of the river (including the bus station) was 107 children (56 in the capture phase, 44 in the recapture phase, 22 recaptured).

Who are the children sleeping in the streets of Bamako?

There were only 8 girls among the 217 children interviewed in Bamako with Capture-recapture. However, this should not lead one to conclude that being a street child is a problem only for boys: it only indicates that it is the boys that are visible in the streets during nighttime in Bamako. Informants told us that girls often work as prostitutes, and thereby spend the night with their customers; other girls (as well as boys) occupy empty buildings and spend the night there. In our survey, it is the most visible children, mainly boys, who are included. This does not mean that the more hidden population groups of street children are not also important, but only that other approaches are needed to reach these groups.

The youngest street children in the survey were only six years old. Table 2 shows that there are relatively few children younger than 10 years of age in the streets, and the largest age group represented is the 14–15 year-olds. It might seem strange that the older groups, 16–17, are less represented. One explanation is that these children have become somewhat more established, moving away from the street to more fixed living arrangements. We do not, however, have reason to believe that these children have returned to their parents or relatives.

Table 2 Age structure among the street children in Bamako

Age	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	N
Percent	0.9	0.0	0.5	0.5	6.9	4.6	11.5	12.0	17.1	18.0	13.8	14.3	217 (CapRecap)

Figure 5 Cumulative age of the street children. Comparing Capture-recapture with Respondent driven sampling in Centre Bamako and the bus station

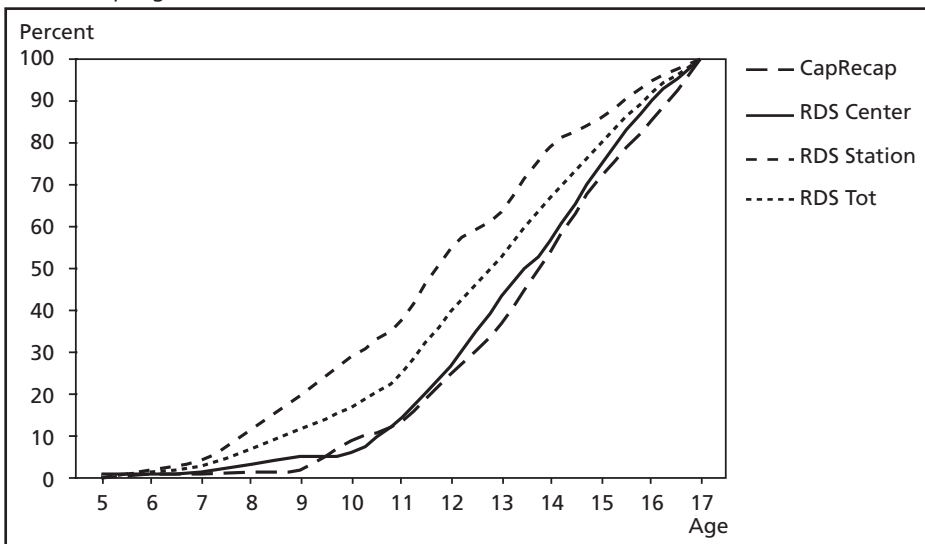


Figure 5 compares the age structure found with the two sampling techniques. The children interviewed using RDS in Centre Bamako and the children interviewed by Capture-recapture have an equal age structure, while the children interviewed from the bus station are much younger. Only the children from Centre Bamako are used in the remaining analysis, as there were problems with the identification of children at the bus station, and many of them were probably Koranic schoolboys. Indeed, during the interviews at the bus station, we recognized many of the children as Koranic schoolboys, which was confirmed by many of the real street children that were present.

Bamako attracts children from different regions of Mali as well as from the neighbouring countries (Table 3). Very few children from northern Mali are found in the streets of Bamako; none from Kidal; and only 2 percent of the street child population was from Gao and Tombouctou. These findings are similar to what was found in the census of drifting children in 2002 (Magassa et al 2002). The major regions of origin for the children were Segou and Sikasso; however, there is a tendency that the younger children come from Segou, while the older ones come from Sikasso. Both these regions have easy access to Bamako, but it is not only the access element that is determinative. In Sikasso, there is a strong tradition that boys, especially young boys, seek a living outside their village when they are 14–15 years of age. One of the boys we met said that he promised to bring 50,000 FCFA back to his family, and is trying to earn this money in the streets of Bamako. If we would give him the money, he would return to his village the next day, he told us. In Mopti there are also strong traditions for labour migration among youth.

In Segou, there is a strong tradition to send the children, especially young boys, to Koranic school. These boys are younger than the ones going on work migration. As we will see later, a large group of the children in the streets are children that have escaped from their Marabout (tutor) in the Koranic school. This might explain the relatively large group of young children from Segou. Children from Burkina Faso are also commonly sent, at a very young age, to join a Marabout in Mali.

There are not many children from Kayes, the western region, among the street children. This may be in part because the access from Kayes to Senegal is easier than to Bamako. There is also a strong tradition for young people from certain areas in Kayes to go on migration to France.

Most of the street children have attended one form of education or another. Regarding the children interviewed at Centre Bamako, approximately one-third has attended formal education and another third a Koranic school, while the last third have never attended school. The frequency of street children that have attended Koranic school is higher among the younger than among the older children. However, these children are not well educated: only one percent said that they could easily

Table 3 Region or country of origin for the street children in Bamako (percent in each age group)

Origin	Age group		CapRecap		RDS (Centre)	
	6-11	12-13	14-15	16-17	Total (%)	Total (%)
Kayes	7	10	7	3	7	8
Koulikoro	4	10	4	7	6	8
Segou	29	28	20	20	23	12
Sikasso	11	14	21	30	21	23
Mopti	7	4	14	13	11	7
Gao/Tombouctou	7	4	0	2	2	2
Bamako	18	10	17	20	16	21
Burkina Faso	11	10	7	0	6	5
Guinea	4	2	4	2	3	2
Côte d'Ivoire	4	8	4	3	5	11
Senegal	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
n (CapRecap)	28	50	70	60	208	132

Figure 6 Mali

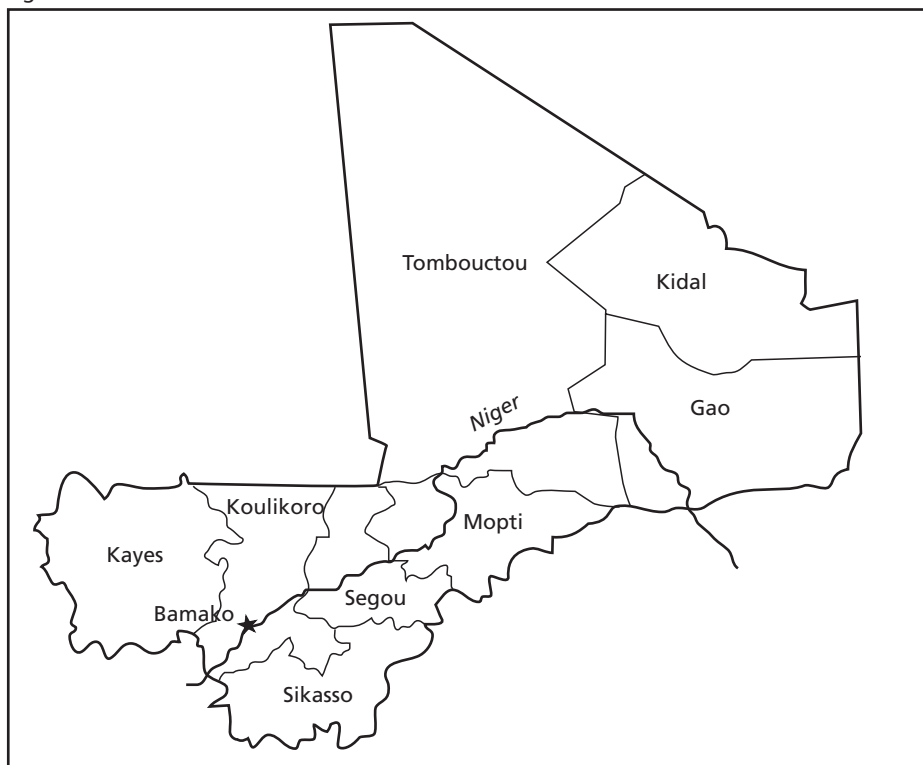


Table 4 Reason for not attending school or leaving school

	Type of school			Total (%)
	Formal	Koranic	Never attended school	
Family poverty	14	8	40	20
Not interested in school	26	13	13	17
Bad treatment	12	40	0	18
Search for money	21	25	33	26
Other	19	15	15	16
Currently enrolled	7	0	0	2
N (RDS-Centre)	42	48	40	130

write a letter, while three percent said they could read a newspaper. Among the children that have attended school, only three percent have more than five years of education.

Not surprisingly, only two percent of the street children were currently enrolled in school – all of them in ordinary schools. The reasons for never attending school and for quitting school varied, as seen in Table 4. For those that never attended school, three out of four had economic reasons: either family poverty or they themselves had to supply the money. Two out of five of the former Koranic students ended their education because of bad treatment.

Why do the children leave their family?

