

الحركة العالمية للدفاع عن الأطفال
فروع فلسطين



CHILDREN IN THE STREET

The Palestinian Case

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Defence for Children International Palestine Section



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Executive Summary

The phenomenon of street children is considered to be the most important problem facing children today in both the developed and developing world. Accordingly, this phenomenon needs to be addressed and solved, lest it continue to threaten societies around the world.

Though some variance exists, international organizations and bodies estimate that the global street child population ranges between 100 – 150 million children. The variance in population size is due to a number of factors: first, there is no common definition of “street children” that is endorsed by all the relevant actors; second, national governments often conceal the extent of the phenomenon in their respective countries, in order to avoid potential recrimination for not doing enough to address the issue; and third, the street child population is fluid, with street children travelling from one city to another and frequently not possessing identification papers or birth certificates.

The phenomenon of street children is predominantly urban. The strong family ties and informal system of social protection upheld in rural areas usually keeps children off the streets, although many street children in the cities have migrated from rural areas to the cities individually or along with their families.

There are a number of major factors that are believed to cause, or exacerbate, the problem of street children. They include:

1. Economic factors
2. Family relations
3. Poor education level of parents
4. Large family size
5. Migration from the villages to the city
6. Wars and natural disasters

In Palestine, as in other locations, the size and extent of the street children phenomenon expands or contracts according to how one defines the problem. According to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) there are three categories of street children: children inhabiting streets, children working on the streets, and the children of street families.

In order to analyse the extent of this phenomenon in Palestine, a pilot study was conducted in order to identify factors affecting the phenomenon and the characteristics of street children in Palestine. The study focused on investigating a group of children on the streets in different locations throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), including East Jerusalem. The data for the study was gathered through a questionnaire, which was based on a set of indicators and variables corresponding to the objectives of the study.

The study aimed at addressing two main questions:

- Does the phenomenon of street children exist in Palestine?
- Who are the street children and what are their characteristics?

The study targeted 120 children (below 18), including 74 children in the West Bank and 46 children in the Gaza Strip. The sample children were present in the following areas: around Israeli roadblocks and checkpoints located between the different Palestinian towns and cities; near border crossings (e.g. Jericho and Rafah); at traffic lights; and in or near markets.

The “street children” phenomenon in Palestine manifests itself through the presence of children in the streets for long hours, working, wandering, begging, loitering or playing. However, these children do not sleep on the streets. Their families are known to them, they have homes to go to, and they all maintain some level of relationship with their families.

Based on the findings of the survey, it would be very rare to find a Palestinian child who had completely severed relations with his/her family. Of the total of 120 children surveyed, only ten children do not sleep regularly in their parents’ home. However, this does not indicate that these children sleep on the streets: over half (6) sleep in the houses of their relatives.

As the absence of housing and family ties are two of the main criteria in many of the definitions of “street children”, the concept that most properly applies to the Palestinian case is “children in the street,” rather than “street children.”

This being said, however, there are small numbers of children who do meet a strict definition of “street children”, but the number of these children is insufficient to classify it a phenomenon. For example, of the 120 surveyed children, only 4 do not sleep regularly in their family home or with relatives: 1 sleeps in a school, 1 sleeps in a deserted place, and 2 sleep in public places.

One of the key characteristics of children in the street in Palestine is that the majority work. Globally, child labour is believed to be a major issue related to the phenomenon of street children and a cross-cutting relationship has been noted, where some street children are working children and some working children are street children. Child labour in Palestine is clearly linked to the poor economic situation brought about, primarily, by Israeli occupation policies. The annual report of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) indicates that economic hardship is the main factor forcing families to send their children to work. According to PCBS, 71% of children in the labour market between the ages of 5 – 17 years work out of economic necessity.

The factors affecting the existence of children in the street in Palestine as well as the factors affecting children while in the street are similar to those affecting children in many parts of the world (e.g. economic issues, difficulties in the home or with education, etc.) While not all children who qualify as “children in the streets” in Palestine are vulnerable to direct violence and exploitation, it is extremely important that those factors that do expose children to violence and exploitation be addressed as a means of eradicating the phenomenon of children in the street in Palestine.

Introduction

Children are the group most vulnerable to political and economic changes at the state and community level as they cannot react to and interact with these changes in the same way as adults do. Children's ability to cope with the surrounding environment is limited if compared to that of the adult community. Research, reports and documents have shown that children's suffering is actually increasing globally, due to ongoing wars and armed conflicts and the economic strains resulting from these situations.

An increased global awareness of the concept of childhood and the needs and rights of children has been exhibited in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the many other declarations of child rights. In spite of this, the situation of many children is becoming worse and the violation of their rights is constantly increasing. Indicative of this is the increasing phenomenon of "street children", which sometimes has catastrophic manifestations that include child neglect, exclusion, homelessness, and regular loitering. "Street children" are found primarily in urban centres (though the children may originate from rural areas) and many depend on themselves for meeting their daily life needs.¹ In order to survive, many are forced to search for work or beg for money or handouts.

These children have formed groups that have their own specific culture, values and structure. These groups have special relations with the policemen that serve in the areas where the groups stay (such as in railway stations) and they have special relations with adult brokers, who provide them with protection and assist them in solving their problems with the policemen.

Although it is difficult to obtain official statistics on the number of street children globally, in the mid-1990s the UN World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimated the number to be 100 million. This number is on the rise. Thus, the phenomenon of street children is one of the most significant problems of our times. All countries, developed and developing alike, suffer from it and it is likely to have wide-ranging, long-term impacts on societies throughout the world unless effectively addressed.

A joint report published by UNICEF and the Arab league in April 2005 showed that, in the Arab world, there are ten million school-age children, who no longer attend school. Most of them are located in Egypt, Iraq, Morocco, and Sudan. This means that these children will enter the future without possessing the simplest means needed to confront life's challenges. The report indicated that most girl children, who will hold primarily responsibility for raising future generations, are denied the chance to develop properly. Millions of street children in both developed and developing countries sleep in streets and abandoned places.

This study aims at investigating the phenomenon of "street children" in Palestine from a variety of angles, in order to conclude a number of recommendations that can contribute to the search for an adequate solution.

The study consists of seven chapters, as follows:

- Chapter one presents a description of the methodology followed in preparing this study.
- Chapter two addresses the theoretical framework, presenting the different definitions of the concept of "street children"; the causes and size of the problem; violations and dangers to which street children are exposed; and society's attitudes towards them.

- Chapter three addresses protection measures found for street children in international human rights law and Palestinian legislation.
- Chapter four presents an analysis of the Palestinian context vis-a-vis street children and the nature of the issue in Palestinian society.
- Chapter five includes a demonstration and analysis of the survey findings.
- The report concludes with a final section, consisting of chapters six and seven. Chapter six includes major findings and conclusions drawn from the survey and chapter seven presents the major general recommendations.

Chapter One

Research Methodology

The main tool used for this research was a comprehensive questionnaire that contained a list of indicators and variables which correspond to the objectives of the study. The questionnaire was completed by 120 Palestinian children, located throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip, who spend the majority of their time in the streets.

In addition to the questionnaire, a number of interviews were conducted with professionals working in the field, including the Director of the Child Protection Center at the Palestinian Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA), the Center's social worker, and the Deputy Director of the Drug Abuse Directorate in the West Bank. Field visits were conducted to places where children in the street are found. In addition, observations were made by the field work team who collected the questionnaire data on children.

Justification:

The need for conducting a specialized study on the issue of street children in Palestine has arisen from a number of reasons, primarily:

1. The lack of specialized studies on the issue of street children in Palestine and the lack of accurate statistics on the size of the problem;
2. The scarcity or total absence of data on the characteristics of children in the streets, including, how they spend their time, why they remain in the streets and other such information;
3. The ambiguity of the legal framework for protecting children in the streets within laws in force in Palestine; and
4. The absence of specific legislative policies at the level of the Palestinian Authority (PA) for protecting Palestinian children from risks associated with the phenomenon of street children.

Objectives:

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To contribute to defining the concept of street children in Palestine within the international and regional framework of this phenomenon;
2. To shed light on the problem of street children in terms of its prevalence in the Palestinian society;
3. To reveal the social, economic, and political causes behind this problem, and the risks and difficulties facing these children;
4. To reveal the details and characteristics of street children in terms of their demographic, educational and health characteristics, housing conditions and characteristics of their families; and
5. To identify the social and economic characteristics of families of street children, their living conditions and other features.

Questions:

In an attempt to examine the issue of street children in Palestine, a set of questions was developed to guide the research. Questions included:

- Is there a problem of street children in Palestine?
- Who are the street children and what are their characteristics?
- If such a problem exists:
 1. To what extent does it correspond to the international and regional definitions?
 2. Is there a specific particularity in the Palestinian context in relation to this problem and what are these particular features?
 3. What are the most important economic, social, and political causes behind the street children phenomenon in Palestine?
 4. What difficulties and dangers do street children in Palestine face?
 5. What are the characteristics of street children in Palestine in terms of age, gender, level of education, family size, exposure to Israeli occupation policies, health status, place of residence, family situation, exposure to domestic violence or discrimination, how do they spend their time, and what types, if any, of punishment is practiced against them, etc?
 6. How does a street child perceive the future? Is the child content with his/her life? If not, what are the reasons behind that?

Target Group:

The study took as a starting point the UNICEF definition of “street children”, which considers them to be of three categories: Children inhabiting the streets; children working on the streets; and the children of street families.

The target group of the study is children (under 18 years), who are found in the streets for long hours, whether they are hired by others, or work for themselves (such as street vendors, children who give transport services, carriers, kiosk vendors, car cleaners, newspaper sellers, etc). The study includes children working at checkpoints, children who beg, children working at traffic lights, and loiterers.

Study Tools:

This study is based on a number of tools, including a review of theoretical literature on street children and interviews held with officials working in relevant Palestinian institutions. The main tool of the research, however, was a special questionnaire prepared according to a group of specific indicators. The questionnaire was completed based on information provided by 120 children: 74 from the West Bank and 46 from the Gaza Strip. In addition, focus was directed towards field visits as sources of information for the study.

The 120 children featured in the study were located primarily in the following places:

- Around military checkpoints that separate cities;
- At border crossings (such as Jericho crossing and Rafah crossing);
- At traffic lights; and
- In markets.

The distribution of surveyed children by age and area is presented in Table 1. The distribution of surveyed children by district is presented in Table 2.

Table 1: Distribution of Surveyed Children by Age and Area

Age Category	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Less than 9 years	3	2	5
10-14 years	41	29	70
15-17 years	30	15	45
Total	74	46	120

Table 2: Distribution of Surveyed Children by District

District	Number
Hebron	8
Bethlehem	8
Jerusalem	8
Ramallah	8
Nablus	8
Salfit	4
Qalqiliya	8
Tulkarem	8
Jenin and Tubas	8
Jericho	6
Gaza	8
Northern Gaza	14
Central Gaza	8
Khan Yunis	8
Rafah	8
Total	120

The Pre-Test:

A pre-test was prepared in order to test the questionnaire, the extent to which children would cooperate and respond to it, the extent of the field researcher's understanding, and, most importantly, the extent to which the questionnaire appropriately addresses the research issue and questions.

One field researcher was selected to coordinate completion of three questionnaires. It was decided that the questionnaires should be completed by children in the Nablus District, given the poor socio-economic situation there. Prior to carrying-out the pre-test, a training meeting was held with the field researcher. During the meeting, the field researcher was introduced: to the methodology of the study; to the mechanism of filling the questionnaire; to the definitions, terms, and all matters related to the questionnaire: to the mechanism of selecting a child in the street; to the principles of dealing with a child responding to the survey; and to the methodology of validating, controlling and verifying the accuracy of the child's responses.

The Field Work Team:

Persons selected to form part of the team that would be responsible for completing the questionnaires

possessed good experience in field data collection, particularly field work with children. These team members were thoroughly assessed prior to being trained. In total, the field work team consisted of thirteen researchers who participated in the data collection process; one supervisor who monitored the data collection; and a verifier who reviewed data from the questionnaires prior to entering it into the computer.

A training workshop was organized for members of the research team in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Videoconferencing technology was used for simultaneous communication with all trainees in order to overcome the problem of restricted mobility between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, while ensuring unified training and understanding of the work concepts and definitions contained in the questionnaire, along with explanation of the methodology, objectives and directions of the work. The training lasted for six training hours with a short break.

During the workshop, the definition of street children and the difficulties that researchers face in agreeing on a common definition were clarified and discussed. Additionally, the questionnaire was explained in detail in order to guarantee that field researchers possessed a common understanding of the questions contained therein. Also, main places where suitable children were expected to be found for interviews and for filling the questionnaire were identified.

Field Data Collection:

The data collection process lasted from June 4 – 11, 2005. A number of technical, administrative and other problems facing the study were addressed through communication with the field team, field visits, review of filled questionnaires, and provision of comments and advice to the work team in order to ensure common understanding of concepts and make the utmost use of lessons learned.

Supervision and Monitoring Mechanism:

Work control forms

Special forms were developed for the process of questionnaire administration in order to control their flow and delivery between the field researchers, the supervisor and the verifier, as well as ensuring delivery of administered questionnaires to the study coordinator for review and provision of feedback in case of any deficiencies or comments.

