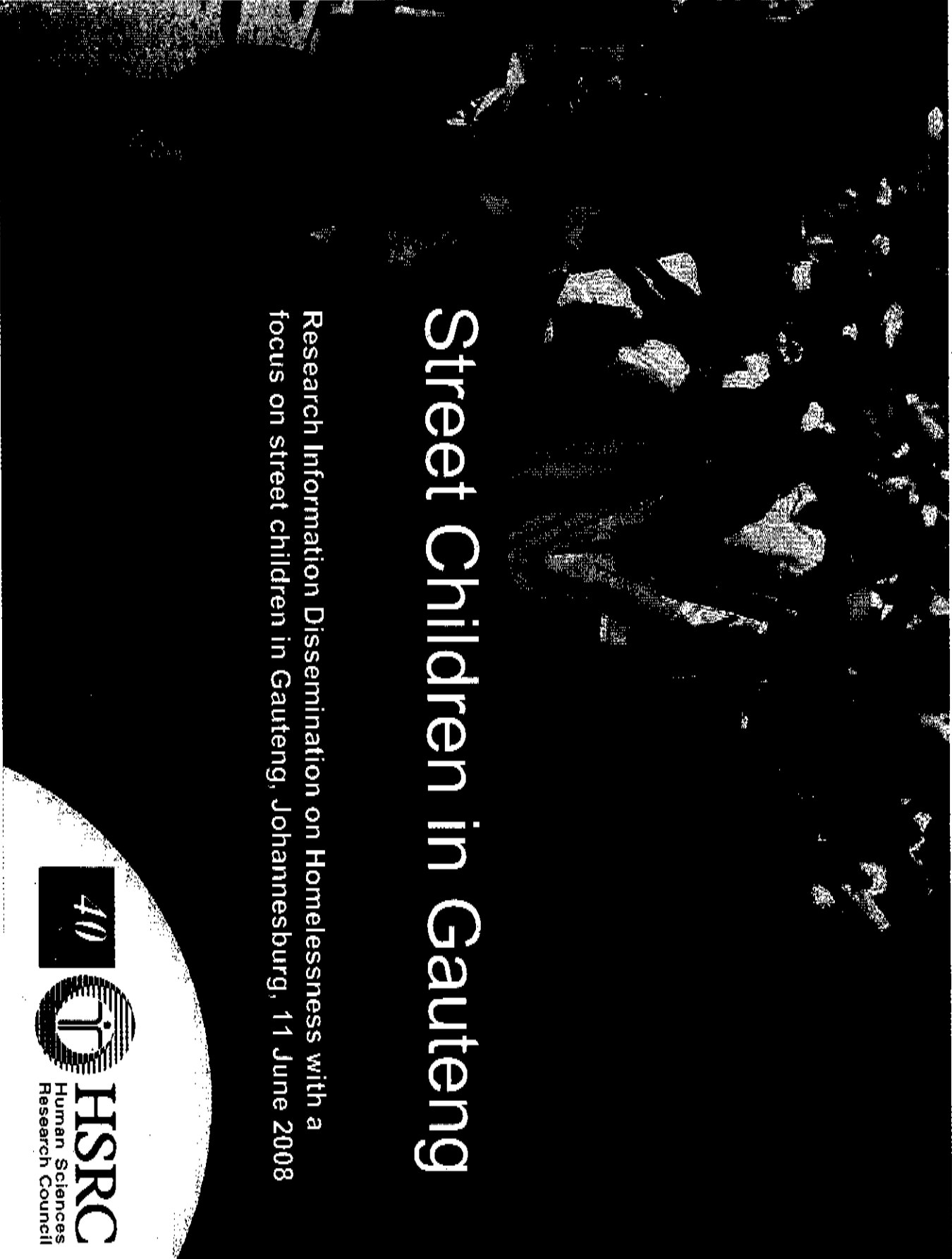




Street Children in Gauteng

Research Information Dissemination on Homelessness with a
focus on street children in Gauteng, Johannesburg, 11 June 2008

Methodology

- Literature review
- Individual interviews with programme staff in Johannesburg
- Focus group with programme staff in Cape Town
- Focus groups with children on the streets and in shelters in both cities
- In Cape Town, individual interviews with adult women who had been on the streets as children
- Survey in Johannesburg

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Estimating the population of street children in Gauteng

Based on our ability to find street children in the vicinity of a random sample of 10 out of 60 shelters and a correction factor for those who were not associated with shelters ...

We estimate not more than 3,200 homeless street children in Gauteng (90% probability).