Among the children interviewed during nighttime half of them had lived in the streets for less than three months. Only one-fourth has stayed in the streets for more than one year. Table 5 shows no remarkable differences in the duration in the street across age groups or of origin. However, it is remarkable that the children from Sikasso seem to quit the street at an earlier stage: only 9 percent had been on the streets

Table 5 Time lived in the streets by age and origin

	Age group				Origin					Total	Total RDS (Centre)
	6–11	12–13	14–15	16–17	Koulikoro/Bamako	Segou	Sikasso	Mopti	Abroad		
Just arrived <1 mo	36	43	29	28	26	33	33	27	41	33	15
New 1–3 mo	21	22	26	10	24	23	21	9	14	20	21
Experienced 3–12 mo	14	10	27	27	17	15	37	27	10	21	26
Veteran >1 year	29	24	19	35	33	29	9	36	34	26	38
N (CapRecap)	28	49	70	60	46	48	43	22	29	207	126

¹Only showed for regions of origin of more than 20 children

Table 6 Causes for leaving home by age

	Age				Total RDS (Centre)	
	6–11	12–13	14–15	16–17	Total	
Search for money	35	46	49	53	48	32
Ran away from marabout	38	30	25	8	23	14
Ran away from family	8	4	4	10	6	30
Mistreatment	12	6	9	10	9	9
Voluntary	8	8	6	5	6	5
Other	0	6	6	13	7	10
N (CapRecap)	26	50	67	60	203	133

for more than a year. This seems to confirm the theory that the children from Sikasso are mainly coming to Bamako to earn money, and return home from the streets when the mission is completed. According to NGOs working in Bamako, it is much easier to cooperate with children that have been on the streets for less than three months. Children living in the streets for only a short period are easier to reintegrate and to return to parents or relatives.

As we have seen, between 300 and 350 children, mainly boys between the ages of 12 and 15, are living in the streets of Bamako. What motivated them to leave their home? As Table 6 shows, half of them went to search for money, and this reason increases by age. Conversely the younger children have a higher tendency to be introduced to the streets by running away from situations, such as mistreatment from their Marabout or family.

What kind of contact do the children have with their family?

The street children by definition do not live together with their family. However, this does not mean that they do not have any family. More than 90 percent of the children living in the streets have at least one of their parents alive. As Table 7 shows, in the youngest age group, all have parents alive. This shows that being a street child is not directly linked to being an orphan. Furthermore, many of the street children are not totally isolated from the family: three out of five have regular contact with their family. Among those who have contact, 62 percent visited their parents during the previous year; half of them had visited their home during the last two months. Another 30 percent of the children that report contact with the parents reported the contact as oral messages. Only 8 percent used telephones or letters as tools for contact with their parents. The low rate of telephone use is unsurprising because telephone service is only available in the biggest towns in Mali.

Table 7 Parents alive and contact with parents by age

Parents alive	Age group				Total (%)
	6–11	12–13	14–15	16–17	
Both are dead	0	8	0	25	9
Only mother alive	6	14	15	16	13
Only father alive	11	3	3	6	5
Both alive	83	76	83	53	73
Total	100	100	100	100	100
N	18	37	40	32	127
Contact with parents (if parents alive)					
Has contact	44	59	59	76	60
N (RDS – Centre)	18	34	41	25	118

What are the children doing?

Not surprisingly, begging is the main activity among the street children (Table 8). In the streets of Bamako, young boys with red tomato cans are seen everywhere. However, it is not easy to distinguish the street children from the Koranic school-boys. The street children told us that they took advantage of that fact by going outside the mosque on Fridays as Muslims are obliged to give charity (*Zakat*) to the poor. However, begging is an activity that is much more frequent among the younger children than the elder. This may be because, as the children themselves said, begging is a much more successful activity for the youngest.

Table 8 Activities last week (each child might have several activities)

	Age				Total (%)	Total RDS (Centre)
	6–11	12–13	14–15	16–17		
Begging	81	74	57	43	60	66
Porter	11	16	30	18	21	16
Washing car windows	0	18	19	25	18	17
Street vendor	19	10	11	10	12	4
Apprentice	11	6	9	14	10	3
Dish washing	11	4	13	7	9	0
Aid disabled	4	12	9	2	7	2
Other activities	0	2	7	10	6	8
Collecting garbage	0	2	13	5	6	5
Stealing	4	4	1	2	2	2
Selling sex	0	0	3	2	2	0
N (CapRecap)	27	49	69	59	204	129

Table 9 Income yesterday in Franc CFA

Age group	Mean	Median	N
6–11	488	400	28
12–13	561	500	47
14–15	747	500	67
16–17	684	500	53
Total	648	500	195

The older children tend to do other activities, such as washing car windows – an activity that is seen in all major crossroads in Bamako – in addition to porting luggage and selling small items in the streets.

Ten percent of the children did some form of training activities. We do not have information on what kind of apprentice activities were carried out.

As noted above, there were very few girls in the sample: only four girls above the age of 14. Three out of the four girls said that they had worked as prostitutes the previous week. None of the boys had worked in prostitution.

As a group, the children are quite successful economically compared to the income level in the country. The street children in Bamako had a mean income of 1.2 USD (median 0.9 USD) the day before the survey. This is a rather impressive amount when considering that 73 percent of the population in Mali live on less than a dollar a day (Unicef 2004⁵).

Life now and dreams for the future

Although life as a street child might be somewhat successful financially, with freedom and income for at least some of the children, the larger proportion of them find life in the street to be more difficult than from where they left. As Table 10

Table 10 Life now compared to home

Life now	Age group				Total (%)
	6–11	12–13	14–15	16–17	
...better than home	28	31	27	25	27
...same as home	10	8	18	15	14
...worse than home	62	61	55	60	59
Total	100	100	100	100	100
n (CapRecap)	29	51	71	60	211

⁵ To compare standards of living across different countries, poverty lines like the number of people living on less than a dollar a day, are converted into purchasing power parity (PPP). In the case of Mali, this means that the income level of the street children is even more impressive.

Table 11 Dreams for the future

Life now	Age group				Total (%)
	6–11	12–13	14–15	16–17	
Continue the same activities	10	0	4	5	4
Get a better job	55	61	80	57	65
Go to school	17	20	1	13	11
Go home	10	16	6	10	10
Go abroad	3	0	6	7	4
Other	3	4	3	8	5
Total	100	100	100	100	100
n (CapRecap)	29	51	69	61	210

shows, around 60 percent, independent of age group, think life in the street is worse than home, and an additional 14 percent think that the quality of life now is the same as home. However, most of the children do not dream of going home.

Only one out of ten children says that they want to go back home; this finding is independent of age, as Table 11 shows. The majority of the children, two out of three, wants to get a better job; another ten percent want to go to school. However, only four percent of the children interviewed aspire to continue with the same activities that they currently do. Cumulatively, these findings may indicate that returning the children to their homes would not necessarily be a success, as the children have already shown that they are capable of leaving home by their own. It is very likely that the children would escape if they are forced to go back, and anecdote evidence from the NGOs confirmed that this had been the case for many of the families.

3.2 The street children in Accra

Who are the children sleeping in the streets of Accra?

The youngest child interviewed in Accra was only five years-old. However, there were few children under the age of 10. The age distribution is illustrated in Table 12. The mean age of the street children was 15 years, whereas the largest age group represented is 16–17 years-old. Unlike in Bamako, girls were clearly overrepresented in

Table 12 Age distribution of street children in Accra

Age	5	6	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	n
Percent	0.1	0.1	0.7	1.5	5.1	2.5	7.0	8.1	11.5	19.2	20.0	24.4	1341

Table 13 Region of origin of the street children in percent

	Age group				Total (%)
	6-11	12-13	14-15	16-17	
Western		1	2	3	2
Central	7	10	7	9	8
Greater Accra	9	3	2	2	3
Volta	1	2	1	1	1
Eastern	2	8	4	4	4
Ashanti	4	1	4	8	5
Brong Ahafo	1	1	2	8	4
Northern	66	66	65	58	62
Upper East	8	9	10	7	8
Upper West	1	1	1	1	1
Abroad	1	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100
n	131	199	402	581	1313

the sample in Accra: 75 percent were girls and 25 percent were boys. One NGO estimated that the actual gender distribution is roughly 50/50, while another NGO argued that girls form the majority. This different perception of the gender balance could be due a recent increase in the number of street girls of Accra.

A majority of the children come from the Northern region (62 percent), followed by the Central region, Upper East, and Ashanti (Table 13). Only five of the street children (one percent) were foreigners – four from Togo and one from Niger.

The Mole Dagbon was the dominant ethnic group among the street children interviewed, with Akans being the second biggest group (Table 13). There is a clear gender division in ethnicity. Among the girls, 80 percent were Mole Dagbon and 10 percent were Mamprusi. Among the boys, 74 percent were Akan and 10 percent were Ga-Dengme.

The Akan is the largest ethnic group in Ghana and found in all regions in the southern part of the country. The Ga-Dengme is the original population of the Accra area, and these boys can be considered “locals”.

The Mole Dagbons are Muslim and come from the Northern region of Ghana. Street girls from the Northern region often work as porters, carrying goods on their heads. This activity is called ‘kaya yee’. These girls are easily recognised in the streets and markets of Accra, with their colourful clothing carrying heavy loads in washing bowls on their heads. The Mole Dagbon girls usually sleep and live together in groups. They look after each other and maintain their own traditions. On Sundays they do not work, but spend the day together, washing their clothes, cooking, and dancing. All the girls in the group contribute some money to buy rice and other