Field monitoring

In view of the prevailing situation in the country and the restricted mobility, the supervisor focused field visits to inspect the work of the researchers in the central area of the West Bank. Based on these visits, reports were made to the project coordinator presenting comments on work progress and problems encountered in the field. The coordinator, in turn, used this information to make the appropriate decisions and recommendations, which were circulated to all team members through special memos.

Follow-up was also conducted via phone calls by both the supervisor and the project coordinator through a special operations desk and a direct telephone line between the field workers and the coordination staff. This was done in order to ensure smooth communication among all involved. All notes were registered in a daily report on the study process, along with commentary and circulation of all worthwhile comments.

Data Quality Control:

- The data collection process in the field was monitored through field visits, assessment through review and verification of administered questionnaires, and verification of adherence to standard instructions provided in the training.
- The administered questionnaires were reviewed by the verifier in order to ensure that responses were filled for all questions, that responses were correctly recorded and that cross-references between the different responses was appropriately maintained.
- Reports were made on major comments and problems encountered in the field and identified either by the supervisor or the verifier or through field visits. These reports were studied and the appropriate instructions were issued accordingly.
- Questionnaires requiring additional responses on some questions or with unclear or conflicting responses were returned for verification.
- The regular flow of questionnaires from the field and the flow of returned questionnaires to the field for corrections was monitored.

Data were entered into the computer using the SPSS software package to ensure easy use and the possibility of obtaining detailed results from the data. Data entry was completed by a staff member with strong experience working with this software. After the completion of data entry, the entered data were verified against the questionnaires to ensure that no errors were made during data entry.

In order to obtain the soundest data, a special questionnaire was developed for the research and subjected to testing. The field work team was provided adequate training and supervision. Results were verified and data were entered into the computer accurately. Persistent monitoring was provided throughout the process. In spite of these steps, the following remarks should be made in regard to the quality of the data:

- Regarding representation and generalization, the study did not use the technique of random sampling. Therefore, caution should be utilized in generalizing any of the results obtained from the questionnaires.
- The manner in which the researchers presented the questions may have affected the children's perceptions and responses. There is thus the possibility of exaggeration or underestimation in their responses.
- The data are presented as numbers from the total number of children interviewed, as opposed to percentages that represent the community of children under 18 years of age as-a-whole, or children found in the streets generally.
- In certain cases, the total number of responses does not match the total number of children, either because the question did not apply to all children or because a number of children did not respond to certain questions.

Difficulties Encountered:

1. Some children did not cooperate with the field researchers, especially working children, who stated that this was because the interview would disrupt their work.
2. Some children requested financial compensation in order to provide data for the questionnaire.
3. Some children appeared afraid and tried to evade the interview. In response, the field researchers did their best to create an atmosphere of trust and reassurance in order to encourage children to participate.

4. Security procedures and checkpoints disrupted the work of field researchers. Although researchers were selected from the same district, internal checkpoints, nevertheless, restricted their mobility and disrupted their work, particularly in the Gaza Strip.
5. It was not possible to travel to the Gaza Strip to follow-up with the field researchers there and train them on how to administer the research questionnaire. In order to solve this problem, a training workshop was held using videoconferencing technology.
6. Some people were willing to provide information on street children and their suffering, but required that the information be kept confidential.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework

Historical Background:

The phenomenon of street children dates back to the Middle Ages and 11th century Europe. It was not until the 16th century that the first centre to deal with such children was established, in England. However, while this centre may have succeeded in getting children off the streets, they were exposed to cruelty and neglect while locked up inside the centre.² Many misguided attempts at dealing with the issue followed over the years.

Hope for finding a sustainable solution to the issue of street children intensified in the twentieth century, when several international and regional organisations were established to promote the rights of children, including street children. Such organizations include UNICEF, Save the Children and Defence for Children International. The struggle for children's rights achieved a major success in 1989 when the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was adopted. The CRC is binding for all parties that ratify it. It is the most widely ratified human rights treaty; 191 states have ratified it.

States Parties are responsible for introducing, explaining and implementing the CRC in the territories under their jurisdiction. By acknowledging the legal status and the rights of the child, the CRC indirectly advocates deep changes in the mentality and norms of society. Application of its provisions could thus transform many societies, traditions, and economic and political norms.³

Though great gains have been made in the area of children's rights, including that most states have ratified the CRC, and in spite of the activity of governmental organizations, NGOs, and international institutions in defending children's rights, the problem of street children is nevertheless still on the rise in both developed and developing countries. This increase is indicative of the violation of other child rights like the right to health, education and an adequate standard of living, as well as the right to live with a family and other rights articulated in the CRC.

Defining “Street Children”:

It is extremely difficult to find a standard definition for the term “street children” in the field of social sciences. Variations are due to differences in the various theoretical and ideological backgrounds of childhood specialists, as well as differences in time and place. Although this does not mean that there are no general frameworks or concepts that specialists can agree on and refer to, the definition and description of this phenomenon have been based on varied modes and approaches.

The World Health organization (WHO) classifies street children according to four categories:

- Children who live in the street.
- Children who have left their families and reside in the street, hotels, shelters, or abandoned places.
- Children living in protection centres or orphanages, who are at risk of becoming homeless.
- Children who have weak or insubstantial relations with their families, and whose circumstances force them to spend the night outside their homes.⁴

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines street

children as “Children with severed family ties, who have found the street their only home; the street is where they stay daily; who all face the same dangers such as becoming involved in drugs or prostitution, and their presence in the streets gives them a sense of freedom.”⁵

According to UNICEF, there are three types of street children:

- Children who reside in the street: Children who have run away from their families and live alone in the street.
- Children who work in the street: Children who spend most of their time in the street, but who regularly go back to their homes.
- Children from street families: Children who live with their families in the street.

The report of the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues defines street children as follows: “a street child or street youth is any underage person for whom the street (in the broadest meaning of the word, including uninhabited residences, wastelands, etc) has become his or her usual place of residence, and this person cannot find adequate protection.”⁶

Others define street children as children who always or sometimes work and reside in the street, without being taken care of by their families, or who spend long periods of the day in the streets.⁷

The various definitions of “street children” rely on different criteria, e.g. some rely on place of residency (the street) to tailor their definition, while others rely on the type of familial relation and the nature of time spent in the street. These defining criteria can also be sub-divided into more detailed criteria. For example, familial relations can be divided among, children who are in daily contact with their families, children who have weak connections with their families, and those who have no family contact at all.⁸

Some researchers have divided street children among three categories: children in the street; children of the street; and abandoned children. For example, “children in the street” perform some economic activities but, at the end of the day, they sleep in their homes and contribute part of their income to cover their family’s expenses. These children feel a sense of belonging to the family. Some of them may go to school. These children are in contrast to “children of the street,” who actually reside in the streets, or “abandoned children,” who have no contact with their families.⁹

Clearly there is no exclusive definition of the concept of street children. One may find some authors using such terms as homeless children, beggars and other terms as synonyms for street children. Even the term “street children” itself has met with controversy. For example, some perceive the concept of “street children” as negative, arguing that it gives a stereotyped picture of children. Others, however, believe that it gives children an identity and a sense of belonging. Advocates for use of the term argue that the concept includes a wide range of children, such as homeless children, children who work and sleep in the streets, children who have or do not have families and spend some time in institutions (such as prisons). They argue for use of the term as it is inclusive. However, it is important to be wary of generalizations, which certainly may not apply to all cases to the same extent, as every child represents a unique case by him or herself.¹⁰

In the Palestinian case, the phenomenon of street children is well observed by the presence of children in the streets for long hours, whether to work, hang around, beg or play; they, however, sleep in their homes with their families and do not sleep in the street. Moreover, their families are known and they preserve their relationship with them, albeit to varying degrees. Mr. Barghith

Barghith, Director of the Child Protection Centre in Palestine, defines street children as “children who spend their time on the streets whether to work, sell, beg or wander in alleys and streets, but they do not sleep outside their homes and they keep up familial relations.”¹¹

Accordingly, we find that, in the Palestinian case, the term “children in the street” is more applicable than “street children”, due primarily to the availability of housing and the continued relations with the family. It should be noted that some of these children would fit the definition of “street children” as defined by UNICEF. Additionally, it should be noted that, in Palestine, there are some individual cases of children, which fit a stricter definition of “street children”. However, these cases do not constitute a phenomenon.

The Extent of the Problem:

There is no consensus among international institutions on the size of the street children phenomenon on an international level. For example, according to some statistics, there are about 150 million street children in the world,¹² while UNICEF estimates the number to be 100 million. This variation is thought to be due to the lack of agreement on a standard definition for the concept of street children. Additionally, it is suspected that many governments underestimate the number of affected children in their respective countries in order to avoid recrimination for not doing enough to care for and protect children. A 2002 World Bank report highlights other difficulties in determining the size of the problem, including the continuous migration of street children from one city to another and the fact that many of them possess neither identity cards nor birth certificates.¹³

In general, there are fewer girls living in the streets than boys. This is frequently due to increased social constraints or pressure on girls to stay at home.

Street Children and Location:

Street children are found primarily in urban areas. Their existence is less prevalent or non-existent, in rural areas as a result of strong family ties and the prevalence of spontaneous social networks of solidarity among families. Other factors that assist in minimizing the problem in rural areas is that food is often more easily available and is usually less expensive than in urban areas.¹⁴

Risks Facing Street Children:

Street children are exposed to a wide range of risks affecting their physical and psychological health and personal safety. These children are vulnerable to exposure to physical, verbal, psychological or sexual abuse, from passersby, from employers and supervisors, or from other street children.

They face other risks due to frequent economic exploitation, including working long hours for low wages, working at night or working without health or accident insurance or belonging to a trade union. Additionally, their education is frequently in jeopardy and they may be either exposed to or directly involved in at-risk situations, such as drug use or distribution, or gang activity.

Due to the harsh environment in which they are forced to survive, street children are often characterized by stubbornness, aggressiveness, apparent selfishness, unstable emotional behaviour, lack of concentration, constant rebellion against authority, mistrust of others, and, sometimes, abusive behaviour towards other children, among other characteristics.¹⁵

Researcher Laila Saleh suggests that all categories of street children share a group of common characteristics, such as rebellion against social patterns and systems, increased mobility, distrust of others, a lack of thinking about the future, early maturity, self-reliance, creation of subcultures,

and an acute awareness of personal security. Saleh emphasizes that most of these characteristics represent defense mechanisms that street children use to protect themselves from others.¹⁶

Root Causes and Contributing Factors:

The existence of street children is a social phenomenon that should be analysed in terms of the underlying economic, social and educational factors that either trigger or exacerbate the problem. Although each child has his/her own experience that drove him/her to the streets, the reasons contributing to this phenomenon are similar in many countries.

A 2002 World Bank report summarizes some of the main causes of the street children phenomenon as follows:¹⁷

1. Low family income, forcing the family to find jobs for their children in order to contribute to increasing their income.
2. Inadequate housing conditions, as the lack of adequate housing may push families and their children to the street.
3. Neglect and abuse, which are common problems with either one or both parents addicted to drugs and alcohol or families that do not provide enough time for interaction among their members.
4. Failure in school.
5. Loss of parents due to armed conflicts and natural disasters, as well as due to epidemics and diseases, such as AIDS and others, in addition to refugee problems in various parts of the world.

1. Economics:

Poor economic situations are a major factor contributing to the problem of street children. Poverty, unemployment, elevated prices, declining national income, poor distribution of wealth within society, and the increasing gap between the rich and the poor are all factors with a direct impact on the rise of the phenomenon of street children.

In Mongolia, following the collapse of the socialist system, attention to social care stopped, and the situation became very difficult as prices have increased and families have been unable to manage. This has forced children into the streets. According to official statistics, there are currently 4,100 street children in Mongolia, as compared to 400 prior to the collapse of the communist system in 1990.¹⁸

Dr. Abdullah Ben Abdel-Aziz's study about street children in the Arab Gulf states also explains the causal relationship between economic factors and street children. When a child feels that the family is unable to afford education fees, the child leaves her/his education and joins the labour force. In addition, a financial crisis of the family provider or a decline in the family income can create factors conducive to driving more children onto the street.

2. Familial Relations:

The family is the primary institution responsible for fulfilling the basic needs of children, including providing security, love, food, clothing, shelter, health care, education and entertainment. Moreover, the family raises children in their own culture and passes this culture to them through the socialization process. The family is considered the reference point for the construction of children's norms, for the shape of their personality and for the direction they take in life.

