



**Assessing the Effectiveness of Street Girls NGOs in  
Egypt:  
With whom? In what specific context?**

**Thèse**

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## Résumé

(Fr)

Depuis les années 80's, plusieurs ONG locales et internationales opèrent en Egypte afin d'éradiquer le phénomène des enfants de la rue. Cependant, le phénomène persiste et donne lieu à une seconde génération d'enfants de rue, notamment avec la présence de jeunes filles dans la rue. Par ailleurs, un large pourcentage de ces mères refuse d'abandonner la rue ou de rejoindre les programmes de réhabilitation des ONG. Non seulement une génération de petits-enfants de rue voit le jour mais en 2011, ces enfants commencent à prendre part dans des affrontements violents contre l'armée et les forces de sécurité égyptiennes.

La dégénération du problème pousse l'Etat Egyptien –jusque-là quasi réticent d'aborder en profondeur les causes du problème- à engager un bras de fer avec les filles et les garçons de la rue. Selon l'Etat, l'approche « de sauvetage » appliquée par les ONG se serait avérée inefficace et par conséquent, devrait céder la place à une approche « punitive » à l'égard des enfants de la rue. Ainsi, l'Etat décide de construire un « village » isolé sous l'égide de l'armée égyptienne où les enfants de la rue seront groupés et placés contre leur gré.

Entre les limites de l'approche de sauvetage et la violence de l'approche punitive, cette thèse cherche à trouver une troisième voie où les efforts des ONG et de l'Etat pourraient aboutir à des solutions plus adaptées aux besoins des enfants de la rue. A travers un échantillon de 30 filles de rue, cette thèse tente de repérer les facteurs causant la faible réceptivité des filles de rues aux programmes des ONG et limitant l'effectivité de l'approche de sauvetage. Pour ce faire, la thèse utilise l'approche de l'écologie sociale de Bronfenbrenner pour étudier les cinq couches formant l'environnement de chaque fille et interagissant pour affecter son processus de prise de décisions. L'effet de chacune de ces couches sur la réceptivité des filles de rues aux ONG est ensuite analysé statistiquement afin d'aider les ONG à concevoir des programmes sur mesure qui répondent aux besoins spécifiques de chaque fille de la rue.



## **Abstract**

(En)

Since the 1980s, many local and international NGOs have been operating in Egypt to solve the problem of street children. However, the phenomenon persisted and produced a second generation of street children, largely due to a high number of young girls living on the street. A large percentage of these street mothers refuse to abandon the street or to join rehabilitation programs provided by NGOs. Not only a new generation of street grandchildren was born but in 2011, these children began participating in violent clashes against the Egyptian Army and Security Forces.

The degeneration of the problem pushed the Egyptian State, thus far unwilling to address the roots of the problem to launch an iron fist policy against street girls and boys. According to the State, the “rescuing” approach adopted by NGOs has proven ineffective and consequently must be replaced by a “punitive” approach to deal with street children. Therefore, the State decided to build, under the supervision of the Egyptian Army, an isolated “village” where street children will be gathered and placed against their will.

Between the limits of the rescuing approach and the violence of the punitive one, this dissertation seeks a third path, where the efforts of NGOs and the State can lead to solutions more tailored to the needs of street children. Through a sample of 30 street girls, this dissertation tries to locate the factors causing the low responsiveness of street girls to NGOs and limiting the effectiveness of the rescuing approach. For this purpose, the dissertation uses Bronfenbrenner’s social ecology approach to study the five layers forming each girl’s environment and interacting to affect her decision making process. The effect of each layer on girls’ responsiveness to NGOs is then analyzed statistically to help NGOs design programs that better address the individual needs of each street girl.



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# Abbreviations

CPC	Child Protection Committees
ECCR	Egyptian Coalition for Child Rights
MOI	Ministry of the Interior
MOSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
NCCM	National Council of Childhood and Motherhood
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
PCPC	Popular Campaign for the Protection of Children
SCAF	Supreme Council of Armed Forces
UNODCCP	United Nations Office on Drug Control and Crime Prevention



# Dedications

*To the young boy I met ten years ago on a cold night under a quiet bridge in the middle of crowded Cairo; to this tiny creature who had left home two weeks earlier to embark on an aimless trip away from his broken family and ended up touring almost all of Egypt on his own, thank you for introducing me to the hidden world of street children that I never knew existed.*

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# **Introduction**



## **A. Street children: a global concern for NGOs and governments**

Pictures of boys and girls cleaning cars in Bombay, scavenging in the rubbish piles of Dhaka, sleeping under the bridges of Cairo, forced into prostitution in Pattaya or begging for food in Rio de Janeiro are all pictures that come to mind when the issue of street children is raised. Estimates on the number of street children have been as high as 100 million<sup>1</sup>. Seen worldwide in general but in large numbers in the southern hemisphere, street children share almost an identical set of characteristics. From Brazil to India, studies show that street children come from the lower socioeconomic strata and originate from families shattered by the societal stress of rapid urbanization. On the street, they build their exceptional companionship system that replaces the family as a source of emotional and economic support, consume drugs to escape from their harsh reality, and see themselves as “nice people who do bad things”<sup>2</sup>.

For decades, coming to the rescue of these children has been one of the main concerns of many UN organizations, NGOs and research centers, but with no major impact on the fate of street children or on the quality of their lives. Governments of developing countries, although better situated than NGOs to tackle the problem, seemed to have more urgent and pressing concerns than street children. Whether conducted in Africa<sup>3</sup> or in Latin America<sup>4</sup>, studies show that most of the efforts addressing the problem of street children were left to churches, NGOs and international organizations such as the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) with very minimal engagement from governments.

While governments’ main interventions adopted a punitive approach, NGOs’ interventions tended to follow the rehabilitative approach<sup>5</sup>. The punitive approach, also called the correctional approach, is one that basically perceives street children as criminals who need to be disciplined. Governments have historically tried to implement this

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<sup>1</sup> “State of the World’s Street Children”, (London: Consortium for street children, 2007), vi.

<sup>2</sup> Johann Le Roux and Cheryl Sylvia Smith, “Causes and characteristics of the street child phenomenon: a global perspective”, in *Adolescence* (Fall 1998), 683-688.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Anthony Kopoka, “The Problem of Street Children in Africa: an Ignored Tragedy” (International Conference on Street Children and Street Children’s Health in East Africa, Institute of Development Studies, University of Dar Es-Salam, April 19th - 21st 2000), 10-11.

<sup>4</sup> Irene Rizzini and Mark W. Lusk, “Children in the Streets: Latin America’s Lost Generation”, *Children and Youth Services Review*, (Vol. 17, No. 3, 1995) 396- 397.

<sup>5</sup> Mark W. Lusk, “Street children programs in Latin America”, *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* (16), 55-77.

disciplinary process through their correctional institutions, referred to by many studies as abusive, violent and unsafe<sup>6</sup>. Instead, NGOs' rehabilitative approach, also called the rescuing approach, perceives street children as victims of unfortunate circumstances and offers services and shelter in an attempt to take them out of the street and reintegrate them into the mainstream society.

## **B. The street children's phenomenon witnessing two turning points in Egypt...for now**

However, with these many interventions in place and with the issue of street children being the focus of many sociologists and research centers, the problem not only persists but is also witnessing two turning points in Egypt. These two turning points are the reasons this study is committed to a different approach from what many could see as a pile of existing literature about street children that never had an impact on their life or fate.

The first turning point is related to a series of events that have lately caused the pictures of "vulnerable, poor and nice" children to fade from many people's minds when they see or talk about street children. Instead, these pictures are gradually being replaced by another set of pictures in which street children are ferociously defying security forces and military officers and are attacking them with Molotov cocktails. And in these pictures, the children in question are not child soldiers who were forced to take part in an armed conflict in the jungles of Congo. They are simply homeless boys and girls who decided to revolt and put an end to their suffering, defying a State that failed to protect them from their abusers and jailed them when they sought refuge on the street. In December 2011, this set of pictures of street children as thugs and criminals became widely known in Egypt after a number of street children were charged with setting fire to the famous Institut d'Egypte. The Institut was a historic scientific complex built by Napoleon Bonaparte two centuries ago and a home for a number of very rare manuscripts and books that were eaten by the blaze. No matter how true or untrue the charges were<sup>7</sup>, street children became the target of a

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<sup>6</sup> Rizzini, 378.

<sup>7</sup> It is unclear who the real perpetrators behind this incident are. The blaze took place on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011 when the Egyptian army opened fire on a nearby sit-in to disperse it, killing 18 protesters. Egypt's ruling SCAF held a huge press conference two days later to convict street children of burning the Institut d'Egypte and to blame them for the chaos, bloodshed and political instability of Egypt. Footage of the convicted street boys and girls confessing to having been bribed to throw Molotov cocktails on the Institut was screened during the press conference. However, activists contesting the SCAF official account of the incident announced their discovery that children in the footage were not street children and that they were already in police custody days before the event. Other activists noted hearing voices of people being tortured in the

huge hate campaign launched against them by Egypt's ruling Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF)<sup>8</sup> and supported by the State media and TV. In the minds of many Egyptians following this extensive hate campaign, street children became "*those who set fire to the Institut d'Egypte*" and "*those who are constantly fueling political instability in Egypt*"<sup>9</sup>. And although this incident has no equivalent in any other country where street children are present, several factors explained later in this study push us to believe the incident is indeed relevant and worthy of thorough study.

Not only has the SCAF's hate discourse against street children led to the distortion of their image in the mind of many Egyptians, the effect of this campaign is even worse for street girls and their NGOs. In the past, the image of street girls in Egypt was mostly moulded by misconceptions and prejudices. Street girls were widely perceived as rebellious girls who chose to disobey their families' rules and defy society's customs. Therefore for many Egyptians, they were basically girls who had gone astray and who were difficult to help. This already imprecise image was distorted further after the Institut d'Egypte blaze as local donors became even more reluctant to fund street children NGOs (for boys and girls alike). However, the impact on donor reticence to street girls' NGOs was much greater due to their prevailing negative image.

The second turning point is that the poor outcome of NGO interventions has recently pushed governments to expand their own presence on the ground and to implement their punitive approach against street children on a larger scale. A blatant example of this tendency is an occurrence in December 2011, when Egypt's SCAF threw all its weight behind the correctional/punitive approach and launched an unprecedented campaign of arrest against street children where basic human rights were utterly trampled. According to many rights groups' documentation of authorities' violations, many arrested children were severely beaten with batons and electrocuters and were tortured while in police custody. One piece of footage used by SCAF to incriminate street children in the Institut d'Egypte fire showed a young street girl claiming she escaped from her step-father's sexual abuse to the street. Although in the footage she denied having set the fire in the Institut d'Egypte, she stayed for a while in police custody for a crime she didn't commit. Moreover, according

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background of the footage taken in what seemed to be a police lockup. However, NGOs' street social workers mentioned to me that few of the boys and girls they serve have told them they were paid and transported to throw Molotov cocktails on the Institut.

<sup>8</sup> The SCAF that took power in February 2011 after President Mubarak's toppling.

<sup>9</sup> Interviews with Egyptian vendors in downtown Cairo, May-June 2013.

to human rights reports<sup>10</sup>, the girl in the footage was one of a dozen other street girls falsely arrested by the military and exposed to a variety of violations and abuse. Several civil societies and human rights groups<sup>11</sup> were outraged by the number of documented violations, and urged the government to immediately end these transgressions, but the government's response was not up to expectations.

The Egyptian government not only launched a harsh crackdown on street children but went further and allocated a budget of 17 million LE<sup>12</sup> to the establishment of a “resort” designed to gather, discipline and rehabilitate street children<sup>13</sup>. The amount was deducted from the budget of the Ministry of Defense, not the Government's budget<sup>14</sup>, thus effectively designating street children as a threat to Egypt's national security. And despite multiple reservations and objections expressed by many NGOs and human-rights organizations, the project carried on.

### **C. A potentially scary scenario in the southern hemisphere**

Egypt's example of the military stepping in to repress street children is one that can be reproduced in other countries where NGOs' rehabilitative model has failed. Several reasons push us to this belief. First, similarly to Egypt, many southern hemisphere countries suffer from harsh socio-economic conditions that may facilitate and accelerate the contagious effect of revolution. Second, in many of these countries, just as in Egypt, the phenomenon of street children is “*of a high level of visibility*”,<sup>15</sup> meaning it continues to persist despite the existing interventions to eradicate it. Consequently, should revolutions occur in the southern hemisphere, or in countries with a heavy presence of children on the street, we would likely see other military “resorts” built for street children *à l'Égyptienne*.

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<sup>10</sup> Issued namely by the Egyptian Coalition for Child Rights and Hisham Mubarak Law Center.

<sup>11</sup> Such as the Front for the Defense of Egyptian Protesters, the Egyptian Coalition for Child Rights, HRW and the Popular Campaign for the Protection of Children.

<sup>12</sup> The equivalent to \$2.5 M.

<sup>13</sup> For a detailed article about this resort, please see Amira Mikhail, The Ghetto City, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012 <https://nilerevolt.wordpress.com/2012/09/10/the-ghetto-city/>

<sup>14</sup> Information learned from other civil society partners who deliberated closely with representatives of the Ministry of Social Affairs to dissuade them from implementing this project.

<sup>15</sup> Meaning that street children have been detected in sufficient numbers and over a long enough period of time to attract sustained NGO, governmental, media and research attention. “State of the World's Street Children”, (London: Consortium for street children, 2007), <http://www.streetchildren.org.uk/reports/State%20of%20the%20World's%20Street%20Children-Violence.pdf>, p 67.

The reason this potential scenario is scary is that very few southern governments have the necessary experience to deal effectively with the issue of street children. As mentioned earlier, for decades the problem of street children has been abdicated by governments and left to NGOs who have accumulated, despite limited resources, a relatively better expertise in this domain. Yet southern governments blamed NGOs for their loose approach and even accused them of intentionally adopting this approach in order to perpetuate the problem of street children, thereby maintaining their donors and securing their funds. The government's almost total lack of expertise in dealing with street children plus its perception of the punitive approach as an ideal solution to the problem result in a truly frightening scenario of unknown consequences.

## **D. Egypt's street girls as a case study**

While it is true that NGOs' interventions adopting the rehabilitative approach have achieved very limited results, this does not constitute a sufficient reason for governments to expand their punitive approach. Instead, it underlines the urgent need to examine the deficiencies of the rescuing approach and to either pinpoint the needed improvements or to suggest more efficient alternatives to address the problem of street children. This is the intent of the current research.

Because this feared scenario occurred in Egypt and as of yet has not happened in other countries, the current research chooses Egypt as a case study. In so doing, this research tries to draw a number of fruitful lessons regarding the methods and approaches that NGOs may need to re-consider or avoid when dealing with street children. Such lessons will not only help Egyptian NGOs improve their programs but undoubtedly will benefit other NGOs dealing with street children in other parts of the world.

Egypt's case is a typical one in which the failure of NGOs' interventions has led the country to witness the two turning points mentioned earlier: street children's revolt taking a violent shape, and government intensifying and expanding its punitive approach toward street children. Twenty years following the establishment of the first street children NGO<sup>16</sup>, a recent report<sup>17</sup> classified the country among 30 other countries<sup>18</sup> where the phenomenon

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<sup>16</sup> In the 1987, Hope Village association was the first Egyptian NGO established to work with street children and is considered one of the most experienced NGOs in this domain.

<sup>17</sup> "State of the World's Street Children", (London: Consortium for street children, 2007), 67-81.

<http://www.streetchildren.org.uk/reports/State%20of%20the%20World's%20Street%20Children-Violence.pdf>

of street children is “of a high level of visibility”. By the latter, the report meant that street children have been detected in sufficient numbers and over a long enough period of time to attract sustained NGO, governmental, media and research attention. Not only does the phenomenon persist, but the attempts of street children NGOs to maintain the vast majority of their clients seem to be in vain. A recent statistic<sup>19</sup> by one of the pioneering and most experienced NGOs<sup>20</sup> indicates a remarkably high turnover rate<sup>21</sup> among the children they serve. According to the statistic, only 10% of the served street children chose to stay at the NGOs’ shelters while nearly 70% preferred to remain on the street<sup>22</sup>.

Moreover, with an important percentage of street girls leaving shelters for the streets and facing different kinds of sexual and physical abuse, the second generation of street children became an additional source of concern. And both street grandchildren and their mothers continue to be underserved. For instance, only one street children’s NGO in Egypt (out of fourteen<sup>23</sup>) offers a “*complete*”<sup>24</sup> rehabilitation program for the second generation of street children and their mothers and only two NGOs have shelters for street girls<sup>25</sup>. This probably means that the unsolved problem of street girls, if not addressed appropriately in the few coming decades, may accelerate the deterioration of the street children phenomenon in Egypt.

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<sup>18</sup> Out of 96 countries.

<sup>19</sup> The statistic in question was drawn from Hope Village unpublished records regarding the annual number of children they receive and serve in their day reception centers and shelters. This statistic was made available to me by Hope Village Secretary General (Dr. Abba El-Badry) during an interview with her in Cairo, May 12th, 2009.

<sup>20</sup> Hope Village Association.

<sup>21</sup> Or the percentage of street children who choose to cut their ties with the NGO even after receiving its services.

<sup>22</sup> The remaining 20% are reunified with their families. For further details, see Annex 1, p138.

<sup>23</sup> The list of fourteen NGOs working with street children was given to the author by the UNICEF office in Cairo. This list includes the following street children NGOs: Hope Village Association, Caritas-Egypt Association, El-Ma’wa (The Shelter) Association, Bena’ El-Mogtama’ (Society Building) Association, Nour El-Hayah (Light For Life) Association, Tofulty (My Childhood) Association, Ana El-Masry (I Am The Egyptian) Association, El-Horeyya Letanmeyet El-Mogtama’ (Freedom For The Development Of Society) Association, Hemaya Bela Hohoud (Unlimited Protection) Association, El-Re’aya el-Egtema’eyya (Social Care) Association, Afaq Gadida (New Horizons) Association, COESS, Hemayet El-Atfal (Children Protection) Association, Tanmeyet El-Mogtama’ (Society Development) Association.

<sup>24</sup> A “*complete*” rehabilitation program means a program that helps individuals who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness by providing four kinds of services:

- homeless prevention daycare centers,
- homeless daycare centers,
- homeless temporary shelters,
- homeless permanent shelters.

In Egypt, only Hope Village Association offers the four types of services for street girls, while three other NGOs (Banaty, Caritas-Egypt and Tofulty) provide no more than two or three of these services.

<sup>25</sup> The two NGOs are “Hope Village Association” and “Banati”.

Therefore, a special focus in the current research is placed on Egyptian street girls who not only are an important source of street grandchildren and are underserved but who also seem to have gradually changed their pattern in the street in the five last years. According to several street workers<sup>26</sup>, street girls' growing dissatisfaction with NGOs and the increasing lack of security in the streets of Cairo have pushed street girls to seek refuge and shelter in prostitution houses and underground casinos. Therefore, the phenomenon of street girls continues to exist and even engender a second generation of street children, but becomes harder to spot and to document. As a result, reaching street girls through NGOs is now harder than it was five years ago; the situation may continue to deteriorate if NGOs fail to explore other approaches to deal with street girls. Moreover, the recent crackdown against street children (girls included) has also contributed to the acceleration of the process where street girls escape from street violence and authorities' violations into prostitution houses and underground casinos.

Consequently, between the poor outcome of the rescuing approach applied by NGOs and the violence of the punitive approach applied by the government, this dissertation tries to find a third path where the efforts of NGOs and the State can lead to solutions that are more tailored to the needs of street girls.

## **E. The key question**

Aside from the negative image of street girls, the recent official crackdown and donors' reticence, what caused the efforts of NGOs with street girls during the past 30 years to be a failure? Why were they effective in pulling some street girls from the street and less effective in attaining the same goal with other girls? The main question of the current research is: when, with whom, and in what specific context, can street girls' rehabilitation programs become a success, and why? This question opens the door to a number of other related questions such as:

- In terms of the socio-economic characteristics of each street girl, is there any set of characteristics that would make some street girls more responsive (or more "*promising*") to an NGO rehabilitation program than other girls? And if the answer is yes, what would be the characteristics of a "*promising street girl*" versus the characteristics of a "*less promising street girl*" or a "*non-promising street girl*"?

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<sup>26</sup> Personal interview with Mohamed Tharwat and Mr. Emad (Hope Village, Rod el-farag), March 2013.

- In terms of the reasons behind their homelessness, is there any connection between the reason that pushed/pulled each girl to the street and the level of success attained by the rehabilitation program? In other words, can any particular type of “push” or ”pull” factor have an impact on the level of effectiveness the program reaches with each street girl?
- In terms of experience and relationship of each street girl in normal times with the Egyptian judicial and police system, can we talk about some particularly traumatic experiences or “irregular” relationships with the authorities and the street community that make the rehabilitation of certain street girls less likely to succeed than others? And if the answer is yes, what kind of experience or relationship would this be?
- In terms of needs, what specific needs do street girls usually try to satisfy when they first visit the rehabilitation center? And to what extent are their needs met? And what were the reasons that pushed them back to the street?
- In terms of intervention, is there a special intervention that can make the program’s effort with a “*non-promising street girl*” or a “*less promising street girl*” a success? And is there any special treatment that can turn the program’s effort with a “*promising street girl*” into a failure?

## F. Thesis’ Chapters

To answer these questions, the current dissertation consists of four chapters. **The first chapter** constitutes a review of the literature about street children and the different definitions and perspectives used to study the phenomenon. It also sheds light on the wide diversity existing within the category of street children and shows how the previous literature has studied this heterogeneity. Then, it introduces the four main approaches used by governmental and non-governmental actors to address the issue of street children.

The **second chapter** expands on the method this dissertation uses to tackle the problem of street children and girls within the Egyptian context. It starts by introducing the social ecology approach which the current dissertation adopts as a theoretical framework. This approach studies children’s development and the reasons why children, street children included, think and act differently. This short study provides a good basis for understanding the reasons street children may respond differently to NGOs. The second chapter examines the five layers of a child’s environment and how they interact and affect his life decisions. (The impact of these five layers on street children’s decision-making becomes the main

axle around which revolve the two following chapters of this dissertation.) The second chapter briefs the reader on the different approaches adopted by the Egyptian government and NGOs to address the problem of street boys and girls. Then, it provides details about the particular sample of street girls this research chose to study, the socio-economic characteristics of these girls and the method by which their data was collected and analyzed.

As for the third and the fourth chapters, they are devoted to reporting the research results and findings as well as to analysing them. **The third chapter** examines a first set of results of the field work-- two layers of the street girls' environment-- and tries to identify their effect on girls' decisions to either quit the street or to stay homeless. In order to do so, the chapter studies the factors that pushed street girls to the street and girls' patterns to cope with the street community. **The fourth chapter** explores a second set of results of the field work, which is the effect of the three remaining layers on street girls' decisions. While doing so, the chapter discusses the different needs girls and their children have on the street (in terms of nutrition, shelter, health services, education, etc.) and the extent to which the severity of their need for a social support system can affect their responsiveness to NGOs. It examines as well girls' past experience with NGOs and with the mainstream society in an attempt to measure the impact of such experience on girls' decisions.

Finally, the **conclusion** summarizes the study's findings regarding the interaction between the five layers of street girls' environment and the impact of this interaction on girls' responsiveness to NGOs. In that sense, it provides some insight on which types of interactions may be more likely to lead to successful NGO interventions and which may be more likely to lead to failure. Finally, based on these findings, the study suggests a number of recommendations and needed measures for Egyptian NGOs and government to better address the problem of street children. These recommendations may provide some guidance to other governments and non-Egyptian NGOs to prevent the Egyptian scenario from reproducing itself.



## **Chapter 1: Street children in the academic literature**



*Who are street children? What does the existing literature say about them? How diverse are they? And how did NGOs, governments and communities historically deal with them? These are all questions the current chapter tries to answer.*

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## **1.1 Who are street children?**

One of the major problems researchers often face when studying street children is the different definitions used to describe the phenomenon. Some definitions are suggested by international organizations while others are adopted by national agencies. The first attempt to define the phenomenon was made by the United Nations in 1985. According to the UN, a street child is “a girl or a boy (under 18) for whom the street has become his or her abode and/or source of livelihood; and who is inadequately protected, supervised or directed by responsible adults”<sup>27</sup>. However, due to the ambiguity of terms such as “inadequately protected” and the fact that street children often live in groups sometimes directed and protected by responsible adults<sup>28</sup>, the need for a new definition emerged.

The second proposed definition was presented by UNICEF in 1986. The organization suggested that the term “street children” is used to designate two categories of children<sup>29</sup>. The first, which UNICEF called “children “on” the street,” referred to those children who work in the street during the day and often return home to their families at night. The second category, children “of” the street, referred to those who work and live in the streets and maintain minimal ties with their families but essentially live on their own<sup>30</sup>. Nonetheless, this distinction was seriously criticized by several researches and social workers who found that the situation of many children does not fit easily into either category<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> Nashaat Hussein, *Street children in Egypt: group dynamics and subcultural constituents* (Cairo: AUC press, 2005), 2.

<sup>28</sup> Hussein, 11.

<sup>29</sup> Hussein, 2.

<sup>30</sup> Kamal Fahmi, *Beyond the Victim: The Ethics of Empowering Cairo's Street Children*, (Cairo: AUC press, 2007), 84-85.

<sup>31</sup> Fahmi, 85.

A third definition was suggested by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1993. This definition added two sub-categories to the two categories previously defined by UNICEF. It suggested that the definition of “street children” includes all of the following<sup>32</sup>:

- Children living on the streets, whose immediate concerns are survival and shelter<sup>33</sup>.
- Children who remain in contact with their family, but because of poverty, overcrowding, or sexual or physical abuse within the family will spend some nights, or most days on the streets<sup>34</sup>.
- Children who are detached from their families and living in temporary shelters, such as abandoned houses and other buildings, hostels/refuges/shelters, or moving about between friends.
- Children who are in institutional care, who have come from a situation of homelessness and are at risk of returning to a homeless existence.

Another category of underserved children often confused with street children is the category of child workers. An important characteristic that can help distinguish between both is that child workers do not necessarily have a troubled relationship with their families, whereas street children are often on the street as a result of flagrant and recurring abuse at home. The ruptured ties between street children and their families, even if some street children continue to pay occasional visits to a few family members, are probably the most evident characteristics of street children.

## 1.2 Types of street children

Studying the phenomenon of street children gave rise to a large body of literature that underlined the wide diversity existing within this apparently homogenous category. Not only are street children diverse in terms of age, gender or length of stay on the street but in a long list of other criteria. On the socio-economic level for instance, street children come from families who don't necessarily share the same socio-economic backgrounds. The factors that pushed children to the street or pulled them to it (*the push-pull factors*) are also very diverse. Even psychologically, street children do not have the same capabilities and

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<sup>32</sup> “A One Way Street? Program on Psychoactive Substance Use Among Street Children” (Geneva: World Health Organization, Program on Substance Abuse, 1993). [http://pangaea.org/street\\_children/world/who3.htm](http://pangaea.org/street_children/world/who3.htm)

<sup>33</sup> Slightly meets the definition of children ‘*of*’ the street.

<sup>34</sup> Is more or less the definition of children ‘*on*’ the street.

patterns of coping with the street environment. They do not approach NGOs for the same reasons and they often have very different needs. Within the judicial system as well, street children may not have the same legal status. In the following lines, some of this literature is shared.

### 1.2.1 Different Push-Pull factors

Researchers found that the reasons pushing or pulling children to the street are various. In his review of the body of literature tackling this question, Johann Le Roux<sup>35</sup> explained that from a global perspective, four main social and economic factors are behind this phenomenon. The first is the existence of “family pathology such as alcoholism, child abuse (physical or sexual) or neglect”<sup>36</sup>. The second is poverty, which he explained by the fact that “some families could not survive without the financial contribution of a working or a self-supporting child (which sometimes involves prostitution)”<sup>37</sup>. The third reason is to escape the failure and humiliation they experience at school. And finally, the fourth is to seek a better life than the one they would have if they remained at home.<sup>38</sup>

According to Le Roux, the predominant factor behind the children being on the street may vary from one country to another. In Nepal for example, he mentions that the main factor is child abuse and neglect followed by the factor of being attracted to city life<sup>39</sup>. In other countries, such as most of the African<sup>40</sup> and the Latin American countries<sup>41</sup>, poverty constitutes the main factor pushing children to the streets while family breakdowns occupy the second place. In Bombay (India) and in Cairo (Egypt), on the contrary, studies reported that family instability is the primary factor behind the children being on the streets followed by poverty and the desire to enjoy the city life (in Bombay)<sup>42</sup> and by physical and sexual abuse (in Cairo)<sup>43</sup>. Peers’ pressure and influence are some other reported factors in Zambia<sup>44</sup> and in Egypt<sup>45</sup>. For Egyptian street girls, other factors included seeking their

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<sup>35</sup> Le Roux, 684.

<sup>36</sup> Le Roux, 684.

<sup>37</sup> Le Roux, 685.

<sup>38</sup> Le Roux, 685.

<sup>39</sup> Le Roux, 686.

<sup>40</sup> Kopoka, 9.

<sup>41</sup> Rizzini and Mark W. Lusk, “Children in the Streets: Latin America’s Lost Generation”, *Children and Youth Services Review*, (Vol. 17, No. 3, 1995), 392.

<sup>42</sup> Francis A. Kombarakaran, “Street children of Bombay: their stresses and strategies of coping”, *Children and Youth Services Review*, (Vol. 26, 2004), 853– 871.

<sup>43</sup> “*Atfal Khareg Nitaq Al-Himâyah*” (Unprotected Children) (SPAAC, 2004), 8-12.

<sup>44</sup> Dr. Musonda Lemba, “Rapid Assessment of Street Children In Lusaka” (UNICEF Zambia, 2002), 8.

independence, being forced into illegal activities, sexual abuse that led to extramarital pregnancy, fleeing school and being kicked out of home<sup>46</sup>. Finally, some researchers<sup>47</sup> preferred not to attribute children's homelessness to one single reason and emphasized that a combination of "pushing" factors makes their life at home unbearable and similarly a combination of "pulling" factors drags them to the street.

### 1.2.2 Different degrees of entrenchment in the street

Street children not only have different reasons for being on the street but also have different degrees of entrenchment in the street. Degree of entrenchment makes leaving the street easier for some and deters others from making the same decision. This was the subject of much interesting research such as Osborne's study<sup>48</sup> that underlined the fact that increased isolation from "non-homeless" environments and further involvement in the homeless environment, along with a longer time spent on the street and a greater number of street friends, led homeless individuals to alter their perceptions of what constitutes a problem worthy of treatment<sup>49</sup>. Therefore, despite having a list of ailments, some homeless would not ask for any treatment and prefer to maintain their *status quo*. Osborne's study was supported by another conducted by Grigsby et al<sup>50</sup> claiming that individuals who replace lost ties to family and friends with ties to street people may become acculturated to homelessness and therefore be unlikely to leave the street<sup>51</sup>.

On the other hand, Slesnick et al proved that having supportive relations with people from outside the street community plays a key role in facilitating homeless people's transition out of the street<sup>52</sup>. However, the study showed that the weight of this factor

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<sup>45</sup>SPAAC, 12.

<sup>46</sup> Dr. Hanna Abul-ghar, Dr. Ossama Refaat and Mohamed Tag El-Din, "Psychological and Physical Health of Street Girl Victims of Sexual Abuse" (Hope Village Association, Civil Society Forum, 2004).

<sup>47</sup> Such as Nashaat Hussein and Kamal Fahmi. For further details, see Kamal Fahmi, *Beyond the Victim: The Ethics of Empowering Cairo's Street Children* (Cairo: AUC press, 2007). and Nashaat Hussein, *Street Children in Egypt: Group Dynamics and Subcultural Constituents* (Cairo: AUC press, 2005) 59.

<sup>48</sup> Randall E. Osborne, "I May be Homeless, But I'm Not Helpless": The Costs and Benefits of Identifying with Homelessness", *Self and Identity*, (1: 1, 2002), 43 – 52.

<sup>49</sup> Randall E. Osborne et al., "A Social Comparison Perspective of Treatment Seeking by the Homeless", *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless*, (Vol. 2, No. 2, 1993), 135-153.

<sup>50</sup> Charles Grigsby, Donald Baumann, Steven E. Gregorich, and Cynthia Roberts-Gray, "Disaffiliation to entrenchment: A model for understanding homelessness", *Journal of Social Issues*, (46, 1990), 151-156.

<sup>51</sup> For other studies supporting this thesis, see Chuck M. MacKnee and Jennifer Mervyn, "Critical Incidents That Facilitate Homeless People's Transition Off the Streets", *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless*, (Vol. 11, No. 4, October 2002), 293- 306.