Figure 7 Ghana

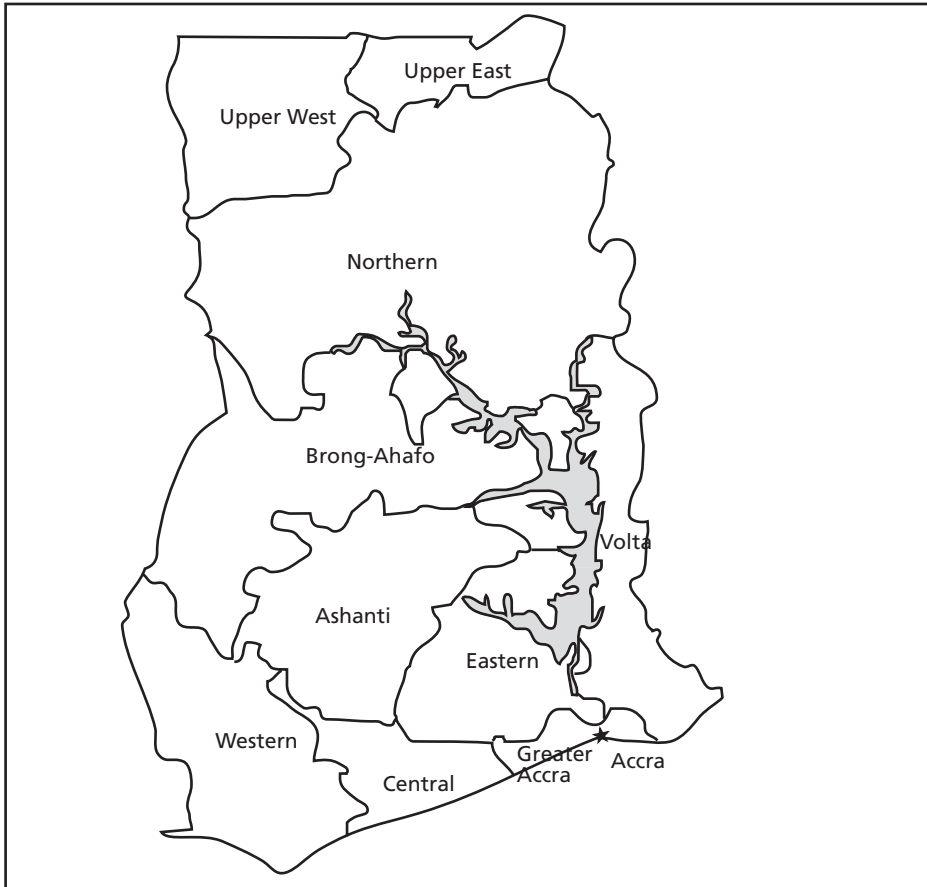


Table 14 Gender by ethnic group in percent

	Male	Female	Total
Akan	74	2	20
Ga-Dangme	10	1	3
Ewe	6	0	2
Guan	1	1	1
Mamprusi	0	10	7
Mole-Dagbon	2	80	60
Sisala	0	4	3
Other	7	2	4
Total	100	100	100
n	338	983	1321

Table 15 Percent of children never attended school by gender and age

	Gender		Age group				All
	Male	Female	6–11	12–13	14–15	16–17	
Never attended school	9	70	50	56	60	52	55
n	338	988	131	201	408	593	1333

things for the meal. If one of the girls does not have money, the others will still let her eat with them (Interview with Mole Dagbon girls in Accra in September 2004). Street children in Accra have generally obtained little education. In total, 55 percent of the children have never attended school (Table 15). In Bamako, this was the case for approximately 33 percent. There are large gender disparities in education: only nine percent of the boys have never attended school, as opposed to 70 percent of the girls (Table 15).

Only one and a half percent of the children are currently enrolled in school, which is not surprising given that they do not have anyone to support them. Literacy levels are low: 87 percent of the children cannot read a newspaper or write a letter, 9 percent can do so with difficulty, and only 4 percent said that they could easily write a letter or read a newspaper. This level is low taking into consideration that nearly half of the children have gone to school.

The level of education of the street children in Accra is illustrated in Figure 3. Remarkable gender differences are seen, when we look at the number of years a child has gone to school. Among the boys, 38 percent have 1–5 years of education, and 51 percent have 6–9 years. By contrast, 17 percent of the girls have 1–5 years of

Figure 8 Level of education by gender

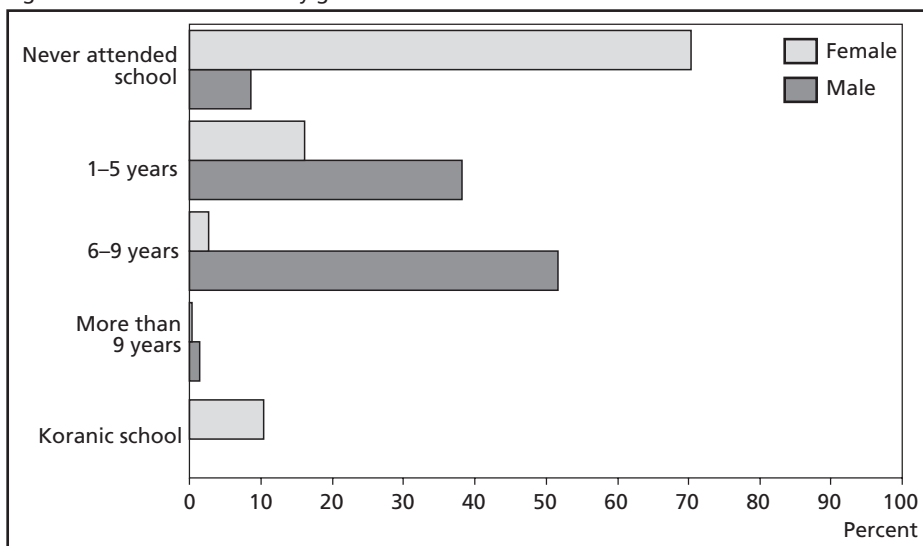


Table 16 Type of school attended, in percent

Origin	Governmental	Private	Makaranta/ Koranic	Total	n
Western	100	0	0	100	19
Central	93	7	0	100	94
Greater Accra	91	9	0	100	32
Volta	94	6	0	100	17
Eastern	95	5	0	100	43
Ashanti	97	3	0	100	60
Brong Ahafo	82	13	5	100	39
Northern	61	1	38	100	217
Upper East	66	0	34	100	32
Upper West	50	0	50	100	2
Abroad	100	0	0	100	4
n	79	4	17	100	559

education, and only 3 percent of the girls have 6–9 years. This indicates that it is common for boys to travel to the city after they have completed primary or junior secondary school, and that there are fundamental differences in the characteristics of street girls and street boys. These findings correspond with findings from the Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS). CAS reports that many street children come from rural areas where the quality of the schools is poor and enrolment rates are low, especially among girls (CAS 1999).

Among the girls, 35 percent have attended Koranic school. This is not surprising, given that 80 percent of the girls in the sample are Mole Dagbon originating from northern Ghana. In northern Ghana, Koranic schools are common, either as pre-schools or replacing formal education altogether (CAS 1999).

At the national level, there is not a huge difference between boys and girls concerning education. The net primary school enrolment rate for Ghana is 60 percent for boys and 57 percent for girls (UNICEF 2003). However, among street girls in Accra, 70 percent have never attended school and many are school drop-outs. This indicates that sending girls to school substantially reduces their likelihood of becoming street children.

Of those children that have attended school, 79 percent have attended governmental school, four percent have attended private school, and 17 percent have attended Koranic school (Table 16). Koranic school is far more common in the Northern, Upper East, and Upper West regions than in other regions in Ghana.

The lack of formal education is often related to the financial situation of the family. When the children were asked why they never attended school or did not continue their education, family poverty was the reason given by 68 percent of the

Table 17 Reasons for never attending school or leaving school, in percent.

	Age group				Total
	6–11	12–13	14–15	16–17	
Family poverty	71	75	67	65	68
Other	9	11	14	12	12
Not interested in school	7	6	9	9	8
Search for money	4	4	3	5	4
Finished education	4	1	3	6	4
Family does not want girls to go to school	3	4	2	3	3
Bad treatment	1	1	1	0	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100
n	98	161	319	496	1074

children (Table 17). Although primary and junior secondary schools in Ghana are formally not entitled to charge school fees, most schools charge fees attached to meals or other activities in order to supplement their tight budgets (UNICEF 2001d). This, in addition to the costs of books and uniforms, makes it difficult for many families to keep their children in school. The second most important reason was “other” (12 percent). The interviewers reported that some of the children said the reason was “non-payment of school fees”. This answer was classified as “other”. It is difficult to say whether these parents are not able to pay school fees, or whether they can pay but choose not to, because education is a low priority. The third most important reason given for not attending or not continuing education is not being interested in school.

Why do the children leave their family?

In Bamako, half of the street children had been living in the streets for less than three months. We see the same tendency with the street children in Accra: 50 percent have been living in the streets for less than three months and 21 percent are “newcomers”, with less than one month in the streets. Cumulatively, 74 percent have stayed in Accra for less than six months (Table 18). There are no clear differences across age groups or region of origin.

This is important information for policymakers since, the longer the children have been away, the more difficult it is to reintegrate them in their home communities. NGOs working with street children, such as AGREDS, spend a lot of resources attempting to send children home. However, they often find that the children run away again after some time and resume their life in the streets. AGREDS says

Table 18 Time lived in the streets by age

	Age group				Total
	6–11	12–13	14–15	16–17	
Just arrived < 1 month	17	21	22	20	21
New 1–3 months	33	36	27	26	29
3–6 months	31	23	27	20	24
6–9 months	6	4	6	5	5
9–12 months	6	7	10	8	8
Veteran > 1 year	7	7	9	20	14
n	131	201	409	592	1,333

that working with children who have been away for a short time is easier, as they have not yet become accustomed to life in the city like the “veterans” have.

The percentage of street children that report that they have been in Accra for less than six months might be too high. The girls from the Northern region, who constitute 60 percent of the street children, do periodically return to their home villages. NGOs that work with these girls say that they will rarely be away from their village for more than six months at a time. The Mole Dagbon from the Northern region are Muslim and, when we were in Accra in September/October, some of the girls explained that they would go home to celebrate the Eid in November. These girls might therefore count the time they have stayed in Accra as the time that has passed since they last visited their village; this could explain why only eight percent of the children say they have been living on the streets for 9–12 months, and only 14 percent say more than one year. Still, we do not know to what extent this way of counting can explain why there are relatively few children that have been in Accra for more than a year. An alternative explanation could be that there has been a rapid increase in the number of street children recently. From our findings, it is difficult to say whether street children eventually return to their villages, whether they find a better job in the city, or whether they go home and return to the streets periodically.

A large majority of the street children in Accra say that searching for money was the most important reason for leaving home (Table 19). There is no difference in motivation by age. Street girls in Accra told us that they were working in order to get money to buy kitchen supplies like pots and pans to bring home.⁶ In the Northern regions of Ghana, it is a tradition for girls to bring such items into marriage as a kind of *trousseau*. Without this, she is a disgrace to her family (CAS 1999). The street children in both Bamako and Accra say that they are “target working” – that

⁶ Interview with girls from the Northern region, Accra, September 2004.