The family situation and the type of relations within a family are, thus, important elements in shaping the features of the child's life. Often, the phenomenon of street children is reversely proportional

to the prevalence of normal relations within the family. A study by UNICEF examined the reasons why children may leave the family and found that some have left the family because of ill-treatment by their fathers or stepfathers or after the death of a parent. Others decided to leave in order to avoid parental control or because of the dire economic situation of the family. Still others left simply because they wanted to enjoy more independence from their families.¹⁹

In Egypt, studies have indicated that the problem of family disintegration is common among families of street children. Statistical data of children joining the Amal Association and Um Kulthoum Society for street children reveal that 24% come from broken families, either due to divorce or the death of a parent, and 32% could not find care and attention from their families or felt that they were subjected to cruel and violent treatment by family members. Accordingly, many street children leave their families, preferring to beg in the streets to earn a living, rather than go back to their families.²⁰

Often these children are exposed to ill-treatment by one of their parents, or both, or by step-parents. Sometimes, the entire family may punish the child for a perceived undisciplined action. Some parents also display favouritism towards some of their children over others, especially when the child is from a second marriage where either the father or the mother has children from their previous marriage. In such cases, a parent may mistreat the children of their spouse.²¹

3. Low Educational Level of Parents:

In spite of attempts to eliminate illiteracy, there remain high levels of illiteracy among the families of street children. As a result of their own lack of education, parents may be unaware of the importance and value of education and may not provide appropriate educational care for their children. This situation encourages children to drop out of school and remain in the streets. Often the family does not resist this action. In some cases, the family is the main factor that drives children from school.²²

4. Large Family Size:

The size of the family has a strong impact on the family's economic situation. Families with more children incur more costs and require more efforts in terms of provision of care. Often poor families are unable to assume complete responsibility for raising and supporting their children if there are many. Large families provide less time, care, and money for each single child. When the father is working all day to earn enough to cover the basic needs of his family, children become deprived of their father's attention and affection, and even from his mere physical presence.²³ A study on street children in the Philippines indicated that most street children there come from large families with an average size of 6 to 10 members.²⁴

5. Dropping Out of School:

Education is a major incentive for social advancement that contributes to a better life. However, too often children drop out of school for various reasons and find refuge in the street. Research on Brazil indicates that 57% of street children in Brazil drop out of school before they resort to staying in the streets, 25% drop out of school while being out in the streets and 12% do so after finding final refuge in the street. These findings emphasize the strong correlation between dropping out of school and becoming street children.²⁵

The aforementioned Brazilian researchers stated that the education system in Brazil is responsible for this situation. They cite factors such as overcrowded classrooms, very high failure rates, which reach up to 68%, poor school environments, poor teacher training, and inadequacies in the educational curricula. According to the researchers, these factors contribute to increased dropout rates and, therefore, to increased numbers of children resorting to the street.

6. Migration from Rural to Urban Areas:

Urban areas hold considerable appeal for many poor rural residents, as they believe they will achieve their hopes and dreams there. Eventually, however, they encounter a harsh reality that destroys the dream that originally pushed them to the city. Immigrants to the city from rural areas are more willing to take a wide range of jobs in order to provide for their family. Since they are in a new environment, they feel less obligation to follow the strict social controls and constraints that they obeyed in their places of origin.

For example, a study on street children in Zimbabwe showed that between the 1920s and 1950s, indigenous farmers between 10-14 years of age used to go to urban centres where offices and imperial institutions were situated. There they worked as servants and guards in the houses of white and black citizens. In urban towns, children worked for the black supervisors in companies, for example, as cooks or cleaners. Sometimes, they offered sexual services to workers who lived in poor neighbourhoods.²⁶

7. Wars and Natural Disasters:

Wars and natural disasters often lead to massive spikes in the street children population. Wars contribute to the deterioration of the national economy, the destruction of homes, the killing and displacement of thousands and the dispersion of families. This, in turn, leads to an increased number of orphans and homeless children. The same applies to natural disasters, such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods and hurricanes. For example, the recent earthquake in Pakistan has resulted in the existence of thousands of street children due to the death of their family members, full demolition of their homes or dispersion of their families.

Perceptions of Street Children in the Community:

The image of street children in their communities is often negative and based on stereotypes. For example, a sweeping and negative commentary that treats all street children in Egypt as though they are the same noted that “these children represent a severely complex problem. They bring the Egyptian society health, psychological, and social disasters. This problem is more dangerous than the problem of child labour because working children are practicing a positive role, even though it is a small role, while a homeless child has no job, and no familial supervision, so a street child is nothing other than a prospective criminal.”²⁷

The only matter that social care workers agree on is that it is imperative that society change its view towards street children as being nothing more than “criminal elements” who should be locked up in police stations, even if there is acknowledgement that the detention should be away from adults and without the children being exposed to rape or violence.

Mushira Hattab adds that “society’s view towards street children must be changed, where street children are dealt with as criminals causing a threat to the society.” Hattab also states that “the strategy to combat the street children problem should be based on a governmental approach and governments should deal with street children as individuals with rights; this is the responsibility of the entire society, which should have a firm stand to give street children their rights to education, health, protection from violation, and a decent life.”²⁸

Violations of Street Children by Police and in Detention:

The mere presence of a child in the street indicates a clear infringement of the child’s basic rights, for if all were as it should be, the child would not be in the street. The Consortium for Street Children stresses that street children are exposed to immense violence, especially by people who are supposed to protect them. In many countries, police beat, torture, and sexually harass street

children, and force them to pay money in exchange for protection or release from detention. Some street children are killed by police officers. However, rarely are those responsible for such acts brought to justice.²⁹

Additionally, street children's rights are often violated when arrested or detained. The outcome report of the Civil Society Forum for North Africa and the Middle East on Promoting and Protecting the Rights of Street Children lists the most common violations as follows: arresting children forcefully and abusively, especially during group raids that officers carry out to 'clean' the streets.

Street children must also often endure appalling detention conditions, locked up together with adult offenders. These children are frequently subjected to sexual abuse by police officers or the adults with whom they sometimes share a detention cell. Even when a child is detained separately from adults, mixing children together with no regard given to age differences implies a violation of their rights.

Other areas of concern were that many countries in the Middle East and North Africa provide no special protection systems for detained girls. Also, deprivation of liberty is often the first resort sought and for periods that often last beyond what is stipulated by law.³⁰

Chapter Three

The International and National Legal Framework for Street Children

The International Legal Framework

States have a prime duty to protect the universal rights of every human being within their jurisdiction or territory. However, due to their dependence on adults and their vulnerability throughout the different stages of their development, children have additional rights and are entitled to additional care and protection. With regard to street children, they have specific rights that are stipulated in a number of international conventions, most importantly:

- International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 138 on the Minimum Working Age (1973)
- ILO Convention No. 182 on The Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of The Child (1989)

ILO Convention No. 138 on the Minimum Working Age (1973):

Article one of this Convention specifies that 15 years is the minimum age for working. Article three of this Convention states that the minimum age for starting any type of employment, which by its nature or working environment is likely to jeopardize the health, safety or morals of young persons, shall not be less than 18 years. The Convention also urges State Parties to adopt this minimum working age in their national legislation.

ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999):

Article one of this Convention urges each State signatories to take immediate and effective measures to prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of child labour. Article three defines the worst forms of child labour as follows:

- a All forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom, and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- b The use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;
- c The use, procurement or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs;
- d Work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989):

The existence of the phenomenon of street children represents a flagrant infringement of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The natural environment for children to live in is with their families, enjoying sound familial relationships that provide them with love and tolerance as well as care and protection. Such a family environment ensures the proper development of children's personalities. According to the CRC, the following rights should be enjoyed by all children, including street children:

The Right to Life:

The right to life is inherent to every human being regardless of his/her gender or age. Article 6.1 of the CRC stipulates that States Parties should recognize that every child has the inherent right to life. Article 6.2 stipulates that States Parties “shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.” This right entails refraining from jeopardizing the life and development of children or from submitting them to physical or moral threats.

The Consortium for Street Children reports that many states kill or torture street children. In some parts of the world, police forces kill and torture street children rather than ensuring their protection.³¹ This contravenes Article 19 of the CRC, which states in its first paragraph that, “States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.”

Moreover, Article 19.2 provides that “such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programs to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for the identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.”

The Right to Health:

Street children live in the streets, public places, abandoned houses, cemeteries or unhealthy shelters. This jeopardizes their right to healthy growth and development. Children need a healthy environment that ensures that they grow up free of disease or illness, and which offers them all medical services. Article 24.1 of the CRC stipulates that “States Parties recognize the right of the child to the highest possible standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health. States Parties shall strive to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such health care services.”

The Right to Education:

A high percentage of street children do not achieve an educational level that would ensure them sufficient work with appropriate pay. This contravenes the right of the child to a basic standard of education as set out in the provisions of Article 28 of the CRC: “States Parties recognize the right of the child to education and, with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

- a** Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;
- b** Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in cases of need;
- c** Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;
- d** Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;
- e** Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.”

Education helps develop the child’s character; therefore, Article 29.1 sets forth that “States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to: (a) the development of the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential....”

The Right to an Adequate Standard of Living:

Article 27 of CRC provides for the right of a child to an adequate living standard. Paragraph one of this article explicitly states that “States Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.”

Paragraph 2 notes that “(t)he parent(s) or others responsible for the child have the primary responsibility to secure, within their abilities and financial capacities, the conditions of living necessary for the child’s development.” In the case of parent(s) or legal guardian(s) who are unable to provide such a living standard, it is the state’s responsibility to do so as set out in Article 27.3: “States Parties, in accordance with national conditions and within their means, shall take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programs, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing.”

Special Child Labour Related Rights:

In many countries, street children are exploited by working long hours in difficult conditions for low pay. This contravenes Article 32 of the CRC, which states in paragraph one, “States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development”.

The Right to Participation, Play and Recreation:

Street children often lack participation in cultural life and opportunities for play and recreation. Article 31 of the CRC stipulates that “States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.” Paragraph two of the same article states that, “States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.”

Rights to Protection:

Street children suffer from maltreatment, sexual abuse, neglect and discrimination. Article 34 of the CRC provides for the protection of children from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. Article 37 specifies legal protection in the case of arrest, while Article 40 stipulates the provision of appropriate and humanitarian conditions of detention that protect the child’s dignity.

The National Legal Framework

Palestinian children suffer rights violations on two main levels. First, Palestinian children are the group harmed the most by Israeli occupation policies, including killings, injury and detention or because of forced displacement as a result of house demolitions or the construction of the Separation Wall in the West Bank. In recent years, violations of children’s rights have been particularly severe, with over 700 children killed during the second Intifada in addition to thousands injured and detained.

Second, though the Palestinian Authority (PA) has obligations toward Palestinian children, it is still unable to meet its minimum responsibilities in this regard. Though the Palestinian Child Law (PCL) has entered into force, it should be noted that other legislation, such as the penal code, that provide protection for children from maltreatment, harm or crimes against them, have not been ratified. The same applies to the juvenile justice law (presently still a bill) and the enforcement of the by-laws of the PCL.

In addition, the PA budget includes no allocation dedicated to meeting its obligations towards children and their development that would help Palestinian children in facing the ill treatment and violations

suffered as a result of Israeli occupation measures and the resulting harsh political, economic and social conditions.

Details of the Palestinian legal framework are set out below:

I. The Palestinian Child Law (PCL)

The Palestinian Child Law defines a child as anyone under 18 years of age. It does not contain any specific provisions for the protection of street children. It does, however, provide a general framework for the protection of children from violence, economic exploitation, homelessness, and neglect – conditions that could push children onto the streets either to live or earn money or beg. This framework includes:

- 1** The right to fulfilment of basic needs. Article 29 of the PCL states that every child shall have the right to food, clothes, shelter, medical care and education; and this shall be the responsibility of his/ her parent(s) or legal guardian(s). This article also requires the state to take all the necessary steps to ensure fulfilment of this right.
- 2** The right to an adequate standard of living. Article 30 of the PCL stipulates that every child shall have the right to an adequate standard of living that ensures his/her physical, mental, spiritual and social welfare. The state shall take all the necessary steps to guarantee this right.
- 3** The right to receive social assistance. Article 31 of the PCL stipulates that certain children have the right to receive social assistance from the Palestinian Authority in accordance with the rules and regulations laid down by the state and its institutions. These children include:
 - a Orphans or children of unknown parentage;
 - b Children in social care;
 - c Children of divorced or abandoned women without financial support;
 - d Children of detainees, missing persons, persons who are incapacitated as a result of illness or disability and those who lack financial support;
 - e Children of families whose houses have been demolished or burnt down;
 - f Disabled children or children with chronic illnesses; and
 - g Children who are multiple births such as twins (triplets and more).
- 4** The right to substitute care. According to Article 32 of the PCL, any child who is deprived of a natural family environment permanently or temporarily shall have the right to receive alternative care via:
 - a A substitute (guardian) family that shall suitably take care of the child;
 - b Public or private social care institutions if there is no substitute family.
- 5** Prohibition of exploitation or putting children at risk. In compliance with Article 43 of the PCL, it is prohibited to exploit children through forcing them to beg or to employ them under conditions that violate the law; it is also prohibited to employ children in any job that could jeopardize their education or physical or mental welfare and safety.
- 6** Prohibition of intentionally exposing children to a number of specific situations. Article 44 of the PCL states that when children are exposed to neglect, forced to beg, abused, or habitually leave their home without their parents' knowledge, this constitutes ill treatment. Such cases place the child's physical and mental health at risk and are therefore prohibited by law. This article sets out the specific instances of hardship and circumstances considered to place the health, and physical and moral safety of the child at risk (below) and prohibits intentionally subjecting children to such circumstances:

- a Loss of parents and lack of family support;
- b Neglect and displacement;
- c Flagrant and consistent neglect while raising or taking care of children;
- d Regularly maltreating the child and failing to inform the child's guardian(s) about the principles of proper child rearing;
- e Abuse of children sexually, economically or through organized crimes or being forced to beg;
- f Children who regularly leave their homes or are absent without notice; and
- g Unjustified dropping out of school.