<sup>52</sup> Natasha Slesnick et al., "Predictors of Homelessness Among Street Living Youth", *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*; (37(4), 2008), 465–474.

(supportive relations) on the homeless decision may vary depending on age: patterns of change in homelessness were different between youth and adults.

### 1.2.3 Different survival strategies

Psychologists have tried as well to understand the reasons behind the different patterns of homelessness. Osborne<sup>53</sup> proved that homeless persons who develop strategies to survive on the street used fewer services (were more self-reliant), made fewer attempts to transition off the street and had higher self-esteem scores than those with low identification scores. In other words, homeless with high self-esteem and self-reliance are highly unlikely to transition back off the street and vice-versa.

However, the high self-esteem and confidence of the homeless person in his ability to survive on the street may be accompanied by a loss of self-confidence in his ability to re-enter the mainstream society. This is what Wolch and Dear<sup>54</sup> stated in their study claiming that the degrading physical environment of the streets contributed to a loss of self-esteem and self-worth that appeared to work against the success of long-term projects aimed at re-entering mainstream society<sup>55</sup>.

### 1.2.4 Different reasons for exiting the street

Even the reasons that push homeless people out of the street are diverse. MacKnee and Mervyn<sup>56</sup> identified five different incidents influencing the homeless person's decision to exit the street. The first one is establishing strong ties with families and mainstream institutions instead of street friends; this confirms and supports the findings of Osborne, Slesnick and Grigsby's studies mentioned earlier<sup>57</sup>. The second is realizing one's self-worth and acknowledging one's abilities, which supports as well the findings of Wolch and Dear's study<sup>58</sup>. The third is accepting personal responsibilities "by facing the wounds of the past with counselors, support workers, friends, and relatives or by accepting the responsibility of

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<sup>53</sup> Osborne, "I May be Homeless..", 2002, 43 – 52.

<sup>54</sup> Jennifer R. Wolch and Michael J. Dear, *Malign neglect: Homelessness in an American city* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993).

<sup>55</sup> MacKnee, 302.

<sup>56</sup> Macknee, 293 - 306.

<sup>57</sup> Randall E. Osborne et al, "A Social Comparison Perspective..", and Grigsby, "Disaffiliation to entrenchment..." and finally Slesnick et al, "Predictors of Homelessness..."

<sup>58</sup> Wolch and Dear.

being a good mother”<sup>59</sup>. The fourth is accomplishing mainstream lifestyle goals “by involving in meaningful work, living in an established residence, and completing educational goals”<sup>60</sup>. Finally, the fifth incident is to change the homeless person’s perceptions “through cognitive adjustment that underlines the physical, emotional, and moral destitution of the street’s life”.

Another study by Berckmans et al. offered a synthesis of 33 studies highlighting the various factors making it likely for program interventions to succeed in getting street children out of the street<sup>61</sup>. According to the study, on a first “*micro-level*”, interventions are more effective when they create a family-like environment where staff develops long-term meaningful relationships with street children. The later condition is made possible through the support of staff members, former street children, a planned strategy involving friends and peers, a hope for change and the involvement of street children in religious practices. On a second “*meso-level*”, interventions become more successful when they offer to street children more opportunities to attend school, vocational training, and educational outings and involve them in recreational activities. Interventions effectiveness increases as well when they build partnerships between public, private and civil-society organizations facilitating a smooth transition for the children back to their communities. Finally, what raises interventions effectiveness on a third “*macro-level*” is a governmental action towards social inclusion of street children. This means the establishment by the government of an urban health care structure specific to the problematic of homelessness, a formal child protection system and a reform of the juvenile justice system.

### 1.2.5 Different legal status

According to Article 37(d) of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child who is in conflict with the law should “have the right to prompt access to legal and other appropriate assistance, as well as the right to challenge the legality of the deprivation of his

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<sup>59</sup> MacKnee, 303.

<sup>60</sup> MacKnee, 303.

<sup>61</sup> Isabel Berckmans, Marcela Losantos Velasco, Bismarck Pinto Tapia, Gerrit Loots, “A systematic review: A quest for effective interventions for children and adolescents in street situation”, *Children and Youth Services Review*, (34, 2012) 1259–1272.

or her liberty before a court or other competent, independent and impartial authority, and to a prompt decision on any such action. <sup>62</sup>”

Due to their tough circumstances and the various troubles they may get themselves into, many street children fall under the category of children in conflict with the law. However, not all of them are granted the same level of access to legal assistance as stipulated by the UN convention. In Guatemala for instance, street children were lucky to get the legal assistance needed to file an international lawsuit before an international adjudicatory body. According to Uché U. Ewelukwa, the lawsuit was “the very first case in the history of the Inter-American Court where the victims of human rights violations were children and the first case ever involving street children before an international adjudicatory body. <sup>63</sup>”

On the contrary, street children in other countries struggle to get the needed legal assistance to file local lawsuits on the very first level. This is for example the case in Egypt where many street children do not have any official documents showing their identity, such as birth certificates or national ID<sup>64</sup>. The lack of such documents is one among other problems making their access to legal protection (attorneys and advocates), social services and rehabilitation programs more difficult than that of their peers who do have them.

Another example of how legal status among street children varies is the way the treatment of street boys and girls under 18 can differ according to national laws. For instance, the Egyptian Child Law (n. 12 of 1996) and its amendment (n. 126 of 2008) distinguish between street children depending on their age category<sup>65</sup>. And according to the same law, each age category is treated differently. These age categories are as follows:

- Children under the age of seven have no criminal responsibility and cannot be charged with any criminal offences,
- Children between the age of seven and twelve cannot be charged with criminal offences. However, any who commit a felony or a misdemeanor should be referred

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<sup>62</sup> UN convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990, <http://www.nccm-egypt.org/e7/e2392/e1430/e1432/infoboxContent1433/ConventionontheRightsoftheChild.pdf> p10.

<sup>63</sup> Uché U. Ewelukwa, “Litigating the Rights of Street Children in Regional or International Fora: Trends, Options, Barriers and Breakthroughs”, *Yale Human Rights and Development Journal*, (Volume 9, Issue 1, 2014), 84-131.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Manal Shahin, General Director of The Child Hotline, Cairo, January 2009.

<sup>65</sup> Adel Azer et al, *Nahwa Manhag Hoqouqi Le-syasat Hemayat Al-tefl fi Masr* (Towards a human rights approach in dealing with child protection policies in Egypt), (Cairo: Dar El-Fikr El-Arabi, 2008), 68.

either to a corrective institution or a therapy/counseling center, or reunified with their families<sup>66</sup>.

- Children between the age of twelve and fifteen can be charged with criminal offences. However, legal sanctions applied to them should not be other than one of the following: probation, public service, referral to a corrective institution or a therapy/counseling center, or reunification with their families<sup>67</sup>.
- Children between the age of fifteen and eighteen can be charged with criminal offences. However, the decision either to apply one of the aforementioned sanctions or to give a reduced sentence should be left to the judge's discretion<sup>68</sup>.

### 1.2.6 Where does the current thesis stand?

The existing literature clearly highlights the diversity of street children and constitutes a solid ground for researchers and future studies interested in the phenomenon. The current thesis starts where this literature ends and tries to examine how street children's diversity contributes to their different level of responsiveness to NGOs. For instance, one of the thesis' chapters explores whether certain *push factors* contribute more than others to the low responsiveness of girls who choose to stay permanently on the street. Another chapter examines street girls who decided to go back to the street after exiting it and the extent to which their decision was influenced by the same reasons that initially pushed them out of the street, or by the survival techniques they used while on the street, or by their degree of entrenchment on the street.

## 1.3 Four approaches to deal with street children

In addition to the academic attention directed towards street children, street children have historically been the target of many social interventions and programs, from the side of NGOs and communities or from the side of governments. While governments were supposedly better situated to eradicate the problem, most of the efforts dealing with street children were undertaken by communities and NGOs. This may be due to the fact that most southern governments are overloaded by a myriad of other urgent and pressing concerns. In this regard, P. Kopoka's study of the street children phenomenon in Africa mentions that

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<sup>66</sup> Article 94, in the Egyptian Child Law (N.12 for 1996) and its amendment (N.126 for 2008), The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, 2008, p31.

<sup>67</sup> Article 101, *ibid*, p 36.

<sup>68</sup> Azer, 68.

most African countries have left the problem of street children to charity and religious NGOs<sup>69</sup>. This same conclusion is drawn by I. Rizzini and M.W. Lusk who studied the same phenomenon in Latin America: most of the efforts to tackle the problem of street children are left to churches, NGOs and UNICEF, with a very minimal engagement from governments<sup>70</sup>. Another group of researchers may disagree with Rizzini's conclusion though. In their study aiming to evaluate governmental interventions targeting street children in Brazil and in Peru, Harris et al. have highlighted two interesting programs ran by the governments of the two countries. According to the researchers, the results of the study suggest that the programs are successful<sup>71</sup>.

When addressing the problem of street children, NGOs and governments have historically adopted four approaches<sup>72</sup>. The first is the punitive/correctional approach which tends to perceive street children as children who have gone astray and who need to be disciplined. It is usually adopted by governments and implemented through their correctional institutions--which tend to be unsafe, violent and abusive<sup>73</sup>.

The second approach is the rehabilitative or rescuing approach which perceives children as victims and believes they can be re-integrated in the mainstream society through education and psycho-social rehabilitation. It is mainly adopted by NGOs and practiced by providing services to street children and offering them shelter. However, the main goal of this approach is to take street children out of the street, which is not always what street children accept and decide to do.

The third approach is the empowering approach which refuses to perceive children's presence on the street as a problem per se and changes its primary goal from that of rescuing them to empowering and educating them while on the street. It is based on Paulo Freire's model of education that emphasizes meeting students on their own turf and

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<sup>69</sup> Kopoka, 10-11.

<sup>70</sup> Rizzini and Lusk (1995), 396-397.

<sup>71</sup> Melissa S. Harris et al., "Community Reinsertion Success of Street Children Programs in Brazil and Peru", in *Children and Youth Services Review*, (Volume 33, Issue 5, May 2011), 723-731.

<sup>72</sup> Lusk, Street children programs in Latin America, 55-77.

<sup>73</sup> Lusk, Street children programs in Latin America, 55-77.

providing them with a combination of practical and political skills<sup>74</sup>. This approach is also adopted by NGOs and churches but is less prevalent than the rescuing approach.

The fourth approach is the preventative approach which tries to tackle the original causes pushing children to the street, such as poverty and child abuse. It focuses on the prevention of this abuse through a number of social and economic programs designed to assist vulnerable families with children. It also focuses on raising the awareness of communities and community leaders regarding the importance of reporting child abuse. This approach is implemented by NGOs and governments both, with governments more or less working on enforcement of a number of preventative laws and measures against child abuse and neglect.

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<sup>74</sup> Rizzini and Lusk (1995), 397.

## **Chapter 2: Studying street children in the Egyptian context**



*How is the phenomenon of street children defined in Egypt? How many street children does Egypt have? How did Egyptian NGOs and government historically deal with them? How does this current research study street children within the Egyptian context? What approach and methodology does it use? And how did it collect the data and analyze it? This chapter tries to answer these questions.*

## **2.1 Defining Egypt's street children**

As stated in the first chapter, many definitions exist for the concept of street children. In Egypt, most governmental and non-governmental agencies, with the notable exceptions of the Ministry of Interior (MOI) and the Juvenile Police, use the UN definition<sup>75</sup>. As for the Juvenile Police in charge of enforcing Egyptian law, the term of “street children” doesn’t exist because it is nowhere to be found in the Egyptian law. The law uses the term of a person “vulnerable to danger”<sup>76</sup> instead of street children, and includes in this category “any person under 18 who begs, including selling or performing for small amounts of money; collects cigarette butts or rubbish; engages in immoral conduct or works for those who do; lacks a stable place of residence; associates with suspect persons or others vulnerable to delinquency; is a habitual truant; is incorrigible; lacks a legal source of income or support; suffers from a mental defect or illness; or, in the case of children under seven, commits any felony or misdemeanor”<sup>77</sup>.

When examined closely, the definition of “vulnerable to danger” seems to differ significantly from the UN definition of “street children”. The first difference is that street children are not always or necessarily involved in delinquent activities. The second is that the definition of “vulnerable to danger” can include other children who may not be necessarily homeless and who have a stable place of residence. To illustrate this difference, Figure 1 highlights the areas where these two definitions overlap and the areas where they diverge.

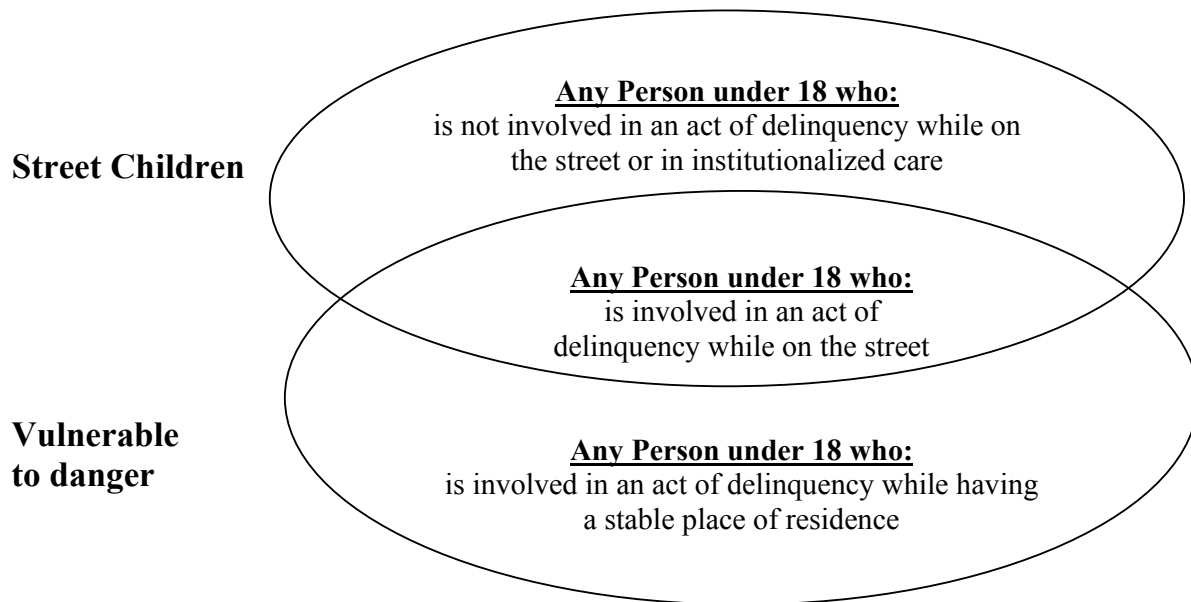
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<sup>75</sup> For UN’s definition, see p13.

<sup>76</sup> In the Egyptian child law, street children were always referred to as “vulnerable to delinquency” until the law was amended in 2008. Since then, street children have been referred to as “vulnerable to danger”.

<sup>77</sup> Egyptian Child Law, n.126 for 2008, Article 96.

**Figure 1 - Differences and similarities between "street children" and "vulnerable to danger"**



The definition adopted by the MOI makes its data about street children relatively inaccurate and unreliable; another reason makes the Ministry's data all but trustworthy. During a personal interview with a high ranking official in the Ministry, where I was trying to check for any possible increase or decrease in the numbers of street children, my interviewee explained how data is handled within the ministry. According to him,

*"It is useless to compare their numbers each year trying to conclude anything because I will tell you how things usually work. We sit together in the beginning of each year, check the number of kids we arrested the year before and based on that, we decide on the number we will have to arrest this year. It usually has to be a number that is close to the number of the year before. Sometimes, some officers want to look more active and effective than their predecessors so they increase the number of arrested kids. But, usually we tend to keep it approximately the same each year"*<sup>78</sup>.

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<sup>78</sup> Personal interview on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009 with Mohamed Aboul-Fotouh, Chief of Operations at the Egyptian Juvenile Police, Greater-Cairo Division.

## 2.2 Counting Egypt's street children

Relying on the data of the MOI to estimate the number of street children is not an option due to the two reasons listed above. However, other reliable estimates do exist. A number of national and international organizations have tried to count street children using more structured methods while referring to the UN definition. However, due to the constant mobility of street children, estimates are quite disparate and range from 4300<sup>79</sup> to two million<sup>80</sup>. Between these two extremes, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) estimated the number of street children to be around 10,000<sup>81</sup>. Another study by Hope Village estimated their number in 1995 to be around 93,000<sup>82</sup> and finally, in 2001, a rapid situation assessment (RSA) undertaken by the UN-ODCCP and the World Food Program in close cooperation with Egyptian NGOs suggested that the number of street children exceeded one million<sup>83</sup>.

The difficulty with quantitative estimation of street children led to the use of a different indicator known as the *street children visibility level*. This indicator was used in a recent study<sup>84</sup> conducted by the Consortium of British NGOs working with street children to evaluate their state in 96 countries, including Egypt. The study classified Egypt among thirty other countries where the phenomenon of street children is of a “*high level of visibility*”, meaning that children were detected on the streets in sufficient numbers and long enough to attract sustained NGO, governmental, media and research attention<sup>85</sup>.

## 2.3 How does Egypt deal with its street children?

Because the phenomenon of street children is remarkably visible especially in the streets of Cairo, in the 1980s the Egyptian civil society began to direct its efforts towards the rescue of street children. The Egyptian government then followed and contributed to

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<sup>79</sup> According to the Network of street children's NGOs in 2009

<http://www.id3m.com/D3M/View.php?image=p14-021-30062009.jpg&Number=1&ID=282268> (Arabic).

<sup>80</sup> “Rapid Situation Assessment of street children in Cairo and Alexandria” (United Nations ODCCP, Regional Office for MENA, 2001), 15.

<sup>81</sup> Personal Interview with Ambassador Hussein El-Sadr, spokesman for the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), Cairo, 28-01-09.

<sup>82</sup> Ahmed Seddiq, *Experiences with Street Children in Egypt*, (Cairo: Center for Child Rights and Protection, 1995).

<sup>83</sup> “Rapid Situation Assessment of street children in Cairo and Alexandria”, UNODCCP, 2001.

<sup>84</sup> “State of the World's Street Children”, (London: Consortium for street children, 2007), 67-81,

<http://www.crin.org/docs/street.pdf>

<sup>85</sup> “State of the World's Street Children: Violence” (Consortium for street children, 2007), 67.

these efforts, but its contribution remained remarkably limited compared to the civil society's contribution. In addition to NGOs and the Egyptian government, international organizations have also tried to address the problem in their own way. In the following lines, we explain the nature of each party's contribution.

### 2.3.1 The civil society: rescue, empowerment and advocacy

Historically, the Egyptian civil society was the first player to address the issue of street children with the founding of Hope Village NGO in 1987. Since then, at least a dozen other NGOs<sup>86</sup> have been using the same approach adopted by Hope Village, which is to "rescue" street children by either reuniting them with their families or by taking them off the street and rehabilitating them in their shelters.

The NGOs' rescue and rehabilitation approach consists of offering various resources to street children to encourage them to eventually quit street life and later to correct their delinquent behavior. It is a three step process beginning with NGO mobile units going to areas where street children usually live or gather and where NGOs can reach out easily to children who have recently joined the street. In a second step, NGOs offer services to children in their day-reception centers; in the final step, NGOs host children in their shelters. However, due to limited resources only five NGOs<sup>87</sup> out of fourteen have shelters for street children.

Although the rescuing approach prevails among street children NGOs, its outcome is noticeably poor. According to research conducted by Hope Village (one of the leading NGOs in the rescuing approach), only 10% of street children end up quitting the street, with 20% being reunified with their families, and 70% returning to the street after receiving the NGO's services<sup>88</sup>. Figure 2 illustrates this dilemma and suggests that instead of rescuing

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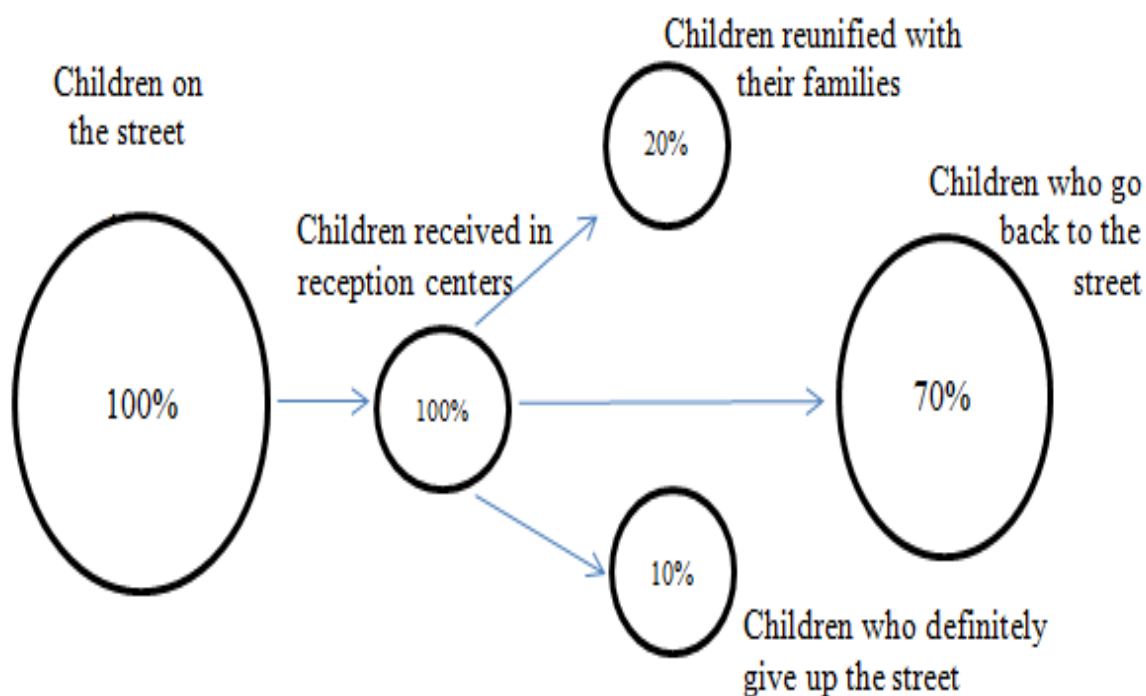
<sup>86</sup> The list of fourteen NGOs working with street children was kindly made available by the UNICEF office in Cairo. The list includes Hope Village, Caritas, El-Ma'wa (The Shelter), Bena' El-Mogtama' (Society Building), Nour El-Hayah (Light For Life), Tofulty (My Childhood), Ana El-Masry (I Am The Egyptian), El-Horeyya Letanmeyet El-Mogtama' (Freedom For Community Development), Hemaya Bela Hohoud (Protection Without Borders), El-Re'aya El-Egtema'eyya (Social Care), Afaq Gadida (New Horizons) Association, COESS, Hemayet El-Atfal (Children Protection), Tanmeyet El-Mogtama' (Community Development). However, the most active NGOs are only ten: Hope Village, Caritas, Ana El-Masry, Banati, El-Ma'wa, Bena' El-Mogtama', Nour El-Hayah, Tofulty, Afaq Gadida, Resalah.

<sup>87</sup> Hope Village, Caritas, Resalah, Banati and Ana El-Masry.

<sup>88</sup> The research in question is an unpublished statistic by Hope Village. It was kindly made available by Dr. Abba El-Badry, Secretary General of Hope Village Association after an interview with her in Cairo, May 12th, 2009.

street children from the street, NGOs' approach actually may be easing their stay in this unsafe environment.

**Figure 2- Street children turnover rate<sup>89</sup>**



The poor outcome of the rescuing approach was the reason that in 1998, one NGO (the Egyptian Association to Support Street Children or EASSC) decided to break the rule, refusing to perceive children's presence on the street as a problem per se and changing its primary goal from rescuing them to empowering them while on the street. Founded by Kamal Fahmi, a professor at the American University in Cairo, EASSC's mission was to offer street kids the opportunity to explore voluntarily other venues of socialization and become involved in other forms of sociability, even if this approach ended with them still on the street. For Kamal Fahmi the "rescuing approach" was meant to fail for two reasons:

*"Firstly, because of their past experiences, many of these children are wary of adult authority in general. Not having the protection of the family, school or village, their autonomy becomes the precious something that belongs to them. They should not be expected to give it up readily. Secondly, [...] asking them to be resilient in pursuing a non-street career, without appropriating their past street life, not only negates the*

<sup>89</sup> For detailed table and numbers, see Annex 1, p 138.

*meaningful relationships that they may have developed, but it also dismisses the value of the skills that they may have acquired, as well as their experiences and the lessons they may have learned*<sup>90</sup>.

However, Fahmi's approach to empower street children didn't last long due to bureaucratic and individual problems he encountered in Egypt, and his NGO was dissolved a few years later<sup>91</sup>.

In addition to rescuing and empowering street children, a third section of the Egyptian civil society follows a rights-based approach<sup>92</sup> and lobbies for the activation and enforcement of the Child Protection System set by the Egyptian Child Law (n.126 for 2008). According to this law, each governor is required to create a child protection committee to report cases of child abuse in Egyptian families and institutions, to take the necessary action against abusers, and to offer services to vulnerable families with kids who can potentially become street children<sup>93</sup>. However, these committees have never been created in certain governorates and remain clearly inactive and quasi-absent in the few governorates that did establish them.

### 2.3.2 The government: sanctions, strategies and preventative laws

While the Egyptian civil society had three clear approaches to deal with street children, the Egyptian government didn't seem to have one. Although Egypt created the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) in 1988 to be the main authority charged with setting up a national child welfare policy, the NCCM didn't tackle the issue of street children until 2002. In addition to that, despite Egypt's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, and despite the several positive amendments introduced by the Egyptian government to Egypt's constitution and Egypt Child Law, a lot of effort is still needed for these stipulated rights to turn into reality. The following paragraphs highlight the gap between what the Government of Egypt has committed to in terms of protecting child rights and what the Government has been doing on the ground.

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<sup>90</sup> Fahmi, 122-123.

<sup>91</sup> Personal interview in January 2009 with Captain Riad, former social worker at EASSC.

<sup>92</sup> Such as the Egyptian Coalition for child's rights founded in 2008 and the Egyptian Campaign for the Protection of Children founded in 2012.

<sup>93</sup> Article 97 to 99. Egyptian Child law n.126 for 2008.

Before 2002, dealing with street children was the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior (specifically the Juvenile Police) and the Ministry of Social Affairs. Both entities supervised and continue to supervise correctional institutions where children who are “vulnerable to danger” are usually placed following an arrest, as a protective and a discipline measure. However, both police lockups and correctional institutions turned out to be hubs of various sorts of mistreatment and child abuse. In 2003, a HRW report revealed that street children were transported to police lockups in trucks that are sometimes extremely crowded and mix the children with adult criminal detainees, who beat and verbally abuse them<sup>94</sup>. The mistreatment goes on, with police themselves beating street children (with hands and batons), binding their hands with rope or handcuffs, and subjecting them to obscene and degrading language while they are in police custody<sup>95</sup>. The report also disclosed police officers extorting money (and sometimes sex) from the children in exchange for avoiding arrest, securing early release from detention, or gaining access to food during detention<sup>96</sup>. The same report explained that both girls and boys were at risk for sexual abuse and violence in police custody, but girls and women living on the street were more likely to enter into sexual relationships with police even when they are not in custody<sup>97</sup>.

*a. Two unimplemented strategies for street children*

In 2002, the NCCM issued its first “Strategy to protect and rehabilitate homeless children”<sup>98</sup>, consisting of an action plan that required a highly coordinated effort between a number of Egyptian ministries such as the ministries of education, health, social insurance, interior, manpower, etc. However, because no authority was designated to monitor the implementation of this strategy or to evaluate its outcomes, the NCCM had to repeat the same process of writing another strategy in 2007--with the same inability to ensure a proper follow-up plan to the second strategy.

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<sup>94</sup> Clarissa Bencomo, “Charged with Being Children” (Human Rights Watch, Vol. 15, No. 1, February 2003), 16, <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/egypt0203/egypt0203.pdf>.

<sup>95</sup> Bencomo, 17.

<sup>96</sup> Bencomo, 18.

<sup>97</sup> Bencomo, 19.

<sup>98</sup> “The National Strategy for the Protection and Rehabilitation of Homeless Children”, (Cairo: NCCM, July 2002).

*b. An amended Egyptian Child Law ... yet inactivated*

Then in 2008, and following a close collaboration with several civil society partners, the NCCM was able to get the Egyptian Child Law<sup>99</sup> amended by introducing many articles in favor of children's rights in general and of street children's rights in particular. The major amendment for the best interest of street children was the introduction of Child Protection Committees (CPC), which are supposed to be the equivalent of Child Protective Services (CPS) in the British system of child welfare. According to the Egyptian Child Law<sup>100</sup>, each governor in Egypt is required to establish a CPC to report to authorities cases of abuse and refer families and at-risk children to available services. The Egyptian Child Law also gives CPC the authority to refer child abusers to family courts and to issue recommendations regarding the children's best interests. However, very few governors have established CPC in their governorate and many children continue to be abused in their families and schools without getting the needed protection. Consequently, as the government fails to protect abused and neglected children, the flow of children leaving home and running away to the street continues to grow.

Another right given to street children by the Executive Regulation<sup>101</sup> of the amended child law was their right to benefit from the system of foster care. Up until 2008, street children were not among the categories of children who could join the foster care system in Egypt. However, according to Article 86 of the Executive regulation, “...*eligible to receive foster care any child: with unknown parents, or who was abandoned by his family, or who has a family that authorities fail to find, or whom the case study reveals he can no more live with his biological parents or relatives*”. However, Article 86 was never activated. Furthermore, when I<sup>102</sup> discussed with a senior official at the Ministry of Social Affairs the possibility of using Article 86 with street children for whom NGOs and correctional

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<sup>99</sup> No. 12 for 1996.

<sup>100</sup> No. 126 for 2008, Articles 98 and 99. An English version of the law is available here: [http://www.nccm-egypt.org/e7/e2498/e2691/infoboxContent2692/ChildLawno126english\\_eng.pdf](http://www.nccm-egypt.org/e7/e2498/e2691/infoboxContent2692/ChildLawno126english_eng.pdf)

<sup>101</sup> A complementary legal document that explains certain articles of the Egyptian Child law. Only the Arabic version of the document is available here: <http://www.mfa.gov.eg/Arabic/Ministry/TraffickinginPersons/low/Documents/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%AD%D8%A9%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%B0%D9%8A%D8%A9%20%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D9%81%D9%84.doc>

<sup>102</sup> As a founding member of the Popular Campaign for the Protection of Children.

institutions are not convenient options, the representative of the Ministry explained she ignored the existence of such an article<sup>103</sup>.

Another article of benefit to street children was Article 134, which stipulates that children's NGOs and correctional institutions should be inspected at least once every 3 months by court experts to ensure the quality of their services and to report potential violations against children. Finally, Article 20 allowed children who were born out of wedlock to have their birth certificates issued by their mother. However, Article 134 was never activated and Article 20 is only implemented when street mothers are accompanied by their attorneys<sup>104</sup>.

*c. A third strategy for street children: because two are not enough*

Although none of the afore-mentioned articles or strategies was activated, in 2013 the Egyptian Government decided to set up a new national strategy for street children. This third strategy came out in very unique circumstances. In 2011, the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF)<sup>105</sup> decided to place the NCCM under the supervision of the Ministry of Health instead of the Egyptian Cabinet<sup>106</sup>. As a result, the already limited role of the NCCM was weakened further and the deeply bureaucratic Ministry of Social Affairs, previously in charge of the abusive correctional institutions, was put in charge of finding solutions for the problem of street children. In 2012, both the Ministry of Defense<sup>107</sup> and the Ministry of Social Affairs decided that the proper way to deal with street children is to bring them together in a "village" or a "resort"<sup>108</sup> built specifically for them and intended as both a place of discipline and of vocational education. Consequently, a generous budget<sup>109</sup> was allocated in 2012 by the Ministry of Defense to the construction of the village, until the

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<sup>103</sup> Discussion with Wafaa el-Mestekawi, Head of the Social Defense Administration, November 2012.

<sup>104</sup> NGOs have reported several cases of street mothers who were arrested for "fornication" when trying to issue birth certificates for their children born out of the wedlock. Since then, street mothers were advised by NGOs not to issue birth certificates for their newborns unless they were accompanied by a lawyer. Personal discussion in September 2009 with Dr. Hanna Aboul-Ghar, Head of Banati NGOs for street girls.

<sup>105</sup> The SCAF took over the power after Mubarak's toppling in February 2011.