Table 19 Causes for leaving home by age

	Age group				Total
	6–11	12–13	14–15	16–17	
Search for money	94	96	96	98	97
Other	6	4	4	2	3
n	127	196	401	579	1303

is, they are working to earn a certain amount of money, and when they have reached their goal they will leave the streets.

This information, and the fact that few children at the age of 16–17 have been in Accra for more than a year, could indicate that they have returned to their villages, but it is difficult based on the information we have to definitively ascertain what happens to the street children. AGREDS, which works in the largest slum area in Accra, says that there are an increasing number of young women with children still working at the markets. This could imply that many street children do not succeed in leaving the streets.

A relatively large number of children come to Accra alone, but most commonly street children travel to Accra with relatives. Half of the street children came to Accra together with relatives (Table 20). It should be noted that when the children talk of a “relative”, this is not necessarily someone in their immediate family, but could be any adult person from their village.

More girls than boys come to Accra with relatives, and younger children come with relatives more often than older children. The relative travelling to Accra with the children could be an older sister or brother, or an aunt. Among the Mole Dagbon, fosterage is common and many girls live with a paternal aunt (CAS 1999). The aunt is responsible for the girl’s upbringing and for teaching her how to be a housewife. In such cases, the girls will carry out domestic work and are rarely sent to school. It is likely that many of the Mole Dagbon girls came to Accra together with an aunt, although it is difficult to ascertain this based on the information in the survey.

Table 20 Who the children came to Accra with in percent.

			Age group				Total
	Male	Female	6–11	12–13	14–15	16–17	
Nobody	59	34	20	30	37	50	40
Friends	16	8	9	6	14	8	10
Relatives	25	58	71	63	49	41	50
Recruiting agent	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
n	338	986	129	201	408	593	1331

One percent of the girls in the sample said that they had travelled to Accra together with a recruiting agent (Table 20).

What kind of contact do the children have with their family?

The street children in Ghana are generally not orphans: 88 percent have both parents alive, four percent have only a father alive, six percent have only a mother alive and two percent do not have parents alive. These findings are similar to Bamako, where 73 percent of the street children have both parents alive and nine percent are orphans.

The majority (73 percent) of the children had contact with their parents during the previous year (Table 21). Telephone and letter is the most common way of keeping in touch, followed by oral message and visit. These findings might be surprising, given the common perception that street children have little or no family network. The street children in Accra obviously do have some sort of family network, and this reflects the importance of family and clan in the Ghanaian society. It also supports the argument that poverty, not lack of family networks, is the main reason why children become street children in Ghana.

Table 21 Contact with parents by age

	Age group				Total
	6-11	12-13	14-15	16-17	
Visit	14	13	13	17	15
Telephone/letter	48	57	54	53	53
Oral message	38	30	32	31	32
Total	100	100	100	100	100
N	73	127	285	458	943

What are the children doing?

The children in Accra were asked what type of activities they were engaged in the previous week, and could circle more than one alternative. As noted above, working as a porter is a very common activity, and 84 percent of the children had done that type of work the previous week (Table 22). The Mole Dagbon girls from the Northern region almost exclusively engage in this type of work, but being a porter is also common among boys.

Although age does not affect the type of activities the children engage in, there are differences between boys and girls. Selling items in the streets, running errands, truck pushing, and shoe shining are activities dominated by the boys. Contrary to Bamako, very few children in Accra are begging. Only one percent of the girls in

Table 22 Activities last week in percent. Each child may have several activities

			Age group				Total
	Male	Female	6–11	12–13	14–15	16–17	
Porter/Kaya bola	61	92	88	90	88	79	84
Street vendor	28	8	17	15	11	13	13
Errand boy/girl	23	5	10	11	10	9	10
Truck pushing	18	0	2	3	3	7	5
Shoe shining	17	0	1	1	2	8	4
Dish washing	4	3	7	3	4	2	3
Apprentice	7	0	0	1	1	3	2
Collecting garbage	4	1	2	4	1	1	2
Begging	2	0	2	1	0	1	1
Washing car windows	3	0	1	1	0	1	1
Other activities	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
Selling sex	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Aid disabled	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Stealing	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
n	337	982	130	199	407	590	1326

the age group 16–17 years reports to be engaged in selling sex. This does not mean that none of street children in Accra work as prostitutes, however: selling sex is a taboo, and it might be that we did not establish the necessary amount of trust for the children to reveal this information during the interviews.

The mean income for the street children in Accra is relatively high: 20,770 cedis per day, equivalent to 2.33 USD.⁷ The median income is 10,000 cedis per day, equal to 1.12 USD. The median income for the street children is thus more than a dollar per day, which is a common poverty measurement used for comparison between countries.⁸ Older children earn more than younger children, particularly those aged 16–17 compared to the younger age groups (Table 23).

The average household expenditure in Ghana is between 101,000 and 500,000 cedis per month, or between 11 and 56 USD (Ghana Statistical Service 2003). This means that the street children are quite successful in reaching their goal of earning money.

The street children in Accra save up a substantial portion of their earnings. It is common to give part of the daily income to a “Susu”. The “Susu” is an informal

⁷ With a the currency exchange rate as of 17.12.04.

⁸ To compare standards of living across different countries, poverty measurements, like the number of people living on less than a dollar a day, are converted into purchasing power parity (PPP). In the case of Ghana, this means that the income level of the street children is even more impressive.

Table 23 Income yesterday in Ghana cedis

Age group	Mean	Median	N
6–11	11,508	10,000	128
12–13	16,219	10,000	196
14–15	17,349	10,000	400
16–17	26,784	12,000	573
Total	20,770	10,000	1297

banking system in which a person offers to keep money in exchange for a small fee. In Accra, 75 percent of the children said that they gave some of their income from the previous day to a Susu (Table 24). The Susu arrangement is often preferred by poor people and by street children who, for various reasons, do not use the formal banking system. Street girls from the Northern region told us every area of the city has a Susu, an adult person that everyone knows. The street children go to the Susu and hand over their money, and the amount is written in a book. The Susu arrangement is usually reliable, although the street children have heard stories of a Susu disappearing with all the money. For this reason, most street children will cash out their savings regularly and buy various items. As mentioned earlier, the Mole Dagon girls from the Northern region prefer to buy kitchen supplies that they bring home as a trousseau.

Some street children in Accra give part of their income to others (Table 24), possibly to someone who is protecting them. The person receiving the money can also be an elder sister or brother. Younger children are more likely to give money to others than older children.

It is generally difficult for street children to store personal belongings: they sleep in the streets at night and work in the streets during the day, and cannot lock up any belongings. In some slum areas, we saw tarpaulins set up by street children to store clothes and other items. These installations are not very solid, and street children told us that personal belongings are easily stolen.

Table 24 To whom did the children give their money in percent.

			Age group				Total
	Male	Female	6–11	12–13	14–15	16–17	
Gave money to Susu	67	78	68	72	77	77	75
Kept all myself	28	12	15	16	16	17	16
Gave money to others	6	9	18	12	7	6	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
n	338	989	131	201	409	593	1,334

Life now and dreams for the future

A majority of the street children in Accra think that their life now is worse than life at home (64 percent). However, 27 percent think that life in the streets is better than at home (Table 25). More girls than boys are dissatisfied with life in the streets, and the younger children are more dissatisfied than the elder. These results are similar to those from Bamako, where 59 percent of the street children said that life in the streets was worse than life at home.

The most important goal for the future is to get a better job. Overall, 46 percent of the children want a better job – 42 percent of the boys and 48 percent of the girls (Table 26). The second most important goal, cited by 23 percent, is to go home. This answer is more common among the girls and among the younger children: among the children aged 6 to 11, 36 percent want to go home, versus only 16 percent of those between 16 and 17.

Overall, 18 percent of the children want to go to school. This answer is much more frequent among the boys (39 percent) than the girls (10 percent), and also more frequent among the younger groups. Only six percent of the children want to continue their current activities.

Table 25 Own assessment of current life situation

			Age group				Total
	Male	Female	6–11	12–13	14–15	16–17	
Better than home	42	22	25	21	24	31	27
Different, but same quality	8	9	5	6	10	10	9
Worse than at home	50	69	70	73	65	59	64
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
n	338	962	129	195	397	587	1308

Table 26 Dreams for the future

			Age group				Total
	Male	Female	6–11	12–13	14–15	16–17	
Get a better job	41	48	29	36	50	52	46
Go home	13	27	36	34	24	16	23
Go to school	39	10	30	19	17	16	18
Continue current activities	0	8	3	5	5	8	6
Get married	0	5	1	4	3	5	4
Other	7	1	2	3	1	4	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
n	335	958	121	199	396	584	1300

4 Characteristics of street children in Bamako and Accra: differences and similarities

There are both differences and similarities between the street children population of Bamako and Accra. The similarities are interesting because they indicate characteristics that might also apply to street children elsewhere. The differences, on the other hand, might be examples of variations in the characteristics of street children in different cities around the world.

The age structure of the street children of Bamako and Accra is similar. In both cities, the majority of the street children are above 14 years-old. In Bamako, the largest age group represented was 14–15 years-old. The street children in Accra are somewhat older: the largest age group represented was 16–17 years-old. This means that the majority of the street children in these two cities are between 14 and 17 years old. Another common feature is that the street children are not orphans: a large majority of them have at least one of their parents alive, and most of the children have regular contact with their parents. However, the forms of this contact vary. In Bamako, 62 percent of the children visited their parents during the previous year, but contact through telephone or letter was rare. In Accra, conversely, 53 percent of the children had contact with their parents by telephone or letter, while only 15 percent had visited their parents during the previous year.