7 The task of preventive and remedial intervention. Article 52 of the PCL stipulates that the Advisor for the Protection of Childhood has a duty to intervene in all circumstances where the health of the child, or his or her physical or moral safety are at risk, especially in those circumstances set out in Article 44 and 47 of the PCL.

8 Duty to report on circumstances that place the child's safety at risk. Article 53 of the PCL states that:

- a Anyone can report a case that seems to threaten a child's health or physical or mental welfare to the Advisor for the Protection of Childhood.
- b It shall be the responsibility of teachers, physicians, social workers and other persons entrusted with the protection and care of children to report such cases.
- c Any person violating the provisions of paragraph (b) above shall be punished by a fine not exceeding two hundred Jordanian Dinars and not less than one hundred Jordanian Dinars or the equivalent in the currency in circulation.

9 Helping children to report. Article 54 of the PCL states that:

- a It shall be the responsibility of every adult to help children or their siblings report instances of maltreatment to the Advisor for the Protection of Childhood, and to report cases where any other child falls within the hardship criteria set out in Article 44 of the law.
- b Any person who violates the provisions of this article shall be fined a sum not exceeding two hundred Jordanian Dinars and not less than one hundred Jordanian Dinars or the equivalent in the currency in circulation.

The previous articles of the PCL could constitute a framework for the protection of street children if they were enforced as laws and regulations. Until now, however, no such regulations have been enacted, which renders these provisions ineffective.

II. Effective Penal Code (Jordanian Law of 1960)

The Jordanian Penal Code of 1960 has no specific provisions for the protection of street children; however, it does criminalize some acts that lead to the presence of street children, including the lack of care and protection of the child or the exploitation of children through forcing them to beg. Article 290 states that a sentence of between one month to one year imprisonment shall be imposed upon:

- 1- Every parent, custodian or guardian of a child who cannot support him/herself or any person entrusted with the care and protection of the child and who despite being able to, refuses or neglects to provide the child with food, clothes, a bed and other basic needs, thereby jeopardizing the child's health;

- 2- Every parent, custodian or guardian of a child less than twelve years old or any person entrusted with the care and protection of such a child and who intentionally or without justifiable reasons neglects or abandons the child – while being able to support the child – or who leaves the child without any means of subsistence.

Article 389.2 of the penal code states that “Any person who begs on the pretext of exposing his/her wounds or deformity or by using any other means, whether he/she is mobile or sitting in a public space, or any person found telling an under-sixteen-year-old child to beg or encouraging such a child to beg, shall be initially sentenced to up to three months’ imprisonment, or the court shall decide to refer him/her to an institution designated by the Minister of Social Affairs to provide care to beggars for a period of no less than one year and no more than three years.”

Chapter Four

Street Children: The Palestinian Case

Palestinian Demographics:

By mid 2005, the population of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) had reached about 3.8 million, with some 2.4 million in the West Bank (including 247,000 residing in East Jerusalem) and 1.4 million in the Gaza Strip. Palestinian refugees represent about 43% of the total population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.³²

The population growth rate in the OPT is high in comparison to the global average, reaching 3.4% in 2004, while the global average did not exceed 1.4%.³³ In the absence of adequate development of resources and mechanisms for distribution of resources, such an elevated population growth rate constitutes an impediment to development.

Children constitute 53% of the total population of the OPT. When examining demographic indicators for children, it is necessary to classify them in age groups according to the difference in their development needs. For example, a high percentage of under-five year olds places a greater toll on society, as this age group has greater needs than others. As of 2004, children in the under-five age group represented 17.8% of the total population residing in the OPT, while 5 – 9 year olds comprised about 15.5% of the total population. Children aged 10 – 14 years made up 13% of the total population and children aged 15 – 17 years constituted 6.6% of the total population.³⁴

The Concept of “Street Children” and Its Relation to Child Labour:

In studying any social phenomenon, it is necessary to consider the specificity of the society under investigation, as the phenomenon may be expressed differently according to the social, economic and political specifics of the situation. This chapter will introduce the question of street children in Palestine within the international context described in the previous chapter as well as consider the specificity of Palestinian society.

The beginning of international acknowledgement of the problem of street children and its characteristics was influenced by the Latin American model, which played a major role in defining the phenomenon of street children. However, definitions began developing as a result of the practical experience gained from important observations and experiences of other countries, including Azerbaijan, Egypt, India, Nepal and Russia.

In the Arab world, there are reservations and variations vis-à-vis the term “street children.” For instance, the Egyptian National Council for Motherhood and Childhood uses the term “homeless children”, instead of “street children.” In Jordan, it is difficult to find a specific definition of street children. In Yemen, the definition of the term of street children was manipulated before enacted in legislation, due to the national government’s shame of acknowledging the existence of street children.³⁵

As for Palestine, there have been no studies or specialized research on street children. However, Defence for Children International/ Palestine Section (DCI/PS) submitted a working paper to the Civil Society Forum for North Africa and the Middle East, which was held in Egypt in March 2004 under the theme of promoting and protecting the rights of street children. The paper concluded that there was no official clear definition of street children.

DCI/PS defined street children as: “children who spend most of their day until sunset or later in the street, in markets, at traffic lights or at Israeli military checkpoints, working or selling things.”³⁶ The same paper also captured the most important factors pushing children to the street, including a weak educational system, poverty and house demolitions as a result of Israeli occupation practices.

In spite of the general framework provided by this previous definition, and notwithstanding the importance of dealing with this phenomenon, the definition itself is still incomplete as it did not refer to the nature of the relationship between these children and their families, nor did it mention the overlapping components and indicators of this phenomenon. For example, child labour is one of the main issues that is directly linked to the question of street children as many working children are street children; and many street children are working.

In its 2005 annual report on Palestinian children, *Children of Palestine: Issues and Statistics*, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) mentions that by mid-February 2004 the number of working children in the OPT aged 5 – 17 years reached 40,139 children, representing 3.1% of the total number of children in the same age group (1,313,663) and 34.9% of the total population. Results show that 71% of working children enter the labour market due to economic hardship and 57.7% of the children working with pay are not enrolled in school.³⁷

Many studies have covered the question of child labour, discussing the concept and size of this phenomenon as well as the characteristics of working children and the factors that pushed them into the labour market. Additionally, research has focused on various government policies and programs aimed at overcoming this problem. The best-known studies relevant to Palestinian children include that made by lawyer Faten Boliva, “Child Labour, Between Law and Reality”, the ILO country report on child labour in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and a study on Palestinian children in the labour market, published by the Development Studies Program of Birzeit University.

As noted previously, in Palestine, the presence of children in the streets for long hours can be observed. However, while these children spend their time in the street and many work, they return home to their families in the evenings. Therefore, it is more appropriate to view these children as “children in the street,” as opposed to “street children,” per se.

Causes of the Phenomenon in Palestine:

As in other areas of the world, the phenomenon in Palestine results from a number of interrelated causes, primarily:

1- Poor economic situation:

PCBS’s annual report “Children of Palestine – Issues and Events” shows that the economic factor is the major cause that makes families push their children into the labour market in order to increase their income and alleviate their suffering. The report notes that 71% of children in the labour market aged 5 – 17 years work out of economic need.³⁸

The poor economic situation in the OPT is due to a number of reasons. The Palestinian economy suffers from a state of dependency and weakness for a number of reasons that are mainly attributed to the political situation. Oppressive Israeli measures imposed against the Palestinian population following the beginning of the second Intifada in September 2000 deepened the crisis of the Palestinian economy. A report published by the Palestinian National Information Centre states that the Gross Domestic Product has decreased by 40% since the beginning of the second Intifada, while the unemployment rate increased by 27%.³⁹ PCBS data on the first quarter of 2005 show an increase in the percentage of households in the OPT living below the poverty line to 67%. Within the

same context, statistics show that 70% of Palestinian households need financial support.⁴⁰

The report by the National Information Centre indicated that the direct and indirect losses of the Palestinian economy have reached 15.633 billion dollars since the end of 2000. The report noted that Israel's construction of the Separation Wall has led to the closure of 1,702 economic establishments.⁴¹

Data published by PCBS showed that 29.1% of the total population of children (below 18 years) in the OPT lives in absolute poverty, while noting a clear variation between the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Rates of dire poverty among West Bank children reached 24.3%, in comparison to 49.9% in the Gaza Strip.⁴²

Additionally, PCBS data show that the percentage of households in need of social assistance has increased, while the poorest households in Palestinian society are still unable to meet their needs on their own.⁴³ Some 4% of Palestinian households resorted to sending their children to the labour market while 5.1% of these households pushed other members into the labour market.⁴⁴ Such practices constitute one of the strategies applied by Palestinian households to cope with and survive these difficult economic conditions.

Add to this that the Palestinian population is a young one, which increases rates of dependency and economic subsistence. A research entitled "Palestinian Children in the Labour Market" by Birzeit University's Development Studies Program shows that the economic situation plays a core role in pushing children to the street to work. The report notes that with "the dire poverty suffered by most of these families, they lack human development and capacities. A number of structural, social and familial fractures combined together make such families more vulnerable to poverty and make their children more liable to enter into the labour market."⁴⁵

In such circumstances, poor families force their children to work in any available job, even when they are underpaid or in difficult circumstances. For instance, Akram is a young boy whose story was published in Alayyam Newspaper:

"Thirteen-year old Akram no longer cares that his community members call him 'the checkpoint boy' after he started carrying people's luggage at the checkpoints of Huwwara and Awarta to the south of Nablus. After his father became unemployed, he began working in order to sustain his 16-member family. Akram's father used to have good work inside the Green Line, although he would rejoin his family only once or twice a week. With his eyes turning right and left hoping to find a client who would pay him good money to help fulfil his family needs, Akram says that 'with the beginning of the Intifada, my father lost his job and started spending his savings until they were depleted; then, I had to go to work.'⁴⁶

2- Household relations:

While Palestinian society, in general, is characterized by strong family networks, poor or difficult home situations do push some Palestinian children to the streets.

During the field research, children reported being beaten with sticks or electricity cables by a family member. One of the children explained why he was on the street as follows, "I do not like school or staying at home because of the problems between my father and mother; I'd rather stay on the street all the time even when there is no work. When I am working, I do not mind the number of hours; most of the time at home, there is shouting and beating. My father takes out his anger on us and beats us without mercy. Sometimes, I run away to my grandfather's place; once I slept in yard of a mosque. Sometimes, I feel hatred and anger towards my mother and father because they turned the house into hell."

The Palestinian National Plan for Psychosocial Health explains that the absence of a breadwinner in some households combined with the lack of social or health insurance has shaken the father's image inside the family. This has had a negative effect on the psychological status of the breadwinner and other family members, increasing tension and domestic violence. PCBS data show that 30.8% of children were exposed to some kind of violence by their families, while friends were the authors of 35.5% of other cases of violence against children.⁴⁷ All of these factors create an environment that pushes children into the street.

Additionally, the household situation is affected by the size of the family and its overall economic situation. The average size of a Palestinian family is 6.4 members.⁴⁸ The larger the family size, the more it needs to secure financial resources and the harder it is to fulfill its needs, especially when the main breadwinner loses his work due to increasing unemployment rates and economic deterioration and instability.

Many families actually believe that sending a child to the street and having him deal with other people helps him develop his personality and self-reliance. Some respondent parents said: "let him grow up to become a man!". Although such an opinion is not necessarily linked to the bad economic situation of the family, it does contribute to pushing children into the street as it makes it appear to be a positive development towards self-sufficiency and the ability to fulfil one's basic needs. When a child selling coffee in front of the Cairo-Amman Bank in Ramallah was asked about the reason that made him work, he replied: "to contribute to the family's income; I want to learn commerce and spend my time doing something useful."

3- Absenteeism:

According to a World Bank Report published in 2002, dropping out of school is one of the main culprits for the phenomenon of street children.⁴⁹ The drop-out rates in Palestinian schools decreased from 1.8% of the total student population in 1999/2000 to 0.9% in 2003/2004. The number of drop-out students reached 158,000 in the period from 1994 – 2004. Researcher Salah Alsoubani notes that the greatest majority of students dropped out at the higher basic education stage, namely grade 10. Absenteeism rates in grade ten reached 3% of the total student population.⁵⁰

The National Plan for Psychosocial Health attributes absenteeism to the difficult economic situation and households' need to undertake additional labour to fulfill their basic needs.⁵¹ This assessment matches the findings of PCBS reports, which indicate that 10.2% of children (6-17 years) in the West Bank and 9.8% in the Gaza Strip dropped out of school because of economic conditions. Results also showed that 57.7% of paid, working children are not enrolled in school education and that, for them, work substitutes going to school.

In addition to economic issues, violence in school plays an important role in increasing absenteeism. PCBS data show that teachers represent a source of violence for 29.9% of children who were subjected to violence.⁵²

4- Cultural factor (lack of public spaces for children):

The absence of public spaces for children to engage in recreational or cultural activities is a contributing factor to the number of children in the street.

According to PCBS data, 44.4% of children (aged 10 – 17 years) in the OPT would love to attend recreational activities in their spare time. However, they are unable to do so, mainly because of the absence of public cultural facilities.⁵³

PCBS data indicate that there are only 62 cultural centres in the OPT. In general, cultural activities

are concentrated in the Central West Bank (in the city of Ramallah, in particular) and Gaza City.⁵⁴ Even when such organizations do exist, low-income families, in most cases, are unable to attend them and many of the institutions have very limited absorption capacity.