<sup>106</sup> Decree N. 28 for 2011.

<sup>107</sup> Although at that time Egypt was under the rule of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Egyptian army still had the upper hand in many internal and civil affairs.

<sup>108</sup> Officials in the Ministry of Social Affairs, under whose supervision the project was to be placed, called it sometimes a 'resort' and sometimes a 'club'.

<sup>109</sup> 17 Million L.E.; for more details see <https://nilerevolt.wordpress.com/2012/09/10/the-ghetto-city/>

civil society learned about the plan and unanimously rejected it<sup>110</sup>. At that point the two Ministries withdrew their plan temporarily and began consulting with the civil society and international organizations<sup>111</sup> in November 2012 about possible alternatives. The consultations led to the writing of a third national strategy for street children in 2013<sup>112</sup>.

The strategy recommended the government implement a four level intervention. The first level consists of a number of measures to prevent children from becoming runaways<sup>113</sup>, the second consists of measures to protect children while on the street, the third level focuses on their protection during their placement in institutions<sup>114</sup> and the fourth suggests successful methods for children's rehabilitation. Nevertheless, no specific entity within the government or from outside was designated to monitor the implementation of the strategy. Moreover, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Defense do not seem to have given up on the village project<sup>115</sup>; it continues on.

### 2.3.3 International organizations: coordinators and capacity builders

International NGOs working with Egypt's street children are of two types. The first type includes international organizations that follow the same rescuing approach<sup>116</sup> as the Egyptian civil society<sup>117</sup>. The second coordinates governmental and non-governmental efforts, builds the capacities of both governmental and non-governmental players, and provides the necessary technical and financial assistance to both<sup>118</sup>.

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<sup>110</sup> For the representatives of the civil society it was worthless to build a whole new village to receive street children when existing NGOs and governmental receiving homes are not fully occupied, and when investing in building the capacities of existing institutions and training their staff was more beneficial.

<sup>111</sup> Such as UNICEF-Egypt and Save the Children-Egypt.

<sup>112</sup> The Strategic Plan to deal with the issue of homeless children 2013, Ministry of Insurance and Social Affairs, Cairo, 2013, 21 pages

<sup>113</sup> Which includes a number of needed measures to assist vulnerable families with potential street children.

<sup>114</sup> Which includes NGOs' shelters and day-reception centers as well as governmental correctional institutions.

<sup>115</sup> All the information included in this paragraph was gathered during my participation as a founding member of the Popular Campaign for the Protection of Children in the deliberations between the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Egyptian civil society from November 2012 to June 2013, regarding the best way to tackle the problem of street children.

<sup>116</sup> For details about the rescuing approach, see "Four approaches to deal with street children", p19.

<sup>117</sup> This applies to organizations such as FACE International and SAMUSOCIAL.

<sup>118</sup> This includes organizations like UNICEF, Save the Children, Terre des Hommes, Human Rights Watch and UNODCCP.

For some organizations such as UNICEF and “Save the Children”, the main partners and beneficiaries are Egyptian street children NGOs, the NCCM (until 2011) and the Ministry of Social Affairs. For organizations with a more rights-based orientation, such as HRW, Terre des Hommes and UNODCCP, the main partners are local NGOs advocating for children’s rights and striving to enforce child protection laws within police lockups, correctional institutions and NGO shelters.

One of the major outcomes of this coordinating and capacity building effort was the creation of two new major entities: the National Network of Street Children NGOs<sup>119</sup> in 2007 and the Egyptian Coalition for Children’s Rights (ECCR) in 2008. The first joined together five NGOs<sup>120</sup> tasked with setting up a coordinated plan to reach out to street children, educate them and provide them with the health services and vocational training they need. The second, which consists of a coalition of 100 children NGOs, has been advocating since 2008 for the activation of child protection committees and for the rights of children especially in the two transitional constitutions Egypt has known since Mubarak’s toppling in 2011<sup>121</sup>.

#### 2.3.4 Street girls in the eyes of the Egyptian society and NGOs

The underlying principles shaping the Egyptian society’s perception of street girls and subsequent intervention strategies are relatively complex. In a conservative society, street girls are seen as something more serious than some “kids in trouble” or “little criminals” who deserve the harsh treatment they get from the police and other authorities<sup>122</sup>. Rather they are perceived essentially as “rebel females” who chose to violate both their families’ rules and their traditional society’s customs, and therefore they don’t deserve

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<sup>119</sup> Initiated and funded by UNICEF, this network was a project aimed to enhance the capacities of street children NGOs and raise the level of coordination among them. The project consists of two phases: the first began in 2007 and was to end by 2009, while the second was scheduled to start in 2009. Interview with Mrs. Omneya Ragab, Child Protection Officer for Street Children UNICEF, (Cairo, 08/02/2009) and with Dr. Abba El-Badry, Secretary General of Hope Village Association (one of the five NGOs forming this network), (Cairo, 12/05/09).

<sup>120</sup> Hope Village, Caritas, Bena’ El-Mogtama’, Nour El-Hayah and El-Ma’wa.

<sup>121</sup> The first transitional constitution was approved in a public referendum in December 2012 under the Muslim Brotherhood rule. Their rule was toppled in July 2013 and was followed by an interim government that undertook to submit the second constitution’s draft to a referendum by late 2013.

<sup>122</sup> According to Nadra Zaki, UNICEF Children Protection Officer,  
[http://www.unicef.org/sowc/egypt\\_30616.html](http://www.unicef.org/sowc/egypt_30616.html)

help<sup>123</sup>. Even worse, street girls who become mothers are seen as “dirty girls” with unrestrained sexuality resulting in unwanted and shameful extramarital pregnancies<sup>124</sup>.

This negative perception has clearly influenced the contributions received by street girls NGOs and pushed them to rely more heavily on international donors and on a limited number of open-minded Egyptian businessmen. As a result, only two NGOs<sup>125</sup> have shelters for street girls while three other NGOs<sup>126</sup> can only serve them by offering them resources in their day reception centers. The situation of street mothers is even worse as Hope Village is the only NGO that has a shelter for them. In addition to that, Egypt has only two receiving homes for the second generation of children born on the street<sup>127</sup>.

## **2.4 Studying street children in Egypt**

The current research studies Egypt’s street children according to the WHO definition. As clarified earlier, that definition takes into consideration the fact that homeless children can be found not only on the street (as UNICEF’s definition states) but also in care institutions and with friends’ families for temporary periods. Since the current dissertation deals with and studies street children who constantly commute between the street and care institutions, the WHO’s definition seems the most appropriate definition to adopt.

## **2.5 How children’s environment impacts NGOs’ effectiveness**

As stated, the main objective of the current dissertation is to understand the reasons street children respond differently to the same rehabilitation program; that is, to examine the reasons behind a program’s varying levels of effectiveness with street children in general and specifically with street girls. In that sense, the dissertation approach to evaluating NGOs’ effectiveness consists of examining how successful they are in reaching their initial goal of rescuing street children by keeping them away from the street.

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<sup>123</sup> Tahani Rached, “These Girls (El-Banat Dol)”, documentary by Studio Masr, 2006, <http://www.veoh.com/watch/v15096890yjdMcQJ?h1=El-Banate+Dol+%5BPart+1%5D>

<sup>124</sup> Rached (2006).

<sup>125</sup> Hope Village and Banati.

<sup>126</sup> Nour El-Hayah, Caritas and Resalah.

<sup>127</sup> The two receiving homes are run by Hope Village and Banati.

As opposed to other studies that have assessed the effectiveness of NGOs based on their level of success in “reintegrating street children into the mainstream society,” in “ensuring them have a stable life style” or in “helping them become lovable ordinary family people”<sup>128</sup>, the current study assesses the effectiveness of NGOs based only on their degree of success in taking children away from the street. According to the rescuing approach adopted by the two studied NGOs, helping children exit the street is a primordial step that needs to be accomplished before they can start “*reintegrating street children into the mainstream society, helping them have a stable life or becoming lovable family people*”.

When attempting to rescue street girls and to keep them away from the street, street girls’ NGOs attain three levels of effectiveness:

1. The lowest level of effectiveness: street girls refusing to give up street life and becoming “permanent street settlers”.
2. The medium level of effectiveness: girls continue to go back and forth between the NGO’s shelter and the street, becoming “street/NGO commuters”.
3. The highest level of effectiveness: the outcome of “girls giving up the street”.

### 2.5.1 Children’s social ecology

In order to understand the reasons why the same program reaches these three varying levels of effectiveness, the current dissertation chose to adopt the social ecology approach<sup>129</sup>. In this approach, understanding each child’s environment becomes a key element in understanding his/her life decisions and behavior, including his/her attitude towards NGOs and his/her level of responsiveness to their rehabilitation program.

The social ecology approach perceives the change in human behaviour as a result of a dynamic interaction between personal attributes and environmental/social circumstances<sup>130</sup>. Originally conceived to study the relationship between plants, animals and their natural habitat, the ecological approach was later<sup>131</sup> extended to the study of

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<sup>128</sup> For a complete synthesis of 33 studies evaluating the effectiveness of numerous interventions targeting street children between 2005-2011, see Berckmans et al., 2012.

<sup>129</sup> D. Stokols, “Translating social ecological theory into guidelines for community health promotion”, *American Journal of Health Promotion*, (Vol.10, n.4, March/April 1996), 282-298.

<sup>130</sup> Stokols, 286.

<sup>131</sup> During the mid 1960s and the early 1970s.

human communities within the fields of sociology, psychology and public health<sup>132</sup>. Instead of perceiving the change in human behavior as a result of pure personal attributes, or pure environmental/social circumstances, the social ecological analysis emphasizes the dynamic interaction between both of them<sup>133</sup>.

In that sense, the social ecology approach is very close to the symbolic interactionism approach, which states that human behavior is formulated through interaction and that individuals and society cannot be separated from each other<sup>134</sup>. However, the social ecology approach goes farther, identifying a number of variables to be examined when studying the process of social interaction, effectively providing researchers with more landmarks to study. As a result, the current research focuses on a number of personal and environmental variables and studies the different forms of interaction between them. Then it examines the extent to which these different forms of interaction have led to different levels of effectiveness within NGOs.

According to this approach<sup>135</sup>, children's decisions (including street children's decisions) are the result of an interaction between the multiple layers of their environments that also affect their basic development as children<sup>136</sup>. These layers are as follows:

1. A **micro-system** that constitutes the child's immediate surrounding and contains structures with which the child has direct contact. These structures include his family, school, neighborhood, friends, peers, and community.
2. A **meso-system** that represents the nature of the relationship between the structures of the child's micro-system, such as the relationship between his family and teachers, or his peers and community. According to Bronfenbrenner, the more the connections between the different structures of the micro-system are diversified and intensified, the more this micro-system becomes influent on the child's development<sup>137</sup>.
3. An **exo-system** that represents the larger social system with which the child has no direct contact but that affects him by interacting with some structure in his micro-system. It

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<sup>132</sup> Stokols, 285.

<sup>133</sup> Stokols, 286.

<sup>134</sup> For further readings about the symbolic interaction approach see, George Herbert Mead, *Mind Self and Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1934) and Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959).

<sup>135</sup> Urie Bronfenbrenner, *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979).

<sup>136</sup> Anne Marie Tietjen, "The Ecology of Children's Social Support Networks", in Deborah Belle (ed.), *Children's Social Networks and Social Support*, (USA: John Wiley and Sons, 1989), 37- 65.

<sup>137</sup> Bronfenbrenner, (1979).

includes factors such as the work of the parents, their social support network, school committees, legislative organisms and institutions or development agencies.

4. A **macro-system** that is comprised of common underlying principles and values that influence childhood institutions of a given society or culture and therefore shape their interventions and affect all other layers.
5. A **chrono-system** that takes into consideration the dimension of time and its role in the child's environments. Elements within this system can be either external, such as the timing of a parent's death, or internal, such as the physiological changes that occur with the maturing of a child<sup>138</sup>.

According to Bronfenbrenner's approach<sup>139</sup>, in order to improve a social program, we must "identify sources of person-environment and group-environment misfit, and develop interventions that enhance the fit between people and their surroundings"<sup>140</sup>. Consequently, what the current research tried to do was study the environment of a number of street girls in order to spot this misfit between their environment and what NGOs offer.

## 2.6 Hypotheses

Based on Bronfenbrenner's theory, a street girl's development and decisions would be affected by the interaction between the following:

- her micro-system (relationship with street friends, police, street partner, peers, etc.),
- her meso-system (relationship between the components of the micro-system),
- her exo-system (social support network, street girls' institutions and NGOs, etc.),
- her macro-system (principles underlying the childhood institutions and the society's perception towards street girls) and,
- her chrono-system (age at which she left home, timing at which she was introduced to the NGO, time duration lived on the street)

Consequently, the **first** hypothesis of this study is that NGOs degree of effectiveness decreases correspondingly when the degree of stability in girls' micro- and meso- systems increases, when her previous experience with the macro-system (NGOs and

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<sup>138</sup> Dede Paquette and John Ryan, *Bronfenbrenner Ecological Systems Theory*, (2001).

<sup>139</sup> Bronfenbrenner, (1979).

<sup>140</sup> Bronfenbrenner, (1979), 288.

correctional institutions) is negative and when she shows no need of any exo-system (educational system, health care, legal assistance, etc). In other words, NGOs are more likely to succeed with street girls who have a conflicted and unstable relationship with their street community, who are not compelled by either their biological families or their street friends to stay homeless, who had a pleasant experience with correctional institutions in the past and who strongly need NGOs' assistance in getting access to education, health care and legal services. Then, my **second** hypothesis, with regards to the role played by the street girl's chrono-system, is that NGOs are more likely to reach a high level of effectiveness with girls who spent less time on the street or left their home at a very early age. This means that street girls who prefer to stay homeless are most probably those who spend prolonged periods on the street and those who leave home as adolescents or as adults.

## 2.7 Methodology

In order to investigate these hypotheses, I held a series of semi-structured interviews with a chosen sample of Egyptian street girls who are at different stages of progress within their NGOs. With each girl, I used a survey<sup>141</sup> with open-questions about her micro-, meso-, exo-, macro-, and chrono- systems. As stated earlier, my objective was to identify the factors of "person-environment misfit" (if any) that led some of the NGOs' efforts to become a complete failure. In other words, my goal was to help NGOs in their effort to offer more individualized services that fit the needs of the different categories of street girls.

My interviewing phase was preceded by a "warming up" phase during which I tried to gain my interviewees' confidence and trust by spending prolonged periods of time with them in places where they usually live. Between January and May 2012, I spent days with them at NGOs reception centers, visited their streets, accompanied by social workers they know and trust, and talked to them in Tahrir Square where they have been noticed lately in large numbers<sup>142</sup>.

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<sup>141</sup> see Annex 2, p139.

<sup>142</sup> Tahrir Square is one of the main squares of Cairo in which millions of Egyptian demonstrators gathered on January 25th, 2011 to protest against the dictatorship of Hosni Mubarak, who ended up handing power to the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) on February 11th, 2011. Since then, Egyptians kept gathering every Friday in Tahrir Square to keep alive the popular pressure on SCAF. For some street kids, the Friday demonstrations became a golden opportunity to express their anger against the inhuman and violent methods of the Egyptian government in general and the Ministry of Interior (i.e., the juvenile police) in particular. For

## 2.8 Sample and Data Collection

As a former volunteer in many street children NGOs and as a co-founder of the Popular Campaign for the Protection of Children<sup>143</sup>, I was easily able to reach out to street girls with the help of NGOs' staff and social workers. My goal was to gather a sample of 30 girls under the age of 18 and where three types of street girls are equally represented. The sample required ten girls who gave up the street for at least two years<sup>144</sup>, ten others who continued to go back and forth between NGOs and the street and ten others who chose to stay permanently on the street. Almost daily between January and May 2012, I visited either Hope Village day reception center for girls in Rod El-Farag, Hope Village girls' shelter in Moqattam or Banati day reception center for girls in El-Malek El-Saleh.

Before beginning my field research, I explained the purpose to the two NGOs'<sup>145</sup> managers and case-supervisors so they understood the type of girls I am willing to interview. The two NGOs were frequented by slums' young girls who are not necessarily street girls and therefore, I had to follow social workers' recommendations. Every day, I would go to visit one of the two NGOs and wait for the social worker to recommend that I interview X or Y. Some days I would go and find no one to interview either because the available girls were reluctant to participate in the study or because the turnout of street girls was too low or just because girls who happen to visit the center that day are not street children. Other days, I was lucky enough to conduct three interviews on the same day.

Girls who gave up the street were the most hard to find and meet with; followed by the girls who chose to live permanently on the street. Many of those who quit the street had married, were living with their husbands and weren't to be found at the NGO's shelter. At the same time, many of those living in the shelter were still street/NGO commuters and hadn't stayed there for at least two years. The one thing that allowed me to meet girls who

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others, demonstrations became a good opportunity to sell their small items (tissue papers, tea, flowers, sandwiches), and for others it became a relief to feel other people's presence on the street, especially if these people were calling for social justice.

<sup>143</sup> An advocacy campaign against the violations street children are subject to while in police or military custody and during periods of political conflicts and clashes.

<sup>144</sup> When I started to look for girls who gave up the street, I originally asked the social workers to connect me with girls who quit the street for at least the 3 past years so I can make sure they don't belong any more to the category of street/NGO commuters. Social workers suggested that girls meeting this requirement will be very hard to find and recommended that I lessen the period to one or two years.

<sup>145</sup> Hope Village and Banati.

gave up the street was the fact that some of them maintained minimal ties with the two NGOs who continue to provide them and their families with social and financial assistance.

As for girls who chose to live permanently on the street, meeting them was a challenge of a different type. A few of them agreed to give me an interview during one of their short visits to the day reception center, but I had to interview others in the street because they stopped visiting NGOs' centers. Of course, I had to be accompanied by NGOs' social workers whom they knew and trusted and who often continue to provide them with services while on the street.

Recording the interviews was not an option. I wanted to conduct my interviews in an informal setting and video or audio-taping them was going to distract my interviewees and perhaps dissuade them from participating or from divulging some information they consider too intimate to be recorded. Given the huge amount of information every girl provided during the interview, I had to write down my notes immediately after every single interview. In the days where I interviewed more than one girl, I made sure to have at least a thirty minute break between the interviews to register each girl's answers on her survey.

To analyze the gathered data, I used the Chi-square test which examines the relationship between two qualitative variables. As my independent variables (including collected data about the environment of each street girl) and dependent variables (the level of effectiveness attained by the program with each girl) were both qualitative, Chi-square seemed to be my best option.

**Figure 3 - Chi-square equation**

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

Chi-square tests the 'null hypothesis' (meaning that no relation of dependence exists) between the two variables. According to chi-square, a relation of dependence exists

between the two variables when the p-value (probability level) is less than 0.05 or when the chi-square is larger than the critical value<sup>146</sup>.

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<sup>146</sup> For the detailed table of Chi-square critical values, please see Annex 3, p143.



## **Chapter 3: Girls' responsiveness to NGOs in light of their Micro- and Meso- Systems**



*Who are the thirty girls included in the sample of the current research? What reasons pushed them to seek refuge in the street and how did these reasons impact their responsiveness to NGOs? What survival patterns did each of my interviewees use to cope with the street community and how did these patterns influence their responsiveness to NGOs? These are the main questions this chapter tries to answer.*

### 3.1 Introducing the 30 street girls of the study sample

In the following section, I introduce the thirty girls whom I interviewed and provide details about their socio-economic backgrounds. This includes information about their families, the type of household they came from (single parent, foster parent, kinship care, etc.), their age when they first became homeless, their criminal records prior to becoming homeless, their education and the time period they spent on the street.

#### 3.1.1 Family's economic background

Table 1 - Economic background of street girls' families

Category	Economic Class		
	Poor	Lower Middle class	Upper class
<b>Total</b>	28	2	0
<b>%</b>	93	7	0

Almost all the girls in my sample belong to underserved communities, with 93%<sup>147</sup> and 7%<sup>148</sup> of them coming from poor and lower middle class families, respectively. None of the girls in my sample belongs to an upper class family. This research uses David Gordon's definition of poverty: "*a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services*"<sup>149</sup>.

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<sup>147</sup> 28 girls out of 30.

<sup>148</sup> 2 out of 30 girls.

<sup>149</sup> David Gordon, "[Indicators of poverty and hunger](#)", (United Nations Headquarters, New York: Expert Group Meeting on Youth Development Indicators, 12th – 14th December 2005).

Regarding the residential areas girls come from, prior to being homeless most girls (80%<sup>150</sup>) lived either in poor urban districts of Cairo or in Cairo's slums; only a few (20%<sup>151</sup>) came from outside Cairo. In Cairo's slums, it is very common to see entire families living, cooking, socializing and sleeping in one bedroom while sharing the restrooms with their neighbors. Space between bedrooms where entire families live is virtually nonexistent, and the word "privacy" is not in the vocabulary of most of street girls. *"Our house was too small. We were five brothers and sisters and we all shared the same bedroom while sharing the bathroom with the neighbors. The street however is open, wide and full of freedom"*, said eighteen year old S.H., who had left home four years earlier.

Privacy is totally absent not only in their homes, but also in the bathrooms they shared with their neighbors or with members of their extended families. In these areas, restrooms' doors are often missing, while a working sewer system and aeration are basically absent. And apparently in this unhealthy environment, unhealthy relationships developed not only between neighbors but also between members of the same family. *"It was a little bit strange for us to see a little girl leaving her family just because the house is small"*, said S.H.'s social worker. *"It wasn't until later that we found out there was something going on between the girl, her father and her uncle and it definitely wasn't something straight at all... It was a very shady relationship...an insane one"*, explained S.H.'s social worker in reference to S.H., who turned out to be a victim of incest<sup>152</sup>.

### 3.1.2 Social status of their care provider

**Table 2 - Social status of the girls' care providers**

	One birth parent missing		Two birth parents available	No birth parent available (Foster care)
Category	Widowed Parent	Step-Parent		
Total	6	12	8	4
%	20	40	26.7	13.3
	60			

<sup>150</sup> 24 girls out of 30 lived in slums and poor urban districts of Cairo.

<sup>151</sup> 6 girls out of 30 coming from Al-Sharqeyya, Alexandria and Al-Menya

<sup>152</sup> S.H. is a very closed-off permanent street settler. This is why her social worker was the one who told me that she has been an incest victim.

60% of the girls in my sample came from broken families where at least one biological parent was missing either because of divorce (40%) or because of death (20%). Only 26.7% of the girls in my sample lived with their birth parents and 13.3% of them were in foster care. By foster care, I mean that girls were raised by a relative or were placed by their own parents in a correctional institution because they simply couldn't care for them<sup>153</sup>.

### 3.1.3 Educational level attained

Table 3 - Educational level attained by street girls

	No School		Elementary school	Middle school or higher	Total of Educated
<b>Total</b>	21		5	4	9
<b>%</b>	70		17	13	30

Out of thirty girls in my sample, only nine attended school (30%). Half of them quit while in elementary school (five girls) while the second half dropped out of school after middle school (four girls).

The reasons for dropping out of school were various. Some were related to the very poor quality of education delivered by schools in poor districts. Consequently, many families decided to spend their limited resources on more useful services and took their children out of schools. For instance, in the case of H.R, it was more cost-effective for her mother to take her out of school at fifth grade because, as H.R. says, *“school was useless anyways and I always ended up getting very low grades”*. Shortly after, H.R's mother forced her daughter to work at the age of eleven as a maid which was apparently more beneficial to her (the mother) than enrolling her at school.

Other reasons for dropping out of school are related to family breakdown as in M.S.'s case. *“M.S. was a brilliant smart kid and her grades both in school and in our IQ tests<sup>154</sup> were pretty much on the high side”*, explained M.S.'s social worker. However, M.S.'s mother passed away suddenly when M.S. was nine and her father re-married shortly after. *“Not only I had to work instead of my mom but my step-mother turned my life into hell, so there was no more room left for school in these circumstances”*, said M.S.

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<sup>153</sup> A few correctional institutions are also receiving homes for children whose parents cannot care for them.

<sup>154</sup> NGO's usually run intelligence and psychological tests on new girls who visit the NGO for the first time and express their willingness to settle at the NGO's shelter.

### 3.1.4 Families' criminal records

**Table 4 - Criminal records of girls' family members**

Category	Families with no criminal records	Families with criminal records
Total	22	8
%	73	27

27% of the girls in my sample (eight out of thirty) have families with criminal records. The two crimes for which a family member was most often convicted were drug trafficking (six cases) and managing prostitution networks (three cases). One of the girls explained to me how her step-mother's profession led her to work and later to live on the street. *"She ran a prostitution network and was our main source of income. But because I didn't want to use this illicit money, I decided to work in the street to have my own source of income"*, said S.G., who is now a permanent street settler selling tissue and flowers at traffic lights.

For most of the girls in question, the family's criminal record was too shameful to mention it to me during the interview. Instead, I asked about them during random conversations with their social workers. However, for one of them, it was amazingly a source of pride. *"My parents are very famous drug dealers in Boulaq<sup>155</sup>"*, said S.R.F. proudly. *"I am coming from a wealthy family and I attended school until 8<sup>th</sup> grade. I didn't run away except recently"*, said S.R.F., distinguishing herself from *"the other poor girls on the street"*. Not only was her family of drug dealers a source of pride for her but S.F.R. spoke with the same pride about her ex-husband, whom she met in the street and who had the same job. *"He is a very big drug dealer in Imbaba<sup>156</sup>"*, said S.F.R. about her ex-husband. *"No one could touch me or bother me in the street when we were married"*, she said.

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<sup>155</sup> A district in Cairo known as a pocket of poverty and drugs.

<sup>156</sup> Another district in Cairo known to be a pocket of poverty.

### 3.1.5 Age when they ran away

**Table 5 - Age when girls in the sample ran away**

Category	Age when homeless for the first time		
	-10	10-15	+15
<b>Total</b>	9	15	6
<b>%</b>	30	50	20

Half of my sample became homeless between the age of ten and fifteen years old (fifteen girls out of thirty), 30% of the girls were younger than ten years old when they first became homeless and only 20% ran away when they were older than fifteen years old.

The youngest runaway girl in my sample was 4 years old when she left home. *“I so much wanted to live with my mom and dad but after they got divorced, they both found new partners and left me to my grandfather. So at the age of 4, I left my grandfather’s house in Boulaq and walked all the way to my mom’s house in Sayyeda Zeinab<sup>157</sup> but she never cared. That was my first day in the street”*, explains eighteen years old L.O.D., who is now a permanent street settler.

However, other girls had an earlier contact with the street life. *“Have you seen Y’s baby?”*, thirteen year old A.M. asked me, referring to a one and a half year old baby. *“This is how old I was when my mom and dad left me on the street”*; an statement that did not surprise me because two weeks earlier I interviewed a girl living on the street with a twenty day old baby girl in her arms.

### 3.1.6 Criminal records prior to homelessness

**Table 6 - Girls' criminal records prior to being homeless**

Category	No criminal record	With criminal record
<b>Total</b>	26	4
<b>%</b>	87	13

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<sup>157</sup> Approximately 5 km or an hour walk.

Prior to becoming homeless, only 13% of the girls in my sample (four out of thirty) had criminal records. One was caught selling drugs, one for theft, another for not carrying any identification, and the last one was arrested for begging.

Getting arrested for the first time on the street is usually the worst nightmare for street children. But for the Egyptian juvenile police, arresting street children is a way to prove the police force still exists. For instance, in 2009 I tried to collect data tracking the numbers of children arrested on the streets of Cairo during the previous few years. The high-ranked police officer whom I met at that time told me,

*“It is useless to compare their numbers each year trying to conclude anything because I will tell you how things usually work. We sit together in the beginning of each year, check the number of kids we arrested the year before and in light of that, we decide on the number we will arrest this year. It usually has to be a number that is close to the number of the year before. Sometimes, some officers may want to look more active and effective than their predecessors so they increase the number of arrested kids. But, usually we tend to keep it approximately the same each year”*<sup>158</sup>.

Allegations for which girls get arrested can be unfounded or unjustified, yet the reality is that those events affect their lives forever. For instance, permanent street settler Y.S. (twenty years old) was arrested at the age of fifteen for not possessing an ID card--although the age at which ID cards are issued in Egypt is sixteen years old. *“I had to use violence with the cop because he cursed me and used very dirty words and moves when talking to me. And because I was rude to him, he didn’t release me until the next day. This night was a nightmare”*, said Y.S., explaining how her first night at the lockup left her with the fierce tomboy attitude she still has today.

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<sup>158</sup> Personal interview on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009 with Mohamed Aboul-Fotouh, Chief of Operations at the Egyptian Juvenile Police, Greater-Cairo Division.

### 3.1.7 Time period spent on the street

**Table 7 - Time period spent by girls on the street**

Category	Number of years spent in the street	
	≤ 5 years	≥ 6 years
Total	10	20
%	33	67

Most of my sample (67%) spent at least six years on the street and a smaller percentage (33%) spent five years or less away from their families.

## **3.2 Girls' responsiveness to NGOs in light of their push factors**

### 3.2.1 Eight push factors

During my interactions with street girls, my interviewees identified eight main reasons for being on the street or in other words, eight push factors. Whether my interviewees were permanent street settlers, street/NGO commuters or belonged to the category of those who gave up the street, they all mentioned having experienced at least one of these eight push factors. On average, every girl in my sample has experienced three combined push factors<sup>159</sup>. The eight main push factors are: neglect, physical abuse, family discrimination and rejection, forced labor, incest, breaking social rules, forced marriage and forced prostitution.

In the following pages, I start by illustrating the relative importance and frequency of every push factor in my sample. Then, I tackle the characteristics of every push factor separately; quoting occasionally some of my interviewees' words describing the hard conditions they have experienced at home.

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<sup>159</sup> In a sample of 30 girls, the 8 push factors were reported 88 times yielding an average of almost 3 push factors experienced by each girl.

**Table 8 - Percentage of girls affected by each push factor<sup>160</sup>**

	Neglect	Physical Abuse	Family Discrimination	Forced Labor	Incest	Breaking Social Rules	Forced Marriage	Forced Prostitution	Sexual Exploitation <sup>161</sup>
Number of girls	23	21	11	10	7	7	6	3	11
Percent of the sample	77	70	37	33	23	23	20	10	37

In terms of importance, neglect and physical abuse were the most often reported push factors and were experienced by 77% and 70% of my sample respectively, as shown in Table 8. Family discrimination and forced labor came in third and fourth, with respectively 37% and 33% of my sample reporting having been discriminated against by their families and forced to work on the street. Then in the fifth place, incest and breaking social rules were other push-factors girls mentioned. In fact, 23% of my sample reported having been raped or molested by a family member and 23% ran away after breaking a social rule. Finally we see forced marriage and forced prostitution with respectively 20% and 10% of the girls reporting having been forced into marriage and prostitution.

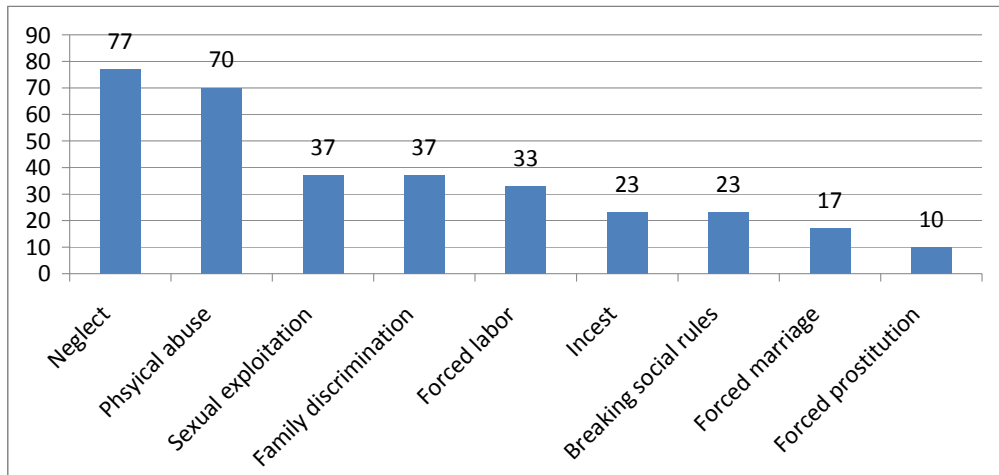
Among those eight push factors, three involve sexual exploitation of one form or another, perpetrated by family members or relatives: forced prostitution, forced marriage and incest. If gathered, these three factors produce a new push factor which is “sexual exploitation”, experienced by 37% of the girls in my sample (eleven girls). With sexual exploitation being experienced by 37% of my sample, it becomes the third most experienced push factor in the sample, experienced exactly as often as family discrimination (see Figure 4).