In both cities a large share of the children had been living in the streets for less than three months. This indicates that there is a large turnover among the street children, and that many of them are able to move away from the streets after some time. However, we do not have any findings to support the idea that these children return to their homes. NGOs working with street children say that it is easier to cooperate with children who have lived in the streets for a short while: newcomers are easier to reach and reintegrate into their home communities. This finding should be of interest to policymakers, as it indicates that targeted efforts to return street children to their parents have great potential.

Illiteracy is widespread among the street children in Bamako and Accra. Although many street children had attended school in the past – either formal school or Koranic school, functional literacy is very low. Koranic schools are more common in

Mali than in Ghana. In Bamako, one-third of the street children had never attended school; in Accra, the same is true for half of the children.

The activities that the children engage in vary, but a common feature is that the street children earn a relatively high income compared to some other groups in society. One should keep in mind, however, that income is unpredictable and varies between the children. One should also bear in mind that long hours, inadequate housing, health risks, and insecurity are part of everyday life for the street children.

In both cities, the children say that life in the streets is worse than life at home. Still, most of them do not want to go back home – instead their hope for the future is to get a better job. This points to the fact that there may be complex reasons for children to leave home. Furthermore, many of these children have a difficult family situation, and in their eyes, returning home is not an option. In our study, we asked the children why they left home to live in the streets. Most of the children had economic motives, although, in Bamako, one out of five had ran away from a Marabout. Some children are working in the streets to earn money for themselves, in order to continue their education or have a *trousseau*. Other children are earning money for their family and told us that, once they saved up a certain amount, they would return home. Although our study reveals that the majority of the children have economic motives, the information we have is not sufficient to explain why children become street children. Qualitative interviews, in which children could tell their life stories, would have been more appropriate to shed light on the social processes that lead children onto the streets.

The most striking difference between street children in Bamako and Accra is the gender distribution: in Bamako, the large majority in our sample were boys, whereas in Accra, three out of four were girls. As previously noted, we should not conclude from this that there are no street girls in Bamako. During the Capture-recapture, the field team interviewed street children at night. Informants told us that many street girls work as prostitutes and spend the night with customers. Street girls might therefore be an even more hidden population, and other methods might be necessary to reach them. In Mali, meanwhile, it is common that both boys and girls leave home to seek work and that, traditionally; many girls are domestic workers, meaning that they are not so visible in the streets. Boys engage in other activities, and it can therefore seem that it is more difficult for boys than girls to find permanent work.

It seems clear that there is a gender difference between the street children in these two cities, but it is difficult to say why this is the case. Different structures in the society might explain some of the variation. In Mali, it is common to send boys to

Koranic schools, and many of the street boys have run away from a Marabout. In Ghana, many street children are girls who have left the underprivileged regions of the north.⁹

Another difference between the street children in Bamako and Accra is the activities they are engaged in. In Bamako, begging is the main activity, and being a porter and washing car windows are also common. In Accra, begging is rare. The dominant activity is being a porter, while street vendor is second. This difference partly reflects the fact that Mali has a population that is largely Muslim, while Ghana has a mainly Muslim population in the north and a Christian population in the south. Giving to the poor is an important part of Islam; in Bamako, Koranic school-boys often collect *Zakat* outside mosques on Fridays, and it is easy for the street boys to mix with them. In Accra, we asked some street children why there was no begging. They said that they did not have to beg because it was relatively easy to make “small money” doing different kinds of work. For example it is common at markets in Ghana for people who are doing their shopping to pay street children to carry their goods.

The street children generally have little education, and many of them have never gone to school. However, in Accra we found remarkable differences between boys and girls, and many of the boys had completed primary school and even junior secondary school. It is likely that these boys come to Accra to find jobs because it is difficult for their family to continue to finance their education. These boys are unemployed youth who seek their fortune in the city.

⁹ Ethnic clashes between tribes in Northern Ghana have been a recurrent problem. In 1994, one thousand people were killed and more than 150,000 people displaced following a land dispute between the Konkomba and the Nanumba tribes. In 2002, the king of the Dagombas and another 30 people were killed in an internal rivalry leading to the deployment of troops in Tamale, the major city of the Northern region (BBC 28.03.02). The ethnic conflicts and the internal displacement of people might have motivated young people to leave the northern regions, but it does not explain why more girls than boys travel to Accra

5 Lessons for methodology

5.1 Capture-recapture

As described above, the Capture-recapture methodology was only used in Bamako. It requires a thorough knowledge of street children and their usual habits, especially with regard to where to find them. This information was obtained through a close collaboration with the NGOs working in the streets of Bamako at night.

To carry out a survey during nighttime, the security situation must be good enough to allow researchers and fieldworkers to walk freely in the streets after dark. The security aspect for the staff must be taken into consideration before such a survey is repeated in other locations. In Bamako, the security aspect was evaluated, and found to be safe for the field staff. Each team was equipped with at least one mobile phone, and all the teams were in frequent contact during the nights.

It is also a challenge that, in order to be classified as “captured”, each child is obliged to give at least some information. As it is not possible to identify the street children just by looking at them, information is needed for two purposes: 1) to verify whether he/she is a street child, and 2) to get sufficient information to identify exactly which children are interviewed in both the capture and recapture phase. As the experience from Bamako shows, the names given by the children were not always correct. If the objective of the survey had only been to estimate the number of children, it would not have been necessary to ask for identification marks like names; instead it would have been sufficient just to include a question like, “Have you been interviewed before?” in the recapture questionnaire. However, to get a more precise estimate, the heterogeneity in the sample must be analysed and, to do this analysis, exact identification of the recaptured cases must be possible. The reason is that there is a possibility that a certain group of children interviewed in the capture phase, might avoid being interviewed in the recapture phase. To test for heterogeneity between the two phases, it is therefore crucial to have data that enable calculations of the likelihood for the children to be interviewed both in the capture and recapture phase, and eventually weight the analysis. However, this was not deemed necessary in Bamako.

Before a CR study is implemented, the total number of street children must be roughly estimated, and the number of locations where they spend their nights evaluated. According to our estimations before the Accra study, the total population of

street children was too large to be covered in the same manner as in Bamako. Combining CR with RDS was therefore considered. As described above, this did not work, as we would only have counted girls from the North if we had carried out a recapture in the same site. Another way of using CR in Accra could have been to use the lists from the NGOs. However, that approach is also problematic, for two reasons. First, only counting children that actively seek assistance or are in a visible position so that they are seen by NGO workers would underestimate the total number of street children: all the children without contact with the NGOs would have a zero likelihood of being counted. Secondly, because the NGOs in Accra have specialised in different groups of street children, mainly in different geographical areas, the probabilities for overlapping in the lists are probably very low, and this would have led to an overestimation of the number of children.

Our survey in Bamako has shown that Capture-recapture might be a useful method for estimating the total number of street children, but only under the conditions mentioned above.

5.2 Respondent-driven sampling

Salganik and Heckathorn argue that, although RDS is not a perfectly random sample, it is possible to make accurate estimates of the population characteristics based on information about the social network connecting the population (2004). This information can then be used to derive the proportion of the population in different groups. Take, for example, a researcher studying the spread of HIV among gay men. The population is made up of two groups of people (HIV+ and HIV-), and the researcher is interested in knowing the proportion of the population in each group. Applying respondent-driven sampling and using information about the network structure from the sample, the researcher can make estimates about the HIV+ prevalence in the population (Salganik and Heckathorn 2004).

In order to use this indirect method to generalize from sample to population, the researcher needs information about the network. In our study, we asked the street children how many other street children they knew. If we assume that street children with many friends are more likely to be included in the sample than street children with few friends, this information can, among other things, be used to estimate the probability of being included in the sample. However, this network question did not work well because the concept of “knowing someone” is vague, and it is difficult to know how the street children interpreted this question. What does it mean to know someone? Some children may have reported only their closest friends, while others may have reported every other street child they have met.

The interviewers found that many children hesitated. Eventually, we decided that if a child reported more than 20 contacts, it was coded as “many”.

The methodological problems of this question made us exclude it from the analysis. The network question might have provided more information if we had asked, “How many other street children have you talked to over the past week/month?” However, another problem with this question is that the concept of “street children” is not necessarily clear to the children themselves. Unlike Heckathorn’s work, which has often been among quite distinctive groups, street children are a concept that is more difficult to apply because it is not relevant to the children themselves.¹⁰ As discussed previously in this report, the concept and definition of street children is a matter of debate among researchers, NGOs, and policymakers.

This point was further stressed in the recruitment pattern of the street children. Both in Bamako and in Accra, there were incidents where the children clearly had not understood the definition of street children as explained to them by the field workers. In this study, we define street children as children less than 18 years of age who spend all their time in the streets on their own or with peers. The operational definition is that the child slept in the street the previous night. In Bamako, some children applied a wider definition than the research team; for example, the children at the bus station recruited Koranic schoolboys staying with a Marabout. These boys did not sleep in the streets the previous night, and therefore did not meet the criteria for being street children. The Koranic schoolboys were excluded from the analysis.

In Accra, some of the children applied a more narrow definition of street children than the research team. The street girls from the northern regions of Ghana recruited mainly other street girls from the northern regions. Street children in Accra are organised in subgroups based on gender, language, religion, and region of origin, and they have limited interaction with other groups. At our first location, we started with three girls from the northern regions as seeds, and these girls recruited almost exclusively among themselves. After running four waves, the large majority of the respondents were northern girls. Moving the field team to another location, and recruiting seeds that belonged to another group solved this problem. However, if the problem is that the respondents apply a wider definition of the target population than the researchers, as in Bamako, the recruitment process should be stopped and restarted with new seeds.

¹⁰ Salganik and Heckathorn acknowledge the challenge of how to verify that sample members are indeed members of the target population. It is possible that some people who are not in the target population may attempt to participate for financial reasons. Methods of population verification must be tailored to the specific population under study (Salganik and Heckathorn 2004).

Thus, a major lesson for applying RDS to reach street children is to ensure that the researchers and the children have a common definition of the target group. It is particularly important that the first wave of street children (the “seeds”) have a clear understanding of the definition in order to recruit children that fall within the target group.