5- Population density:

Approximately 20% of Palestinian households live in households with a density of 3 or more persons per room. In this context, the home does not provide the child with enough space to move freely. Additionally, high population density and numerous children under one roof make carrying-out every day tasks more complicated in some situations. As a result, in some instances, for example, among families in some Palestinian refugee camps, children are often compelled to leave the house or parents encourage their children to play outside in order to temporarily alleviate the over-crowded conditions.

6- Israeli occupation measures:

Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip is a major contributing factor to the phenomena of children in the street in Palestine. The link between Israeli measures of collective punishment and the poor performance of the Palestinian economy has been made repeatedly by the World Bank and other international agencies. Israel's restrictions on Palestinian freedom of movement, as embodied in its "closure" policy, has had a profound effect on Palestinian economic conditions, in particular the rise in unemployment and poverty rates.

Other measures of repression that Israel applies against Palestinians in the OPT also contribute significantly to the phenomenon of children in the street as they lead to overall poor living conditions. Such measures include: the destruction of infrastructure and property, such as the demolition of Palestinian homes, the shelling of factories, and the levelling and/or confiscation of agricultural land; raids on and attacks of Palestinian communities; ongoing and illegal settlement and Wall construction; construction of settler-only bypass roads; and expropriation of vital natural resources; among other activity.

A joint study by the National Plan of Action for Palestinian Children (NPA) and Save the Children US on the impact of the Israeli occupation on children and their families demonstrated that the Palestinian people suffer severe psychosocial pressure and overwhelming violence in all aspects of life, including a continuous feeling of insecurity. The study noted that what makes this already unstable situation worse is the omnipresent feeling among children that their parents, teachers and caretakers are no longer able to protect them.⁵⁵

Parents and teachers noticed the spread of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among children, ranging from nightmares to bed-wetting, aggressiveness, hyperactivity, reduction in the span of attention and concentration.⁵⁶

7- Tendency towards independence among children:

PCBS data reveal that 6.3% of children in labour work to achieve self-independence and reliance.⁵⁷ Possible explanations for this include that, if a child feels that he/she is unable to realize him/herself within his/her family, he/she begins seeking possible alternative venues for achieving that. The street sometimes becomes the arena for challenging and proving oneself. For example, this could be accomplished by earning an income to fulfill his/her needs.

Factors Mitigating Presence of Street Children in Palestine:

There are a number of factors specific to Palestinian society that assists in mitigating the spread of the phenomena of street children in Palestine. They are:

1. Solid social relations. Palestinian socio-cultural heritage places emphasis on the family, and, in particular, the responsibility of the family's head to provide for the needs of all family members, particularly children. This responsibility moves from the father to the eldest son, in cases where the father is absent. Great emphasis is placed on assisting members of the extended family as well.

Speaking of household relations among Arab families, researcher Halim Barakat notes that 'familial relations are based on cooperation, sacrifice and total, unconditional and unlimited commitment without reserve. This reinforces the feeling of safety and security among family members and makes them fearless in facing crises and potential disasters.'⁵⁸ This is consistent with the nature of family relations within Palestinian households. While this system may have its negative drawbacks, it can contribute to preventing children from going to the street and never returning to the family. It can also serve as a reserve of support to assist in getting children off the street altogether.

2. Emphasis in Islam on caring for orphans and others in less-fortunate situations: Abdelrahman Almaydani notes that Islam goes to great lengths to provide for the needs of orphans through social care. Islam also urges believers to look after orphans in their custody (katalat alyateem) and to manage their wealth with full integrity and honesty. It also warns of abusing the weak positions orphans are in and threatens those who misuse orphans' moneys with severe punishment.⁵⁹ Given that Islamic traditions are still strong in Palestine, they assist in mitigating the spread of the phenomenon of street children and other social problems. This is evidenced by the many organizations that take care of orphans and persons without any shelter.
3. Widespread marriage: The widespread occurrence of marriage, along with a taboo on pre-or-extra-marital sexual relations, limits the number of children born outside of marriage, thus minimizing the number of children born outside of familial support networks.

Chapter Five

Survey Finding

This survey is among the first that addresses the phenomenon of street children in Palestine, its causes and circumstances. It monitors, describes and analyzes the realities of this group of children. It is not a quantitative representative survey. Consequently, the findings of the field survey only represent the surveyed children, and one should be wary of generalizing the findings of this survey to broader segments of the population.

Various international and regional experiences have indicated a number of causes for the phenomenon of street children, but have failed to identify one specific issue as the definitive cause of the phenomenon. The Palestinian experience fits into this same framework, as it is a combined package of causes and variables under which Palestinian children live that lead to the phenomenon. In reviewing this study, it is important to take into consideration three fundamental issues, namely:

- 1- The specificities of the Palestinian reality, such as its structure, social conditions, cultural heritage, including traditions, values, religion and other aspects. The strong nature of familial relations and social relations outside the family, which can curb the spread of the phenomenon.
- 2- Political specificities, represented by several decades of living under Israeli occupation.
- 3- That the sources of information are children.

The main findings of this survey, based on the methodology mentioned earlier, were as follows:

Characteristics of Children in the Street:

Age and Gender

Out of 120 cases of surveyed children, and for the purpose of age distribution, the survey included 3 females and 117 males.

Of those, 70 were between 10 and 14 years old (41 from the West Bank, and 29 from the Gaza Strip). The 15-17years age group included 45 children (30 from the West Bank and 15 from the Gaza Strip), while those less than 9 years old included only five children (3 from the West Bank and 2 from the Gaza Strip).

Though the distribution of ages among those surveyed was diverse and covered all age groups, this does not necessarily reflect a natural distribution or is indicative of larger trends.

Enrolment Status

The findings of the survey indicated that of the 120 surveyed children, only 63 children were enrolled in school (42 in the West Bank and 21 in Gaza). Of those enrolled, 42 were enrolled in public schools and 21 were enrolled in UNRWA schools. None of the surveyed children were enrolled in private schools. The survey revealed that the cases of enrolment in school were not concentrated within a specific age group.

Of the 120 surveyed children, 57 were not enrolled in school (32 children from the West Bank and 25 from the Gaza Strip). Consequently, it is clear that there is a strong link between dropping out of

school and the presence of children in the streets. The question arises, however, as to whether this is a cause or an effect?

Disabilities

Fifteen (15) out of 120 surveyed children suffered one form of developmental disability. According to their own statements, 4 of the children who suffer from disabilities work full-time because of economic need.

Place of Residence, Refugee Status and Gender

Of the surveyed children, 48 come from families living in cities, 35 from families living in villages, and 37 from refugee camps.

On the total number of surveyed children, 68 are from refugee families, while 52 are from non-refugee families. This indicates that the difficult economic and housing conditions under which refugees live creates an environment that encourages children to go out to the streets, especially when this is linked to the economic factor.

As for gender, only one case of a female worker appeared. This can be explained by the conservative nature of the Palestinian society, which does not easily allow girls to leave the house to work in the streets.

Original and Alternative Shelter

The main premise upon which the study based its theoretical framework for identifying “children in the streets”, as distinguished from those who are called “street children”, is whether the child takes the street as his shelter, or lives at the house of his family.

Of 120 children surveyed for this study, only 10 do not sleep regularly with their families. This does not mean, however, that they absolutely lack shelter or that they take the street as their shelter. More than half of these children sleep at houses of their relatives. Four (4) of the children do not sleep at the houses of their families or any of their relatives. Of these, one (1) child sleeps in a deserted place, 1 at school, and 2 others in public places.

The Presence of One or Both Parents in the Household

In order to determine the impact of the presence of parents as related to the presence of children in the streets, the study surveyed whether children lived with one or both parents. Results were as follows:

Of those surveyed, only two (2) children lived in the absence of both parents. Eighteen (18) children lived with one parent (of whom 7 children lived with the father and 11 children with the mother). The remaining lived with both parents.

The data available indicated that there was no reason-based relation between the absence of one or both parents and the presence of children in the streets.

Children who Live Separate from their Families

Of the total number of children surveyed, three (3) reported having no family and six (6) live in separation from their families. In addition, one (1) child indicated that he did not stay with his family, but did not indicate whether he still had family or not.

As for the causes for such a situation, children indicated (2-3 repetitions for each cause) the lack of a sense of belonging to the family, discrimination against the child, continuous punishment,

deteriorating economic conditions or family conditions between parents. Additionally, there were four cases of causes other than what is mentioned.

Table 3: Distribution of Children Who Do Not Stay with Their Families:

Reason	Number of Children
Child had no household	3
Child had no feeling of belonging to the household	1
Discrimination against the child in the household	2
Children continuously suffered punishment	2
The deteriorated economic situation of the household	3
Household problems between the parents	2
Other reasons	4
Total number of children	10

Note.: A child may have noted more than one reason.

The Size of Household and Housing Conditions

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the average size of the Palestinian household is 6.4 persons. The average household size in the surveyed sample amounted to 8.2 persons, 8.8 in Gaza and 7.8 in the West Bank. This is an indication that children in the streets come from households whose size is higher than average.

Out of 120 children, only 41 come from average or below-average size households, while 79 come from households that are higher than the average Palestinian household size.

The number of children in each household varied between one and 15. The average number of children in the households of surveyed children amounted to 5. Thirty-four (34) households had three children or less, while 54 households had between 4 to 6 children. The number of households in which 7 to 9 children lived amounted to 25, while the number of households in which 10 or more children lived amounted to 7.

Out of 120 children, the families of 9 children live in houses made of one room or of tinplate. The majority of children (70 children) indicated that their families lived in houses constituting 2-3 rooms on average, while the average number of household members amounted to 8 persons approximately, which means that the average housing density exceeds three (3) persons/room.

Table 4: Households of Children according to Size:

Number of Persons in Household	Number of Surveyed Children
2-4	12
5-6	29
7-9	44
10+	35
Total	120

Note: Irrespective of whether it is original or alternative family.

Table 5: Distribution of Households according to Number of Children:

Number of Children in Household	Number of Households
3 children and less	34
4-6	54
7-9	25
10+	7
Total	120

Level of Education of Household Members:

Out of 834 persons, who constitute the total number of members of households of sampled children who presented the necessary data on the question related to the level of education of their families, 732 said that their level of education was below high school, while 99 said they were illiterate. Seventy-three (73) indicated that they had completed high school, while only 29 persons held a college degree. Such data makes clear the link between the low level of education of household members and the presence of their children on the streets.

Partners of Children in the street

Of the 120 children surveyed, 44 asserted that they spend their time in the streets with their friends or children from the same neighbourhood, 30 children indicated that they spend their time with child relatives, while 36 children said they spend their time alone.

Causes for the Presence of Palestinian Children in the Streets:

Impact of Israeli Occupation Measures on Children and their Households

The findings of the study revealed that 40 out of the 120 surveyed children had been directly exposed to at least one Israeli occupation measure. Fifteen (15) of the surveyed children had been wounded, while a similar number had been victims of different types of assaults, such as beating and/or humiliation and verbal abuse at checkpoints. Seven children had been arrested and the property of three children had been confiscated.

Children suffer not only from direct attacks, however, but also from attacks on their family members and loved ones. Within this context, it is noted that three (3) out of the 120 surveyed children had lost a member of their family as martyrs; 23 children indicated that one of their household members had been injured by bullets of the occupation forces; 21 said that one member of their household had been arrested; two (2) reported that their household possessions had been expropriated; three (3) had lost their houses after they had been completely demolished by the occupation forces, while the houses of four (4) children had been partially destroyed. Nine (9) children said that one or more of their household members had been subjected to various forms of assaults, such as beating, humiliation and verbal assault or detention at Israeli military checkpoints.

Both direct and indirect attacks on children and their families, stemming from Israel's occupation, constitute factors that push children towards the streets, and aggravate the phenomenon of children in the street in Palestine.

Economic Conditions

Eighty seven (87) out of 120 surveyed children indicated that poor economic conditions were the

major cause for their presence in the streets.

The survey findings indicated that there is a similarity between the situation in Palestine and the international situation in terms of the presence of children in the street in cities more than in rural areas. Out of 87 children in the street, whose main reason for being in the streets was the economic factor, 37 are from a city, 25 from refugee camps and 25 from a village. Those children from cities were, in particular, from the densely populated neighbourhoods that are marginalized socially, economically and in terms of services.

In the OPT, refugee camps are generally either part of cities, or they are located very close to a city. They are characterized with high population density and low standards of many basic services.

Other Factors

Twelve (12) out of 120 surveyed children indicated that the reason for their presence in the streets is due to abuse from parents, brothers or other family members.

A number of other causes were mentioned by the surveyed children as causes or factors for their presence on the street, these included: the desire for independence from the family (5), the death of one or both parents (4), and a search for entertainment and a means of filling their free time (10). Only one (1) child noted that their presence on the street was due to their expulsion from home.

Ten (10) children indicated that the reason for them to be in the streets was related to looking for entertainment, fulfilling desires and spending free time. Of the 10, 6 were from refugee camps, 3 from a village and 1 from a city. This stems from the lack of sufficient places for children to spend leisure time, or venues for the entertainment or amusement of these children specifically.