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<sup>160</sup> In a sample of 30 girls.

<sup>161</sup> Sexual exploitation includes incest, forced marriage and forced prostitution. These different forms of sexual exploitation were experienced by 11 girls but some girls were subject to more than one form of sexual exploitation.

**Figure 4 - Percentage of girls affected by each push factor**



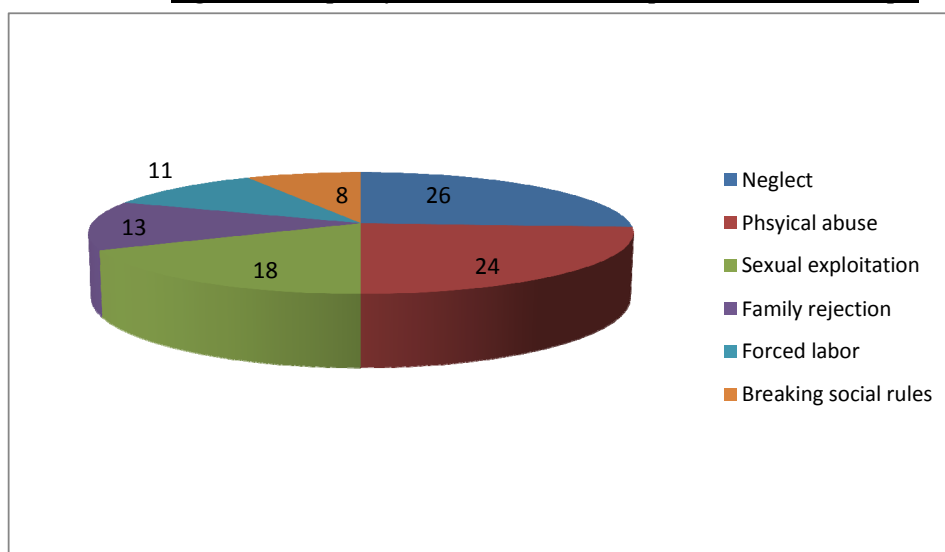
However, if we take a look at the number of times sexual exploitation has been reported in my sample, the ranking of this push factor may differ. As a matter of fact, many of the eleven girls in my sample who were sexually exploited reported having faced more than one form of sexual abuse. For instance, some of them were forced not only into prostitution but into marriage, or were victims of incest as well. As a result, the three forms of sexual exploitation were reported sixteen times by the eleven girls. In Table 8 and Figure 4, both sexual exploitation and family discrimination appear as equally important (with 37% of the sample, or eleven girls, having been victims of each) which is not exactly the case. Family discrimination was experienced by eleven girls and reported eleven times whereas sexual exploitation was experienced by eleven girls but was reported sixteen times. Consequently, sexual exploitation is even more prevalent than family discrimination within the community of street girls.

Table 9 and Figure 5 illustrate the difference between the two push factors in terms of importance and frequency. It shows that while sexual exploitation represents 18% of the total number of reported abuses in the sample, family discrimination represents only 13% of them.

**Table 9 – Number of times each push factor was reported**

	Neglect	Physical Abuse	Sexual Exploitation			Family Discrimination	Forced Labor	Breaking Social Rules	Total
			Incest	Forced Marriage	Forced Prostitution				
Number of times reported	23	21	7	6	3	11	10	7	88
Percentage of total number of push factors	26	24	8	7	3	13	11	8	100
			18						

**Figure 5 - Frequency of occurrence for each push factor in the sample**



#### a) Neglect

Neglect was the main reason for 77% of the interviewees to leave their families. Among a total of 88 forms of abuse reported by the entire sample, 26% were related to neglect. Neglect includes, among other things, the parents' indifference as to where the girl goes during the day or where she spends her nights, which opens the way for peer pressure. It also includes their indifference to or failure to protect their daughters from being abused by their own new partner, and a remarkable lack of communication with their daughters.

A case where neglect opened the way for peer pressure is I.M.'s case (twenty years old). During the day, she was always allowed, or rather left, by her mother to play with street friends without any supervision. Describing her situation, she says.

*"I used to spend the whole day on the street playing with other kids who don't go to school. We did everything together; we roamed between residential areas together, ate together, begged together and played together. One day they told me they will travel to Mansoura<sup>162</sup> and insisted I should go with them. I wanted to discover what it is like to travel and wanted to feel free, so I went with them. This was my first time spending the night out of town, and my first time going so far from my family",* said I.M., describing the way she started her street life.

As for cases where neglect took the form of a failure to protect the girl from a step-parent's abuse, S.G.'s case was an evident one. At the age of seventeen, her father failed to stop her step-mother's constant torture of her; he didn't try or didn't care to do so. On the contrary, he allowed the step-mother to force his daughter into prostitution, and later on to marry an old man for his money. *"My father couldn't do much. When he married her, he got her a new house and gave up its ownership to her. He was afraid of losing the house",* said S.G.

Causes of neglect were various. Some households like A.S.A.'s (aged fourteen) were so overcrowded that the mother was the one pushing the kids to go spend their whole day on the street. *"My brothers, sisters and I were so many. My grandmother lived with us in a one bedroom apartment and had children the same ages as us. We used to fight a lot so my mom ordered us to go play on the street and later on forced us to work there",* said A.S.A. The same scenario applies to B.A.K. (aged fourteen) whose mother had children from a previous marriage and whose father was too busy to care. *"At the age of nine, I was let, along with my sister, to spend most of the day on the street. Sometimes, my mom used to leave my eight months old brother with us and so, sometimes we took him with us to the street too",* said B.A.K. who became sexually active and started doing drugs on the street by the age of ten.

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<sup>162</sup> A city that is 102 km away from Cairo: an hour and a half drive.

Another cause of neglect is being an extremely busy single parent with no network of social support. This is the case of Y.S.'s (aged twenty) mother. After she got divorced, she left her village in Upper Egypt and moved to Cairo looking for a job. She couldn't get access to any childcare service because of her limited resources and she couldn't ask anyone to care for her child as she was new to the area. *"I was almost 4 years old when she managed to find a job. She used to work in a hospital<sup>163</sup> at night and came back to spend two or three hours with us in the morning. After that, she used to go to sleep and let us spend the whole day on the street"*, said Y.S., who was later raped by her step-father without her mother objecting to it.

#### *b) Physical abuse*

*"See this? My father boiled a big spoon of margarine and poured it on my head when I was only four"*, said L.O.D. (aged eighteen) moving her hair aside to show me a deformed area on her skull she keeps covered.

Physical abuse was the second most recurring reason behind girls' homelessness. 70% of my interviewees mentioned having been severely beaten; burned with cigarettes, hot spoons or boiling water; hanged; and clawed. The injuries included broken bones, deformation of some body parts, bruises, abrasions, and of course unhealed emotional damage.

Infliction of physical abuse wasn't limited to just the biological parents. In F.O.R.'s case (aged nineteen), the abuser was her step-mother. *"She would chain me in the bed and start whipping me right after"*, said F.O.R., describing how her step-mother used to punish her. In other cases, it was the girl's siblings with the incitement of their mother. *"Every time I did something wrong, even if it was really minor, my mom ordered my older brothers to beat me up. They did it all together and it hurt so bad"*, said I.M. (aged twenty).

#### *c) Sexual exploitation*

Data shows that sexual exploitation of girls by their own families constitutes the third major reason for them to run away. 18% of the push factors in my sample were related

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<sup>163</sup> I was informed later by the social worker that Y.S.'s mother worked in a prostitution network at night, not in a hospital as she said.

to one form or another of sexual exploitation, which included being raped by a family member, being forced to prostitution, and being forced to marry an old man for money. The number of girls who were subject to sexual exploitation was eleven<sup>164</sup> which constitutes 37% of the sample.

### **Incest/rape by step-father**

Data indicated that incest and rape by a step-father were the most common form of sexual exploitation that girls faced at home before they decided to run away. Out of sixteen incidents of sexual exploitation, seven incidents or 50% involved being molested by a relative or raped by a step-father.

Talking about incest in a conservative society is sometimes considered a taboo. Some of my interviewees were courageous enough to talk about it while others never mentioned it. Instead, I learned about it from their social workers while verifying my data. For instance, this is S.H.'s case (aged eighteen), who turned out to be a victim of incest. *"This girl had something going on with her father and uncle and it didn't look like a healthy thing at all. After she ran away and got pregnant, she looked at them with fearless eyes and talked to them in a very daring way. In return, her father and uncle were very passive and never tried to blame her...not even with a look. It's a very shady relationship...an insane one"*, explained S.H.'s social worker.

For other girls, it took years before they could disclose their secret to their own social workers. M.S. (aged twenty) started visiting the NGO's daycare and shelter when she was twelve years old. *"She suffered from bedwetting and couldn't build healthy relationships with her friends. We took her to a psychologist but her case didn't improve and the psychologist couldn't give us an explanation"*, said M.S.'s social worker. It wasn't until M.S. turned fifteen years old that she begged her social worker not to take her home to her father and explained that he had previously molested her.

### **Forced informal marriage**

After incest, the second most common form of sexual exploitation is forced informal marriage, where girls are traded for money. Out of sixteen cases of sexual

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<sup>164</sup> These 11 girls experienced 16 forms of sexual exploitation.

exploitation, six cases (or 38%) included being forced to live with a husband who was not the girl's choice or that the girl never agreed to marry. Generally, the groom is a much older man, usually at least double the girl's age, who uses his wealth to bribe the family and get its approval. However, another reason for a family to finalize this deal is their girl's non-virginity. For instance, L.O.D. (aged eighteen) was forced to get married as early as eleven years old because she started to run away occasionally at the age of six, and therefore wasn't expected to stay a virgin. The same scenario happened to A.K.A. who, at the age of fifteen, was forced to marry her 62 year old wealthy husband because she had already lost her virginity three years earlier.

The marriage being involuntary is one matter; it being informal (*'urfi*) is another aspect that further complicates the situation. In case of divorce, an informally wedded girl is left without any legal rights, and her children cannot be registered in the State's official records except after a lengthy complicated process. Consequently, many girls don't even try to document their children who, as a result, end up losing their legal rights. One of the most dramatic cases illustrating the negative consequences of a forced informal marriage was that of S.G. (aged seventeen). At the age of fifteen, she was forced by her step-mother to marry a wealthy married man who is triple her age. Both the man and his family mistreated her but S.G. couldn't go anywhere. After she delivered her first baby, they decided to kick her out and to take her baby away from her. The man registered the baby under his first wife's name and S.G. was never allowed to see her baby. *"He doesn't ask about me except when he wants his 'legal right'"*<sup>165</sup>. *I got pregnant again but I got rid of the baby"*, said S.G., who came to the NGO's reception center that day to ask for medical assistance after aborting herself two days earlier.

### **Forced prostitution**

Compared to other push factors, forced prostitution is not a highly recurrent one. In fact, in my entire sample of thirty girls, forced prostitution was reported by only three girls (10% of the whole sample).

In two out of the three cases of forced prostitution, there were two common aspects: a step parent was acting as a pimp, and the forced prostitution was accompanied by other

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<sup>165</sup> A word commonly used to mean sex within an official marriage.

sorts of abuse. For instance, in S.G.'s case (aged seventeen), it was the step-mother running a prostitution and drug trafficking network who tortured her, forced her into prostitution and later forced her to marry a man triple her age. In W.M.'s case (aged seventeen), it was her step-father who not only tried to sexually molest her but who forced both her and her sister into prostitution.

In my sample, birth parents rarely tried to force their daughters into prostitution; only one girl was forced into prostitution by her own mother. However, a few girls in my sample had birth parents who tried to take advantage of their daughter's sex activity in the street. That's the case of three girls<sup>166</sup> who didn't originally run away because of forced prostitution but got involved in this commerce later on the street. Their money became a source of conflict between their birth parents and their sex dealers.

#### *d) Family discrimination and rejection*

37% of the girls in my sample left home as a result of being rejected or discriminated against by their family. Forms of rejection are various. In L.O.D.'s case, the parents got divorced and neither of them was ready to take care of her, especially after they both got re-married. *"They both wanted to get rid of me and gave me to my grandfather. At the age of four, I left my grandfather's house in Boulaq and walked all the way to my mom's place in Sayyeda Zeinab<sup>167</sup> but she didn't care. She never talked to me as a mother would do. I felt unwanted so after my grandfather passed away I decided to live on the street"*, said L.O.D. about her parents.

Other girls were not handed to a family member like L.O.D. was, but rather to a correctional institution, to a shelter or just kicked out of home. In fact, Egypt's correctional institutions offer to host poor kids whose parents are unable to take care of them. Although the intention is to support poor families, the result is mixing 'normal' kids with others kids who have criminal records or who at least have lived for a while on the street. Inevitably, children begin to influence each other in a negative way, especially if no supervision exists; soon the placed child flees the institution to join his peers on the street.

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<sup>166</sup> Y.S. (aged twenty), D.G. (aged fifteen) and R.S. (aged nineteen).

<sup>167</sup> Approximately 5 km or an hour walk.

As for M.S.H.'s case, M.S.H.'s mother didn't even think about a safe home to place her in. Instead, she just kicked her out. *"It was following a fight between me and my mom after midnight. I was fourteen at that time and she just kicked me out. I had nowhere else to go to so I decided I will sleep on the stairs. But it was very dark and scary there so I went out to the street"*, said M.S. about the way her street life began. *"My mother never asked about me again"*.

As for discrimination, it took place with families discriminating between siblings or favoring boys over girls. For instance, 13% of the sample (four girls out of thirty) mentioned their families favored their brothers. *"They were allowed to go to school while I had to stay home and serve them. And, every time I did something wrong, my mom ordered them to beat me up"*, said I.M. about her brothers.

#### e) Forced labor

Another reason for girls to be on the street, forced labor was experienced by 33% of the girls in my sample. When they first start to work in the street, girls usually sell small items (such as tissues, flowers...) at traffic lights, wash cars, or work as informal parking valets or as maids. However, some girls start their life on the street with more unusual jobs. This is the case of D.G.D. (aged fifteen), who was forced by her father to work with him in drug trafficking. A drug dealer himself, D.G.D.'s father started using his daughter as a low-wage assistant when she was only six years old. Now that she is fifteen, he tries to push her into prostitution for an additional source of income. *"He wants me to become like my sister and take my money. My sister wants me 'in' too to take that money"*, said D.G.D. about her father and her sister who works in prostitution.

When they prolong their stay in the street, girls start diversifying their jobs. Some choose to be street vendors, others to be waste collectors, others to be belly dancers or prostitutes while others prefer to become drug dealers or even to become professional armed robbers. The different types of jobs practiced by girls in the street are the focus of Chapter Four.

f) Breaking social rules

In a conservative society, breaking social rules can sometimes be irreparable. This is the case of seven girls in my sample (23%) whose main reason to live on the street was the breaking of a cultural or a religious rule. Following this incident, each left her family either because she feared its revenge, to escape from its unbearable physical punishment, or because she felt she had become a “*persona non grata*” at home.

R.O.J. (aged nineteen) is one of these cases. Born to a poor rural family of Upper Egypt, since age eleven she was compelled to work on the street selling small items and tissues. At the end of the day, she had to give her income to her “caregiver” and had to continue working as a servant for her brothers. With time, the street became her permanent home and she fell in love with K., who has been living on the street since his early childhood. However, at the age of fifteen, R.O.J.’s family found out about the illegal relation between their daughter and K. and as a result, R.O.J. was beaten violently and humiliated before getting totally expelled from her family’s home.

H.R. found herself in a different situation. At home, she always felt discriminated against and decided to revolt. *“My mom used to love my younger sister more than she loved me. She used to bring her nice stuff and deprived me from many things that I enjoyed. So I decided to break her rules”*, said H.R. Every day, H.R. would dress as if she were heading to school but hid an extra outfit in her backpack. Upon arriving at school, she left school and changed her outfit anywhere she could before sneaking around with guys. At the end of the day, she would go back home as if nothing had happened. *“And I enjoyed it because my mom was over controlling so I liked to break her rules. But for her it was too much. She started beating me up and tried everything with me but I wanted to teach her that it was too late. I just left home”*.

However, not all the cases where a girl left home because a social rule was broken were caused by the family’s violent reaction. Some cases indicated that the girl’s negative self-image, after breaking the social rule, may have played a decisive role in her decision to avoid the mainstream society. This is the case of S.R.F. and Z.O.M. (both eighteen), after their relationship with their respective boyfriends got physical. They both decided to run away even though their parents showed understanding of the situation. For instance,

S.F.R.'s mother told her she has forgiven her, and begged her to come back home; for S.F.R. there was never a thought of returning, especially after she was raped on the street two months later. *"I didn't want my older brothers to be ashamed of me or to look down at me"*, said S.F.R., who has always lived with her relatively wealthy family and who ran away at the age of fifteen. As for Z.O.M., her mother showed indifference to her behavior but her step-father and brothers made several attempts to peacefully bring her back home and allowed her to return whenever she needed. However, after several attempts, Z.O.M.'s step-father and brothers gave up. *"I was silly and I still am. I lost myself because of a silly behavior and since then, my life hasn't been the same and it will never be the same. It will never be fixed"*, said Z.O.M., talking about herself after *"sinning"* with her boyfriend.

Another case that led to the girl's homelessness even though the family didn't use physical coercion was that of O.R. who decided at the age of seventeen to convert to Islam. In her case, the family's reaction consisted of a moral rejection rather than a physical punishment. *"They didn't beat me up or anything. I was just working at one of our family owned businesses and my elder brothers decided I was no more welcome there. So I decided to work on the street and this is how my street life began"*.

### 3.2.2 Push factors and girls' responsiveness

The initial goal of this chapter was not only to highlight the factors pushing girls to the street but also to examine whether some of these push factors may have affected girls' degrees of responsiveness to NGOs. In order to do so, I started by observing the frequency of each push factor in each of my three studied categories of street girls. Then, I used the chi-square test to detect any kind of correlation between any of the push factors and girls' responsiveness to the NGO. However, before studying the extent to which the eight push factors affect girls' responsiveness to NGOs, the section below explores first the effect of girls' socio-economic conditions on their degree of responsiveness.

#### a) Socio-economic background and girls' responsiveness to NGOs

In the introductory section of this chapter, we saw that street girls come from poor homes and broken families; they have had an early disturbed adolescence; and they are mostly illiterate. Some of them had criminal records prior to being homeless and others did not. A few of their families had criminal records while others were clear. And finally, some

of the studied girls had spent more than five years on the street while others have spent less. The effect of these socio-economic conditions on girls' responsiveness to NGOs is the focus of this section.

### **i. Poverty and girls' responsiveness to NGOs**

As stated earlier and as shown in Table 10, 93% of street girls come from poor families while only 7% come from lower middle class homes.

**Table 10 - Poverty and girls' responsiveness to NGOs**

Category	Economic Class		
	Poor	Lower Middle Class	Upper Class
<b>1<sup>st</sup>: Permanent street settlers</b>	10	0	0
<b>2<sup>nd</sup>: Street/NGO commuters</b>	8	2	0
<b>3<sup>rd</sup>: Those that gave up the street</b>	10	0	0
<b>Total</b>	28	2	0
<b>%</b>	93	7	0

While Chi-square indicates a very strong relation of dependence between poverty and the phenomenon of street girls<sup>168</sup>, it indicates no relation of dependence between girls' responsiveness to NGOs and the economic class they came from<sup>169</sup>. This means girls' responsiveness to the program is not affected by whether the girl is coming from a lower middle class or a poor class.

### **ii. Family breakdowns and girls' responsiveness to NGOs**

The same situation applies to family breakdowns. Although 60% of street girls come from families where one birth parent is missing (as shown in Table 11), Chi-square indicates that family breakdowns don't seem to have any negative influence on girls' responsiveness to the program<sup>170</sup>.

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<sup>168</sup> Chi-square= 28.37, df=2 and p-level= 0.00000069. For the detailed table, see Chi-Square Table 1, p 159.

<sup>169</sup> Chi-square= 4.10, df=5 and p-level=0.53. For details, see Chi-Square Table 2, p159.

<sup>170</sup> Chi-square test indicates no relation of dependence between the two variables. Chi-Square= 3.75, df=11 and p-level=0.97. For the detailed numbers, see Chi-square Table 3 - Families' breakdowns and girls' responsiveness to NGOs, p159.

**Table 11 - Family breakdown and girls' responsiveness to NGOs**

	One birth parent missing		Two birth parents available	No birth parent available (Foster care)
Category	Widowed Parent	Step-Parent		
1 <sup>st</sup> : Permanent street settlers	2	3	4	1
2 <sup>nd</sup> : Street/NGO commuters	1	4	3	2
3 <sup>rd</sup> : Those that gave up the street	3	5	1	1
Total	6	12	8	4
%	20	40	26.7	13.3
	60%			

### iii. Girls' educational level and their responsiveness to NGOs

As for girls' level of education, ironically the number of educated girls in my sample was higher in the two less responsive categories of girls with eight girls (out of nine educated girls or 89%) choosing to be permanent street settlers and street/NGO commuters (see Table 12). Although chi-square testing indicates no relation of dependence between girls' education and their responsiveness to NGOs<sup>171</sup>, these numbers are quite alarming. Not only are Egyptian schools known for their poor performance but for their excessive use of corporal punishment and for physically abusing students. For instance, in a study conducted in 1996-7 to examine the prevalence of corporal punishment in Egyptian schools, 79.96% of boys and 61.53% of girls reported corporal punishment by teachers during one year using hands, sticks, straps, shoes and kicks<sup>172</sup>.

**Table 12- Girls' responsiveness in light of their education level**

<sup>171</sup> Chi-square=2, df=2 and p-level=0.37. For details, see Chi-Square Table 4 - Girls' education level their responsiveness to NGOs, p160.

<sup>172</sup> "Ending legalized violence against children, Report for MENA Regional consultation" (Cairo, The UN Secretary General's Study on Violence Against Children, 2005), <http://www.eldis.org/vfile/upload/1/document/0708/DOC19313.pdf>

Category	No School	Elementary school	Middle school or higher	Total of Educated
1 <sup>st</sup> : Permanent street settlers	6	3	1	4
2 <sup>nd</sup> : Street/NGO commuters	6	2	2	4
3 <sup>rd</sup> : Those that gave up the street	9	0	1	1
Total	21	5	4	9
%	70	17	13	30

#### iv. Age when girls ran away and their responsiveness to NGOs

50% of the girls in my sample ran away between the ages of and fifteen, as shown in Table 13, signaling an early disturbed adolescence. However, again, although this disturbed adolescence plays a key role in nurturing the phenomenon of street girls, it doesn't seem to affect girls' level of responsiveness to NGOs, as Chi-square indicates<sup>173</sup>.

**Table 13 - Girls' responsiveness in light of their age when they ran away**

Category	Age when homeless for the first time		
	-10	10-15	+15
1 <sup>st</sup> : Permanent street settlers	3	4	3
2 <sup>nd</sup> : Street/NGO commuters	3	6	1
3 <sup>rd</sup> : Those that gave up the street	3	5	2
Total	9	15	6
%	30	50	20

#### v. Families' criminal records and girls' responsiveness to NGOs

The criminal records of families were found to have a remarkable impact on girls' responsiveness to NGOs. The table below shows the percentage of families with criminal records for each category of street girls. According to the table, 27% of the families had criminal records and all the girls who belong to these families stayed in the two less responsive categories (permanent street settlers and street/NGO commuters). None of them

<sup>173</sup> Chi-square=1.4, df=8 and p-level=0.99. For details, see Chi-Square Table 5 - Age when girls ran away and their responsiveness to NGOs, p160.

managed to reach the third category (those who gave up the street). In this regard, Chi-square indicates a relation of dependence between giving up the street life and the absence of criminal record on the family's side<sup>174</sup>. However, families' criminal records do not determine whether the girl will remain in the first (street permanent settlers) or the second (street/NGO commuters) category of street girls<sup>175</sup>.

**Table 14 - Families with criminal records in each category of street girls**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Families with no criminal records</b>	<b>Families with criminal records</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup>: Permanent street settlers</b>	6	4
<b>2<sup>nd</sup>: Street/NGO commuters</b>	6	4
<b>3<sup>rd</sup>: Those that gave up the street</b>	10	0
<b>Total</b>	22	8
<b>%</b>	73	27

#### **vi. Girls' criminal records and their responsiveness to NGOs**

The same thing applies to girls who had criminal records prior to being homeless: they show a particularly low degree of responsiveness to NGOs. According to the table below, 13% of the sample had a criminal record prior to becoming homeless and ended up staying in the least responsive category of street girls: permanent street settlers.

**Table 15 - Criminal record of street girls prior to homelessness**

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<sup>174</sup> Chi-square=3.85, df=1 and p-level=0.04. For details see

Chi-Square Table 6 - Families' criminal records and girls' responsiveness to NGOs, p160.

<sup>175</sup> Chi-Square= 4.1, df=2 and p-level=0.13. For details, see Chi-Square Table 7 - Families' criminal records and girls' positions between the 1st and the 2nd category of responsiveness, p160.

Category	No criminal record	With criminal record
<b>1<sup>st</sup>: Permanent street settlers</b>	6	4
<b>2<sup>nd</sup>: Street/NGO commuters</b>	10	0
<b>3<sup>rd</sup>: Those that gave up the street</b>	10	0
<b>Total</b>	26	4
<b>%</b>	87	13

The statistical analysis of the data using the Chi-square test indicates a relation of dependence between having criminal records prior to being homeless and being less responsive to the NGO's program<sup>176</sup>. These results suggest that NGO's programs should be revisited to better address the needs of girls who had criminal records before they became homeless.

#### **vii. Time period spent on the street and girls' responsiveness to NGOs**

Regarding the different time period girls have spent on the street, Table 16 shows that 67% of my sample has spent at least six years on the street. However, the statistical analysis of the data indicates no relation of dependence between girls' responsiveness to the program and the length of the time period they stayed on the street<sup>177</sup>.

**Table 16 - Time period spent on the street by each category of street girls**

Category	Number of years spent in the street	
	≤ 5 years	≥ 6 years
<b>1<sup>st</sup>: Permanent street settlers</b>	4	6
<b>2<sup>nd</sup>: Street/NGO commuters</b>	2	8
<b>3<sup>rd</sup>: Those that gave up the street</b>	4	6
<b>Total</b>	10	20
<b>%</b>	33	67

<sup>176</sup> Chi-Square= 8.2, df=2 and p-level=0.016. For details, see Chi-Square Table 8 - Girls' criminal records prior to homelessness and their responsiveness to NGOs, p161.

<sup>177</sup> Chi-Square= 1.2, df=5 and p-level= 0.94. For details, see Chi-Square Table 9 - Time spent on the street and girls' responsiveness to NGOs, p 161.

*b) Push factors and girls' responsiveness*

Now that we have studied the effect of girls' socio-economic background on their responsiveness to NGOs, this section explores how the eight push factors influence this level of responsiveness. Table 17 indicates the frequency of each push factor per category of street girls. According to the table, the first category of girls (permanent street settlers) is the one that suffered the most from push factors (push factors reported 36 times within the first category as opposed to 28 and 24 times in the second and the third categories). The most frequent push factors for permanent street settlers were respectively sexual exploitation, neglect and physical abuse. However, neglect and physical abuse were highly recurrent in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> category as well, while only one case of sexual exploitation managed to quit the street permanently.

**Table 17 - Frequency of each push factor per category of girls in the street**

Category	Sexual Exploitation	Breaking social rules	Family discrimination /rejection	Forced labor	Neglect	Physical abuse	Total
<b>1<sup>st</sup>: Permanent street settlers</b>	10	4	4	4	7	7	36
<b>2<sup>nd</sup>: Street/NGO commuters</b>	5	2	4	3	8	6	28
<b>3<sup>rd</sup>: Those that gave up the street</b>	1	1	3	3	8	8	24
<b>Total</b>	16	7	11	10	23	21	88

To verify whether or not there was any kind of relationship between sexual exploitation and girls' responsiveness, the Chi-square test was used. [Table 18](#) illustrates the correlation between the different push factors and girls' responsiveness to NGOs.

**Table 18 - Correlation between push factors and girls' responsiveness to NGOs<sup>178</sup>**

	<b>Chi square (x2)</b>	<b>df<sup>179</sup></b>	<b>P - level</b>
<b>Sexual exploitation</b>	6.2	1 <sup>180</sup>	0.01
<b>Breaking social rules</b>	2.03	2	0.3
<b>Family discrimination</b>	0.18		0.9
<b>Forced labor</b>	0.2		0.9
<b>Neglect</b>	0.01		0.99
<b>Physical abuse</b>	0.2		0.9

In Table 18, sexual exploitation is the only variable that has a P- value<sup>181</sup>  $\leq 0.05$ <sup>182</sup> which implies the existence of a relation of dependence between girls' low responsiveness to the rehabilitation program and sexual exploitation. This table also indicates that other push factors do not influence girls' level of responsiveness to NGOs.

As for the different types of sexual exploitation and their frequency within the different categories of girls in the street, Table 19 shows that the more frequent form of sexual exploitation in the category of street settlers is forced marriage.

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<sup>178</sup> For the detailed chi-square tables of every variable, see Annex 4: Chi-square Tables of Chapter Three 10 – 18, p161-163.

<sup>179</sup> Degree of freedom = the number of studied categories - 1.

<sup>180</sup> This study usually performs the chi-square test on each studied variable with a df=2. However, in some cases, the observed differences between the 3 categories are too important to neglect, which pushes the study to perform a second chi-square test with a degree of freedom =1, the two new sets of categories being :

1. "those who gave up the street" as opposed to "those who continue to live on the street" (which includes both street NGOs commuters and permanent street settlers) or,
2. "those who accept help from NGOs" (street/NGO commuters and those who gave up the street) as opposed to "those who refuse any help from NGOs" (permanent street settlers).

In the present test examining the relation between sexual exploitation and girls' responsiveness to NGOs with a df=1, the results indicates that girls who have been sexually exploited are more likely to belong to the category of "those who refuse any help from NGOs".

<sup>181</sup> P value means the probability that the difference in observed numbers is due to chance.

<sup>182</sup> The null hypothesis (no relation of independence exists) is rejected only when P value  $\leq 0.05$ . This means that there is a very low probability that a difference in observed numbers is due to chance.

**Table 19 - Forms of sexual exploitation and their frequency per category of girls in the street**

Category	Forced Prostitution	Forced Marriage	Incest/ SF <sup>183</sup> rape
1 <sup>st</sup> : Permanent street settlers	3	4	3
2 <sup>nd</sup> : Street/NGO commuters	0	2	3
3 <sup>rd</sup> : Those that gave up the street	0	0	1
Total	3	6	7

However, in terms of dependence, Table 20 indicates that there is a relation of dependence only between girls' low responsiveness to the program and forced prostitution<sup>184</sup>, despite its low frequency in the sample.

**Table 20 - Dependence between forms of sexual exploitation and girls' responsiveness<sup>185</sup>**

	Chi-square	Df	P level
Forced prostitution	6	2	0.04
Forced marriage	4		0.13
Incest	1.14		0.56

Consequently, it can be said that excluding forced prostitution, none of the other push factors is a main reason behind the different levels attained by girls' in the rehabilitation program. Only forced prostitution destroys girls' responsiveness to the program, while all other push factors can be dealt with. This suggests that girls who were forced into prostitution may need a particular rehabilitation program that eventually brings more focus on healing their deformed self-image and restoring their lost self-esteem.

However, forced prostitution cases were only three in the whole sample (10%). This suggests that push factors are responsible for the poor outcome of NGOs with only 10% of the population of street girls, yet statistics indicate that NGOs are ineffective with

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<sup>183</sup> SF: step-father.

<sup>184</sup> Chi-square = 6, df=2 and p-level=0.04.

<sup>185</sup> Chi-square test was performed here with a df=2 and showed no relation of dependence between forced marriage or incest and girls' responsiveness to NGOs. It may be argued that with a df=1, results may have been different. However, even when chi-square was performed with df=1, the results showed no relation of dependence between these two variables and girls' responsiveness to NGOs.

approximately 70% of street boys and girls<sup>186</sup>. The remaining 60% of street girls with a low degree of responsiveness to NGOs must have other reasons to do so. Trying to find out these reasons is the objective of the second section of this chapter and of Chapter Four.

### **3.3 Girls' responsiveness to NGOs in light of their coping pattern with the street community**

In the street, each girl has her own way of dealing and getting along with the street community or with her *micro-system*. This section aims to describe the four main attitudes or patterns girls have on the street with street friends, co-workers, boys and street leaders, police, and social workers, using my sample of thirty girls. The objective is to examine the correlation between these different patterns and girls' responsiveness to the rehabilitation program. This section sheds light on the extent to which street gangs can prevent girls from leaving the street and highlights the impact of the widespread violence to which they are constantly subjected.