Current sleeping arrangements

On street	230	76.4
In shelter	12	3.9
In park	28	9.2
With friends or associates	2	0.7
Other	33	10.8

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Reason for leaving home

- Pull factors (28 children, 9.8%):
 - Seeking a better life
 - Searching for a parent
- Push factors (258 children, 91.2%):
 - Abuse, domestic violence, poor family relationships (54, 18.9%)
 - Loss of caregivers (79, 27.6%)
 - Poverty (35, 12.2%)
 - Dropped out of school (7, 2.4%)
 - Fear of retribution (7, 2.4%)
 - Lost (5, 1.7%)
 - Peer pressure (15, 5.2%)
 - Fleeing war or poor economic conditions in country of origin (30, 10.4%)

Migration patterns

Province	N	%
Gauteng	136	44.6%
Mpumalanga	28	9.2%
KZN	20	6.6%
North-West	19	6.2%
Limpopo	17	5.6%
E. Cape	14	4.6%
N. Cape	2	0.7%
W. Cape	1	0.3%
Free State	1	0.3%
Don't know	67	22.0%

Livelihood strategies

	N	%
Begging	210	68.9
Car guard	81	26.6
Car-washing	29	9.5
Unspecified income	27	8.9
Recycling	15	4.9
Busking	9	3.0
Other work	9	3.0
Borrowing	7	2.3
Relative/friend	5	1.6
Shelter	2	0.7
Providing sexual services	2	0.7

Safety and Security

"...we get reports of injuries every week. Recently, there have been reports of a boy who fell from the bridge, three cases of skull fractures and one report of a stab wound..."

Shelter Manager

Access to health services

	Number interviewed	Percentage
Government hospital/clinic	45	14.8
Day hospital	10	3.3
Chemist/Pharmacy Shop	6	2.0
Traditional healer or herbalist	3	1.0
Home based care services/house visit/ treatment at a shelter	2	0.7
Health services at the workplace	1	0.3
Private Doctor	1	0.3

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Use of and satisfaction with health services (past 3 months)

Health services	Children making use of service	Proportion dissatisfied
Government hospital/ government clinic	45 14.8%	3 6.8%
Day hospital	10 3.3%	2 20%
Chemist/Pharmacy Shop	6 2.0%	1 16.7%

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Mental health

	Number of children reporting symptoms of depression in the last 30 days	Percentage
Number of street children reporting a diagnosis of a mental illness	136	44.6
	10	3.3

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Self reported alcohol use

Drinking alcohol 2-3 times per week or more		Child (n=11)	Adult (n=118)
Frequency of binge drinking (≥6 drinks) for those who drink:			
Never		17 30.9%	133 30.3%
Less than monthly		8 14.5%	84 19.1%
Monthly		13 23.6%	88 20%
Weekly		13 23.6%	88 20.0%
Daily or almost daily		1 1.8%	50 11.4%
Don't know		3 5.5%	9 2.1%

Conclusions about health issues

(1)

- ***Some health conditions may contribute to people becoming homeless.***
- ***Some health conditions may be exacerbated or even caused by being homeless.***
- ***Access to health care appears to be quite good and most clients were satisfied with the service received.***

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Conclusions about health issues

(3)

- ***There is a case to be made for better awareness of the health needs of the homeless among some health service providers.***
- ***More low cost rehabilitation facilities, dealing with alcohol and other substance abuse, appear to be needed.***

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Shelter services: Access and quality

- “Shelter” is a misnomer! A range of services is needed
- Street work, drop-in centres, intake shelters, shelter, children’s home, prevention projects, alternative education
- Goal of services: Family reunification
- Shelter is an interim option while working towards family reunification, or a last option if that fails

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- # **Shelter services: Children's views of other success factors**
- Provision of child care
 - No matter what, knowing you can return to the shelter
 - Educational outings
 - A volunteer programme which made it possible to form relationships with adults other than those at the shelter
 - Having to do daily chores

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The policy environment

- **Convention on the Rights of the Child**
 - Article 20.1: "A child temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment... Shall be entitled to special protection and assistance by the State"
 - Article 39: "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation or abuse;.... Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child."
- **African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child echoes the CRC**

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The policy environment

- Children's Act (No. 38 of 2005)
- A street child is one who
 - Because of abuse, neglect, poverty, community upheaval or any other reason, has left his or her home, family or community, and lives, begs or works on the street; or
 - Because of inadequate care, begs or works on the streets but returns home at night.

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Children's views: The most important things government can do

	N	%
Provide employment	80	28.3
Provide housing	77	26.2
Provide skills training	54	17.7
Provide grants or money	23	7.5
Provide primary health care	4	1.3
Provide emergency assistance	2	0.7
Other	65	21.3

Recommendations

- **Intervention:**
 - There are no quick fixes
 - Provide a range of services
 - Develop trust (warmth and limit-setting)
 - Provide for education that is appropriate to each child's needs
 - Provide for health services (including mental health services)
 - Advocate with Home Affairs for ID books
 - Address the issue of aging out of care

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Acknowledgements

- Thanks are due to all the city officials who gave of their time to inform us about homeless policy and practice and to the numerous shelter managers and staff for their advice and generous cooperation with the fieldwork.
- Most important, our thanks to the homeless people who shared their experiences with us and for whose benefit this research is intended.
- For the research, our financial partners have been HSRC, Gauteng DSD, national DSD, and the Swiss Development Corporation.

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