Table 6: Causes of the Presence of Children in the Streets

Reason for Going Out to the Street	Number of Cases	Region		Place of Residence			Refugee Status	
		West Bank	Gaza	Camp	Village	City	Non-Refugee	Refugee
Expulsion from home	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Independence from family	5	2	3	2	3	0	2	3
Death of one or both parents	4	3	1	1	3	0	2	2
Abuse by family members	12	10	2	3	0	9	8	4
Poor economic conditions	87	56	31	25	25	37	37	50
Desire, entertainment and filling leisure time	10	2	8	6	3	1	1	9
Wanted by police	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
Total	120	74	46	37	35	48	52	68

Causes Attributed to Problems in the Family

Family conditions and its stability are considered influential factors that push children to the streets.

When asked whether their households suffered from family problems, 42 children responded that their households did not suffer from specific family problems, while 70 children responded that their households did. The remaining children did not answer the question.

Family problems due to poor economic conditions ranked first in its frequency among the responses of children. Other types of family problems identified included: conflict between the parents; problems due to unemployment and free time⁶⁰; and problems due to drugs or delinquency.

Table 7: Causes of Family Problems in Relation to Geographic Distribution

Variable	West Bank		Gaza		Total	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
No Family problems	29	39	13	31	42	70
Due to conflict between parents	10	58	10	31	20	89
Due to unemployment and free time	31	36	10	31	41	67
Due to poverty and deteriorating economic conditions	40	27	21	20	61	47
Due to drugs or delinquency	1	66	4	37	5	103

Note.: A child may have noted more than one type of family problem.

Discrimination against the Child within the Household as a Cause for Going to the Street

Regarding the question whether the children had ever felt they were discriminated against within the household, 32 children out of the total sample (120) believe that such discrimination existed. This is similar to the number of respondents (28) who said that abuse and lack of interest by other members of the household reflected discrimination, which pushed them towards spending longer time on the streets.

Through a group of responses provided by children regarding the forms of discrimination to which they had been subjected within their households, the following forms were the most frequent: scarcity or lack of buying things for them, including toys and presents, in comparison with other household members; discrimination in the fair division of chores among household members, or giving them less pocket money than others.

What Children Seek to Achieve while in the Street:

The study identified the main goals that children seek to achieve through their presence in the streets. Carrying-out work was the main purpose identified by 74 out of the 120 surveyed children. Nineteen (19) children said that their purpose was merely wandering and loafing, while 14 children said that their purpose was playing. A number of children said their goal was to look for work or help others. Four (4) children indicated that their purpose for being in the street was to beg. All of these cases of begging came from the Gaza Strip, though this does not indicate that such cases do not exist in the West Bank.

Table 8: Children in the Streets according to Purpose and Region:

Purpose	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Wander/loaf	11	8	19
Play	9	5	14
Beg	0	4	4
Work	50	24	74
Look for work	4	4	8
Help others	0	1	1
Total	74	46	120

Children in the Streets who Work:

Of 120 surveyed children, 89 work: 43 work permanently, 17 work seasonally, and 29 work occasionally. The vast majority of those who work do so inside Palestinian areas in the OPT, while 19 work in Israeli settlements and areas in Israel.

Table 9: Types of Work Undertaken by Children Working in the Streets:

Type of Work	Number
Street vendor	23
Collecting and selling iron, aluminium and copper	5
Labourer in vegetable market	4
Peddler	28
Porter	12
Cleaner	3
Crafts	5
Working in concrete	2
Poultry breeder	1
Beggar	4
Worker at car wash	2
Total	89

The Influence and Role of Others in Pushing Children to Work

According to surveyed children, 46 said that they went to work of their own initiative and without being influenced by others, while 32 said that they were encouraged and influenced by their families in order to go to work.

While it is believed that difficult economic conditions are the cause for families to push their children towards the labour market, survey results also indicate that children themselves play a role in the decision to work. The survey data also indicates the extent and depth of interaction of these children with the social and economic realities of the society as a whole. This is confirmation that these children are neither “ignorant” of the circumstances in which they live, nor do they simply “not understand,” as some believe. Children are extremely aware of and sensitive to the difficult conditions that exist as a result of the repressive measures Israel applies as part of its occupation. Children realize fully the extent of their impact on the incomes and living standards of their families, because they are directly affected by them.

Age Breakdown of Working Children and Their Working Hours

Of the 89 children who reported working, 57 do so illegally, as they are younger than the minimum working age of 15 years, as specified by article 93 of the Palestinian Labour Law No. 7 of 2000.

Survey results indicate that the working hours for most children exceed those legally permitted for children, which is one hour less than the eight working hours allowed for adults. This reflects an absence of satisfactory control mechanisms for working hours. The fact that some children work such long hours and do so while employed for others reveals the degree of exploitation to which some Palestinian children are exposed.

Table 10: Number of Working Children according to Age Group:

Age	Number
Less than 10 years	7
10 – 12	14
13 - 14	36
15 +	32
Total	89

Table 11: Number of Hours Worked Daily:

Number of Working Hours	Number
2-6	31
7-10	36
11 +	22

The Main Reason that Pushes a Child to Work

Of the 89 children who reported working, 67 children attributed that to poor economic conditions, while 10 children said that failure in school was the major reason they work.

Table 12: Main Reasons Pushing Children to Work:

Reason	Number
Economic conditions	67
Independence from family	3
Status as only provider for the family	3
Failure in school	10
Other	6

The Parties who Assisted the Child in Finding a Job

The findings of the study indicated that 45 out of the 120 surveyed children found their jobs with assistance from their relatives, which reflects the extent to which these families believe in the idea of work for their children. On the other hand, 22 children said that their friends helped them to find their jobs, while 16 children asserted that they found their jobs through the media, and 6 children said that they did a personal search and exerted personal efforts.

The Reasons for Attempting to Prevent Children from Working

Based on the practical experiences of children, and within the framework of the surrounding social influence, 52 out of the overall number of working children (89) pointed out that they faced several

attempts to prevent them from going to work. A family member was the source of such attempts for 13 children, while the Palestinian police was the source for 4 children. Israeli parties attempted to prevent 10 children from working, and 7 children faced such attempts from sources other than those listed above.

A Child's Income and Its Disposal

Of those surveyed, 46 children earn less than NIS 20 daily, 24 earn between NIS 21-40, while 11 children earn NIS 41-60. Those who earn more than NIS 61 amounted to only 11 children.

The study revealed that 43 out of 89 working children submit their full income to their parents or family. This is an indication that those children work with the aim of helping their families economically. Nineteen (19) children said that they give part of their incomes to their families and save the rest. This is also an indication that the child has enough awareness to determine how to correctly dispose of his/her income. The number of children who save all their income amounted to 6 children, reflecting a tendency towards independence for some children.

Difficulties Faced by Children while in the Streets:

The presence of a child in the streets exposes him/her to numerous problems and difficulties. Findings of the study revealed that 78 children (45 in the West Bank and 33 children in Gaza) out of the total sample of 120 children have faced difficulties and problems during their presence in the streets, while 41 children (28 children in the West Bank and 13 in Gaza) indicated they did not face any difficulties or problems.

The types of difficulties faced by children were distributed as follows: 53 children suffered from weather conditions, as it is too cold in the winter and too hot in the summer; 56 children considered occupation measures that they face among the difficulties, such as checkpoints on the roads and curfews, or even assaults or arrests; 33 children indicated that they were harassed by passersby; and 46 children considered the nature of their jobs a problem in and of itself. For example, one child, works in a quarry.

While the police are supposed to be a source of protection and security and consequently children should feel reassured by the presence of the police, survey results indicate that 57 children, out of the total 120, have been exposed to harassment by the Palestinian police, either by scolding or, in cases, by beating.

In terms of other difficulties, 65 children indicated that their colleagues were the source of difficulties. This may be attributed to competition at work. For example, in many cases, children fight over selling to a specific customer. This often happens among children who work as porters in markets or as peddlers at traffic lights, for example.

Table 13: Types of Difficulties Children Faced during their Presence in the Streets according to Region:

Type of Difficulty, if any	West Bank		Gaza		Total	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
No difficulties or harassment	28	45	13	33	41	78
Weather conditions	17	27	7	26	24	53
Occupation measures(checkpoints, curfew)	21	24	1	32	22	56
Harassment by passersby	24	21	21	12	45	33
Nature of job	22	23	10	23	32	46
Harassment by Palestinian Police	9	36	12	21	21	57
Competition and harassment of work colleagues	7	38	6	27	13	65
Attitude of family member	7	38	4	29	11	67

Types of Abuse Faced by Children while in the Streets

Findings of the study indicated that children faced different types of difficulties during their presence in the streets. Types of abuse varied, from physical abuse, as indicated by 43 children (28 in the West Bank and 15 in the Gaza Strip), to psychological (swearing, expulsion, insulting, scolding etc), as indicated by 27 children (18 in the West Bank and 9 in the Gaza Strip). Three (3) children admitted to having been exposed to sexual abuse.

Table 14: Types of Abuse Faced by Children according to Region

Type of Abuse	West Bank		Gaza Strip		Total	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Physical	28	45	15	31	43	76
Psychological	18	55	9	37	27	92
Sexual	2	71	1	45	3	116

Children's Experience with Institutions Dealing with Children:

Among the children surveyed by the study, only 12 had received care from a relevant child care institution, while the vast majority (108) had never had the opportunity to receive any care, services or attention from such institutions. Services provided to children by the relevant social institutions included counselling, shelter or employment.

Of the 12 children who had received the services of social care institutions, four (4) indicated that they were good, but expressed their desire not to go back to these institutions, while two (2) children said they were good and encouraged other children to seek their assistance, Five (5) children considered the experience good, and expressed their desire to go back to these institutions. Only one child gave a negative evaluation, indicating that the treatment received was bad.

It should be noted that the rate of children who received such services is low, relative to the total number of surveyed children.

Table 15: Children Who Were Treated by Child Care Institutions according to Type of Service and Duration of Stay:

Type of Service	Number
Counselling	6
Shelter	5
Employment	2 (ages 15 and 17)
Financial assistance	4
Other services	5
Duration	
One month	1
3 months	3
5 months and more	8

Note: Some children may have received more than one service.

Children’s View of People’s Perception of Them:

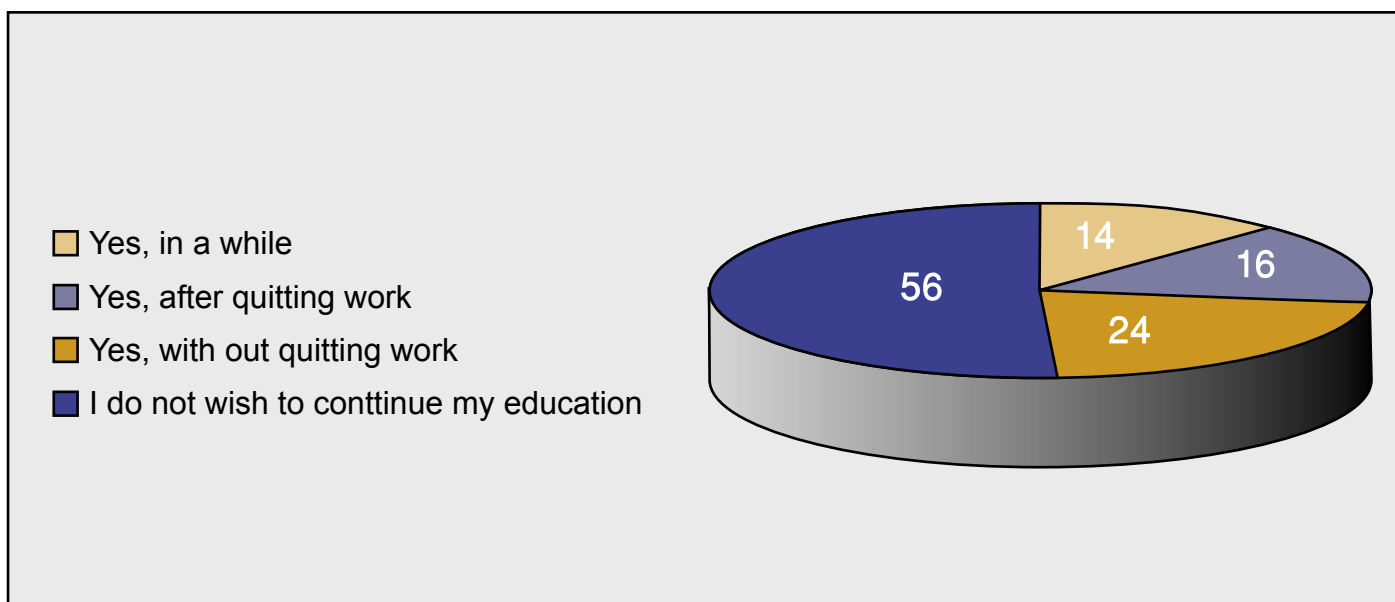
Around half of the sample (56 children) believes that the society has a positive perception towards them, i.e. they perceive them with respect. Twenty-five (25) children believe that people view them with disrespect, while 20 children believe that people do not pay them any attention, meaning that they treat them with negligence and indifference. Seven (7) surveyed children believe that people exploit them.