#### **3.3.1 Girls' patterns on the street**

As mentioned earlier, girls on the street have four main patterns to cope with the street. To identify these patterns, I didn't rely on my interviews only. I met with girls on the street, chatted with them and spent prolonged periods of time in their company. I also met with their social workers and learned more details of some important life turning events girls have experienced and about traumas they have gone through. The little stories girls recounted during interviews or conversations, the type of slang they used to tell them and their body language expressed a lot as well. Thus, I was able to observe a wide variety of behaviors from girls on the street that largely revolved around four main patterns summarized in Table 21: the "vulnerable girl" pattern, the "tomboy girl" pattern, the "business girl" pattern and the "ordinary girl" pattern. Some of my interviewees were unclassifiable under any of the four patterns. In the following pages, I present the characteristics of each coping pattern and explain the reason why some girls couldn't be classified. And finally, I examine the effect girls' patterns on the street have on their responsiveness to the program.

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<sup>186</sup> See Figure 2, p28.

**Table 21 - Girls' different patterns with the street community**

	<b>Vulnerable girl</b>	<b>Tomboy girl</b>	<b>Business girl</b>	<b>Ordinary girl</b>
<b>With friends</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Prefers to avoid strangers and never initiates a relationship</li> <li>* Never approaches others for friendship</li> <li>* Limited circle of friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Very wide circle of street friends</li> <li>* Considered by other girls as source of protection</li> <li>* Sometimes source of annoyance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Limited circle of friends to which she is not very attached</li> <li>* May sometimes pity street friends</li> <li>* Doesn't usually identify herself as a girl in the street</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Very wide circle of street friends</li> <li>* Very attached to street friends</li> <li>* Can sometimes be a trouble maker</li> </ul>
<b>With street leaders and offenses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Cannot hold a weapon to protect herself</li> <li>* Depends on her limited circle of friends for protection</li> <li>* May choose to live in a corrective institution –rather than in the street*</li> <li>for protection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Prefers to have a boyish look: haircut, men's cloths.</li> <li>* Can use a weapon (namely blades and knives) for protection</li> <li>* Fully depends on herself for protection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Finds a way to get a protection through surrounding people who work at the same place but who don't necessarily live in the street</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Can use a weapon (namely blades and knives) for protection</li> <li>* Depends on other friends and sometimes on herself for protection</li> </ul>
<b>With boys</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Has only one partner (more than one is a rare exception) or no partner at all</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Multiple informal marriages are the norm</li> <li>* Some partners may belong to the street community and some others may not</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* All partners are from outside the street community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Multiple informal marriages are the norm</li> <li>* Some partners may belong to the street community and some others may not</li> </ul>
<b>With job</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Limited number of marginal jobs with relatively limited income or no job at all.</li> <li>* Fears to engage in illegal activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Limited number of relatively high income jobs</li> <li>* Usually has illegal activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Has only one job on which she highly relies for living</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Can have marginal or high income jobs: no particular pattern</li> <li>* Can have legal or illegal jobs: no particular pattern</li> </ul>
<b>With police</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Avoids confrontation with police.</li> <li>* Tolerates their bad treatment and curses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Police avoid confrontation with them</li> <li>* Replies to offenses verbally and physically</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Doesn't usually get caught by police.</li> <li>* If arrested, tries to reach a compromise with police based on an exchange of interests.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Police usually ignore them unless they provoke the police or unless police need a service.</li> <li>* Their relationship with police is a mix of : Physical abuse Sexual exploitation Exchange of interests</li> </ul>
<b>With criminal justice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Has a very limited criminal history or no history at all</li> <li>* "Begging" and "absence of a family" are the main reasons they get arrested for</li> <li>* Can get unjustly exaggerated sentences out of helplessness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Usually has a very long criminal record</li> <li>* "Theft" and "drug trafficking" are main crimes they get arrested for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Usually has a very limited criminal record or no record at all.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* No particular pattern: criminal record varies.</li> </ul>

## **1. The “vulnerable girl” pattern**

Vulnerable girls tend to have a very limited circle of street friends. They usually prefer to avoid strangers and don’t usually initiate a friendship with other girls on the street. For instance, this is how nineteen year old F.O.R. described her relationship with other girls on the street: *“I was always very afraid of getting arrested so I decided not to know anyone and not to let others know me. I was afraid of selling tissues or flowers because I didn’t want cops to arrest me. I spent my days vagabonding between metro stations and at the end of the day, I used to choose a hidden place to sleep”*<sup>187</sup>.

When a vulnerable girl gets in trouble, she cannot use weapons<sup>188</sup> to protect herself. Instead, she relies on her very limited circle of friends to deter her offenders. This is the case of nineteen year old R.O.J. Even though she has been on the street for more than 8 years, for protection she still relied on a small group of street boys aged eleven to nineteen who lived in the same busy square. *“She is a poor girl and she has no one to go to (for help). We pity her so we are here to help if anyone bothers her”*, said one of the boys about R.O.J.<sup>189</sup>.

To avoid street dangers and offenses, some vulnerable girls may willingly ‘surrender’ themselves to a correctional institution. This behavior is generally a rare exception among kids on the street due to the very negative reputation correctional institutions have among them. However, eleven year old R.N.<sup>190</sup> did it willingly after spending a few years on the street and realizing she couldn’t survive the street anymore.

In terms of their relationships with boys, most vulnerable girls tend to have only one partner during their life on the street and prefer to stay with him for a long time no matter how abusive he may be. For instance, while he was under the influence S.S.M.’s husband dropped his 8 month old daughter in a pot of boiling water. This accident happened again with his 6 month old son, and again the father was under the influence. Nonetheless, and

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<sup>187</sup> F.O.R. belongs now to the category of “those who gave up the street”.

<sup>188</sup> Weapons in the street community are namely blades and knives.

<sup>189</sup> R.O.J. belongs to the category of “permanent street settlers”.

<sup>190</sup> R.O.N. is now a 23 year old girl WOMAN? who gave up the street life.

despite the physical abuse she and her kids are subjected to, S.S.M. still lives with her husband because for her, *“The shadow of a man is better than that of a wall”*<sup>191</sup>.

Among my interviewees, the only vulnerable girl who had more than one partner during her stay on the street was R.O.N. This was not because she liked changing partners. Rather, it was a desperate attempt to find another source of protection after her two ex-street-husbands left her.

The types of jobs that vulnerable girls tend to practice on the street include begging, working as an informal valet, selling flowers or tissues at traffic lights and washing cars. These jobs are marginal ones and generate a relatively limited income compared to what other street jobs can generate<sup>192</sup>. Some vulnerable girls may even prefer not to work at all, such as I.M. *“I didn’t want to work because I knew cops may come and take me if they saw me begging or selling tissues. I ate with some of my friends when they had food but I basically relied on drinking a lot of water so that my stomach gets full to avoid getting hungry”*, said I.M.

In general, vulnerable girls are also afraid of engaging in illegal activities such as drug trafficking, prostitution or thuggery. One of them once pointed at a deep injury mark in her face and told me the story behind it.

*“Immediately after I got divorced, one of the ladies I knew from the street invited me to her apartment saying she has a job for me. I went to see that job and realized it was nothing more than a man who wanted to sleep with me. Of course, I refused so he threatened to injure me. I didn’t really understand what he meant by ‘injuring’ me. I thought it will be a small scratch and that’s it, so I told him that I’d rather be injured than sleep with him. I didn’t realize what he was talking about until I saw him slapping my face with a sharp knife. I started bleeding intensely and lost consciousness. I didn’t wake up until a few hours later when a man found me lying down in the middle of his corn field”*, said nineteen year old F.O.R.

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<sup>191</sup> S.S.M. is now a 20 year old girl who belongs to the category of “street/family commuters”. She lives with her husband but continues to run away occasionally to stay on the street.

<sup>192</sup> These jobs can generate an income of up to 300LE a day (50\$ a day) which is a relatively limited income compared to what other jobs in the street can generate. One of the social workers was once joking when she said *“When I see how much those kids make a day, I seriously start thinking about changing my career”*.

The same situation applies to R.O.J. Along with other kids on the street, she was approached after the Egyptian revolution by the remnants of the old regime and asked to participate in acts of thuggery against public buildings. After I interviewed R.O.J., her social worker told me that in December 2012, R.O.J. was arrested for accompanying other homeless kids who were paid to set fire to Cairo's famous Scientific Complex. *"She didn't throw Molotov though. She refused to. She was just accompanying the other kids: her protecting friends"*, her social worker said.

Vulnerable girls don't get arrested frequently. As a matter of fact, the Egyptian juvenile police usually ignore girls and boys on the street unless kids provoke them or unless the police are conducting one of their arrest campaigns<sup>193</sup>. Therefore, vulnerable girls never seek to provoke the police. However, in case they get arrested, their usual attitude is to avoid any kind of confrontation with police officers, which may include tolerating their verbal and physical abuse.

Consequently, vulnerable girls tend to have a very limited criminal record or no record at all. Usually, "begging" and "absence of a family" are the only possible reasons they can get arrested. However, vulnerable girls can get unjustly exaggerated sentences due to their helplessness, such as in the case of A.H. who spent three years in an adult prison<sup>194</sup>.

*"I was sitting with some new friends that I had just met on the street when the cops launched one of their arrest campaigns. The kids refused to surrender and confronted the police violently in a fight where weapons were used and tires were set on fire. I didn't participate though because I didn't know why cops were attacking us and I didn't know how far the other kids were ready to go. But it was an incident that newspapers reported the next day as a 'thugs attack against authorities and security forces'. The other kids who were older than me were released a few months later because they managed to get a lawyer, while I was sent to an adult prison for 3 years"*<sup>195</sup>.

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<sup>193</sup> Arrest campaigns are randomly conducted by the juvenile police every once in a while.

<sup>194</sup> A.H. is now an 18 year old girl who gave up the street.

<sup>195</sup> According to the Egyptian Child law, children should never be placed in adult prisons. However, A.H. mentioned having faked her age and personal information in order to look older and be placed in an adult prison because she believed correctional institutions were worse than adult prisons.

## 2. The “tomboy girl” pattern

Unlike vulnerable girls, tomboy girls tend to have a very wide circle of street friends and are regarded as a source of protection for other girls. S.R.F.<sup>196</sup> (age eighteen) and R.O.K.<sup>197</sup> (age twenty one) are two good examples, although each has her own way of protecting her circle. For instance, R.O.K. chooses to first “*negotiate wisely*” with offenders before using force while S.R.F. uses force as a first and ultimate option. In her street fights, every available weapon is used: scalpels, sharp blades, knives, broken glass and sometimes machetes and cleavers. About her battles, she said, “*When a confrontation is in order, I completely put my fears aside and attack fiercely because if my adversary sees the trace of fear in my eyes, he will never have mercy on me*”.

Tomboy girls can be a source of protection for other girls on the street, but they can sometimes be a nightmare, as is the case for L.O.D. Having joined the street life at the age of six, she now uses sexual violence to humiliate her adversaries. According to her social worker, “*L.O.D. used to visit the NGO as a boy for years until we discovered she was a girl when she turned eight years old. Now she drags to her room any girl with whom she has a conflict and orders her boyfriend to rape her. She tells him exactly what to do and orchestrates the rape while she watches vengefully. She even humiliates her victim by dictating what sexual positions she should be in and what acts she should do*”.

In terms of appearance, many tomboy girls prefer a very boyish look, to the point of sometimes hiding their gender. They cut their hair like boys or hide it under a cap and wear men’s clothes such as B.A.K. (age fourteen) does. No one knows she is a girl except her employer, and she works in places traditionally reserved for men<sup>198</sup>.

For a tomboy girl, having multiple informal husbands is the norm, while accepting abuse by any one of them is not even an option. This is why Y.S. decided to end her relationship with her informal husband when he failed to protect her from his brother when the brother tried to rape her. “*I decided not to live anymore in this house when I found I was*

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<sup>196</sup> S.R.F. is a street/family commuter.

<sup>197</sup> R.O.K. belongs to the category of “those who gave up the street”.

<sup>198</sup> B.A.K. worked as a Micro-bus ticket boy and as a trash collector.

at risk”, said Y.S.<sup>199</sup> who, at the age of fifteen years old, was raped by her step-father. Some of the tomboy girls’ partners belong to the street community while others don’t. They can have homes and families but having been raised themselves in poor families and in marginalized areas, they understand the circumstances street girls came from.

In terms of jobs, tomboy girls don’t like to spend a long time working. Rather, they prefer to have a limited number of relatively high income jobs. Thuggery and professional thefts are their major source of income, but some of them work also in prostitution. This tells us that unlike vulnerable girls, tomboy girls are not afraid of engaging in illegal activities; but some of them prefer to stay legal. R.O.K. and B.A.K., for instance, never engaged in illegal activities.

As for police officers and their relationship with tomboy girls, police tend to usually avoid confrontations with them. Tomboy girls can humiliate officers in public by using the most profane words and language, a situation any man in a “macho” environment would never like to face. Even when they are provoked by tomboy girls, police usually prefer to let go before things get complicated. In the unlikely event of getting arrested, a tomboy never tolerates any bad treatment and replies both verbally and physically to any offense. And in order to get released, a common trick tomboy girls use is to threaten they will injure themselves and pretend the police were the perpetrators<sup>200</sup>. Many tomboy girls have done this by cutting themselves with blades, knocking their heads against the wall, or both. However, these tricks stopped working since the eruption of the Egyptian revolution<sup>201</sup>.

Consequently, tomboy girls find ways to get released or to escape, but they still tend to have long criminal records with theft and drug trafficking as the major charges. However, tomboy girls are not bothered by this as they usually find ways to get around them. Once I was reviewing L.O.D.’s criminal records with her social worker when he told me,

*LOD got many jail sentences but she always lies about her true name when she gets arrested. Cops know her under the name of K.O.D. which is the name of her sister, who never lived on the street or committed any crime. If this sister gets*

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<sup>199</sup> Y.S. is now an 18 year old permanent street settler.

<sup>200</sup> According to a social worker who explained to me the different ploys girls use to get released.

<sup>201</sup> This is discussed in further detail later in chapter four. For more information, see p101-103.

*arrested for any reason, she will find under her name a very long criminal record she doesn't know anything about. L.O.D. and many girls on the street don't care about their criminal records. They look at it as a very minor thing in their life as long as they can get around it. They continue to live with it and it doesn't represent a concern to them."*

### **3. The "business girl" pattern**

Business girls are ones who consider job and business a primary objective in the street. They socialize every once in a while with other kids on the street but this is never their main concern. Consequently, business girls tend to have a limited circle of friends to whom they are not very attached. For instance, referring to her street friends, H.R. said, *"I stay with them just to have some company but they are not my friends"*.

In some cases, business girls don't identify themselves as street girls and talk about street girls as a third party. *"I used to work and play with 'street girls' and my older sister was always with me. Then, she ran away and I joined her a few years later. But I never did what they used to do, like doing drugs or sniffing glue. My sister never allowed them to have a bad influence on me. But in general they are poor girls and I pity them"*, said R.S.<sup>202</sup> who, unlike all my other interviewees, used a non-rural slang with lots of English words mixed in to distinguish herself from 'street girls'. Business girls in my sample are homeless girls; their relation with their families is quasi-absent and most of them don't live with their families any more. Their situation is more complicated than that of a working child coming from a poor household.

To stay safe while living and working on the street, business girls find a way to get the support of surrounding people who work in the same place but who are not necessarily homeless. In S.G., H.R. and O.R.'s cases, store owners and street vendors in the area they work in were their protectors, while in W.'s case, her pimp was the protector.

In terms of relations with boys, a unique characteristic distinguishing business girls from other street girls is that all their partners do not belong to the street community. They are cousins, neighbors, old family friends or co-workers, but never friends from the street.

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<sup>202</sup> R.S. belongs to the category of those who gave up the street.

In terms of job pattern, a business girl tends to have only one job to which she is highly committed and on which she highly relies for a living. Types of job that business girls practice include both low and high income ones. Some business girls for instance, only sell tissues and flowers; others work as street vendors while others are professional prostitutes.

As for the relation between business girls and law enforcement, business girls rarely get arrested or get into troubles with police because they tend to distance themselves from other girls on the street. Consequently, business girls have a very limited criminal record or no record at all. However, whenever they get arrested, they find a way to reach a deal with police officers based on an exchange of services. Some girls agree to work temporarily as informants for the police in exchange for being released, while others get released in exchange for sexual favors. R.S. explained to me her relationship with the police saying,

*“If I work for the Egyptian government, the first thing I will do will be to blow up the juvenile police because they are all dirty people... One time after the revolution, I was arrested for breaking the curfew. When the officer checked my criminal record and found I had been convicted earlier and served four months in prison, he told me he can release me on one condition which was to sleep with him the next day. I accepted and gave him my phone number, but once outside, I never replied to his calls. On another occasion, another cop told me he can release me provided that I sleep with a wealthy Arab man who can pay me up to 1000 LE per night<sup>203</sup>. He wanted his share from this money, of course, but I did to him the exact same thing I did to the first cop”.*

#### **4. The “ordinary girl” pattern**

Many of my interviewees belonged to this last category. They had a very wide circle of street friends to whom they were much attached. D.K.M. and N.F. were two good examples. This is how D.K.M. described how close she is to her street friends: *“I have neighbors now but I try to avoid them because they will keep asking me about my past and where I grew up. The only close friends I still have are those with whom I lived and grew up*

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<sup>203</sup> Approximately \$170.

*on the street. I sometimes go to spend some time with them just to remember the old days”.* As for N.F., she described her relationship with street friends as follows: *“They are my true friends and they shared with me both my bad and good moments. Every time I went to the shelter, I missed them so much and they cried begging me not to leave”.*

With street friends and non-street people alike, ordinary girls can sometimes be trouble- seekers and -makers. When I met D.G.D. (fifteen years old), she couldn’t stop laughing about what she had just done. *“This mosque keeper...”,* she explained; *“...he didn’t want me to sleep close to the mosque so I taught him a lesson he will never forget. When he washed his clothes and hung them to dry in the sun, I took all his clothes and threw them in the backyard of the abandoned villa. I hope he will never find them”,* said D.G.D. before bursting again into laughter, explaining that the funniest thing was that the mosque keeper hasn’t found out about her prank yet. *“I so much want to see his face when he finds out”,* she said in laughter.

An hour earlier, D.G.D. had been the subject of a conversation a social worker and I had with a woman who lives with her children in the same busy square as D.G.D. *“D.G.D. took my little daughter and incited her to run away. We kept looking for both of them for the last two weeks until we found out they went on a trip to Alexandria<sup>204</sup> with boys. I shouldn’t have allowed her to stay with my daughters, she is an evil”,* the woman said. Another example of a trouble making girl is that of A.M. (thirteen years old) about whom the social worker said: *“I can’t accept her at the shelter right now; she has to learn that being admitted to the shelter is not an easy thing. Last time, she ran away with a little girl whom we found two days later on the street in a very deplorable condition. She was almost raped. And this was not the first time A.M. incites other girls to run away with her and gets them into trouble”.*

The worst nightmare for any girl on the street, ordinary girls included, is to be “marked” in the face. A mark in the face usually means that the girl has been attacked, raped and injured in the face by her offender<sup>205</sup>. It’s an incident that turns a girl’s life in the street into hell because it makes public the humiliation that she has been subjected to and indicates she can’t protect herself in the street. Furthermore, potential offenders see

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<sup>204</sup> 3 hours drive from Cairo, where D.G.D. originally lived.

<sup>205</sup> According to M.A., a social worker at Hope Village.

“marked” girls as easy prey, which makes them more vulnerable to aggressions. For their safety, ordinary girls don’t hesitate to hold or use weapons to defend themselves. The main weapons they carry are blades and scalpels. Sometimes, they depend on friends and on older girls on the street for protection, but sometimes they just rely on themselves.

For ordinary girls on the street, having multiple informal marriages is mostly the norm. Some partners belong to the street community and some don’t. However, all of them come from poor and marginalized areas and some of them may have criminal records. Kids live either with their mom on the street, at the shelter or with relatives.

In terms of jobs that ordinary girls tend to practice on the street, there is no specific pattern. They can either have marginal jobs or high income ones. They can also have legal or illegal jobs.

Police usually ignore ordinary girls on the street, unless the latter provoke them or unless the officers need a service. The relationship between ordinary girls and law enforcement is a mix of physical abuse, sexual exploitation and an exchange of services. Finally, in terms of criminal records, ordinary girls do not have a specific pattern. They can have very long criminal record or no record at all.

## **5. Unclassifiable girls**

Some of my interviewees were unclassifiable under any of the four abovementioned patterns. Instead, their attitude with the street community was a mix of two or more patterns at the same time or has changed dramatically over time from one pattern to another.

B.X.’s pattern was a mix of the “tomboy girl”, the “vulnerable girl” and the “business girl” patterns. As a tomboy girl, she worked at two places traditionally reserved for men (a men’s coffee shop and a horse stable in one of Cairo’s slums) while hiding her gender. Only her employers and some close friends knew she is a girl. As a vulnerable girl, however, she couldn’t hold a weapon to protect herself and relied on her employer and his family to protect her from any offender or any client who discovers she is a girl. And finally as a “business girl”, her prime objective on the street was her job while making friends was a very marginal concern. Her street friends were very few and her relationship with police

was one of the best. *“I serve them tea and coffee at the coffee shop so they know me very well. They know I am straight and I don’t make troubles as other girls do. No one has ever arrested me”*.

Other unclassifiable cases reflecting a pattern-shift were those of M.S. and K.A.S. who started their life in the street as “vulnerable” girls but who later on adopted the “tomboy girl” pattern. At the beginning of her life on the street, M.S. avoided and was avoided for a long time by street friends because she had a constant problem of urinary incontinence that made her unwelcome. When she got arrested at the age of thirteen for “the absence of family” and was placed at the correctional institution, she preferred to stay there for almost five years, although girls could easily run away from there and frequently do so. For her, the correctional institution was relatively safer than the street. However, by the end of her stay, she started to occasionally run away. When she came to visit Hope Village day care center, social workers said she *“looked seriously traumatized and psychologically unstable. She lost confidence in everybody and started to dress up, to act and to talk like boys. Social workers at the correctional institution have even mentioned to us that she started to show signs of a homosexual behavior”*. Later on, M.S. became one of the street leaders in her area. She completely refused to live in the NGO’s shelter because she said she has other friends to protect in the street.

K.A.S.’s case was almost the same as M.S.’s with some subtle differences. Right after she ran away at the age of fourteen, she willingly chose to live in the correctional institution for almost three years instead of living on the street. Then she ran away at the age of seventeen and chose to marry a man she doesn’t love just to have a safe haven and avoid the street. When her marriage fell apart, she went to live at the shelter at the age of nineteen before running away and getting kidnapped for the first time in her life. About this incident, social workers said *“she was able to escape but stayed terrified during the whole night and couldn’t sleep. She came to us the next day in the morning with a severe nervous breakdown and begged to get re-admitted to the shelter”*. However, K.A.S. started to run away repeatedly and gradually became one of the street leaders. Later on, she was unwelcome at the shelter because of both her disruptive and her homosexual behavior.

### 3.3.2 Girls' patterns and girls' responsiveness to NGOs

The previous section highlighted the characteristics of every coping pattern street girls have on the street. The following section discusses the prevalence of each pattern among street girls and the extent to which each pattern influences girls' degree of responsiveness to NGOs.

**Table 22 - Prevalence of each coping pattern among street girls**

Category	Vulnerable	Tomboy	Business	Ordinary	Mix
1 <sup>st</sup> : Permanent street settlers	1	2	3	3	1
2 <sup>nd</sup> : Street/NGO's shelters commuters	1	2	0	4	3
3 <sup>rd</sup> : Those who gave up the street	6	1	2	1	0
Total	8	5	5	8	4

As Table 22 indicates, eight girls in my sample (27%) belong to the “vulnerable girl” pattern, eight to the “ordinary girl” pattern, five to each the “tomboy” and the “business girl” patterns, while four were unclassifiable.

Six out of eight vulnerable girls (75%) ended up leaving the street and Chi-square test shows a relation of dependence between being vulnerable and giving up the street<sup>206</sup>. The two exceptions were R.O.J. and S.S.M. who showed a low level of responsiveness to the NGO. R.O.J. stayed in the category of permanent street settlers while S.S.M. reached the category of the street/family commuters. In R.O.J.'s case, the reasons were that her family forced her to work on the street, and refused to let her live in a shelter. As for S.S.M.'s case, she had already spent more than five years in a correctional institution and refused since then to repeat her negative experience with institutionalized care. Instead, she decided to live with her informal husband, but kept running away to the street every once in a while due to the husband's addiction to drugs and his recurrent physical abuses against her and her two kids.

Girls' negative experience with correctional institutions and their families' refusal to let them live in a shelter were two factors that affected R.O.J. and S.S.M.'s responsiveness

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<sup>206</sup> Chi-square= 6.08, df=1 and p-value= 0.01. For details, see Chi-Square Table 19 - The "vulnerable girl" pattern and girls' responsiveness to NGOs, p163. No other relation of dependence was found between the other patterns and girls' responsiveness to NGOs. For details see Chi-Square Table 20-21-22, p163-164.

to the NGOs. However, these two factors do not seem to have had the same negative effect on other girls on the street. As a matter of fact, in a following section of this chapter<sup>207</sup> and in Chapter Four<sup>208</sup>, the results of chi-square indicate no relation of dependence between the two factors and girls' responsiveness to the program.

As for the relation between the other patterns and girls' degree of responsiveness to NGOs, chi-square test indicates that girls' patterns do not determine the category they end up in<sup>209</sup>. It was quite interesting though, to see one case of a tomboy girl giving up the street and living with her husband. When reviewing her case, I noticed she was the only tomboy girl who had a little daughter living with her. All other tomboy girls placed their kids either in NGOs' shelters or with family members. The girl in question decided on another option: she placed her daughter from a previous marriage in a shelter and kept her daughter from her current husband with her. The number of children that street girls are in charge of affects considerably their degree of responsiveness to the NGO. This is one of the variables this study tackles in Chapter Four<sup>210</sup>.

### 3.3.3 Families and street communities: their impact on girls' responsiveness to NGOs

Many girls on the street wish they could quit the street life and live in the shelter. However, many of them couldn't make this decision either out of fear of their street gang or because their families refused to give their consent for the NGO to host them. The following table indicates the number of girls who were compelled by their families or by their gangs to stay on the street as opposed to those who were not.

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<sup>207</sup> See "Families and street communities: their impact on girls' responsiveness to NGOs", p83.

<sup>208</sup> See "Experience with correctional institutions", p110.

<sup>209</sup> For detailed chi-square tables, see Chi-Square Tables of Chapter Three, p158.

<sup>210</sup> See "Number of kids in girls' care and girls' responsiveness to the program", page 109.

**Table 23 - Girls compelled to stay on the street by their families or street community**

Category	Limited by Birth Family	Limited by Street Community	Total	Girls with no constraints
1 <sup>st</sup> : Permanent street settlers	2	2	4	6
2 <sup>nd</sup> : Street/NGO's shelters commuters	1	3	4	6
3 <sup>rd</sup> : Those who gave up the street	0	0	0	10
<b>Total</b>	3	5	8 (27%)	22

As shown in Table 23, only eight out of thirty street girls (27%) were compelled by their families and street gangs to stay on the street while the majority had no constraints. Although the percentage of street girls compelled by their surroundings to stay on the street was minimal (27% as shown in Table 23), statistical analysis indicates that street gangs and families strongly hinder the attempt of these few girls to settle permanently at the shelter<sup>211</sup>. However, families and street communities' power does not play any role in determining whether the girl will become a street permanent resident or a street/NGO commuter<sup>212</sup>.

This small percentage of girls compelled to stay on the street may also give a wrong impression that street gangs and families do not represent a danger to NGOs. The fact is that when a girl defies her family or street gang by settling at the shelter or by visiting the reception center, the entire shelter, including the NGO's staff, is in danger. When her street gang and her family learn she is at the shelter, they don't usually come to pick her up peacefully. This is how one of the social workers described the situation:

*“Police doesn't help especially after the revolution. One time, we called them when a family from Upper Egypt<sup>213</sup> came fully armed to attack the center and to look for their daughter. When we called the police, they told us: you revolted [against us],*

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<sup>211</sup> Chi-square=4.07, df=1 and a p-value = 0.04. For detailed chi-square table, see Chi-Square Table 23 - The compelling power of street gangs/families and girls' responsiveness to NGOs, p164.

<sup>212</sup> Chi-square=4.11, df=2 and p-value=0.13. For detailed chi-square table, see Chi-Square Table 24 - Compelling power of street gangs/families and girls' decision to become permanent resident or street/NGO commuter, p164.

<sup>213</sup> Upper Egypt is usually known for its ultra-conservatism with regards to women.

*then go protect yourself. Later, a whole street gang came to attack the center with cleavers and knives. The police wasn't responsive so we had to stay confined in the center for a whole day until we managed to ease the situation through negotiations”.*

### 3.3.4 Street violence and girls' responsiveness to NGOs

Street violence being almost a daily event in the life of street girls, it was important to study its effect on girls' responsiveness to NGOs. In the following section, I highlight the prevalence of street violence among street girls, showing the percentage of girls who were victims of domestic violence (from their partners), of sexual violence (rape or conservation<sup>214</sup>), or of both. Then, I present the results of Chi-square test regarding the relation between street violence and girls' responsiveness to NGOs.

Domestic violence is not limited to physical beating that leaves serious injuries in the victim's body. It includes cases of severe torture such as the case of S.R.F., who was inhumanly tortured a few days after I interviewed her. When I saw her a day after the incident, I was shocked by the deplorable condition she was in. *“My ex locked me up in a small room, muzzled me and chained me before cutting my hands and legs with broken glass and blades. He ‘marked’ my face and deformed it seriously. Then at the end, he rubbed my injuries with sliced garlic to cause me more pain”*, S.R.F told me while showing me several serious injuries on her face and on her legs.

Sexual violence is not only committed by males; many girls have reported being raped by older girls in correctional institutions and on the street. As a matter of fact, during several discussions with social workers, I discovered that a few of my interviewees were also known to use rape and sexual violence as a way of humiliating other girls.

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<sup>214</sup> “Conserving of a street girl” means kidnapping her and keeping her enclosed in an abandoned house for several days where her offender/s rape her repeatedly.

**Table 24 - Sexual and domestic violence in each category of street girl**

Category	Sexual Violence	Domestic Violence	Victims of both
1 <sup>st</sup> : Permanent street settlers	5	7	5
2 <sup>nd</sup> : Street/NGO's shelters commuters	9	8	8
3 <sup>rd</sup> : Those who gave up the street	5	5	2
Total	19 (63%)	20 (67%)	15 (50%)
	24 (80%)		

The table above shows that 80% of the girls in my sample were subject to either sexual or to domestic violence. This doesn't mean that the remaining 20% of the sample haven't faced any kind of violence on the street. Rather, it means they have been victims of violence but that was not a sexual or a domestic one. Girls who were victims of only domestic violence represented 67% of my sample and those who were victims of only sexual violence represented 63%, while 50% of the sample was victims of both.

Statistical analysis indicates no relation of dependence between street girls being victims of sexual violence and their decision to settle in a shelter. It shows as well no relation of dependence between domestic violence and girls' responsiveness to NGOs. The same applies to girls who were victims of both sexual and domestic violence: street violence doesn't have any effect on their degree of responsiveness to NGOs<sup>215</sup>. This means that although street violence may push some street girls to seek refuge in the shelter, girls' exits from the street during these moments are more likely to be temporary than permanent. Shortly after they feel safe and get a small break at the shelter, most of them go back to the street.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

This chapter introduced the thirty girls who accepted to be part of a sample studied by this dissertation. When the economic background of the studied street girls was observed, the vast majority of them (93%) were found to be from poor families while only

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<sup>215</sup> For details see Chi-Square Table 26 and 27, p165.

7% belonged to lower middle class families. Regarding the stability of their families, 60% of the girls were found to be from broken families with at least one biological parent missing either because of divorce (40%) or because of death (20%). As for their education, 70% of the sample turned out to be illiterate and never went to school. Regarding their criminal records as well as their families, most of the girls in my sample (87%) had no criminal records prior to being homeless. Only 27% of the girls had parents with criminal records. Most of the girls joined the street life at a very early age, with half of them becoming homeless between the age of ten and fifteen years old. By the time I interviewed them, most of the girls in my sample (67%) had spent at least six years on the street.