Heckathorn (2002) argues that any bias that may occur when the respondents are recruiting new respondents within a social network will get weaker over the waves. A respondent might prefer to recruit among his or her closest friends or acquaintances, but as this group is exhausted, the respondent will look outside the group. Our experience from working with street children revealed that, for this mechanism to work, the incentives for recruiting must be considered carefully. The incentive must neither be too strong nor too weak. In Accra, it seemed that the incentives were too strong. The street children considered the biscuits and sardines luxury goods; the respondents therefore tried to keep these delicacies within their own group and recruited mainly among themselves. In Bamako, conversely, some street children reside in the outskirts of town, and for them it seemed that the incentive for participating and recruiting was too weak. Some children told the field workers that the small gifts they received were not enough to compensate for the price of the bus ticket to get to the interview site. The incentive structure and its implications must therefore be considered before starting up RDS.

The size of the population will also affect the recruitment pattern. For the bias to be weakened over the waves, we assume that the respondents have to go beyond their inner circle to find new respondents. In Accra, the population of street children is large. When we recruited girls from the northern regions, these girls continued to recruit other girls from the northern regions and this group was so large that, even after four waves, the girls did not need to find other street children. This shows that a large population might be a problem for RDS. This problem was eventually solved in Accra by doing RDS in four different locations; thereby enabling us managed to get a sample of street children with different origins and ethnicities.

Although in our work with street children, we experienced a somewhat different recruitment pattern than predicted by the methodology, the recruitment mechanism nevertheless worked well and, in Accra, we got a sample of 1,341 respondents within a relatively short time. Street children comprise a population that is connected with network ties as described by Heckathorn, but several factors made it difficult to get information about the network, particularly the fact that the concept of street children is unclear to the population itself, and the fact that street children are organised in subgroups. Cumulatively, means that we did not meet the necessary assumptions in order to apply the indirect method of estimation, as described by Heckathorn.

Still, as we explored the stability of selected characteristics, we found that the bias in the sample is weakened over the waves (Appendix 1: Stability of the estimates by wave number). This leads us to conclude that, although we did not succeed in getting sufficient information about the network, it is possible to generalise from the sample to the population. However, when applying RDS, it is important to adjust the method to the special attributes of the population under study.

6 Conclusion

Capture-recapture proved to be a good sampling technique for estimating the number of street children in a city, but it requires the researchers to have some knowledge of the street children population before sampling starts. In order to meet the assumptions that all children should have a non-zero likelihood of being selected, the researchers need either to carry out the sampling in all the places where the street children congregate, or to map out all the places where the street children congregate and do a random sample of places. Doing a Capture-recapture is difficult, although not impossible, in a large city with a big population of street children. The reason for this is that, the larger the population of street children, the larger sample you will need in order to make a reliable estimate. Selecting a large sample requires a lot of resources, especially taking into account that the capture and recapture must be carried out within a short time in order to meet the assumption of a closed population.

In our study, we decided to study the most vulnerable of the street children: the children who sleep in the streets at night without a parent or a tutor. In order to be able to distinguish the street children from other groups of children visible in the streets, we carried out the sampling at night. Before deciding to work at night, the security situation must be considered carefully.

The respondent-driven sampling worked well to give the characteristics of the street children population in a city, but it has to be adjusted to the population.

One of the challenges was to make the respondents understand the concept of a street child, and thus to recruit within the target population. The concept of a street child, as we define it, is not relevant to the children. Another challenge was the fact that the population of street children in Accra was large. The RDS assumes that the recruitment will provide an unbiased sample because the preferences that respondents may have will weaken over the waves. However, when the population is large, the respondents may only recruit within a subgroup. This problem can be solved by moving the sampling to another location, or by starting with fewer seeds and running many waves. Generally the RDS works well when the recruitment exhausts the population completely, or is close to exhausting the population.

The street children in Accra and Bamako share many of the same features as street children in other cities of the world. They live hand-to-mouth and work long hours as beggars, porters, shoe shiners, or traders. They are exposed to many dangers. They

share a dream of a better future. A distinctive characteristic of the street children in these two West African cities is that they are “target working” – they have an explicit goal of making a certain amount of money, and when they have reached this goal, they will go back home. Whether or not they succeed remains an open question, but compared to some other groups in the society, they have a relatively high income.

The street children population of Accra differs from street children elsewhere by the fact that the majority of them are girls. Girls, especially from the northern regions of Ghana, are found in large numbers in Accra. Why this is the case is difficult to say, but part of the explanation lies in the special economic and social conditions of the northern regions of Ghana. It seems that the economic hardship that these regions face adversely affects girls more than boys. In terms of education, at the national level, there are only minor differences in the enrolment rates of boys and girls. Among street children, however, 70 percent of the girls have never attended school, while the same is true for only 9 percent of the boys. This means that if girls attend school, the likelihood of them becoming street children is substantially reduced.

Finding lasting solutions for street children is not an easy task. Indeed, previous efforts to assist street children have sometimes had detrimental effects. Actors providing education or vocational training of street children have seen that this can be a “pull” factor, leading even more children to the streets. Reuniting street children with their parents is another alternative that has not always proved successful – in many cases; the children leave after a short time. In our study, we found that few children wish to go home. Because many children come from broken homes or from families in a difficult financial situation, returning children to their parents should not be done without considering these factors and consulting all actors involved. In order to find lasting solutions for street children, we need more knowledge about the social processes that lead children to the streets.

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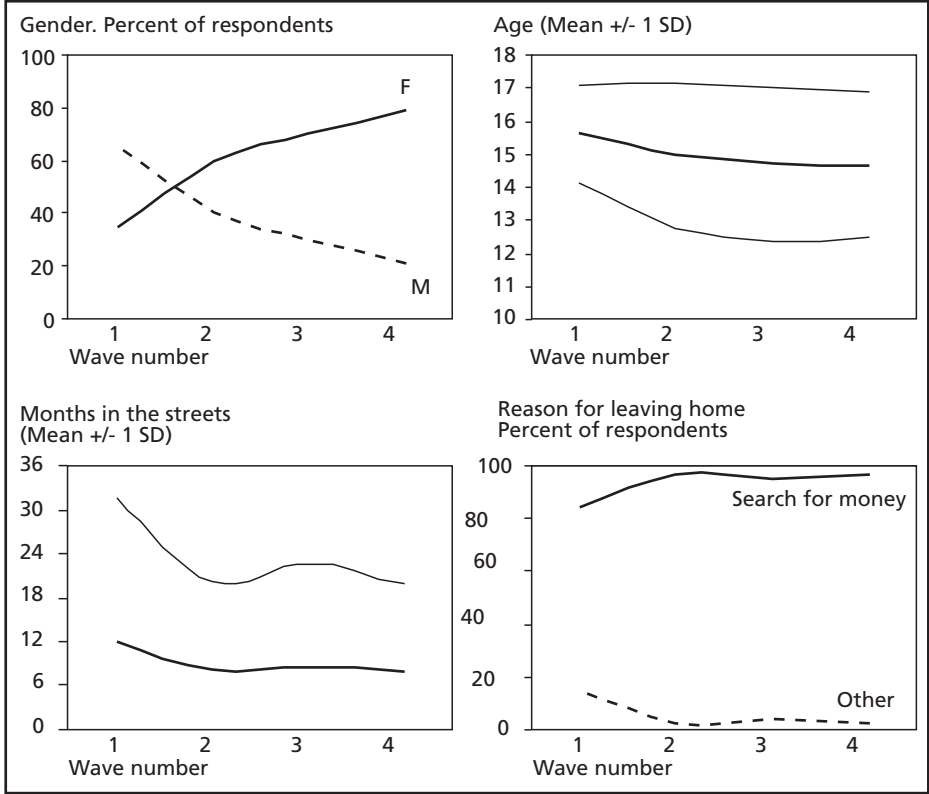
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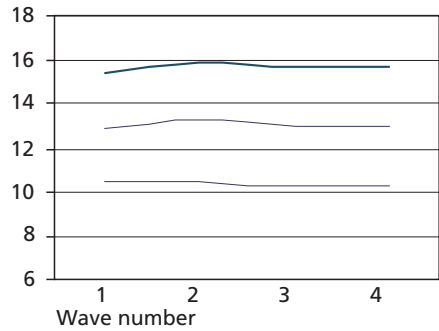
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Appendix 1: Stability of the estimates by wave number

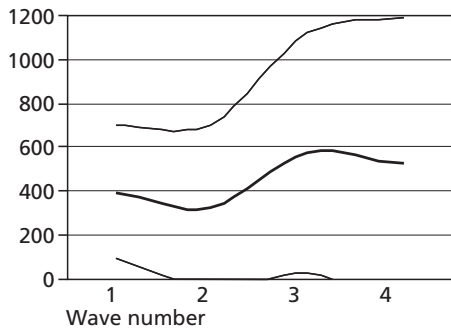
Accra



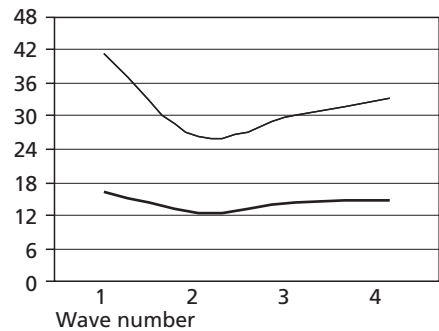
Age (Mean +/- 1 SD)



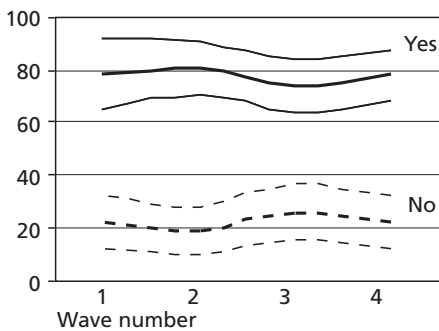
Income yesterday CEDI (Mean +/- 1 SD)