Future Tendencies of Children in the Streets:

Educational Tendencies

Of children surveyed, 14 wish to continue their education at some point in the future, 16 announced that they would quit work and continue their education, and 24 children said that not quitting work was a condition for continuing education. The largest single group of respondents, 56, indicated that they do not wish to resume their education.

Figure 1: Children’s Desire to Continue Their Education in the Future



Survey results reveal 18 children wish to change their field of work and 16 wish to develop their work. It is worth noting that 42 children plan to improve their living standards. Eight children plan to get married, and 3 children plan to reunite their families.

Tendencies Regarding Professions

The profession of individuals is determined by several factors, including the level of education and the surrounding social and cultural environment. Of surveyed children, 41 believe that some type of craftsmanship is the career of the future. A craftsman, as it is said, learns the profession through practice and training. In addition, a profession such as this does not need a high level of education.

In other cases, there was greater inconsistency between the child’s stated professional ambition and the present reality in which they live: 11 children aspire to become physicians, 9 aspire to become engineers, 3 wish to become pilots and 10 wish to become teachers.

Table 16: Professions to which Children Aspire

The Dream Profession	Number
Physician	11
Engineer	9
Pilot	3
Teacher	10
Craftsman	41

Table 17: Children’s Satisfaction with their Current Conditions

Level of Satisfaction	Number
Yes, fully	35
To some extent	39
No	46

While the findings of the study indicated that the number of children who are fully satisfied with their conditions amounted to 35 children, 39 indicated partial satisfaction in their lives and 46 were dissatisfied with their living conditions.

There were several reasons for the lack of satisfaction (partial or full satisfaction). Seventy-five (75) children pointed to poor economic conditions as the reason for dissatisfaction. Poor social conditions were the cause for 34 children, while 21 children indicated that their dissatisfaction stems from their living conditions, and from the prevailing security conditions, while 15 children mentioned a variety of other reasons for their dissatisfaction.

Chapter Six

The Finding

This study seeks to contribute to an understanding of the extent to which there is a problem of “street children” in Palestine. It has attempted to do this by reviewing the places where this phenomenon exists in Palestine, the social roots of the problem, what types of work children in the street are engaged in and what are the most important problems they face while in the streets.

The main findings of the study are as follows:

1. Palestine does not have “street children”, per se, or homeless children who sleep in the streets, public markets, mosques or abandoned buildings. Familial relations are still very strong in Palestinian society. This serves as a safety, or protection net for children. It is very rare to find a child who ends his/her relationship to his/her family permanently. While there may be isolated cases such as these, in the overwhelming majority of cases, the community intervenes immediately to find a solution for these children.
2. This being the case, however, there are children “in the street” in Palestine. These are children who spend most of their time in the street outside their homes. While on the street, these children seek work, beg, play, hang around or spend leisure time. Nonetheless, these children sleep in their homes and preserve their family relations. Moreover, their families care for them and provide them with their needs within the economic and social abilities of such families. It should be noted that these children are defined as “street children” according to UNICEF’s definition.
3. Survey results indicate that few children received services provided by child care institutions, although most of the surveyed children fall within categories of children identified as needing assistance from the child protection system (e.g. working children, school drop outs, victims of violence, etc.). It should be noted, however, that the simple fact that surveyed children did not report receiving services from the related child protection institutions does not mean that these institutions did not provide services or assist some of the children in one way or another.
4. Economic issues are a major factor pushing children into the street. This is a direct result of Israeli occupation policies. In light of the high unemployment and poverty rates, many Palestinian families send their children to work in order to contribute to sustaining family needs. The poor economic situation also exacerbates already existing family problems, having a negative impact on children.
5. It is not common to find girls on the street in Palestine, as the society does not accept such practices. Only 3 cases of girls were identified.
6. The highest percentage of children in the street live in cities; the second highest live in refugee camps and the third highest live in villages. This trend reflects those witnessed internationally.
7. A considerable percentage of children in the street come from refugee families. Refugees in camps or in cities suffer extremely poor economic and housing conditions, especially in the camps of the Gaza Strip, which have a very high population density. The camps also lack public recreation areas, which makes the street the only place available for children to expend their energy.
8. Children in the street usually have a high sense of responsibility. The study showed that many of them took the initiative to look for work as they felt the needs of their family required it, or they felt it was needed in order to face an emergency, such as a father’s death, illness or loss of work.

9. The majority of children surveyed (89 out of 120) work. They do so near Israeli checkpoints, as porters in public markets, by selling newspapers, or other wares, etc. This indicates a high level of interrelation between child labour and the phenomenon of children in the street.
10. Children in the street face various difficulties, including physical, psychological and sexual abuse. Many of those who work do so for long hours and low wages.
11. Not all children who have been classified as street children or children in the streets are subject to direct violence or exploitation. In light of this, it is not necessary to deal with all the children in the street within the framework of the Child Protection System run by the Ministry of Social Affairs.
12. There is a clear link between the level of education of household members and the presence of their children in the streets.

Chapter Seven

Recommendations

Recommendations based on the findings of the survey:

- A dialogue and exchange of experiences among Arab countries should be established in order to define the conceptual framework of the phenomenon of street children regionally as a preliminary step towards solving it.
- There is a need to devise implementation mechanisms and to ensure their compatibility with the Palestinian Child Law and with international and regional standards for children's rights.
- The PA budget should allocate specific sums to meet its obligations vis-à-vis developing and supporting Palestinian families, to enable Palestinian society to face the hardship and violations caused by the Israeli occupation and the resultant harsh political, social and economic situation.
- There is a need to conduct an evaluation, in cooperation with the different Palestinian ministries that work in the area of child protection, to understand the extent to which children in the street, who are vulnerable to danger, are eligible to be dealt with within the framework of the Child Protection System.
- When dealing with children in the street, the root causes that push children to the street need to be addressed, rather than simply targeting the fact that children are in the street.
- As children in the street who work do so outside the legal framework (the Labour Law) and outside the official economic sectors, the responsibility of their protection and follow up is that of the police. Accordingly, it is important to train the police on how to deal with children in the street. Additionally, there is a need to generate interest and commitment of other officials and departments, such as the governors, municipalities and local councils to provide protection to these children.
- The Ministry of Youth and Sports should establish sufficient recreation centres that will contribute to filling leisure time for children and provide them with activities that are suited to their age.
- A study should be conducted on Palestinian children from the OPT who work in the streets inside the Green Line. The study should include an examination of difficulties faced by child care organizations in providing assistance to children that are not Israeli citizens.
- The Ministry of Education should maintain its efforts aimed at minimizing school drop outs, as the phenomenon is considered to be one of main factors pushing children to the streets. Additionally, a basic education system that can incorporate children who have dropped out of school should be established.

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Annexes

Annex 1 – Survey Indicators

Circumstances pushing the child to the street and how time is spent	
How time is spent in the street	Why are children on the street and how do they spend their time (wandering/ hanging out, playing, begging, working, looking for work, helping others, other/specify)?
Reasons that pushed the child to the street	To find out the most important causes pushing children to the street (kicked out of the house, to gain independence vis-à-vis family, home demolition, death of one of the parents...etc).
Difficulties facing children while in the street	To find out the difficulties that children face when they are in the street (weather conditions, occupation measures, harassment by pedestrians, nature of work, etc.).
How spare time is spent	To find out how children spend their spare time and what are the mostly frequented places to spend such time, as well as what activities are undertaken (studying, sleeping, eating, working, watching TV, helping family, pursuing studies, etc.).
Forms of maltreatment or exploitation faced by children	To acknowledge the forms of abuse (economic, drug trafficking, recruitment by a Palestinian faction, recruitment by Israel, sex trading, others/ specify) or forms of maltreatment practiced against children in their harsh conditions (physical, moral, sexual or other abuses/ specify).
Party maltreating or exploiting the child	To find out the parties that bear the responsibility for pushing children to such circumstances and destroy their future by abusing them, or the parties which abuse the children while they are on the street and contribute to making them lose their way in life (occupation forces, Palestinian police, a family member, a relative, work colleagues, pedestrians, others).
Impact of maltreatment	To identify the psychological and physical effect of maltreatment experienced by these children (leaving the family, withdrawal/ psychological disorder, disability, to become responsible, fear of others, other reasons).
Use of income	To find out to what extent the child can shoulder the responsibility and contribute to the economic wellbeing of his family, does he: (give all of his income to his parents, does he give part of it to his parents/ and save the other part, does he save part and spends the other part, does he save it all, others, specify)?
Future projects	Future orientations of these children under current circumstances, including (leaving work and becoming full-time students, changing career, development of work, better living standard, marriage, to have a family, others).
Family problems suffered by children and their causes	To identify family problems that children face and the causes thereof (parents fighting, unemployment and spare time, deterioration of economic situation, drug abuse and delinquency, others/ specify).
The most common punishment a child faces in his/her family and whether it matches the offence	To identify the most common punishment a child is subjected to in his/her family including (beating, shouting, verbal humiliation, deprivation of pocket money, deprivation of visiting relatives, etc.) and to what extent do such sanctions match the offence (match, less, bigger, the mistake should not entail punishment, no opinion.).
Care provided by social establishments as well as children's assessment of these organizations	To find out to what extent do social institutions care about this phenomenon and in what way do they handle the children (counseling, sheltering, employment, financial assistance, others), and what is the children's assessment of these organizations (good, but I will not go back to them, good and I call to support them and send children to them, good and I wish to go back there, I received bad treatment there, other).
Children's level of satisfaction about their life and status and the reasons for the lack of satisfaction	How satisfied children are about their current status and why they are not satisfied (economic situation, social problems, security situation, other) as well as children's professional aspirations for the future (physicians, engineers, pilots, teachers, craftsmen, other).

People's view of these children	To find out how others treat these children (respect, disrespect, abuse, negligence, other).
Children's exposure to the practices of the occupation forces	To identify the practices of the occupation faced by the children or any of their family members during their work (injury/ wound, detention, confiscation of property, assault, others/ specify).
Household Social Indicators	
Age Group	To find out the age groups of children and their family members for different age groups.
Refugee Status	To find out whether the families of these children are refugees and to what extent does this affect the presence of children in the street and their difficult circumstances (refugees or non-refugees).
Average household size	Classification of children as per the average family size and finding out the familial conditions in which the child lives.
Gender	Classification of children and their family members according to gender (male or female).
Marital status	To find out the social situation in which the child lives and its impact on shouldering responsibilities (married or unmarried).
Orphan and living with a family	Classification of children as orphans either by having lost mother or father or both parents, and whether they live with the family or in an alternative place (in a relatives' house, with a friend's family, in a private house, in the street, in the bus/ taxi depot, in the mosque/church, etc.).
Education	
Enrolment Status	To find out how determined the child is to pursue his/her education given the circumstances he/she lives in and to what extent does the family care for the education of the child, by finding out the enrolment status of all family members (enrolled, not enrolled).
Education obtained (in school years)	To ascertain the educational attainment of the child by finding out the number of school years he successfully completed, whether he is still enrolled in school or dropped out, and the impact thereof on the work he is carrying out.
Educational Level	Distribution of children according to their educational Level and the suitability and stability of circumstances that helped them pursue their education
Reason for dropping out of school (if applicable)	To identify the primary reasons that forced children to drop out from school and worsened his/her living conditions (lack of enrollment, repetitive failure, difficult economic conditions, lack of interest in learning, family problems, security circumstances, dismissal from school, other).
Health	
Smoking	To find out the prevalence of smoking among children given the difficult situation they face (smoking or non-smoking)
Disability and its cause	Classification of children according to the presence of a disability (hearing, speech, optical, motor, mental, multiple) and the cause of the disability (congenital/ hereditary, at birth, car accident, work accident, the occupation, other.)
Health insurance	Classification of children and their families according to the type of health insurance they possess, if any, and the most common insurance systems (government, UNRWA, private insurance company, Israeli).
Labour	
Relationship to labour force	Identify children and their family members economically and their household contribution to the labour force, number of working family members, number of unemployed members.

Profession	To find out the nature of child labour and the work of other family members (unemployed, student, housewife, carpenter, teacher, etc.).
Economic activity	Distribution of children and their working family members according to the establishment they work in (hospital, cardboard factory, bakery, other).
Work status	To find out under what circumstances children and their family members work (paid labour, self-employed, other).
Duration of work	To find out how long the child has been working and how capable is he of holding up under the work conditions.
Workplace	Distribution of children and other family members according to their workplaces (in the same governorate, in Israel and settlements, abroad, other).
Age at the beginning of work	Distribution of children according to the age at which they started working and the number of years they have been working and bearing responsibilities.
Number of places in which they worked	Number of times they have changed work.
Exposure to work accidents, type of injury and whether or not they received treatment	To what extent do children accept their jobs in spite the difficulties they face and work accidents, and what type of injuries have they sustained (disability, fractures, deformation, other/ specify) and whether they receive appropriate treatment.
Difficulties faced at work	Other difficulties that children face in their work places including attempts to stop them from working (a family member, the Palestinian police), how they manage to pass through Israeli checkpoints (via personal permit, birth certificate, no document is needed, bribe, others) or if the child worked/s in Israeli controlled areas (Israeli settlements, Israel, East Jerusalem).
Motivations for work and assistance finding employment	To know what conditions prompt children to work in such jobs (the economic situation, independence from the family, the only bread earner for the family, academic failure), and the persons who assisted them in getting jobs (family members, friends, media, along, others).
Job satisfaction	To know to what extent the child is satisfied with the jobs they are doing (Yes totally, somewhat, no), and the most important reasons for their dissatisfaction, if applicable (my peers aren't satisfied with my job, type of work isn't suitable for my age, long working hours, extreme exhaustion, low income, other).
Average daily income	The average daily income for working children. To know if one form in which these children are exploited is in the form of a low daily income.
Impact caused by child leaving work	To know what would be the impact on the child, if the child was asked to leave work (living or economic hardship, not to complete education, others).
Alternative for work	The child's vision for the best alternative to his current work (having a suitable job, receiving assistance, government covering the needed expenses, others).