This chapter also explored the main reasons for girls to be on the street. According to the data, these reasons are: neglect (reported by 26% of the girls), physical abuse (reported by 24%), sexual exploitation (18%), family discrimination (13%), forced labor (11%) and breaking social rules (8%).

When the data was analyzed using Chi-square, the only push factor found to be destroying girls' chances to progress in general within the rehabilitation program was forced prostitution. This may suggest that girls who were forced into prostitution need a particular program where more focus is placed on improving their self-image or on recovering their self-esteem. However, it should be emphasized that girls who were forced into prostitution constitute only 10% of my sample whereas statistics show that NGOs are ineffective with 70% of street girls. This is why NGOs limited effectiveness should not by any means be attributed only to girls who experienced being forced into prostitution.

Other factors that were found to be affecting NGOs' effectiveness are girls' patterns on the street. Compared to "tomboy girls", "business girls" and "ordinary girls", "vulnerable girls" tend to be more likely to give up the street and be more responsive to NGOs (excluding very rare exceptions and due to very particular circumstances). This result suggests that rehabilitation programs may need to be tailored in a way that matches the needs of all girls in the street and not only vulnerable ones, who constitute only 27% of street girls.

Three other factors affecting girls' responsiveness to NGOs are the pressure of their community, their families' criminal records and girls' own criminal records before they

become homeless. According to statistical analysis, 27% of the girls on the street find themselves constrained to remain homeless by their families and their street community. Statistical analysis has also shown that girls who belong to families with criminal records (27% of the sample) and girls who had criminal records prior to being homeless (13%) are more unlikely to quit the street life.

Finally, Chapter Three highlighted two additional findings that may challenge our ideas about street girls and the factors affecting their willingness to quit the street. The first of these findings is that although the violence girls face on the street is very widespread<sup>216</sup>, it does not make girls more willing to leave the street and live permanently in the NGO. Street violence may lead the girls to look for a safe shelter but only for a limited period of time, after which street girls go back to the street.

The second important finding is that the time period girls spend on the street doesn't affect their degree of responsiveness to the rehabilitation program either. A number of girls in my sample managed to quit the street after being homeless for more than six years while others who have only recently joined the street life refused completely to settle in the NGO shelter, and vice versa.

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<sup>216</sup> With 63% of street girls being victims of sexual violence, 67% being victims of violence inflicted by her street partner and 50% being victims of both.



## **Chapter 4: Girls' responsiveness to NGOs in light of their Macro- and Exo-systems**



*What are girls' needs on the street, in terms of food, clothing, kids' needs and shelter, and how do these needs affect girls' degree of responsiveness to NGOs? How do street girls describe their past experience with NGOs and the mainstream society? And how does this experience influence NGOs' attempts to rehabilitate street girls? These are the main questions this chapter tries to answer.*

## **4.1 Girls' responsiveness to NGOs in light of girls' needs**

Like all other human beings, girls on the street have needs and so do their children. This first section of Chapter Four aims to shed light on these basic needs and girls' struggle to satisfy them. The extent to which NGOs help girls in meeting these needs is another focus of the first section. Finally, this section examines the extent to which each girl's needs influence her degree of responsiveness to NGOs.

### **4.1.1 Girls' needs**

During the day, girls spend their time working on the street or visiting NGOs' centers to satisfy their needs. In the evening, girls start looking for a safe shelter where they can spend the night with their children away from street offenders. The following pages look at the different activities girls practice during the day to meet their needs (whether on the street or at NGOs). Then, it highlights the different options girls resort to at night to find a safe shelter for themselves and their children.

#### **a) Street work during the day**

In order to survive with their children on the street, street girls' first choice is work. Relying on their husbands, if any, as breadwinners is not an option. On the contrary, many husbands rely on their wives, who work at more than one job at a time, to survive. Table 25 indicates the different jobs girls practice on the street. Street girls most often do the following jobs: selling tissue paper and flowers at traffic lights (60%), working as street vendors (40%), as maids and beggars (20%), as thieves and prostitutes, as belly dancers and

as parking valets. Other jobs include working in hair and beauty salons, in food processing factories, in horse stables, in waste collection or in grocery stores. Some of the jobs girls practice are legal and some are not (such as theft, prostitution and drug dealing).

**Table 25 - Jobs of girls on the street**

Type of job	Legal							Illegal		
	Selling tissue/flowers	Begging	Valet	Dancer	Street vendor	Maid	Other	Theft	Prostitution	Drugs
<b>Total</b>	18	6	1	3	12	6	11	4	4	2
<b>%</b>	60	20	3	10	40	20	37	13	13	6

Table 26 lists the income each street job generates per month. The most rewarding job on the street is prostitution; girls who practice it can make between \$1500 and \$5000 a month. Some girls do it for as low as 20 LE/hour<sup>217</sup>, but this is rare. The fall of 2012 was one of these rare circumstances. *“The police ignored intentionally the presence of thugs and street kids and girls in Tahrir square”*, said a social worker about the situation in the revolution’s iconic square after all political parties and activists ceased holding sit-ins there<sup>218</sup>. *“They wanted people to believe that those who occupy Tahrir Square are nothing but thugs, prostitutes and thieves. Famous thugs were therefore let to have their prostitution tents erected in Tahrir square where girls could sleep with clients for as low as 20 LE/hour”*. However, girls who treat prostitution as a profession usually earn 300LE/hour<sup>219</sup>. Some of them also have a say on the kind of clients they will service. Arabs<sup>220</sup> are generally their favorite clients, as the price they pay can sometimes go up to 1000LE<sup>221</sup> per night.

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<sup>217</sup> \$3/hour.

<sup>218</sup> In the post revolution era, sit-ins in Tahrir square became easy targets for thugs, mobs and security forces especially when the number of protesters decreased. The decision not to hold further sit-ins in Tahrir square came after the famous one in front of the ministerial cabinet (close to Tahrir square) was violently dispersed. In that instance, the number of protesters decreased remarkably after several days of sit-in and made it easy for the Egyptian military to disperse them violently, taking the lives of more than 40 protesters. Since then, political activists decided not to hold further sit-ins there.

<sup>219</sup> The equivalent to \$50/hour.

<sup>220</sup> The word “Arabs” here means people coming from the Gulf countries.

<sup>221</sup> The equivalent to approximately \$170 per night.

**Table 26 - Income of each street job per month**

<b>Job</b>	<b>LE per day</b>	<b>LE per month</b>	<b>\$ per month<sup>222</sup></b>	<b>\$ per month (by PPP)<sup>223</sup></b>
<b>Prostitution</b>	300-1000	9000-30000	1500-5000	4500-15000
<b>Street vendors (selling tea)</b>	150-200	4500-6000	750-1000	2250-3000
<b>Begging</b>	100-150	3000- 4500	500-750	1500-2250
<b>Selling tissue or flowers</b>	50-70	1500-2100	250-350	750-1050
<b>Valet</b>	50-70	1500-2100	250-350	750-1050
<b>Belly dancing</b>	30-50	900-1500	150-250	450-750
<b>Waste collection</b>	30	900	150	450
<b>Microbus ticket-boy</b>	20	600	100	300
<b>Housemaids/baby sitting</b>	( ) <sup>224</sup>	300-800	50-130	150-400
<b>Hair and beauty salons</b>	-	300-400	50-70	150-200
<b>Thefts</b>	-	200-1000	30-170	100-500
<b>Drugs trafficking</b>	-	200-1000	30-170	100-500
<b>Food processing factories</b>	-	150-200	25-30	75-100
<b>Horse stable</b>	-	150-200	25-30	75-100
<b>Coffee shop</b>	-	150-200	25-30	75-100
<b>Grocery stores</b>	-	150	25	75

Table 27 indicates that 53% of girls on the street make more than \$750 a month. However, this money is entirely spent on a day to day basis and in most cases, girls are not the ones benefitting from the money. This can be attributed to several reasons. The first reason is that saving is discouraged in the context of the street because keeping a large amount of money makes girls (and boys alike) more at risk of peers' attacks. Saving is almost impossible on the street; in some cases, girls who have savings plans are compelled

<sup>222</sup> Based on a currency rate of \$1 = 6LE

<sup>223</sup> This column describes the purchasing power of the money girls earn on the street in terms of dollars. It is based on a PPP (purchasing power parity) of \$1 = approximately 2LE, taken from the "World Bank Report, 2005", (International Comparison Program, Tables of Final Results, February 2008), 9. [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/ICPINT/Resources/ICP\\_final-results.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/ICPINT/Resources/ICP_final-results.pdf)

<sup>224</sup> Blank squares mean that for this job girls don't get their salary on a daily basis.

to settle temporarily at a shelter to be able to achieve them. This is the case of R.S., who makes more than \$1500 a month and saves her money with the NGO's social workers.

The second reason that girls' money is not saved or taken advantage of well is that it often ends up being confiscated either by their parents, their partners or by street leaders. Many girls are also the only breadwinners in their entire families, and have to spend their money on their families' and kids' needs. *"I just decided to quit work on the street because I have had it. My husband wants to stay at home and wants me to work instead of him, even though we have a little girl to feed. Then, he takes all the money I make and spends it madly"*, said Z.O.M., whose husband decided to punish her by kicking her out of the home and refusing to let her see her one year old daughter.

Many girls are also drugs addicts or have addicted family members or partners. Consequently, a large share of the money they make ends up being spent on drugs, which consumes a big part of their income. *"I do drugs: that's something I can't deny. And I drink sometimes too when I am depressed. But that's the only way I can feel good about myself"*, said D.K.M., the only breadwinner for a family of two children and a disabled husband who abuses her both verbally and physically.

Finally, the fourth reason for girls' money being spent so quickly is they spend it on their needy friends. For instance, M.S. helped her friend S.S.M. survive on the street for more than three years. It is also the case of R.S. who told me during our interview *"When I don't share my food with them<sup>225</sup>, I just waste it later in the toilet. When I share it, it stays and nourishes the love among us"*.

**Table 27 - Percentage of girls with an income exceeding \$750/month**

	<b>Less than 750</b>	<b>More than 750</b>
<b>Number of girls</b>	14	16
<b>%</b>	47	53

In terms of legality, Table 28 shows that 70% of girls on the street were never involved in any sort of illegal activities such as prostitution, drug trafficking or professional

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<sup>225</sup> i.e., street friends.

thefts. Of course, many of them are sexually active, but they don't consider sex to be a commercial activity. A large percentage of girls also sniff glue and do other drugs, but they are not drug traffickers. In this regard, a social worker once told me that *"girls on the street don't usually go after illegal activities. They only do it when they are in bad need for money and cannot find another way to get it. But once they get what they want, they go back to their normal life"*.

**Table 28 - Girls with legal/illegal activities**

		No illegal	Mix of legal/illegal
<b>Number of girls</b>	Total	21	9
<b>%</b>	%	70	30

***b) Shelter hunting at night***

By the end of the day, girls on the street have to look for a hidden and safe place to spend the night away from sex offenders and street harassers. For girls who maintain very minimal ties with their families, going back home may be a risky option. This is how R.S. explains it: *"Sometimes, I couldn't go back home because the money I got wasn't enough. I knew my father was going to beat me up thinking that I made more than that and that I spent part of the money on myself. So, I knew the street was safer"*, said R.S., recalling the days when, as young as ten years old, she had to spend several nights on the street.

Married girls too can sometimes avoid going back home at night. Domestic violence and husbands' infidelity are the main reasons. *"One day I was at home when he came in with two other girls. He wanted to spend the night with them and he intentionally brought them to my house to humiliate me. That night, I just decided I am going back to the street"*, said S.S.M., whose case is pretty similar to N.F.'s. The latter's husband humiliated her in the exact same way.

As for girls who are completely disconnected from their families, the available options are not less risky. *"I rented a room in Embaba<sup>226</sup> but because I used to get home close to midnight, I was regarded negatively by my neighbors. One of them tried several times to flirt with me but I stopped him. So one night, he just broke into my room and*

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<sup>226</sup> A poor district known as one of Egypt's most famous pockets of poverty and crime.

*threatened to kill me if I didn't give him what he wants*", said R.S. about her shelter hunting experience at the age of sixteen.

Some girls are offered the opportunity to spend the night at a friend's house, such as I.M. (ten years old at that time). However, this option too has its own risks. *"When I ran away I called one of my old school friends who told her parents about it. Her parents invited me in and I spent several days where they kept trying to convince me to go back home. When they found it was in vain, they called my family and let them know I was there. My family came to take me and I was severely beaten that day and for several days after"*, said I.M.

Other girls are invited by their boyfriends (the majority of whom are street workers who do not necessarily live on the street) or by their boyfriends' families to spend a night or two away from the street. However, every time the relationship between girls and their boyfriends or their families gets troubled, girls end up returning to the street. In many cases, girls can't find refuge except in abandoned places and houses. In S.S.M.'s and M.S.'s case (sixteen and seventeen years old), an abandoned car served them as a shelter after they miraculously managed to turn it into a bedroom.

Table 29 shows the three main places street girls use as shelters at night. The same girl may spend each night at a different place, experiencing therefore all of the three options at different times of her life. The majority of girls (73%) have spent their night in a family setting either with their own families, with their friends' families or in their partners' room. Then, 67% of street girls spent their nights in abandoned places (houses, cars, etc). And finally, very few (20%) rented a room and lived independently for the same reason R.S. (who was attacked by a neighbor) mentioned earlier. *"When you are a lonely women, no one will leave you alone"*, she said.

**Table 29 - Places where girls spend their nights**

	<b>Abandoned houses/car/place</b>	<b>Family's house/ friend's family/ partner's room</b>	<b>Rented room (the girl by herself)</b>
<b>Number of girls</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>20</b>

### 4.1.2 Girls' children

Despite being kids or teens themselves, most of the girls on the street become mothers at a very early age. For some girls, kids are a huge burden that influences their life decisions and further complicates their daily life struggle; for others, they are just a potential source of income. However, what most of the newborn kids have in common are the hardships they experience during their early childhood. Whether on the streets with their mothers, living with relatives or at the shelter, the vicious cycle of abuse and neglect continues to reproduce itself and damages the kids on physical, emotional and social levels all at the same time.

#### *a) Physical suffering and malnutrition*

One of the main problems babies born to girls on the street face is the negative consequences of their mothers' addictions and malnutrition during pregnancy. Preterm babies, low birth weight, calcium deficiency, and physical defects are some of the most common problems faced at birth. Later, most kids suffer from malnutrition due to relying mainly on herbal teas, boiled anise and water instead of breast milk or formulas.

While growing up, grandchildren of the street face another problem: their mothers' age. Being children themselves, street mothers are often too young to take care of their children. As [Table 30](#) indicates, 36% of the girls in the street had their first child when they were younger than fifteen, while 64% had their first baby between the ages of fifteen and eighteen.

**Table 30 - Age of street mothers when they had their first baby**

	No kids	With kids	
		Less than 15 y	15 to 18 y
Number	8	8 (36%)	14 (64%)
%	27	73	

Consequently, 46% of street grandchildren are left with their mothers' families (who have already abused or at least failed to protect their mothers), with their fathers' families or at the shelter (see [Table 31](#)).

**Table 31 - Percentage of children living with their street mothers**

	Number of kids in the sample	Kids living with mother	Kids away from mother
<b>Total</b>	37	20	17
<b>%</b>	100	54	46

Some children are lucky enough to be placed in a well maintained shelter while others end up in overcrowded shelters with kids-to-caregiver ratios of more than 10 to 1 where serious incidents can take place. For instance, in one of the overcrowded shelters, baby M. (one year old) got second degree burns over the lower half of her body after the shelter's only caregiver asked a ten year old to change baby M's soiled diaper. The child, wanting to wash baby M., opened the hot water and left it for a while until it became extremely hot. She then placed baby M. into the water, resulting in the entire area under her belly button getting burned. Baby M was hospitalized, and both her belly and her legs were bandaged. The next day when I visited the shelter she was lying on the couch crying while everyone else was busy doing other things. No one noticed she had soiled her diaper some time ago; the resulting rash, the burns she got the night before, and her sleepless night were extremely irritating her.

***b) Forced separation***

If they are not placed at an NGO shelter, street grandchildren live with relatives or with their mothers, who either live on the street or continue to shuttle between the shelter and the street. On the street, every day in the mother's life is a completely new and different day, and so it is for her children. A.O.H. and her 4 year old, for instance, were a happy mother and daughter when I met them at Banati day care center. Little H. was nicely dressed and her hair was carefully and agreeably fixed. She played joyfully with her friends at the NGO reception center while her mother chatted cheerfully with the social worker. Two days later, I saw A.O.H. at another NGO reception center in a very deplorable state. Lying down on the couch, she was almost fainting. Her daughter was laying on the other side of the couch, in great fatigue, with tired eyes, dirty clothes and unkempt hair. A.O.H. had had a fight with her informal husband the day before and had spent the night on the street with her daughter. In the morning, A.O.H. had no other option than to place H. at the shelter while she worked on the street. It was a forced separation that neither A.O.H. nor her little H. wanted; but they had no other choice.

The same case applied to R.O.K. A mother of two daughters whose father barely satisfies the family's basic needs, R.O.K. had no other choice than to place one of her daughters at the NGO's shelter. The daughter she placed at the shelter was from her ex-husband who no longer wanted to be in charge of her. Consequently, instead of being cut off from only her father, R.O.K.'s daughter became deprived of her mother as well. *"I know she may feel resentful towards me and towards her younger half-sister. But look at the bright side of it. She actually got used to the comfortable life at the shelter and I sometimes feel she doesn't like to stay at our poor and boring house. There, she also goes to school which is something neither me nor my husband will be able to afford"*, said J.A.K.

c) An unknown fate

Early suffering is what most children of street girls face, and some of them are born to an unknown fate as in the cases of S.H., H.R. and R.S. At the age of fifteen, S.H., who had joined a prostitution network after experiencing incest, delivered her first baby. A few months later, she came to visit the reception center without him and claimed that her father took the baby and sold him. S.H.'s father denied this and claimed that the child died. Up to now, no one at the NGO knows the truth.

H.R.'s story was slightly different as she voluntarily gave up her baby. *"The lady said she cannot get pregnant and wanted a child. I gave her mine and she gave me money in return"*, said H.R., who never asked about her child again. *"I never felt attached to him unlike my two other kids, so I don't feel the need to go check on him. I don't know... I just never felt anything towards him"*, she explained.

As for twelve year old R.S., she needed a safe shelter for her son whose father, her boyfriend, refused to recognize him or to register under his name. *"One of my aunts couldn't conceive so she welcomed the baby with great joy. Both her and her husband adopted<sup>227</sup> him but we never told him I was his real mom. He is five years old now and he lives in their comfortable house, has plenty of toys and lots of nice clothes. I am happy for him and I'm not planning to tell him anything about me being his real mom"*, R.S. said.

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<sup>227</sup> Adoption in Egypt is illegal. What R.S. meant here is that her son was falsely registered as the biological son of her aunt instead of being registered as a foster son of this aunt.

d) *A legal labyrinth*

Not only do kids of street girls have to experience a variety of hardships, they grow up unrecognized by the State and are consequently deprived of their right to public education and health care<sup>228</sup>. In theory and according to the Egyptian child law<sup>229</sup>, a woman can issue a birth certificate for her newborn even if she doesn't know who the father is. In practice though, if a girl on the street goes through this procedure without a lawyer, she ends up getting arrested for committing adultery<sup>230</sup> while her child stays undocumented. Consequently, girls on the street avoid registering their children unless they have a lawyer. And because they have limited resources and a weak social support network, girls usually resort to NGOs to find a lawyer.

The process of registering children of street girls can take a long time. To issue a birth certificate for a newborn, his mother must have identification documents for herself. Since many street girls are undocumented<sup>231</sup>, their lawyers must go through the lengthy process of registering them and issuing their IDs. This process is often further complicated by the fact that the lawyer must first get a signed authorization from the girls' parents. In M.S.'s case, it took the lawyer two years to get this authorization because the father had previously raped his daughter M.S. and wanted nothing to do with her.

e) *And yet these babies are forced to exist*

Abortion in Egypt is illegal according to Articles 260 to 264 of the Egyptian Penal code<sup>232</sup>. The latter stipulates that anyone who induces or facilitates an abortion is subject to imprisonment. As a result, NGOs cannot facilitate abortion for girls on the street. In addition to that, doctors, surgeons, pharmacists, and midwives who conduct an abortion are subject to aggravated sentences.

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<sup>228</sup> Egyptian governmental bureaucracy requiring a list of official documents first, the birth certificate included, before services will be provided .

<sup>229</sup> Egyptian Child Law, n. 126 of 2008, Article 20.

<sup>230</sup> Adultery is a crime in Egypt according to the Prostitution Prevention law n°10 for 1961.

<sup>231</sup> Street girls are mostly from poor families in Egypt. Many of these families don't know how to issue birth certificates for their children or think it's an unnecessary procedure.

<sup>232</sup> "Abortion policy-Egypt", in Abortion Policies, a Global Review, United Nations Population Division Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007. p135.  
<http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/abortion/doc/egypts1.doc>

The only available options for girls on the street are to either induce abortion on their own using random medications or to resort to unlicensed midwives and clinics. The first option is more frequent as it involves no cost at all. *“I swallowed a whole tablet of pills that I have already used to abort my first baby. It’s a method I learned from a friend on the street and I can’t count the number of time I’ve used it before. It usually works”*, said L.O.D. who was almost unconscious after an unsuccessful attempt to abort her baby. Of course, the pills in question were not abortion pills.

Even when abortions are induced clandestinely by a physician, they are conducted in very risky and abnormal conditions. In F.O.R.’s case (twelve years old), the abortion was induced a few days before her due date.

*“I hid my pregnancy until my step-mother found out about it when I was almost due. She immediately took me to the hospital for abortion. First, the doctor refused to do the surgery but they kept begging her to save me from this scandal. The doctor gave up and aborted the baby. It was a full baby and I saw him with my own eyes. I think they threw him away. Well, I don’t know exactly what happened but after the surgery, my step-mother and I just came back home without him. I feel guilty about it whenever I remember it”*, said F.O.R.

Meanwhile NGOs do not facilitate access to contraception information or offer any contraceptives to prevent unwanted pregnancies in the first place. When asked about the reason, a social worker explained that *“It’s not in their culture and if we give it to them, they won’t use it anyways”*. However, aside from this absurd explanation, the fact is that in a country where adultery is criminalized, educating minors about contraceptive methods or providing contraceptives is often interpreted as encouraging them to have extramarital sex. *“I will be encouraging her to enjoy her life on the street without having to worry about the consequences of her acts”*, said the same social worker regarding the reason why his NGO doesn’t offer contraceptives to girls on the street. The reality remains that most of the consequences are borne by the newborn child, the NGO or the girl’s family who ends up taking charge of her baby.

### 4.1.3 How do NGOs help

Most of the time, the income of street jobs is not enough to satisfy girls' needs and their children's. Consequently, girls on the street resort to NGOs' help, who provide them with food, clothes, and physical health care as well as social, financial and legal support.

Table 32 shows what girls see as the most important services offered by NGOs.

**Table 32 - Most vital services girls need from NGOs**

Category	Social support	Clothes	Legal assistance	Financial help	Health care	Kids' needs	Nutrition	Total	Average
Number of girls	22	15	13	10	9	9	8	86	
%	73	50	43	33	30	30	27	-	

#### *a) Social support*

According to Table 32, 73% of the girls in my sample believe the most important service NGOs offer is the social and moral support. For them, the main reason to keep visiting NGOs is to vent their personal problems, frustrations and fears to their social workers and seek their advice. Some social workers may also offer sometimes to go with the girl and talk to her husband or street friends in an attempt to solve their problems.

#### *b) Clothing*

For girls, staying on the street with torn clothes, messed up hair and a dirty body is now out of the question. This appearance may reveal their identity as "street girls" and can consequently make them more vulnerable to street assaults. Therefore, most of the girls on the street try to either look like an ordinary middle class girl (lower middle class) or to look like a boy. To do so, 50% of them rely on NGOs to provide showers and offer them new clothes occasionally.

#### *c) Legal support*

Legal support is the third most important service girls get from NGOs according to 43% of the girls in my sample. Legal support includes providing lawyers for detained or arrested girls and issuing IDs for the girls or birth certificates for their children. This

assistance is part of a legal support program funded by UNICEF and supported by a team of lawyers affiliated with the Egyptian Coalition for Child Rights<sup>233</sup>.

Until recently, most of the girls' requests for legal support were related to IDs and birth certificates' issuance, as girls tend to deal independently with arrests and detentions.

*“When they are arrested, girls manage to get released without lawyers' help. They have their own ways of doing so. Some girls give false information about the district they are from in order to get transferred to another police district. When they get transferred, they lie again about their district and keep falsifying their information until cops get annoyed and decide to release them. Other girls threaten to hurt themselves or go ahead and actually injure themselves with blades as a way of forcing cops to release them before they meet the prosecutor<sup>234</sup>. Other tricks include bribing the cops, accepting work as secret informants for them<sup>235</sup>, or offering them sexual favors”.*

Even when girls' tricks don't work, they often manage to escape from correctional institutions through sewer tunnels or by climbing the institution's walls. *“In their memory, they have saved a map of the underground sewer tunnels. They enter the tunnels through manholes and they know which manhole leads them to which street”*, explained one of Banati's social workers. And when they escape, correctional institutions stop looking for them after a while. *“They call our NGO to check whether or not we have seen the girl recently and they keep looking for her for a month or two but then they forget about her until she gets arrested again”*, explained one of the Hope Village social workers. Many girls are also sentenced in absentia but sentences are loosely enforced. *“Girls don't really*

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<sup>233</sup> The Egyptian Coalition for Child Rights is a coalition of 53 NGOs working on children and human rights issues. It consists of a group of NGOs working on child development, a group of street children's NGOs (nearly 14 NGOs), a group of human rights NGOs and law centers, and a group of women's empowerment NGOs. It was officially created in 2008 but started working informally in 2004 in close cooperation with a group of international organizations (such as Plan, UNICEF, Save the Children, and Terre des Hommes, among others). It played a pivotal role in introducing major amendments to the Egyptian Child Law in 2008. Thanks to these amendments, circumcision was banned, marriage age was raised to 18, women were given the right to issue birth certificates for their children even if their father was unknown and corporal punishment was banned. For further details about the Child Law amendments, see “An amended Egyptian Child Law ... yet ...”, p31.

<sup>234</sup> Theoretically, if an arrested person is tortured or physically abused while in police custody, he can submit his complaint to prosecutors whom he is supposed to meet shortly after his detention. However, in practice, prosecutors don't have much influence or power over police officers.

<sup>235</sup> This option is used on a very limited scale due to the strong bonds that exist between girls and boys on the street.

*care about the sentences they get as far as they can get around and evade the police and the criminal justice”, said one of Hope Village social workers.*

However since the eruption of the Egyptian Revolution in 2011, street boys and girls have been facing a wider campaign of arrests, either because they took part in street protests or because they happened to be on the street when political clashes took place. Under these circumstances, it became harder for street girls to evade police officers and as a result more legal support was needed to get them released. In this regard, the Egyptian Coalition for Child Rights, the main entity providing legal assistance for children in these cases, has documented more than 450 cases of child arrests in 2011 and more than 657 cases in 2012, compared to 150 cases in 2010<sup>236</sup>.

*d) Financial help*

33% of girls in my sample said financial support provided by NGOs is one of the reasons they keep visiting NGOs. Financial help can take different forms. It can be an in-kind financial assistance every month, or an exceptional financial help to the girl when she is getting married, or a monthly salary to the girl if she accepts work as a housekeeper or a cook at the NGO. Some NGOs also try to financially empower their girls by teaching and training them in a number of income generating activities such as pottery and ceramic production as well as beads and accessories work.

*e) Physical health care*

Two major health problems that girls and boys alike face on the street are street injuries and skin diseases. NGOs provide physical health care for girls on the street, especially for those who don't have any ID or those who lost contact with their families. Physical health care is provided by volunteer doctors who reach out to street children through NGOs' mobile units roaming the streets. Volunteer doctors are also occasionally available at NGOs' reception centers. In case they are not available when a girl needs urgent care, a social worker usually accompanies the girl to the hospital or to the closest medical center.

Girls are also frightened of getting “marked”, or injured on the face. For many of them, getting “marked” lessens their chances of surviving on the street and means they

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<sup>236</sup> Unpublished records of the Egyptian Coalition for Child Rights for 2010, 2011 and 2012.

were too weak to defend themselves. Consequently, another service some NGOs started offering lately is to cover the cost of the plastic surgeries needed to remove the unwanted marks from girls' faces.

*f) Kids' needs*

Treating the kids when they get sick, feeding them, getting them new clothes, issuing them birth certificates, educating them or even placing them in an NGO's shelter are all things that street mothers cannot do on their own. Therefore, 30% of the girls in my sample said the help NGOs offer in this regard constitutes one of the most important services to them.

*g) Nutrition*

In a street girl's life, food is not one of the biggest concerns. Girls can either buy their food from the money they earn on the street or visit NGOs where two meals are offered daily for free. Enough girls seem to be buying their own food that only 27% of the girls in my sample said they come to visit the NGO for the food it offers. However, some street girls don't have either of these two options. For instance when they first ran away, I.M. and F.O.R. were afraid of getting arrested if they were seen begging or selling small items at traffic lights. Consequently, not only did they not have any source of income at that time but they didn't know about the NGO until later. I.M. told me, *"I ate with some of my friends when they had food but I basically relied on drinking a lot of water so that my stomach gets full in order to avoid getting hungry"*.

*h) Education*

Interestingly, education wasn't mentioned by any of my interviewees as a reason to frequent the NGO. Although NGOs offer literacy classes, this service doesn't seem to interest street girls who are mostly uneducated.

#### 4.1.4 Girls' needs and their responsiveness to the program

The following pages examine the impact of girls' needs on their degree of responsiveness to NGOs. In order to do so, six variables are studied to determine the extent

to which they influence each girl's degree of responsiveness. The six variables are as follows:

1. the income she earns,
2. the type of economic activity she practices on the street,
3. the legality/illegality of her job,
4. the type of shelter she has,
5. the number and type of services she feels she needs from the NGOs and
6. the number of children who continue to live with her and of who she continues to be in charge.

*a) Girls' income and their responsiveness to the program*

**Table 33 - Categories of girls on the street and their respective income**

	<b>Less than \$750</b>	<b>More than \$750</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> : Permanent street settlers</b>	3	7
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> : Street/NGO commuters</b>	3	7
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> : Those who gave up the street</b>	8	2

Table 33 highlights the income earned by girls within each of the three studied categories. The two less responsive categories of girls on the street consist of girls who mostly earn more than \$750 a month (sixteen girls out of twenty earn more than \$750 a month). On the contrary, eight out of ten girls who gave up the street had a monthly income of less than \$750 while on the street. Chi-square test indicates a relation of dependence between girls' high income and their low responsiveness to the NGOs<sup>237</sup>. It is worth mentioning that 53% of girls on the street earn more than \$750 a month as shown in Table 27. Therefore, this result suggests that girls' high income on the street may explain why NGOs are ineffective with nearly 53% of the girls.

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<sup>237</sup> With a chi-square=11.33, df=3 and p-level=0.01. For details, see Chi-Square Table 28 - Girls' income and their responsiveness to NGOs, p 166.

b) Girls' activity and their responsiveness to the program

**Table 34 - Categories of girls and their respective activities on the street**

	Legal							Illegal			Total types of jobs
	Selling tissue or flowers	Begging	Parking Valet	Dancer	Street vendor	Maid	Other <sup>238</sup>	Theft	Prostitution	Drugs	
<b>1<sup>st</sup>: Permanent street settlers</b>	6	1	1	1	5	1	3	2	2	2	24
<b>2<sup>nd</sup>: Street /NGO commuters</b>	6	4	0	2	6	2	8	2	1	0	31
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> : Those who gave up the street</b>	6	1	0	0	1	3	0	0	1	0	12

Table 34 highlights the economic activities practiced by each category of girls on the street. The second category of girls (street/NGO commuters) was the one with the highest number of practiced jobs (31 jobs as opposed to 24 in the first category and twelve in the third). It is also a category that tends to diversify its activities more than the two other categories do (with eight girls practicing “other” jobs in the second category, as opposed to three in the first category and none in the third). The activity of “selling tissues and flowers at traffic lights” was the most commonly practiced job in the three categories. Street vending is particularly practiced in the two less responsive categories (eleven girls practicing it in the two less responsive categories as opposed to one only in the category of those who gave up the street).

In terms of statistical dependence between the type of activities girls practice and their level of responsiveness to the NGO, chi-square test indicates no relation of dependence<sup>239</sup> between any of the practiced activities and girls' low or high responsiveness. Although Table 34 shows a remarkable difference in the numbers of street vendors

<sup>238</sup> Other jobs include working in hair and beauty salons, in food processing factories, in horse stables, in waste collection or in grocery stores.