Months in the streets (Mean +1 SD)



Begging last week (Mean +/- 1 SD) Percent of respondents



Appendix 2: Questionnaires

Capture-Recapture 1 Identification of children on the streets in Bamako			
CR101	Serial number of questionnaire	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	
CR102	Interview date	_ _ _ - _ _ _ - _ _0_ _4_	
CR103	Interviewer name		
CR104	Place (precise description)		
CR105	Start interview	_ _ _ : _ _	
CR106	End interview	_ _ _ : _ _	
CR107	Sex	M F	1 2
CR108	What is your name?		
CR109	How old are you?	In whole years	_ _ _ If ≥18 → END
CR110	Where did you sleep last night?	In the streets <i>Centre d'accueil</i> Friends Employer With siblings Auntes/uncles/cousins Grand parents Distant relatives Other _____ DK NA	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 98 99 If 1 continue. If not 1 → END
CR111	How many days did you come to this place last week?	Number of days	_ _ If 7 days →CR113
CR112	Do you come more often during weekends, weekdays, or both?	Weekdays Weekends Both	1 2 3
CR113	What time of the day do you most often come here?	It's my first time here Morning Afternoon Evening All the time	1 2 3 4 5
CR114	How long have you stayed in the streets?	_ _ _ years _ _ _ months _ _ _ weeks	

CR115	Why did you leave your parents?	Search for money 1 Parents dead 2 Parents divorced 3 Mother or father remarried 4 Searching relatives 5 Work opportunities given by relatives 6 Work opportunities given by friends 7 Work opportunities given by a stranger 8 Ran away from marabout 9 Ran away from family 10 Physical mistreatment from family 11 Physical mistreatment from others 12 Other..... 13 DK 98 NA 99	
CR116	Where do you come from? If Abroad, specify country	Kayes 1 Koulikoro 2 Segou 3 Sikasso 4 Mopti 5 Tombouctou 6 Gao 7 Kidal 8 Bamako 9 Abroad _____ 10 DK 98 NA 99	
CR117	Last week, did you carry out any of the following activities?	1=Yes 2=No 8=DK 9=NA Begging 1 2 8 9 Porting luggage 1 2 8 9 Collecting garbage 1 2 8 9 Dish washing 1 2 8 9 Washing car windows 1 2 8 9 Guide blinds 1 2 8 9 Apprentice 1 2 8 9 Street vendor 1 2 8 9 Stealing 1 2 8 9 Prostitution 1 2 8 9 Other _____ 1 2 8 9	
CR118	How much did you earn yesterday?	999 998 DK 999 999 NA	[][][][][] FCFA If 0 →CR121
CR119	How much of that income did you keep yourself?	999 998 DK 999 999 NA	[][][][][] FCFA If all →CR121
CR120	To whom did you give the rest?	Elder brother / sister 1 Leader 2 Friend 3 Parents/relatives 4 Marabout 5 Other _____ 6 DK 8 NA 9	
CR121	Do you think your life now is better than home, 1 different, but of same quality, 2 or worse than home? 3 NA 9	

CR122	What do you want for the future? Read all categories	Continue the current activities Get a better job Go to school Go home Get married Don't care Become recruiter Go abroad Other _____ DK NA	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 98 99	
CR123	Last week on this same day, at this same time, were you here?	Yes No DK NA	1 2 8 9	

Recapture Identification of children on the streets in Bamako			
R01	Interview date	_ _ - _ _ - _0_ _4_	
R02	Interviewer name		
R03	Place (precise description)		
R04	Start interview	_ _ : _ _	
R05	End interview	_ _ : _ _	
R06	Have you already been interviewed during night time?	Yes No DK NA	1 2 8 9 If Yes → R08
R07	If No : Go to questionnaire Capture-Recapture, note the identification number	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	→ Questionnaire Cap-Recap
R08	If Yes : Find the name of the child in the list and note the identification number	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	
R09	How many times have you been here since our last visit?	_	
R10	Sex	M F	1 2
R11	What is your name?		
R12	How old are you?	In whole years	_ _
R13	Where do you come from?	Kayes Koulikoro Segou Sikasso Mopti Tombouctou Gao Kidal Bamako Abroad _____ DK NA	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 98 99

RDS Identification of children on the streets Bamako			
RD01	Serial number of questionnaire	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	
RD02	Identification number of recruiting child	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	
RD03	Wave	1 to 4	_
RD04	Interview date	_ _ _ - _ _ _ - _ _0_ _4_	
RD05	Interviewer name		
RD06	Place (precise description)		
RD07	Start interview	_ _ _ : _ _ _	
RD08	End interview	_ _ _ : _ _ _	
RD09	Sex	M F	1 2
RD10	What is your name?		
RD11	How old are you?	Des années entière	_ _ _ If ≥18 END
RD12	Where did you sleep last night?	In the streets <i>Centre d'accueil</i> Friends Employer With siblings Auntes/uncles/cousins Grand parents Distant relatives Other _____ DK NA	1 If 1 continue. 2 If not 1 → 3 END 4 5 6 7 8 9 98 99
RD13	How long have you stayed in the streets?	_ _ _ years _ _ _ months _ _ _ weeks	

RD14	Why did you leave your parents?		Search for money Parents dead Parents divorced Mother or father remarried Searching relatives Work opportunities given by relatives Work opportunities given by friends Work opportunities given by a stranger Ran away from marabout Ran away from family Physical mistreatment from family Physical mistreatment from others Other..... DK NA	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 98 99	
RD15	Are your parents alive?		No, both are dead Only mother alive Only father alive Yes, both alive DK NA	1 2 3 4 8 9	If No → RD20
RD16	Where do your parents [does your mother/father] live?		Kayes Koulikoro Segou Sikasso Mopti Tombouctou Gao Kidal Bamako If Abroad, specify country Abroad _____ DK NA	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 98 99	
RD17	Do you have any contact with your parents?		Yes No NA	1 2 9	If No → RD20
RD18	When did you last have contact with your parents?		Month/Year	□□□□	
RD19	What kind of contact have you had during the last year		Visite Telephone Letter No contact Oral message NA	1 2 3 4 5 9	
RD20	Where do you come from?		Kayes Koulikoro Segou Sikasso Mopti Tombouctou Gao Kidal Bamako If Abroad, specify country Abroad _____ DK NA	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 98 99	

RD21	Have you ever attended school or vocational training (including Franco-Arab and Koran)?	Yes No NA	1 2 9	If No→ RD36
RD22	Are you currently enrolled in school?	Yes No NA	1 2 9	If No→ RD30
RD23	At what age did you start at school?	In whole years 98 DK 99 NA	<input type="text"/>	
RD24	Did you attend school during most of last month?	Yes No NA	1 2 9	If Yes→RD26
RD25	Why did you not attend school last month?	School holiday Sickness /Disability Family poverty Family disintegration Not interested in school Repeated failure Bad treatment at school School not available nearby Transportation not available Left school for marriage Care for family members No place at the school/ school overcrowded Work in order to help family economically Need money for living Concerns about safety Family do not want the girl to go to school Poor teacher quality Inappropriate shift system at school Other DK NA	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 98 99	
RD26	In which grade are you currently enrolled? Mark <u>stage</u> of education and <u>grade</u> within that stage	Primary school (grade 1-6) Lower-secondary (grade 7-9) Upper secondary (grade 10-12) Technical education and vocational training University/Institutions Others NA	1 2 3 4 5 6 9	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> . . If not 4 → RD28
RD27	Which vocational/skills training course are you attending? Mark all that apply	Bicycle repair Motorcycle repair Carpentry Sewing Animal raising Agricultural training Electrical Building Mechanical Paramedical Other DK NA	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 98 99	
RD28	How many years have you gone to school altogether? Include current year	Number of years	<input type="text"/>	

RD29	What type of school do you now attend?	Governmental Privat Franco-Arab Koran NA	1 2 3 4 9	All→RD37
RD30	At what age did you start at school?	In whole years 98 DK 99 NA	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	
RD31	What is the highest grade you have completed? Mark <u>stage</u> of education and <u>grade</u> within that stage	Primary school (grade 1-6) Lower-secondary (grade 7-9) Upper secondary (grade 10-12) Technical education and vocational training University/Institutions Others NA	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 . 9 .	If not 4 →RD28
RD32	Which vocational/skills training courses did you attend? Mark all that apply	Bicycle repair Motorcycle repair Carpentry Sewing Animal raising Agricultural training Electrical Building Mechanical Paramedical Other DK NA	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 98 99	
RD33	For how many years did you go to school altogether? Ask if he/she has repeated	In whole years 98 DK 99 NA	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	
RD34	Where did you complete your highest education? If Abroad, specify country	Kayes Koulikoro Segou Sikasso Mopti Tombouctou Gao Kidal Bamako Abroad _____ DK NA	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 98 99	
RD35	What type of school did you mostly attend?	Governmental Privat Franco-Arab Koran NA	1 2 3 4 9	