<sup>239</sup> With a chi-square = 20.66, df=29 and P-level=0.87. For detailed table, see Chi-Square Table 29 - Type of street job and girls' responsiveness to the NGO, p166.

observed in the three categories, chi-square results showed no relation of dependence between this activity and girls' responsiveness<sup>240</sup>.

c) Legality of girls' activity and their responsiveness to the program

**Table 35 - Categories of girls and the legality of their activities on the street**

	No illegal activity	Mix of legal/illegal activity
<b>1<sup>st</sup>: Permanent street settlers</b>	6	4
<b>2<sup>nd</sup>: Street/NGO commuters</b>	6	4
<b>3<sup>rd</sup>: Those who gave up the street</b>	9	1

Table 35 describes the activities each category of girls practice or have practiced in terms of legality. As mentioned earlier, most street girls don't engage in illegal activities unless they are in very bad need of money. In terms of dependence between the girls' job being legal and girls' level of responsiveness, chi-square indicates no relation of dependence between them<sup>241</sup>. In other words, the legality or illegality of girls' jobs doesn't play any role in girls' decision to stay on the street or to quit it.

d) Girls' shelter and their responsiveness to the program

**Table 36 - Categories of girls and their respective sheltering options**

	Abandoned houses/car/place	Family's house/ friend's family/ partner's room	Rented room (the girl by herself)	Total
<b>1<sup>st</sup>: Permanent street settlers</b>	4	8	3	15
<b>2<sup>nd</sup>: Street/NGO commuters</b>	8	10	2	20
<b>3<sup>rd</sup>: Those who gave up the street</b>	8	4	1	13
<b>Number of girls</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>6</b>	

<sup>240</sup> Even when the test was performed with a df=1, the obtained p-level was 0.06. For details see Chi-Square Table 30 - Girl's activity as a street vendor and her responsiveness to the NGO, p 167.

<sup>241</sup> Chi-square = 2.85, df=3, and P-level = 0.41. For details see Chi-Square Table 31 - Girl's illegal/legal activities and her responsiveness to NGOs, p167.

Table 36 presents the different sheltering options available for the three studied categories of girls on the street. Among the three available options, living in a familial setting (with a friend's family, with her own family, with a partner and/or shuttling between these) is the most frequent one. Living in abandoned houses, cars or places is not the favorite option for the less responsive categories of girls due to the risks and dangers involved. However, among those who gave up the street, living in abandoned places was the most frequent option. (80% lived in abandoned places as opposed to 40% who lived in a familial setting and 10% who lived in an independent room).

Nonetheless, chi-square indicates no relation of dependence between the type of shelter girls have and their degree of responsiveness to the program<sup>242</sup>.

*e) NGOs' services and their impact on girls' responsiveness*

**Table 37 - Services each category of girls gets from NGOs**

Category	Social support	Clothes	Legal assistance	Financial help	Health care	Kids' needs	Nutrition	Total	Average
<b>1<sup>st</sup>: permanent street settlers</b>	6	3	3	2	2	1	0	17	1.7
<b>2<sup>nd</sup>: Street /NGO commuters</b>	7	7	7	1	3	3	2	28	2.8
<b>3<sup>rd</sup>: those who gave up the street</b>	9	5	3	7	4	5	6	41	4.1

In terms of services received from NGOs, Table 37 indicates a correlation between the number of services girls get from NGOs and girls' responsiveness to the program. According to the latter, the average number of services that each street settler (1<sup>st</sup> category) relies on NGOs for is 1.7 services. This average increases in the category of street/NGO commuters (2.8 services per girl) and increases further in the third category (those who gave up the street) with an average of 4.1 services per girl. This may signify that girls who

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<sup>242</sup> With a chi-square =4.18, df=8 and p-level= 0.84. For details see Chi-Square Table 35 - Type of a girl's shelter and her responsiveness to NGOs, p 167-168.

rely on NGOs for more than four services are more likely to have a high responsiveness to NGOs.

This correlation is confirmed by the results of the chi-square test that indicates a relation of dependence between the number of services girls get from NGOs and their responsiveness to their program<sup>243</sup>. However, the results of chi-square test don't clarify which variable influences the other. The question of knowing whether girls' high responsiveness to the program allows them to get more services from NGOs, or the opposite (girls who get more services become more responsive to the program than their peers), stays unanswered and constitutes a possible subject for further research.

Regarding the type of services that each category of girls needs most from NGOs, Table 37 indicates that every category has its own set of needs. For the two less responsive categories of girls (street settlers and street/NGO commuters), the three most needed services were social support, clothes and legal assistance. As for those who gave up the street, NGOs were much more needed for basic needs such as social support, financial help and nutrition. However, as chi-square test indicates there is no relation of dependence between the type of services that girls need from NGOs and girls' responsiveness to NGOs<sup>244</sup>.

*f) Number of kids in girls' care and girls' responsiveness to the program*

**Table 38 - Categories of girls on the street and their children**

	<b>Number of mothers</b>	<b>Total number of kids</b>	<b>Kids living with mother</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup>: permanent street settlers</b>	6	10	2
<b>2<sup>nd</sup>: Street/NGO commuters</b>	7	11	7
<b>3<sup>rd</sup>: those who gave up the street</b>	9	16	11
<b>Total</b>	22	37	17

<sup>243</sup> With a chi-square=10.35, df=2 and p-level= 0.005. For details, see Chi-Square Table 42 - Number of services girls rely on NGOs to get and their responsiveness to NGOs, p 153.

<sup>244</sup> For the detailed chi-square tables, see Chi-Square Table 36 to 41, p 152-153.

Table 38 indicates that girls' responsiveness to NGOs increases proportionally with the number of children in their care. Among street settlers (the least responsive category) only two children remained with their mothers, seven kids stayed with their street/NGO commuting mothers (2<sup>nd</sup> category) and eleven children remained with their mothers who gave up the street (most responsive category).

The results of chi-square test confirm this correlation and indicate a relation of dependence between the number of kids living with the girl and her responsiveness to the program<sup>245</sup>. However, chi-square doesn't clarify which variable influences the other. No information is available on whether girls' responsiveness to the program is influenced by the number of kids in their care or whether girls' high responsiveness to the program encourages them to keep their children. The question remains a possible subject for future research.

## **4.2 Previous experiences with institutions**

This section of Chapter Four focuses on how street girls evaluate their own experience with institutionalized care, whether governmental or non-governmental. By governmental institutionalized care, the study means correctional institutions where street girls are placed following their arrest by the juvenile police. By non-governmental institutions, the study means NGOs' shelters where girls choose to live at some point of their lives. The objective of this section is to examine the impact of girls' previous experience with these institutions on girls' decision to either leave the street or to remain homeless.

### **4.2.1 Experience with correctional institutions**

Many street girls are placed in correctional institutions according to Article 99 of the Egyptian Child Law (n. 126 for year 2008). The latter stipulates that children who are "vulnerable to danger"<sup>246</sup>, must be either handed back to their families<sup>247</sup> under the

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<sup>245</sup> With a Chi-square=6.16, df=2 and p-level=0.046. For the details, see Chi-Square Table 43 - Number of kids living with the girl and her responsiveness to NGOs, p154.

<sup>246</sup> According to Article 96 of Egypt's Child Law, the category of children who are "vulnerable to danger" includes any person under eighteen who:

- is in a condition where his safety, moral principles, health and life are in danger
- has a family, school or care institution that puts his life in danger or neglects or abuses him

supervision of their District Child Protection Committee<sup>248</sup>, placed in correctional institutions, or placed with foster families<sup>249</sup>. Many street girls and children end up being placed in correctional institutions for “lacking a stable place of residence”, for having an “unreachable/unavailable guardian” or for committing a misdemeanor.

- *On the way to the institution*

Before getting placed in correctional institutions, many street girls report having been mistreated by the juvenile police during the arrest process and during their detention. In one of its reports about this mistreatment, HRW indicated that street children are transported to police lockups in trucks that are sometimes extremely crowded and in which the police regularly mix children with adult criminal detainees who beat and verbally abuse them<sup>250</sup>. The mistreatment goes on, with police beating street children (with hands and batons), binding their hands with rope or handcuffs, and subjecting them to obscene and degrading language, all while they are in police custody<sup>251</sup>. It also includes extorting money (and sometimes sex) from them in exchange for avoiding arrest, securing early release from detention, or gaining access to food during detention<sup>252</sup>.

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- is deprived, without any reason, from his legal right to visit and see one of his parents
  - has a legal guardian who refuses to take him in charge (financially)
  - is deprived of his right to primary education
  - is incited by his family, school or care institution to commit acts of violence or pornography or is subject to harassment, sexual assault or exploitation or is exposed to drugs or alcohol.
  - begs, including selling or performing for small amounts of money
  - collects cigarette butts or rubbish
  - lacks a stable place of residence
  - associates with suspect persons or other delinquents
  - is a habitual truant; is incorrigible
  - lacks a legal source of income or support
  - suffers from a mental defect or illness
  - or, in the case of children under seven, commits any felony or misdemeanor

<sup>247</sup> by district attorneys.

<sup>248</sup> An entity created by the Egyptian Child Law (n126 for 2008) to be the equivalent of Child Protective Services in the British system of child welfare. According to the law, when the district attorney decides to return the child to his family, the child protection committee should refer families of children at risk to available services and support programs and make sure the child is safe with his family. However, this entity was never activated and was never among the priorities of executive authorities. For further details about child protection committees in Egypt, see p31.

<sup>249</sup> The concept of foster families is not widely known among Egyptian families. Even high officials at the Ministry of Social Affairs ignore its mechanism and rules as stated by the law.

<sup>250</sup> Bencomo, (2003),16. <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/egypt0203/egypt0203.pdf>.

<sup>251</sup> Bencomo, 17.

<sup>252</sup> Bencomo, 18.

In terms of sexual exploitation of street girls by police officers, the same report explained that both girls and boys are at risk for sexual abuse and violence in police lockups, but that girls and women living on the street are more likely to enter into sexual relationships with police even when they are not in custody<sup>253</sup>. Not only there is a difference between the kind of treatment boys and girls receive but there is also a difference between the treatment each street girl receives depending on how “good” her relationship with the police is. Some street girls build relationships with police guarding parks and other public spaces in order to get their protection from sexual violence by other men. Others, unwilling to seek such protection, find themselves confined to work as housemaids in abusive conditions<sup>254</sup>.

In the studied sample, most of my interviewees reported having been abused some way or another by police officers. The most frequent type of abuse was verbal, followed by physical, then sexual and finally by money extortion. [Table 39](#) highlights the number of arrested girls versus the number of girls who were never arrested while on the street. [Table 40](#) illustrates the relative weight of each type of abuse.

**Table 39 - Number of arrested girls and types of abuse they face**

	Never arrested	Arrested	Total
<b>Number of girls</b>	9	21	30
<b>%</b>	30	70	100

**Table 40 – Comparative weight of each type of abuse faced by girls**

	Arrested	Verbally abused	Physically abused	Sexually abused	Money Extortion
<b>Number of girls</b>	21	15	10	3	3
<b>%</b>	100	70	47	14	14

According to [Table 39](#), 70% of street girls were arrested at least once. [Table 40](#) indicates that many of them have been subjected to more than one type of abuse, the more frequent abuse being verbal (70% of arrested girls), then physical (47%), followed by

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<sup>253</sup> Bencomo, 19.

<sup>254</sup> Bencomo, 19.

sexual (14%) and finally money extortion (14%). However, the number of sexual abuse cases involving police officers as opposed to family members (37%)<sup>255</sup> or street offenders (63%)<sup>256</sup> may have been underreported by girls. This may be due possibly to girls' fear of making such accusations against police officers, given their power and their impunity.

- Once at the institution...

**Table 41 - Street girls' experience in correctional institutions**

	Arrested	Placed in institution	Less than 3 years	More than 3 years	Negative experience	Acceptable experience
<b>Number</b>	21	11	4	7	9	2
<b>%</b>	70 <sup>257</sup>	52 <sup>258</sup>	36 <sup>259</sup>	64 <sup>260</sup>	82	18

After a period of detention in police lockups, 52% of my interviewees were placed in a correctional institution. As shown in Table 41, most of them ended up staying there for more than three years (64%) and the majority of them evaluated their experience at the institutions as “negative” (82%). Among the latter, two girls chose to be placed in an adults' jail<sup>261</sup> to avoid going back to the institution and two others started to develop violent homosexual behavior.

Girls who were placed in correctional institutions reported having been abused physically and verbally by social workers and sexually by older girls. *“There, at least four girls cut themselves every night because of fights. You don't get help from anyone as it becomes just girls after 4pm, there's no supervision after that, so older girls wait until we're alone”*, said thirteen year old S.

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<sup>255</sup> In a previous chapter, 37% of street girls reported having been sexually exploited by family members and step parents. Sexual exploitation included incest, forced prostitution and forced marriage. For further information, see Sexual exploitation, p55.

<sup>256</sup> 63% of street girls reported having been raped while on the street. For further details, see Table 24 - Sexual and domestic violence in each category of street girl, p86.

<sup>257</sup> 70% of the interviewees were arrested

<sup>258</sup> 52% of arrested girls were placed in institutions

<sup>259</sup> 36% of girls who were placed in institutions spent less than 3 years there

<sup>260</sup> 64% of girls who were placed in institutions spent more than 3 years there

<sup>261</sup> By falsifying their age.

Among my interviewees, complaints about social workers' mistreatment were very common. Girls reported having had their hair shaved by social workers as a form of punishment. Others reported being locked in the "disciplining room" which consists of a 2m<sup>2</sup> room with one single window (30cm X 30cm), with no illumination or restroom. The room is sometimes used to confine up to 15 girls. Two other methods used by social workers to "discipline" girls are "beating rows" and "the *falaka*". In the first method, when one girl exhibits an inappropriate behavior, all girls in the institution are lined up in a row and are beaten up with batons one after the other. In the second method, the punished girl is bound upside down on an iron bar hung between two tables or chairs and beaten up on her legs and feet with a tool similar to a whip.

#### 4.2.2 Experience with NGOs

In the previous section, we discussed how street girls seek NGOs' support to satisfy their basic needs as well as their children's needs. In the current section, we focus on how street girls evaluate their experience with NGOs' shelters.

In Egypt, only two NGOs have shelters for street girls: Hope Village and Banati. Hope Village has a shelter for street girls and a separate shelter for street mothers while Banati has only one shelter for street girls who do not have children. In the studied sample, only one of my interviewees spent time at Banati's shelter. Consequently, this section will only tackle street girls' experience with Hope Village shelters.

**Table 42 - Street girls' experience with NGOs' shelters**

	<b>Never stayed in shelter</b>	<b>Stayed in shelter</b>	<b>Shelter's life is acceptable</b>	<b>Shelter's life is unbearable</b>
<b>Number</b>	9	21	4	17
<b>%</b>	30	70	19	81

As shown in **Erreur ! Source du renvoi introuvable.**<sup>42</sup>, 70% of my interviewees decided at some point to live at the shelter of Hope Village. Only 19% of them estimated their stay at the shelter as "acceptable" while the majority (81%) couldn't bear it and left the shelter, returning to the street.

**Table 43 - Reasons for leaving NGOs shelters and returning to the street**

	Social workers' mistreatment	Alienation	Strict rules	Boredom	Addiction
Number	5	7	11	3	4
%	24	33	52	14	19

When asked about their reasons for leaving the shelter, girls indicated more than one reason. According to Table 43, the reasons are: shelters' strict rules (mentioned by 52% of the girls), alienation (33%), social workers' mistreatment (24%), addiction (19%) and boredom (14%).

*a) Shelters' strict rules*

Examples of the shelter's strict rules included restrictions on the way girls should dress and look. It also included forcing girls to participate in the shelter's household work, and to follow a certain daily schedule. *"I fled the shelter many times because I was fed up of being told what to do and what not to wear. For example, I wasn't allowed to wear makeup or tight clothes"*, said A.S., nineteen years old. As for eighteen year old B.X., staying at the shelter was pointless. *"Every day, I hated being woken up very early in the morning to follow the same schedule that never changes. I was also never allowed to stay up at night or have some time for myself"*, said B.X.

Another rule that led some girls to leave the shelter is that an NGO cannot object to parents' request to take the girl out of the shelter, no matter how abusive these parents are. As a matter of fact, legally NGOs cannot foster girls at their shelters before getting their parents' written consent. *"Every time I went to the shelter, the shelter's manager called my parents to get their written approval. But because they always refused to give him this approval, I was always returned back to my family. So I just stopped wasting my time and stopped asking to be at the shelter"*, said O.J. As for M.S., the reason behind her decision to leave the shelter was slightly different although still due to some family related issues. *"My mother kept visiting me at the shelter and wanted to force me into marrying a man who is twice my age. When I couldn't stand it, I just left the shelter"*, she said.

b) Alienation

The second most important reason for girls to go back to the street is their strong feeling of alienation. This feeling is largely caused by four factors. The first factor is the difficulty girls experience in getting along with each other at the shelter. *“I was just never able to consider them as friends. We fought a lot and because I hated being with them, I left the shelter after every fight”*, said A.S. when trying to explain the difference between her “real” friends on the street and the girls she lived with at the shelter.

The second factor behind girls’ feeling of alienation is the isolation they feel being away from their “street family” and missing them. *“Every time before I leave the street, my friends used to cry and begged me not to leave. And every time, shortly after I go to the shelter, I miss them and go back to the street”*, explained N.F.

The third factor behind girls’ feeling of alienation is related to the kind of psychological support they get during their transition out of the street life. In reception centers, girls’ psychological problems are dealt with by social workers while counselors end up playing a very marginal role in girls’ lives. Consequently street girls don’t get the psychological support they need. A social worker explained this phenomenon by pointing at the counselors’ high turnover rate.

*“Counselors do not stay for a long time at the NGO, and counseling needs consistency. They are usually undertrained when it comes to dealing with street children, and don’t understand that getting results with street children requires a lot of time. So they get burned out quickly. And shortly after they start working with us, they start looking for another job and leave. Consequently, street girls know that we social workers are the ones who will continue to be there for them”*<sup>262</sup>.

As for the psychological support girls do receive at the shelter, it consists of a group therapy session that takes place on a weekly basis during which girls are asked to discuss some of their common concerns. However, the impact of these sessions doesn’t seem to be significant as most of the time, girls do not participate equally in the discussion. Some of them are resistant to talking about specific issues in public, to avoid sharing their

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<sup>262</sup> M.K., a social worker at Banati.

weaknesses or to avoid being made fun of by others. Consequently, with no privacy in the counseling process, and with the already uneasy relationship between many girls at the shelter, the effectiveness of group therapy is sessions questionable.

A fourth factor that deepens girls' feeling of alienation is the lack of social support and solidarity expressed by the non-street community towards them even when they decide to give up the street. As a matter of fact, very few volunteers take the initiative to work in street girls' shelters and most of the shelters' visitors are usually undergraduate social work students or researchers. For instance, this is what one of the girls who refused to talk to me said: *"You guys don't think about us unless you need something. We always receive researchers at the shelter who say they want to help us and hear from us about our problems but all they want is to help themselves. And even though talking with strangers about our personal lives is a hard thing to do, we do it for them but they disappear later and they never show up. Enough is enough, I am just not going to do this anymore!"* said D.K.M.

Even girls who decide to give up the street by settling in an independent home continue to suffer from this isolation. *"I have good neighbors and they never hurt me but I just try as much as I can to limit my contact with them. In your neighborhood, if you become friend with someone, it means he will start asking about your family, your past and your whole life and I don't want this to happen so I just avoid them"*, said D.K.M. For her, nothing fills the gap left by old street friends. *"Sometimes, I just go back to the street where I used to live to see if someone is still there. It just makes me happy to find them and spend some time with them. It reminds me of the old days!"* she said. Another girl, R.S., explained to me how the stigma of being a former street girl can hinder any rehabilitation plan. *"The only solution my husband and I figured out is to go live in a new town where nobody knows us. I will then wear "Abaya"<sup>263</sup>, be friends with good people and people will never suspect my past. It's only then that I will be able to start a new life like any normal human being."* R.S. said.

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<sup>263</sup> A robe-like dress worn by many Muslim women in the Middle East as a sign of respect for customs and sometime as an expression of chastity.

c) Social workers' mistreatment

The third most important reason for street girls to leave the shelter is social workers' mistreatment and verbal abuse. One of my interviewees told me about her social worker: *"I immediately left when she called me a bitch"*, said O.J. Another girl explained that *"People working at the shelter are not good. They say they want to help us but they disdain us and look down at us. They will never be able to help if this is how they look at us"*, said L.O.D. Other forms of reported mistreatments included failure and unwillingness to intervene whenever girls fight with each other.

d) Addiction

Girls may leave the shelter due to the different kinds of addiction they suffer from. For instance, Z.O.M. couldn't remain at the shelter because she failed to quit smoking or drugs. *"It wasn't allowed there"*, she said, *"so whenever I wanted to smoke or to do drugs, I just left"*, she explained in embarrassment. As for A.K., sex addiction was the motive to leave the shelter. About this, her social worker said, *"Many street girls are compelled by the street's harsh conditions to suppress their femininity, but their femininity stays in there and wants all the time to come out. As all girls, they want to feel pretty, loved and treated as a mature person, and as a mature lady. And sex being their only window to feel that, many of them become sex addicted"*. Another kind of addiction was B.'s addiction to work. *"I just couldn't bear the idea of staying the whole day without doing anything worthy. I needed to work and to have my own source of income in order to feel safe"*, said B.

e) Boredom

Finally, the last reason for girls to return to the street is the boredom. In this regard, B.X. said *"Every day, we were woken up very early in the morning to do absolutely nothing other than cleaning up, watching TV, talking, fighting and then going back to sleep. It was no fun at all so I couldn't stay there more than two weeks"*.

#### 4.2.3 Impact of girls' previous experience with institutionalized care

The following pages explain the way girls' negative experiences with institutionalized care and with juvenile police influence their decision to remain on the street.

**Table 44 - Number of arrested girls per category**

Category	Arrested
<b>1<sup>st</sup>: Permanent street settlers</b>	7
<b>2<sup>nd</sup>: Street/NGO commuters</b>	8
<b>3<sup>rd</sup>: Those who gave up the street</b>	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>

**Table 45 - Types of abuses faced by each category of street girls**

Category	Type of abuse				Total
	verbal	physical	sexual	extortion	
<b>1<sup>st</sup>: Permanent street settlers</b>	4	2	1	0	<b>7</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup>: Street/NGO commuters</b>	6	5	1	1	<b>13</b>
<b>3<sup>rd</sup>: Those who gave up the street</b>	5	3	1	2	<b>11</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>31</b>

Table 44 shows that the three categories of street girls are affected almost equally by police arrests, although it can be noticed that the category of street/NGO commuters is slightly more affected than the two others. However, the amount of injustice inflicted to the category of street/NGO commuters is much more emphasized in Table 45. The latter shows that street/NGO commuters are the most affected by police abuses (with thirteen accounts of abuse reported by this category as opposed to seven reported by the category of permanent street settlers and eleven in the category of those who gave up the street).

**Table 46 - Experience with correctional institutions per category of street girls**

Category	Placed in correctional institution	Less than three years	More than three years	Negative experience	Acceptable experience
<b>1st: Permanent street settlers</b>	2	1	1	0	2
<b>2nd: Street/NGO commuters</b>	7	2	5	7	0

<b>3rd: Those who gave up the street</b>	2	1	1	2	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>

Table 46 supports the results of Table 44 and Table 45 and indicates that the category of street/NGO commuters is the most vulnerable category among the three studied categories of street girls. The table shows that 63% of girls who were placed in correctional institutions (seven girls out of eleven) belong to the category of the street/NGO commuters who fail to progress further within NGOs' rehabilitation programs. The table also indicates that 70% of those who spend more than three years at a correctional institution (five out of seven) belong to the category of street/NGO commuters. Additionally, it shows that 100% of street/NGO commuters had a negative experience with correctional institutions.

**Table 47 - Girls' experience with NGOs by category**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Lived in a shelter</b>	<b>Social worker's mistreatment</b>	<b>Alienation</b>	<b>Strict rules</b>	<b>Boredom</b>	<b>Addiction</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1st: Permanent street settlers</b>	4	2	2	2	1	1	<b>8</b>
<b>2nd: Street /NGOs commuters</b>	9	2	5	5	1	3	<b>16</b>
<b>3rd: Those who gave up the street</b>	8	1	0	4	1	0	<b>6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>30</b>

As for girls' experience with NGOs' shelters, Table 47 also indicates that the category of street/NGO commuters had the most negative experience at the shelter and the largest number of reasons to leave the shelter (sixteen reasons as opposed to eight within the category of permanent street settlers and six within the category of those who gave up the street).

Consequently, the main conclusion we can draw from this section is that the category of street/NGO commuters owes to a certain degree its existence to the repugnant

conditions prevailing in care institutions (correctional institutions, shelters and police stations).

### **4.3 Conclusion**

The current chapter described street girls' needs in terms of food, clothing, kids' needs and shelter. It also tried to explore the different means girls use to satisfy these needs, one of them being earning money through work and the other being assistance from NGOs. The three most practiced jobs by girls on the street turned out to be in order: selling tissue papers and flowers at traffic lights (60%), working as street vendors (40%) and as maids and beggars (20%).

One of this chapter's main findings is that girls' income on the street remarkably affects their degree of responsiveness to NGOs. According to the data, 53% of girls on the street earn more than \$750 a month and are consequently less willing to leave the street than are their peers who make less money. Some girls earn this money by practicing more than one economic activity at a time, and others just focus on one or two high income jobs. However, no economic activity in particular was found to be in any way associated with a low or high degree of responsiveness to NGOs.

Another important finding of the current chapter is that only 30% of girls on the street get involved in illegal activities, while 70% practice legal activities only. This obviously contradicts the perception of street children and girls as merely delinquent children or as criminals. The fact is that even street children who use drugs are not involved for commercial purposes, and may use just to ease the harshness of their life on the street. Girls' early sexual activity may be another issue NGOs need to address but is not as serious as if it were practiced for commercial purposes. However, the type of jobs girls were practicing, whether legal or illegal, has no effect on their level of responsiveness to NGOs.

One of the main needs girls try to meet through work and NGOs' help is their need for shelter. For this reason, the current chapter tried to study how street girls manage to find a safe haven. Data revealed that 73% of girls on the street shuttle between friends' houses, their family house and their partners' rooms. 67% spend their night in abandoned places

and only 20% lived independently in rented rooms. However, the type of shelter girls have did not seem to influence their level of responsiveness to NGOs.

What does affect girls' responsiveness is the number of services they get from NGOs. These services include counseling, social support, education, health care, financial assistance and legal consultations. In this regard, statistical analysis indicated that girls who rely on NGOs for more than four services are more likely to have a high level of responsiveness to NGOs. Data analysis also indicated that girls' responsiveness to NGOs increases proportionally with the number of children they care for and who continue to live with them.

An alarming finding of Chapter Four is that the vicious cycle of child abuse and neglect is more likely to keep reproducing itself. According to the data, 73% of girls are street mothers but only 54% of their kids remain with them. The rest (46%) are left to the mother's family (that has already abused her in the past and may continue to abuse her kids), with their fathers' family or at the shelter where serious incidents can take place. This clearly indicates a critical need to tailor a special program for street mothers that better addresses their kids' needs. It also indicates that if the government insists on ignoring the importance of activating legally mandated Child Protection Committees, the phenomenon of street children will keep reproducing itself for generations to come. Finally it underlines the urgent need to increase the number of NGOs working with street mothers, as only one NGO fulfills this role.

The current chapter explored as well the extent to which girls' previous experience with institutionalized care (in NGOs and correctional institutions) has affected their responsiveness to NGOs. And given the fact that girls are usually arrested first before being placed in correctional institutions, the study gathered information as well about girls' experience with the juvenile police. 70% of street girls in my sample said they have been arrested at least once and many of them have been subjected to more than one type of abuse. The more frequent form of abuse was verbal (70% of arrested girls), followed by physical (47%), sexual (14%) and finally by money extortion (14%). With regards to correctional institutions, 52% of street girls said they were placed there at least once. Most of them ended up staying there for more than three years (64%) and the majority of them evaluated their experience at the correctional institution as "negative" (82%).

As for girls' past experience with NGOs, 70% of my interviewees said they lived at some point at Hope Village's shelter. Only 19% of them estimated their stay at the shelter as "acceptable" while the majority (81%) couldn't bear it and as a result, went back to the street. Girls' motives to leave the shelter were respectively: the shelter's strict rules (mentioned by 52% of the girls), alienation (33%), social workers' mistreatment (24%), addiction (19%) and boredom (14%).

Regarding the extent to which this negative experience with institutionalized care has affected girls' responsiveness to NGOs, the data indicated a remarkable correlation between being a street-NGOs commuter and having a negative experience with care institutions. This suggests that the category of street-NGOs commuters may somehow owe its existence to the repugnant conditions prevailing in care institutions (correctional institutions, shelters and police stations). The main feature of this category is that it consists of girls who were most frequently arrested, who spent the longest time periods in correctional institutions and who had the worst experience at NGOs' shelters.

## **Conclusion**



*What was the main question of this study and what were its primary goal and hypotheses? To what extent did it manage to answer this question, meet this goal and verify the hypotheses? What are the study's main findings with regards to the environment of street girls? According to the study's findings, what are the effects of this environment on girls' degree of responsiveness to NGOs? How would these findings affect NGOs and help them improve their programs? This is what the conclusion discusses.*

## **A. Reminder of the starting point**

The main objective of this thesis was to understand the reasons behind NGOs' ineffectiveness in pulling girls out of the street, given that more than 70% of street girls return to the street after receiving services from NGOs. The social ecology approach, adopted by the current thesis, suggested that if a program is not functioning well, then there must be a misfit between the population it intends to serve and the environment it offers. Therefore, the thesis focused on identifying the sources of misfit between street girls' needs and the environment NGOs offer to them.

To identify the sources of this person-environment misfit, the thesis observed the life journey of a sample consisting of thirty street girls who responded differently to NGOs. In doing so, the thesis aimed to understand the reason why the same program managed to succeed at pulling one third of this sample out of the street, was still struggling with another third that continues to commute between the street and NGOs, and failed with the last third that decided to settle permanently on the street.

The studied variables in each girl's journey were what Bronfenbrenner called the "multiple layers interacting with each other and affecting the development of the child". These layers consisted of the girl's micro-system (relationship with street friends, police, street partner, peers, etc.), her meso-system (relationship between the different components of the micro-system), her exo-system (social support network, street girls' institutions and NGOs, etc), her macro-system (principles underlying the childhood institutions and the

society's perception towards street girls) and her chrono-system (age at which she left home, time duration lived on the street).

Then, through a statistical analysis facilitated by Chi-square test, the study examined the correlation between each of these variables and each girl's degree of responsiveness to NGOs in order to verify two hypotheses. The **first** hypothesis is that NGOs' degree of effectiveness increases correspondingly when the degree of stability in girls' micro- and meso- systems increases, when her previous experience with the macro-system (NGOs and correctional institutions) is negative and when she shows no need of any exo-system (educational system, health care, legal assistance, etc.). The **second** hypothesis, with regards to the role played by the street girl's chrono-system, is that NGOs are more likely to reach a high level of effectiveness with girls who spend less time on the street and leave their home at a very early age.

## **B. Study's findings with regards to the environment of street girls**

In its attempt to verify these two hypotheses, the current study started by studying the environment of 30 street girls and found the following:

- Street girls come from extremely poor families (93%), with at least one birth-parent missing (60%) and they usually have an early disturbed adolescence, as 50% of the girls left home between the age of 10 and 15 years old. They are mostly uneducated (70%).
- The main reasons for girls to run away are respectively: neglect (26%), physical abuse (24%), sexual exploitation (18%), family rejection (13%), forced labor (11%) and breaking social rules (8%).
- Girls have four patterns of coping with street life and community: the vulnerable girl pattern, the tomboy girl pattern, the business girl pattern and the ordinary girl pattern.

- The percentage of street girls compelled to remain homeless by their surrounding is limited to (27%). 63% of street girls are victims of sexual violence, 67% are victims of domestic violence and 50% are victims of both.
- In terms of earning, 53% of street girls earn more than \$750 a month. The three jobs most practiced by girls on the street are in order: selling tissue paper and flowers at traffic lights (60%), working as street vendors (40%), and working as maids and begging (20%).
- In terms of the legality of their jobs, only 30% of the girls on the street get involved in illegal activities while 70% practice legal activities only. Also, only 13% of my sample had criminal records prior to being homeless.
- In terms of sheltering options, 73% of girls on the street shuttle between friends' houses, their family house and their partners' rooms. 67% spend the night in abandoned places and only 20% live independently in rented rooms.
- In terms of kids, 73% of girls on the street have kids but only 54% of these kids remain with their mothers. The rest (46%) are left to the mother's family (that has previously abused her and that may continue to abuse her kids), with their fathers' family or at the shelter where serious incidents can take place. The vicious cycle of abuse is therefore more likely to keep reproducing itself.
- In terms of being victims of abuse by authorities, 70% of street girls were arrested at least once and many of them reported having been subjected to more than one type of abuse. The more frequent form of abuse is verbal (70% of arrested girls), then physical (47%), followed by sexual (14%) and finally money extortion (14%).
- In terms of their past experience with governmental and non-governmental institutions, 52% of street girls reported having been placed in a correctional institution at least once. Most of them ended up staying there for more than three years (64%) and the majority of them evaluated their experience at the correctional institution as "negative" (82%). 70% of my interviewees decided at some point to live at Hope Village's shelter. Only 19% of them estimated their stay at the shelter as "acceptable" while the majority (81%) couldn't bear it.

Girls' motives to leave the shelter were respectively: the shelter's strict rules (mentioned by 52% of the girls), alienation (33%), social workers' mistreatment (24%), addiction (19%) and boredom (14%).

## **C. Study's findings with regards to the variables affecting girls' responsiveness to NGOs**

As for the way this environment affected girls' degree of responsiveness to NGOs, the current study was able to find:

- With regards to the socio-economic background of street girls, the statistical analysis of the data indicates a very strong relation of dependence between poverty and the phenomenon of street girls. However, it shows that neither the family's economic condition, nor its degree of internal cohesion nor the girl's educational level affect girls' degree of responsiveness to NGOs.
- The key variables negatively affecting girls' responsiveness to NGOs are the following: being forced into prostitution (10% of my sample), belonging to a family that has a criminal record (27% of the sample), having a criminal record prior to being homeless (13%), earning more than \$750 monthly (53%),
- The key variables positively affecting girls' responsiveness to NGOs are the following: belonging to the pattern of the "vulnerable girl" (27% of the sample), relying entirely on the NGO for at least four services (33%), having at least one child living with them (53%).
- The category of street-NGOs commuters to a certain degree owes its existence to the repugnant conditions prevailing in care institutions (correctional institutions, shelters and police stations). The main feature of this category is that it consists of the girls who were most frequently arrested, who spent the longest time periods in correctional institutions and who had the worst experience with the NGO's shelter.

## **D. Study's verification of its main two hypotheses**

The **first** hypothesis of this study was that NGOs degree of effectiveness decreases correspondingly when the degree of stability in girls' micro- and meso- systems increases, when her previous experience with the macro- system (NGOs and correctional institutions) is negative and when she shows no need for any exo-system (educational system, health care, legal assistance, etc). This hypothesis proved to be right.

On the street, a stable micro-system does not mean the girl manages to protect herself from violence, as nearly 80% of my sample reported having been subjected to both domestic and sexual violence. Rather, a girl with a stable micro-system is a girl who managed to build a stable relationship with police and a protective network of friends. This applies to all street girls except vulnerable girls, who were statistically proven to be the most likely to quit the street. Vulnerable girls are not able to use dissuading threats against police as tomboy girls do. They don't have a criminal history as most tomboy girls do and are not a source of protection for their friends as are tomboy girls. They are different from business girls, who avoid mixing with other street girls to avoid attracting the attention of police; and unlike business girls, vulnerable girls seek protection in their limited circle of street friends. They are also different from ordinary girls who often exchange services with police to get released following their arrest, and they do not have any extended network of friends as ordinary girls do. This is why most vulnerable girls end up leaving the street.

Girls with a stable meso-system are those who do not have a conflicted relationship between their families and their street community. This applies to girls who are compelled by their families and street community to remain on the street (27% of the sample) and whom chi-square proved to be more unlikely to settle in NGOs' shelters. It applies as well to girls who belong to families with criminal records (27%) as their families may be facilitating and benefiting from their stay on the street. According to chi-square these girls are also more likely to remain in the category of street permanent settlers.

Girls who had a negative experience with their macro-system are those who described their experience with NGOs, correctional institutions and the mainstream society as unbearable. They experienced many forms of abuse at the correctional institution and many restrictions and rules in NGOs' shelters after spending years in a rules-free life on the

street. They also suffered from either their neighbors' incessant questions about their past or their rejection when some neighbors discover they lived homeless for a while. According to the data, most of those with a negative experience with their macro-system remained in the category of the street/NGO commuters.

The study showed as well that girls who tend to stay on the street are those who show no need for an exo-system. For instance, girls who earn more than \$750 per month (53%) were found to be less responsive to NGOs and consequently, NGOs are more unlikely to produce any outcome with these girls. However, girls who said they needed the NGO's help in more than four services (33%) showed a high degree of responsiveness to NGOs. The same situation applies to girls who have at least one child living with them (53%) and who were proven to be more likely to give up the street.

My **second** hypothesis, with regards to the role played by the street girl's chrono-system, was that NGOs are more likely to reach a high level of effectiveness with girls who spend less time on the street and leave their home at a very early age. This hypothesis proved to be wrong. Almost 50% of the studied sample left home between the age of 10-15 years old and 67% lived on the street for at least six years. However, the statistical analysis of the data indicated that these two factors do not affect a girl's degree of responsiveness, and that other factors such as those mentioned earlier might be more influential.

## **E. Recommendations**

The poor outcome of the "rescuing approach" adopted by most of the NGOs turned out to be the result of a huge gap and mismatch between street girls' lifestyles on the street and the environment NGOs offer. At certain moments of their lives on the street, girls may be willing to exit homelessness with all the insecurity and instability it engenders. However, NGOs do not seem to offer a good alternative for these girls due to a number of reasons. This section of the dissertation highlights these reasons and offers recommendations to NGOs and governments on how to best deal with them.

### **1. Child labor laws should not apply to street girls**

Egyptian Child Law forbids child labor under the age of 14. However, applying this law to street girls and children fails to recognize the exceptional circumstances they live in

and hinders NGOs' efforts to attract them. The law, inspired by a Western discourse on childhood as "*a time of play, innocence and learning*"<sup>264</sup>, fails to acknowledge two important facts in the life of street girls and children. First, many street girls value their independence (financial independence included) and will never trade it away, because adults' abuse and societal rejection have taught them that their independence is the only thing that truly belongs to them. Second, almost 53% of the girls on the street earn the equivalent of \$750 a month without being penalized for their earnings. Consequently, their view that settling in an NGO shelter where laws have to be enforced makes no sense is a completely rational view. This law would impose a wider societal perception of childhood on an exceptional category of girls; a perception that children should be either at home or at school, where work is not permitted. As a result, street girls, especially those with high income street jobs, refuse to give up their financial independence only to join a mainstream society that has rejected them in the past and continues to do so in the present.

This brings back an old discussion on the extent to which the Western discourse on childhood should be used as an ideal and included in many child laws and programs even with children who are unable or unwilling to enforce such notions of childhood<sup>265</sup>. The current study suggests that street girls under fourteen should be treated as an exceptional case by both NGOs and the government. On one hand, the government should revisit the Egyptian Child Law in a way that better accommodates street girls and children. On the other, if NGOs ask street girls to quit their street job, they may need to help them find other alternatives with the same high income they can earn on the street.

## **2. Isolating street girls in shelters has never worked and will never work**

Although they lose their social support system when they abandoned their families and dropped out of school, street girls build new ones by strengthening their relationships with street friends. As a result, the latter become the only social network the girls trust and are unwilling to leave. But when street girls join the shelter, they are required to stay there and street friends' visits are not usually welcomed. Additionally, street girls come from a rules-free environment but are met at the shelter with a long list of restrictions and

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<sup>264</sup> Berckmans et al., 2012, p1266.

<sup>265</sup> For details regarding the weight of the Western discourse on childhood intervention programs and studies targeting street children, see Berckmans et al., 2012.

instructions, eventually causing them to hate the shelter's environment and go back to the street.

The alienation girls feel is another important factor that pushes them back to the street. Besides missing their street friends, there are three other reasons that contribute to this feeling. The first is that NGOs try to replace the girl's natural network of street friends with an artificial network of shelter residents. At the same time, no real effort is made by the NGO to create common activities and interests between the shelter's residents in order to strengthen this new network. The second reason is that the psychological support at the shelter lacks consistency (due to the high turnover of counselors) and privacy, making it virtually non-existent. The third is the lack of support provided to street girls by the non-street community; this could eventually be addressed by a mentorship program designed to involve volunteers from the mainstream society in the rehabilitation of street girls.

In addition to strict rules and girls' feeling of alienation, many street girls just don't want to stay in the shelter because they are required to follow a repetitious, void and boring daily schedule with roommates they have difficulties getting along with. Taking this into consideration, NGOs should facilitate regular contacts between street girls and their street friends, by relatively easing their rules and by modifying their daily schedule to become more diverse and entertaining.

### **3. Customizing NGOs' rescuing approach: a necessity**

As explained in the previous chapters of this dissertation, the rescuing approach is effective only with two specific groups of street girls: "vulnerable girls" and girls who have more than one child living with them on the street. Many categories of street girls are left behind by NGO programs that do not accommodate their needs or consider their particular circumstances.

NGOs must eventually start reshaping their rescuing approach in a way that considers the needs of the least responsive categories of street girls. One of these categories is street girls who were forced into prostitution. For this category, NGOs should re-design their services to focus on addressing their negative self-image and boosting their self-esteem. This may include introducing to the rehabilitation program of NGOs an extensive

mental health program exclusively designed for this specific category. It should also include the creation of a stable network of individuals who are neither members of the street community nor staff members of the NGO, to provide these girls with the social support they need and to limit their fears of being rejected by the mainstream society.

The least responsive categories of street girls also include girls who had criminal records before they became homeless. In order to improve their effectiveness with this category, NGOs must eventually boost their services in the areas of counseling, mentoring and mental health care.

Girls from families with criminal records are also in the category of least responsive to NGOs. To address their specific needs, NGOs should start hiring family counselors with the necessary experience to deal with these situations. NGOs also may need to do more networking with other NGOs and law centers in order to lobby for the activation of Child Protection Committees. The latter are by law the only entity that is supposed to provide a governmental protection to children against their aggressors even if these aggressors are their own parents.

Other categories of street girls that need special attention are “tomboy girls”, “business girls”, “ordinary girls” and in general girls who do not have children living with them on the street. For these categories, NGOs must acknowledge that taking girls away from the street might be NGOs’ own objective but might not necessarily be a priority for the girls in question. In this regard, NGOs may need to re-design their program based on these girls’ priorities instead, and come up with individualized life plans for each street girl depending on her own circumstances. This implies decreasing the case load of NGO social workers and training them to better achieve this task.

Girls who earn more than \$750 per month on the street are another category showing a limited responsiveness to NGOs. Since girls under the age of 14 are not allowed to work, NGOs and child rights centers should lobby for street children to be treated as a special case by the Egyptian Child Law. As for girls who are older than 14, NGOs may need to build a network of employers who may be willing to hire them or build partnerships with small-business development centers to create other alternatives for street girls.

#### **4. Pushing the preventative approach forward by activating the Child Law**

As statistics indicated, 70% of street children who have left home have embarked on an irreversible journey. Moreover, street grandchildren are either left with their grandparents who have already abused their parents, on the street facing violence in the company of their mothers, or in NGOs' shelters where no regular inspection is conducted. The vicious cycle of child abuse and neglect is therefore likely to keep reproducing itself unless serious preventative measures are undertaken by the Egyptian Government. The need to build a coordinated action plan involving child advocacy groups, human rights-based organizations and street children NGOs in order to lobby for these preventative measures becomes a must.

The preventative measures in question are directly related to the activation of four main articles in the Egyptian Child Law. The first and second Articles (98 and 99) are related to the Child Protection Committees in charge of reporting cases of child abuse within each governorate to authorities and of referring families and children at risk to available services. According to the Egyptian Child Law, CPC also should be able to refer abusers to Egyptian courts and to recommend necessary actions to ensure the child's safety.

The third article that must be activated is Article 134, stipulating that family courts should send experts at least once every three months to visit child care institutions to ensure compliance with their obligations. This article should be able to ensure that no violations are committed against street children in juvenile police lockups, in correctional institutions or in NGOs.

The fourth article rights' groups should lobby to activate is Article 86 of the Executive Regulation explaining the Egyptian Child Law and stipulating that street children can be integrated within the system of foster care. The activation of this article should offer a third alternative to street children for whom neither NGOs nor correctional institutions are appropriate options.

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## **Annexes**



**Annex 1 - Statistics of Hope Village regarding street children**  
**turnover rates - 2009**

	<b>Total street children served since 1988</b>	<b>Street children reunified with their families since 1988</b>	<b>Turnover of street children received in daycare centers</b>	<b>Turnover of street children in temporary shelters</b>	<b>Turnover of street children in permanent shelters</b>
<b>Number of children</b>	21 000	4 151	...	...	...
<b>%</b>	100	19.7	70	30	4



## **Annex 2 - Interview Questionnaire**

Name of the Street Girl \_\_\_\_\_

Level of effectiveness reached with her (1) (2) (3)

Age \_\_\_\_\_

### **I - Severity of the street girl's push-pull factors**

1. How was your life at home?
2. What attracted you to the street life?
3. Before you left home, had you ever been to jail?
4. If yes, what was the reason?
5. How long had you been in jail before you decided to run away and start your life on the street?

### **II- Strength of the street girl's micro-system**

- Relation with street friends

1. How many street friends do you have?
2. How long have you been on the street?
3. How do you communicate with street friends (what language do you use)?
4. Have you learned songs on the street?
5. Do you have a street partner?
6. How nice is he to you?
7. How long have you been together?
8. How long has he been on the street?
9. Do you have children?
10. How old are they?
11. Do they live on the street?
12. Does your partner get to see them?
13. Does he care about them?

- Relation with street gang

1. Do you have a gang?
2. How long have you been with them?
3. Are they helpful or harmful?

- Relation with delinquency police/criminal justice system

1. How old were you when you were arrested for the first time?
2. Why were you arrested?
3. Has anyone in your family ever been in jail?
4. If yes, why were they arrested?
5. Have any of your caregivers (including older brothers and sisters) been in jail for prolonged periods of time?
6. What about your other family members (non-caregivers)?

- Relation with street job

1. While on the street, what do you do for living?
2. For how long have you been doing this job?

### **III- Stability and controlling power of the street girl's meso-system**

- Stability

1. How safe and comfortable do you feel on the street?
2. Does everybody in your surroundings support your presence on the street?
3. How often does your family try to get you back?
4. How often do the delinquency police try to take you out of the street?
5. How many times have you been arrested by the delinquency police?
6. So far, how long did you spend in jail or in corrective institutions?
7. What do you usually do when you are chased by the cops?
8. Once you are arrested, what do you start worrying about?
9. How do you usually get out of jail?
10. What kinds of sentence have you gotten?
11. How often do your gang's friends get arrested?
12. How often has your partner been arrested?
13. How often do you get in troubles with other gangs in the street?
14. Do you usually have arguments with your partners? If yes, how often?
15. Have ever gotten in trouble with your boss/employer in the street? If yes, how often?

- Controlling Power

1. Have you ever talked with your partner about leaving the street? If yes, what was his reaction? If no, what do you think his reaction would be?
2. Have you ever talked with your gang about leaving the street? If yes, what was their reaction? If no, what do you think their reaction would be?
3. Have you ever talked with your employer about leaving the street? If yes, what was his reaction? If no, what do you think his reaction would be?
4. Do you have any official ID papers for you or for your children (if any)?

### **IV- The severity of her need for an exo-system**

- Severity of her need

1. Do you have a birth certificate?
2. What do you do when you get sick?
3. Have you ever visited a doctor while living on the street?
4. How often do you ask for the NGO's help?
5. Have you ever been to school?
6. Have you ever tried to get a job/job training/a micro-credit?
7. How does the cops' presence in your life impact your safety?
8. Have you ever had a lawyer/child advocate?
9. Have you ever had a counselor/therapist?
10. Have you ever had a social worker?

- Continuity of her need

1. How many kids do you have?
2. Do any of them have a birth certificate?
3. What do you do when one of your children gets sick?
4. Have any of them been checked by a doctor?
5. How many times did you need the NGO's help for something related to your children's well being or safety?
6. Have any of your kids been to school?
7. How does cops' presence on the streets impact your kids' safety?
8. Have you ever needed legal assistance for an issue related to your kids?
9. Have any of your kids been with a counselor?
10. Do any of your kids have a social worker?

**V- Her experience with other intermediary agents and the macro-system**

1. Tell me about your past experience with other NGOs/service providers?
2. Have you been sheltered before in another NGO?
3. Was this shelter a forced one (such as corrective institution) or an optional (NGO shelter)?
4. How long have you been in a forced shelter? In an optional shelter?
5. How do evaluate your stay in each?
6. Why did you leave the optional shelter?
7. How did you leave the forced shelter?
8. What do you think is still missing (if any) in the NGO's services?
9. Has any NGO helped you get a lawyer/child advocate?
10. How do you evaluate the lawyer/child advocate's help?
11. Have you faced any obstacles before you managed to get a lawyer? If yes, what kind?
12. How long have you been helped by this lawyer?
13. In the future, would you be willing to ask for a lawyer's help in case you get in trouble?
14. How did you find the social workers in the past institutions/shelters?
15. What do you think of their counselors?
16. Were doctors available when you needed them?
17. Did they provide any kind of education? Informal education? Job training?
18. Did you have to deal with any of your family members/neighbors while going through this process?
19. Where they opposed or supportive? What was their reaction?
20. How do you feel people treat you when they know you are/were homeless?
21. Is it something that you prefer not to mention?
22. Have you ever tried to change neighborhoods to avoid aggressive neighbors?
23. How did things go in the new neighborhood?
24. Do you think things would have been different if you were a boy? If yes, how?
25. Have you ever tried to disguise your gender to get a better treatment? If yes, talk to me about it?

\*\*\*\*\*

### Annex 3 - Critical values of Chi-square

	$P(X \leq x)$							
	0.010	0.025	0.050	0.100	0.900	0.950	0.975	0.990
$r$	$\chi^2_{0.99}(r)$	$\chi^2_{0.975}(r)$	$\chi^2_{0.95}(r)$	$\chi^2_{0.90}(r)$	$\chi^2_{0.10}(r)$	$\chi^2_{0.05}(r)$	$\chi^2_{0.025}(r)$	$\chi^2_{0.01}(r)$
1	0.000	0.001	0.004	0.016	2.706	3.841	5.024	6.635
2	0.020	0.051	0.103	0.211	4.605	5.991	7.378	9.210
3	0.115	0.216	0.352	0.584	6.251	7.815	9.348	11.34
4	0.297	0.484	0.711	1.064	7.779	9.488	11.14	13.28
5	0.554	0.831	1.145	1.610	9.236	11.07	12.83	15.09
6	0.872	1.237	1.635	2.204	10.64	12.59	14.45	16.81
7	1.239	1.690	2.167	2.833	12.02	14.07	16.01	18.48
8	1.646	2.180	2.733	3.490	13.36	15.51	17.54	20.09
9	2.088	2.700	3.325	4.168	14.68	16.92	19.02	21.67
10	2.558	3.247	3.940	4.865	15.99	18.31	20.48	23.21

## **Annex 4: Chi-square Tables of Chapter Three**

**Chi-Square Table 1 - Poverty and the phenomenon of street children**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	28	13.5	210.25	15.57407407
2	2	13.5	132.25	9.796296296
3	0	3	9	3
Total		30	Chi-square	28.37037037
			P-level	6.91E-07

**Chi-Square Table 2 - Girls' economic class and their responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	10	9.3	0.49	0.052688172
2	0	0.7	0.49	0.7
3	8	9.3	1.69	0.18172043
4	2	0.7	1.69	2.414285714
5	10	9.3	0.49	0.052688172
6	0	0.7	0.49	0.7
Total		30	Chi-square	4.101382488
			P-level	0.534913709

**Chi-Square Table 3 - Families' breakdowns and girls' responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	2	2	0	0
2	3	4	1	0.25
3	4	2.7	1.69	0.625925926
4	1	1.3	0.09	0.069230769
5	1	2	1	0.5
6	4	4	0	0
7	3	2.7	0.09	0.033333333
8	2	1.3	0.49	0.376923077
9	3	2	1	0.5
10	5	4	1	0.25
11	1	2.7	2.89	1.07037037
12	1	1.3	0.09	0.069230769
Total		30	Chi-square	3.745014245
			P-level	0.97679115

**Chi-Square Table 4 - Girls' education level their responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	4	3	1	0.333333333
2	4	3	1	0.333333333
3	1	3	4	1.333333333
Total		9	Chi-square	2
			P-level	0.367879441

**Chi-Square Table 5 - Age when girls ran away and their responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	3	3	0	0
2	4	5	1	0.2
3	3	2	1	0.5
4	3	3	0	0
5	6	5	1	0.2
6	1	2	1	0.5
7	3	3	0	0
8	5	5	0	0
9	2	2	0	0
Total		30	Chi-square	1.4
			P-level	0.994246542

**Chi-Square Table 6 - Families' criminal records and girls' responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	8	5.4	6.76	1.251851852
2	0	2.6	6.76	2.6
Total		8	Chi-square	3.851851852
			P-level	0.049691098

**Chi-Square Table 7 - Families' criminal records and girls' positions between the 1st and the 2nd category of responsiveness**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	4	2.6	1.96	0.753846154
2	4	2.6	1.96	0.753846154
3	0	2.6	6.76	2.6
Total		8	Chi-square	4.107692308
			P-level	0.12824072

**Chi-Square Table 8 - Girls' criminal records prior to homelessness and their responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	4	1.3	7.29	5.607692308
2	0	1.3	1.69	1.3
3	0	1.3	1.69	1.3
Total		4	Chi-square	8.207692308
			P-level	0.016509057

**Chi-Square Table 9 - Time spent on the street and girls' responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	4	3.3	0.49	0.148484848
2	6	6.6	0.36	0.054545455
3	2	3.3	1.69	0.512121212
4	8	6.6	1.96	0.296969697
5	4	3.3	0.49	0.148484848
6	6	6.6	0.36	0.054545455
Total		30	Chi-square	1.215151515
			P-level	0.943415549

**Chi-Square Table 10 - Neglect and girls' responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome	Observed	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	15	15.3	0.09	0.005882353
2	8	7.7	0.09	0.011688312
Total		23	Chi-square	0.02
			P-level	0.99

**Chi-Square Table 11 - Physical Abuse and girls' responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome	Observed	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	7	7	0	0
2	6	7	1	0.142857143
3	8	7	1	0.142857143
Total		21	Chi-square	0.2
			P-level	0.9

**Chi-Square Table 12 - Sexual exploitation and girls' responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome	Observed	Expected:	$(\text{Observed}-\text{Expected})^2=$	$(\text{Observed}-\text{Expected})^2 / \text{Expected}=$
1	10	5.3	22.09	4.167924528
2	5	5.3	0.09	0.016981132
3	1	5.3	18.49	3.488679245
Total		16	Chi-square	7.6
			P-level	0.02

**Chi-Square Table 13 - Family discrimination and girls' responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome	Observed	Expected:	$(\text{Observed}-\text{Expected})^2=$	$(\text{Observed}-\text{Expected})^2 / \text{Expected}=$
1	4	3.6	0.16	0.044444444
2	4	3.6	0.16	0.044444444
3	3	3.6	0.36	0.1
Total		11	Chi-square	0.18
			P-level	0.9

**Chi-Square Table 14 - Forced labor and girls' responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome	Observed	Expected:	$(\text{Observed}-\text{Expected})^2=$	$(\text{Observed}-\text{Expected})^2 / \text{Expected}=$
1	4	3.3	0.49	0.148484848
2	3	3.3	0.09	0.027272727
3	3	3.3	0.09	0.027272727
Total		10	Chi-square	0.2
			P-level	0.9

**Chi-Square Table 15 - Breaking social rules and girls' responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	$(\text{Observed}-\text{Expected})^2=$	$(\text{Observed}-\text{Expected})^2 / \text{Expected}=$
1	4	2.3	2.89	1.256521739
2	2	2.3	0.09	0.039130435
3	1	2.3	1.69	0.734782609
Total		7	Chi-square	2.03
			P-level	0.3

**Chi-Square Table 16 - Forced prostitution and girls' responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	$(\text{Observed}-\text{Expected})^2=$	$(\text{Observed}-\text{Expected})^2 / \text{Expected}=$
1	3	1	4	4
2	0	1	1	1

3	0	1	1	1
Total		3	Chi-square	6
			P-level	0.04

**Chi-Square Table 17 - Forced marriage and girls' responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	4	2	4	2
2	2	2	0	0
3	0	2	4	2
Total		6	Chi-square	4
			P-level	0.13

**Chi-Square Table 18 - Incest and girls' responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	3	2.33	0.4489	0.192660944
2	3	2.33	0.4489	0.192660944
3	1	2.33	1.7689	0.759184549
Total		7	Chi-square	1.14
			P-level	0.56

**Chi-Square Table 19 - The "vulnerable girl" pattern and girls' responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	2	5.3	10.89	2.054716981
2	6	2.7	10.89	4.033333333
Total		8	Chi-square	6.08

**P-level= 0.01**

**Chi-Square Table 20 - The "Tomboy girl" pattern and girls' responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	4	3.3	0.49	0.148484848
2	1	1.7	0.49	0.288235294
Total		5	Chi-square	0.44

**P-level= 0.51**

**Chi-Square Table 21 - The "business girl" pattern and girls' responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	3	3.3	0.09	0.027272727
2	2	1.7	0.09	0.052941176
Total		5	Chi-square	0.08

**P-level= 0.78**

**Chi-Square Table 22 - The "Ordinary girl" pattern and girls' responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	7	5.3	2.89	0.545283019
2	1	2.7	2.89	1.07037037
Total		8	Chi-square	1.62

**P-level= 0.2**

**Chi-Square Table 23 - The compelling power of street gangs/families and girls' responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	8	5.3	7.29	1.375471698
2	0	2.7	7.29	2.7
Total		8	Chi-square	4.07

**P-level= 0.04**

**Chi-Square Table 24 - Compelling power of street gangs/families and girls' decision to become permanent resident or street/NGO commuter**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	4	2.6	1.96	0.753846154
2	4	2.6	1.96	0.753846154
3	0	2.6	6.76	2.6
Total		8	Chi-square	4.11

**P-level= 0.13**

**Chi-Square Table 25 - Sexual violence and girls' responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	14	12.6	1.96	0.155555556
2	5	6.4	1.96	0.30625
Total		19	Chi-square	0,46

**P-level= 0.49**

**Chi-Square Table 26 - Domestic violence and girls' responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	15	13.3	2.89	0.217293233
2	5	6.7	2.89	0.431343284
Total		20	Chi-square	0.42

**P-level= 0.42**

**Chi-Square Table 27 - Being victim of both sexual and domestic violence and responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	13	10	9	0.9
2	2	5	9	1.8
Total		15	Chi-square	2.7

**P-level= 0.1**

## **Annex 5: Chi-square Tables of Chapter Four**

**Chi-Square Table 28 - Girls' income and their responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	6	6	0	0
2	14	12	4	0.333333333
3	8	3	25	8.333333333
4	2	6	16	2.666666667

Chi-square =11.33 and P-level= 0.01

**Chi-Square Table 29 - Type of street job and girls' responsiveness to the NGO**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	2	0.72	1.6384	2.275555556
2	0	0.92	0.8464	0.92
3	0	0.36	0.1296	0.36
4	2	1.4	0.36	0.257142857
5	1	1.9	0.81	0.426315789
6	1	0.7	0.09	0.128571429
7	2	1.4	0.36	0.257142857
8	2	1.9	0.01	0.005263158
9	0	0.7	0.49	0.7
10	1	2.1	1.21	0.576190476
11	2	2.8	0.64	0.228571429
12	3	1.1	3.61	3.281818182
13	5	4.2	0.64	0.152380952
14	6	5.6	0.16	0.028571429
15	1	2.2	1.44	0.654545455
16	1	1.05	0.0025	0.002380952
17	2	1.4	0.36	0.257142857
18	0	0.55	0.3025	0.55
19	1	0.36	0.4096	1.137777778
20	0	0.46	0.2116	0.46
21	0	0.18	0.0324	0.18
22	1	2.1	1.21	0.576190476
23	4	2.8	1.44	0.514285714
24	1	1.1	0.01	0.009090909
25	6	6.4	0.16	0.025

26	6	8.3	5.29	0.637349398
27	6	3.3	7.29	2.209090909
28	3	3.9	0.81	0.207692308
29	8	5.1	8.41	1.649019608
10	0	2	4	2

Chi-square = 20.66 and P-level = 0.87

**Chi-Square Table 30 - Girl's activity as a street vendor and her responsiveness to the NGO**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	11	8	9	1.125
2	1	4	9	2.25

Chi-square = 3.37 and P-level = 0.06

**Chi-Square Table 31 - Girl's illegal/legal activities and her responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	12	14	4	0.285714286
2	8	6	4	0.666666667
3	9	7	4	0.571428571
4	1	3	4	1.333333333

Chi-square = 2.85 and P-level = 0.41

**Chi-Square Table 32 - Living in abandoned places and responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	4	6.3	5.29	0.83968254
2	8	8.3	0.09	0.010843373
3	8	5.4	6.76	1.251851852

Chi-square = 2.1 and P-level = 0.35

**Chi-Square Table 33 - Living in a family setting and responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	8	6.82	1.3924	0.204164223
2	10	9.02	0.9604	0.106474501
3	4	6.16	4.6656	0.757402597

Chi-square = 1.06 and P-level = 0.58

**Chi-Square Table 34 - Living in an independent room and responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	3	1.86	1.2996	0.698709677
2	2	2.46	0.2116	0.08601626
3	1	1.68	0.4624	0.275238095

Chi-square = 1.06 and P-level = 0.58

**Chi-Square Table 35 - Type of a girl's shelter and her responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	4	6.25	5.0625	0.81
2	8	6.8	1.44	0.211764706
3	3	1.8	1.44	0.8
4	8	8.2	0.04	0.004878049
5	10	9	1	0.111111111
6	2	2.5	0.25	0.1
7	8	5.4	6.76	1.251851852
8	4	6	4	0.666666667
9	1	1.6	0.36	0.225

Chi-square= 4.18 and P-level =0.84

**Chi-Square Table 36 - Girls' need for social support and their responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	6	4.3	2.89	0.672093023
2	7	7.2	0.04	0.005555556
3	9	10.5	2.25	0.214285714

Chi-square= 0.89 and P-level= 0.64

**Chi-Square Table 37 - Girls' need for clothes and their responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	3	3	0	0
2	7	4.9	4.41	0.9
3	5	7.1	4.41	0.621126761

Chi-square= 1.52 and P-level = 0.46

**Chi-Square Table 38 - Girls' need for legal support and their responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	3	2.6	0.16	0.061538462
2	7	3.9	9.61	2.464102564
3	3	6.5	12.25	1.884615385

Chi-square= 4.41 and P-level= 0.11

**Chi-Square Table 39 - Girls' need for financial support and their responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	2	2	0	0
2	1	3	4	1.333333333
3	7	5	4	0.8

Chi-square= 0.13 and P-level= 0.34

**Chi-Square Table 40 - Girls' need for help with kids' needs and their responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	1	1.8	0.64	0.355555556
2	3	2.7	0.09	0.033333333
3	5	4.5	0.25	0.055555556

Chi-square = 0.44 and P-level=0.8

**Chi-Square Table 41 - Girls' need for food and their responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	0	1.6	2.56	1.6
2	2	2.4	0.16	0.066666667
3	6	4	4	1

Chi-square= 2.6 and P-level= 0.26

**Chi-Square Table 42 - Number of services girls rely on NGOs to get and their responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> =	(Observed-Expected) <sup>2</sup> / Expected=
1	17	28	121	4.321428571
2	28	28	0	0
3	41	28	169	6.035714286

Chi-square = 10.35 and P-level = 0.005

**Chi-Square Table 43 - Number of kids living with the girl and her responsiveness to NGOs**

Outcome:	Observed:	Expected:	$(\text{Observed}-\text{Expected})^2=$	$(\text{Observed}-\text{Expected})^2 / \text{Expected}=$
1	2	6.6	21.16	3.206060606
2	7	6.6	0.16	0.024242424
3	11	6.6	19.36	2.933333333

Chi-square = 6.16 and P-level = 0.045