RD36	<p>If not continued education:</p> <p>What is the principal reason for not continuing your education?</p> <p>If never attended school:</p> <p>What is the principal reason for never attending school?</p>	<p>Finished education 1</p> <p>Sickness/Disability 2</p> <p>Family poverty 3</p> <p>Family disintegration 4</p> <p>Not interested in school 5</p> <p>Repeated failure 6</p> <p>Bad treatment at school 7</p> <p>School not available nearby 8</p> <p>Transportation not available 9</p> <p>Left school for marriage 10</p> <p>Care for family members 11</p> <p>No place at the school/ school overcrowded 12</p> <p>Work in order to help family economically 13</p> <p>Search money to survive 14</p> <p>Concerns about safety 15</p> <p>Family do not want the girl to go to school 16</p> <p>Poor teacher quality 17</p> <p>Inappropriate shift system at school 18</p> <p>Other 19</p> <p>DK 98</p> <p>NA 99</p>	
RD37	Can you read and understand everyday written material, such as a letter or a newspaper in French?	<p>Yes, easily 1</p> <p>Yes, with difficulty 2</p> <p>No 3</p> <p>NA 9</p>	
RD38	Can you write, say a letter to a friend?	<p>Yes, easily 1</p> <p>Yes, with difficulty 2</p> <p>No 3</p> <p>NA 9</p>	
RD39	Last week, did you carry out any of the following activities?	<p>1=Yes 2=No 8=DK 9=NA</p> <p>Begging 1 2 8 9</p> <p>Porting luggage 1 2 8 9</p> <p>Collecting garbage 1 2 8 9</p> <p>Dish washing 1 2 8 9</p> <p>Washing car windows 1 2 8 9</p> <p>Guide blinds 1 2 8 9</p> <p>Apprentice 1 2 8 9</p> <p>Street vendor 1 2 8 9</p> <p>Stealing 1 2 8 9</p> <p>Prostitution 1 2 8 9</p> <p>Other</p>	
RD40	How much did you earn yesterday?	<p>999 998 DK</p> <p>999 999 NA</p> <p>_____ FCFA</p>	If 0 → RD43
RD41	How much of that income did you keep yourself?	<p>999 998 DK</p> <p>999 999 NA</p> <p>_____ FCFA</p>	If all → RD43
RD42	To whom did you give the rest?	<p>Elder brother / sister 1</p> <p>Leader 2</p> <p>Friend 3</p> <p>Parents/relatives 4</p> <p>Marabout 5</p> <p>Other _____ 6</p> <p>DK 8</p> <p>NA 9</p>	
RD43	Did you have any accidents or illnesses related to the work last 12 months?	<p>Yes 1</p> <p>No 2</p> <p>NA 9</p>	

RD44	Do you think your life now is better than home, different, but of same quality, or worse than home? NA	1 2 3 9	
RD45	What do you want for the future? Read all categories	Continue the current activites Get a better job Go to school Go home Get married Don't care Become recruiter Go abroad Other _____ DK NA	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 98 99	

Identification street children in Accra				
AC01	Serial number of questionnaire	_ _ _ _ _ _ _		
AC02	Identification number of recruiting child	_ _ _ _ _ _ _		
AC03	Wave	1 to 4	_	
AC04	Interview date	_ _ _ - _ _ _ - _ _ _		
AC05	Interviewer name			
AC06	Place of interview (precise description)			
AC07	Start interview	_ _ : _ _		
AC08	End interview	_ _ : _ _		
AC09	Sex	M	1	
		F	2	
AC10	What is your name?			
AC11	How old are you?	In entire years	_ _	If ≥18 END
AC12	Where did you sleep last night?	In the streets	1	If 1 continue. If not 1 → END
		Shelter	2	
		Friends	3	
		Employer	4	
		With siblings	5	
		Auntes/uncles/cousins	6	
		Grand parents	7	
		Distant relatives	8	
		Other _____	9	
		DK	98	
		NA	99	
AC13	Where exactly did you sleep last night?			
	Write down name of street, market etc.	_____		
AC14	How long have you stayed in the streets?	_ _ years	_ _ months	_ _ weeks
			_ _ days	

AC15	What is the one most important reason why you ran away from home?	Search for money Parents dead Parents divorced Mother or father remarried Searching relatives Work opportunities given by relatives Work opportunities given by friends Work opportunities given by a stranger Ran away from forced marriage Ran away from family Physical mistreatment from family Physical mistreatment from others Other _____ DK NA	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 98 99	
AC16	When you first left your home, who did you go together with?	Nobody, on my own Friends Relatives Recruiting agent Other _____ DK NA	1 2 3 4 5 8 9	
AC17	Are your parents alive?	No, both are dead Only mother alive Only father alive Yes, both alive DK NA	1 2 3 4 8 9	If No → AC22
AC18	Where do your parents [does your mother/father] live?	Western Central Greater Accra Volta Eastern Ashanti Brong Ahafo Northern Upper East Upper West Abroad _____ DK NA	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 98 99	
AC19	Do you have any contact with your parents?	Yes No NA	1 2 9	If No → AC22
AC20	What kind of contact have you had during the last year	Visite Telephone Letter Oral message No contact NA	1 2 3 4 5 9	
AC21	When did you last have contact with your parents?	Month/Year		<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>

AC22	Where do you come from? If Abroad, specify country	Western Central Greater Accra Volta Eastern Ashanti Brong Ahafo Northern Upper East Upper West Abroad _____ DK NA	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 98 99	
AC23	Which ethnic group do you belong to?	Akan Ga-Dangme Ewe Guan Gurma Mole-Dagbon Grusi Mande Other _____ DK NA	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 98 99	
AC24	Have you ever attended school (including Koran school)?	Yes No NA	1 2 9	If No → AC37
AC25	Are you currently enrolled in school?	Yes No NA	1 2 9	If No → AC32
AC26	At what age did you start at school?	In whole years 98 DK 99 NA	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	
AC27	Did you attend school during most of last month?	Yes No NA	1 2 9	If Yes → AC29
AC28	Why did you not attend school last month?	School holiday Sickness /Disability Family poverty Family disintegration Not interested in school Repeated failure Bad treatment at school School not available nearby Transportation not available Left school for marriage Care for family members No place at the school/ school overcrowded Work in order to help family economically Search money to survive Concerns about safety Family do not want the girl to go to school Poor teacher quality Inappropriate shift system at school Other DK NA	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 98 99	

AC29	In which grade are you currently enrolled? Mark <u>stage</u> of education and <u>grade</u> within that stage	Primary school (grade 1-6) Junior secondary (grade 1-3) Senior secondary (grade 1-3) Technical education and vocational training University/Institutions Others NA	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 5 6 . 9 .	
AC30	How many years have you gone to school altogether? Include current year	Number of years	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	
AC31	What type of school do you now attend?	Governmental Privat Makarant/Koran NA	1 2 3 9	All→AC38
AC32	At what age did you start at school?	In whole years 98 DK 99 NA	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	
AC33	What is the highest grade you have completed? Mark <u>stage</u> of education and <u>grade</u> within that stage	Primary school (grade 1-6) Junior secondary (grade 1-3) Senior secondary (grade 1-3) Technical education and vocational training University/Institutions Others NA	1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 5 6 . 9 .	
AC34	For how many years did you go to school altogether? Ask if he/she has repeated	In whole years 98 DK 99 NA	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	
AC35	Where did you complete your highest education? If Abroad, specify country	Western Central Greater Accra Volta Eastern Ashanti Brong Ahafo Northern Upper East Upper West Abroad _____ DK NA	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 98 99	
AC36	What type of school did you mostly attend?	Governmental Privat Makarant/Koran NA	1 2 3 9	

AC37	<p>If not continued education: What is the principal reason for not continuing your education?</p> <p>If never attended school: What is the principal reason for never attending school?</p>	<p>Finished education 1 Sickness/Disability 2 Family poverty 3 Family disintegration 4 Not interested in school 5 Repeated failure 6 Bad treatment at school 7 School not available nearby 8 Transportation not available 9 Left school for marriage 10 Care for family members 11 No place at the school/ school overcrowded 12 Work in order to help family economically 13 Search money to survive 14 Concerns about safety 15 Family do not want the girl to go to school 16 Poor teacher quality 17 Inappropriate shift system at school 18 Other 19 DK 98 NA 99</p>	
AC38	Can you read and understand everyday written material, such as a letter or a newspaper?	<p>Yes, easily 1 Yes, with difficulty 2 No 3 NA 9</p>	
AC39	Can you write, say a letter to a friend?	<p>Yes, easily 1 Yes, with difficulty 2 No 3 NA 9</p>	
AC40	Which of the following activities do you engage in last week?	<p>1=Yes 2=No 8=DK 9=NA</p> <p>Begging 1 2 8 9 Porting luggage 1 2 8 9 Collecting garbage 1 2 8 9 Dish washing 1 2 8 9 Washing car windows 1 2 8 9 Guide blinds 1 2 8 9 Shoe shining 1 2 8 9 Apprentice 1 2 8 9 Street vendor 1 2 8 9 Stealing 1 2 8 9 Selling sex for money 1 2 8 9 Other 1 2 8 9</p>	
AC41	How much did you earn yesterday?	<p>999 998 DK 999 999 NA</p>	<p>□□□□□□□ Cedi If 0 → CR121</p>
AC42	How much of that income did you keep yourself?	<p>999 998 DK 999 999 NA</p>	<p>□□□□□□□ Cedi If all → CR121</p>
AC43	To whom did you give the rest?	<p>Elder brother / sister 1 Leader 2 Friend 3 Parents/relatives 4 Susu 5 Other 6 DK 8 NA 9</p>	

AC44	Do you think your life now is ...	<p style="text-align: right;">... better than home, ... different, but of same quality, ... or worse than home? NA</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">1 2 3 9</p>	
AC45	What do you want for the future? Read all categories	<p style="text-align: right;">Continue the current activities Get a better job Go to school Go home Get married Don't care Become recruiter Go abroad Other _____ DK NA</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 98 99</p>	
AC46	How many other street children do you know in Accra?	<p style="text-align: right;">Note the number, DK=98, NA=99</p>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	

Identification of street children

This report presents the results of a study of the street children population in two West African cities: Bamako in Mali and Accra in Ghana.

The main aim of this study was to develop methodologies for difficult to reach populations, i.e. populations that are not found within household structures or schools, and to give the characteristics of the street children population in Bamako and Accra. In Bamako, the majority of the street children are boys, while in Accra, the majority of the street children are girls. The age structure is similar; in both cities, the street children are mainly between 14 and 17 years old. A large share of the children have been living in the streets for less than three months and they have regular contact with their parents. The children say that life in the streets is worse than life at home. Still, most of them do not want to go back home – their hope for the future is to get a better job.

The report is the third in a series of working papers from a Fafo research program on trafficking and child labour, generously financed by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



P.O.Box 2947 Tøyen
N-0608 Oslo
www.fafo.no/english/

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