Housing

Type of shelter	To know the type and conditions of shelter where the child lives (house/apartment, one room, portable house or a shack, others).
Ownership of shelter	To know the distribution of children according to their family's ownership of the shelter (owned, rented, without any cost, other).
Number of rooms	In order to calculate the average population density
Availability of long lasting commodities for the family	To know the individual's and family's living standards basing on the availability of long-lasting commodities (gas stove, fridge, washing machine, tape recorder, radio, water solar heater, TV, satellite dish receiver, telephone, private car, computer).
Connection of public service networks' to the shelter	In order to know the infrastructure around the child's shelter, and the shelter's connection to public service networks including water, electricity and sewage.

Annex 2 – Research Questionnaire

Questionnaire Number	
Date of Filling the Questionnaire	
Volunteer's Name	
Volunteer's Number	

District	
Detailed Address	

A. Passing Time:

Question Number	Question	Answer
1.	How do you usually spend your time here in the street? 1. I loaf / loiter 2. I play 3. I beg 4. I work 5. I search for work 6. I help others Other / Specify	
2.	With whom do you usually spend your time here in the street? 1. Alone 2. With relatives 3. With friends / neighbors 4. With schoolmates 5. Others / Specify	
3.	Usually, when will you be in the following places (by hours every day):	
	Place	
	1. In the street 1. In the house 2. At work 3. At school 4. Other places	
4	How do you usually spend your time by hours? 1. Studying 2. Sleeping 3. Eating 4. Working 5. Watching TV 6. Helping family at home Continuing study 7. With family members 8. Playing with peers 9. At the club 10. At the coffee shop 11. At the theatre or cinema 12. Social activities 13. Others / Specify	

<p>5 6</p>	<p>What are the most important reasons that make you stay in the street?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I was expelled from the house 2. I want to be independent from the family 3. My house was demolished 4. One or both parents died 5. Maltreatment by family members 6. Bad economic situation 7. Others / Specify <p>Do you face difficulties during your presence in the street? 1. Yes 2. No</p>	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No difficulties or harassments If yes, go to question number 7 2. Weather conditions 3. Occupation measures (e.g. checkpoints, curfew, etc.) 4. Passersby / people 5. Nature of work 6. Palestinian police harassment 7. Opinions of colleagues at work 8. Stands taken by a family member 9. Others / Specify 	
<p>7</p>	<p>Have you ever been subjected to maltreatment (outside the house)? 1. Yes 2. No (If no, go to question number 10).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical 2. Psychological 3. Sexual 4. Others / Specify 	
<p>8</p>	<p>Who maltreated you (outside the house)? 1. Yes 2. No</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Occupation forces 2. Palestinian police 3. An member of my immediate family (“family member”) 4. A relative 5. A work colleagues 6. A passerby 7. Others / Specify 	
<p>9</p>	<p>What was/is the impact of maltreatment on you? 1. Yes 2. No</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leaving the family 2. Depression / psychological disorder 3. Paralysis 4. Became more responsible 5. Being wary of others 6. Others 	

10	<p>Have you been subjected to any form of exploitation? 1. Yes 2. No</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I wasn't subjected to any form of exploitation. (Go to question number 12). 2. Economic (including being robbed) 3. Trafficking drugs (smuggling) 4. Enlisted with any of the Palestinian factions 5. Recruited as a collaborator with Israel 6. Prostitution 7. Others / Specify 	
11	<p>Who exploited you? 1. Yes 2. No</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Occupation forces 2. Palestinian police 3. A family member 4. A colleague at work 5. A relative 6. Others / Specify 	
12	<p>Have you filed any complaint against those who exploited you (If it occurred more than once, answer about the last time)? 1. Yes 2. No</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I didn't file a complaint. (Go to question number 14). 2. Complained to the family 3. Complained to the Palestinian police 4. Complained to the Israeli police 5. Others / Specify 	
13	<p>What was the result of the last complaint that you filed (the most significant result)?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They ignored the complaint. 2. The complaint is still being processed. 3. The perpetrators were rebuked. 3. The perpetrators were fined. 5. The perpetrators were imprisoned. 6. I don't know 7. Others / Specify 	
14	<p>Do you know any other children with the same conditions as yours? 1. Yes? How many? 2. No</p>	Answer the number
15	<p>Do you have a family (parents and siblings)? 1. Yes and I live with them 2. Yes but I am separated from them 3. I don't have a family If the answer was (2) or (3), go to question number 19.</p>	
16	<p>Who is the head of the family? 1. Father 2. Mother 3. Brother 4. Sister 5. Uncle 6. Aunt 7. Grandfather / Brandmother 8. Other relative 9. Others</p>	
17	<p>Who lives with the family?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Both parents (Go to question number 22) 2. Only the father 3. Only the mother 4. Neither of them 	
18	<p>Why does one or both of the parents not live with the family?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Death 2. Divorce / Separation 3. Father's second marriage 4. Others / Specify 	

19	<p>If you live outside the family, where do you sleep (the alternative)? 1. At a relative's house 2. At a friend's house 3. At a private house 4. At a house / shelter for a charitable/ social / humanitarian institution ... (Institution's name is ...) 5. In the street 6. In a car lot / bus station 7. At a mosque / church 8. In a mobile house / kiosk 9. In a deserted / under construction building 10. In a school / public building 11. Others / Specify</p>	
20	<p>With whom do you stay in the shelter (the alternative shelter)? 1. Alone 2. With relatives 3. With friends 4. With shelter mates 5. Others / Specify</p>	
21	<p>What are the reasons for not staying with your family? 1. Yes 2. No 1. Family doesn't exist 2. Lack of feeling of belonging 3. Family doesn't care for my presence 4. Get rid of family restrictions 5. Discrimination within the family 6. Continuous punishment 7. Deteriorated economic situation of the family 8. Domestic problems between parents 9. Others / Specify</p>	
22	<p>What are the causes of domestic problems in your family? 1. Yes 2. No 1. There are no domestic problems in my family 2. Problems between the parents 3. Unemployment and free time 4. Poverty and deteriorated economic situation 5. Drugs or behavioral problems 6. Others / Specify</p>	
23	<p>Have you / Do you face any kind of punishment by any family member? 1. Yes 2. No (Go to question number 28)</p>	
24	<p>What are the main punishments that you have / are facing in the family? (Choose the 3 most prevalent ones.) 1. Beating 2. Yelling and cursing 3. Depriving me of pocket money 4. Depriving me of meeting friends / classmates 5. Depriving me of visiting relatives 6. Making me work in the house 7. Making me work outside the house 8. Others / Specify</p>	
25	<p>Who is the person that usually punishes you? 1. Father 2. Mother 3. Eldest brother 4. Stepmother 5. Brother's wife 6. More than one person 7. Others / Specify</p>	

26	<p>Do you think there was a reason for the punishment? 1. Yes 2. No</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Without any reason 2. For making chaos in the house 3. For poor performance at school 4. For playing with friends that my family considers as bad company 5. For damaging property 6. For beating / attacking younger brothers 7. For beating / attacking neighbors' sons / friends 8. Others / specify 	
27	<p>Usually, do you think that the punishment against you is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In proportion with the misdeed 2. Less than that 3. Greater than that 4. That the misdeed isn't worth punishment 5. That there was no misdeed at all 6. Other / Specify 	
28	<p>Within your family have you / do you feel discrimination against you? 1. Yes 2. No</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No 3. I don't know (Go to question number 30) 4. Other / Specify 	
29	<p>In what way do you believe you have been discriminated against? 1.Yes 2. No</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maltreatment and good care of other family members 2. No, or less, buying of commodities, including toys and gifts, as compared to other family members 3. Making me work around the house more than the others 4. Being given less pocket money than the others 5. Other / Specify 	
30	<p>Have you ever been taken care of by any of the institutions that provide care for children?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No 1. No (Go to the next section) 2. Yes, for counseling 3. Yes, for shelter 4. Yes, for employment 5. Yes, for financial assistance 6. Yes, in another way / Specify 	
31	<p>How many months did you stay in the social care institution? 1. Yes 2. No (If the answer to the last question part (3) was Yes)</p>	

32	Who assisted you in receiving care at the social care institution? 1. Yes 2. No 1. Myself 2. My immediate family 3. Relatives 4. Political party 5. Clergy men 6. Others / Specify	
33	How was your experience with the social care institution? 1. Good, but I don't want to go back there 2. Good, and I call for supporting it and sending children there 3. Good, and I want to go back there 4. They treated me badly (beating, insulting and yelling) 5. Other / Specify	

B. Characteristics of the Child:

34	How old are you? (In years completed)	
35	Do you receive education? 1. Yes 2. No (Go to question number 42)	
36	In what grade are you?	
37	Is your school a 1. government school 2. UNRWA school 3. private school?	
38	Does your presence in the street affect your academic performance? 1. Yes 2. No	
39	Do you skip classes? 1. Yes 2. No (Go to question number 43)	
40	How many days do you skip classes every week?	
41	Why do you skip classes? (After answering this question, go to question number 43) 1. To work 2. I don't have money 3. I don't have books and stationary 4. I didn't do my homework 5. I'm afraid of school punishment 6. I'm not convinced that I need to go to school 7. Other / specify	
42	Why did you stop your education? 1. I didn't enrol in a school 2. Recurrent failure 3. Difficult economic conditions 4. Disregard for education 5. Domestic problems 6. Security conditions 7. Expulsion from school 8. Marriage 9. Maltreatment 10. Students' mockery 11. I suffer a handicap 12. Other / Specify	
43	Do you smoke? 1. Yes 2. No (Go to question number 46)	
44	Are you medically insured? 1. Yes 2. No	
45	Do you suffer any physical impediments (Handicapped)? 1. Yes 2. No (Go to question number 50)	
46	In what way are you handicapped? 1. Deaf 2. Speaking 3. Blind 4. Limbs 5. Mental 6. Multiple	

47	What caused you to be handicapped? 1. Congenital/genetic 2. By birth 3. Road accident 4. Working accident 5. Occupation 6. Other	
48	Are you married? 1. Yes 2. No	
49	Do you work? 1. Yes 2. No (Go to question number 73)	
50	If you work, what is the nature of your work in detail? -----	For office use
51	Did you work in another job before? 1. Yes 2. No (Go to question number 54)	
52	What is the type of last work compared to the present one, in detail? -----	For office use
53	How old were you when you started working for the first time? (In years)	
54	For how long have you been working in this job? 1. Less than three months 2. 3 – Less than six months 3. Six months or more	
55	Who convinced you to start working? 1. No one 2. A family member 3. Friends 4. Other people / Specify	
56	How often do you work? 1. Always 2. Seasonably 3. Intermittently	
57	What are your daily working hours?	
58	What is the main reason why you work? 1. The economic situation 2. Independence from the family 3. I am the only provider for the family 4. Failure in education 5. Others / Specify	
59	Who helped you get a job? 1. Family 2. Friends 3. Media 4. Direct search 5. Other / Specify	
60	Have you tried working in Israeli-controlled areas (e.g. settlements/Israel/East Jerusalem)? 1. Yes 2. No (Go to question number 62)	
61	How do you manage the checkpoints? 1. Yes 2. No 1. Special permit 2. Birth certificate 3. No document is needed 4. Bribe 5. Other / Specify	
62	Did any one try to stop you from working? 1. Yes 2. No 1. No one tried to stop me. (Go to question number 64) 2. A family member 3. The Palestinian police 4. Israeli parties 5. Others / Specify	

63	<p>In your opinion, what was their aim in preventing you from working? 1. Yes 2. No</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For my own well-being 2. To avoid people's talk 3. Legal reasons 4. Others / Specify 	
64	<p>Have you had a work accident? 1. Yes 2. No (Go to question number 67)</p>	
65	<p>What were the results of the most dangerous work accident that you suffered?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Became handicapped 2. Suffered bruises / fractures 3. Disfigurement 4. Other / Specify 	
66	<p>Have you been provided with medication for the injury?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No 	
67	<p>Are you satisfied with your present job?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes, totally (Go to question number 69) 2. Somewhat 3. No 	
68	<p>If you are not satisfied or somewhat satisfied, what are the two main reasons for your dissatisfaction?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rejecting the principle of work at all for those my age 2. Type of work isn't suitable for my age 3. Long working hours 4. Extreme exhaustion 5. Low income 6. Other / Specify 	
69	<p>What is your average daily wage at work (in Israeli Shekel)?</p>	
70	<p>How do you dispose of the income you receive from work?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I give it all to my parents / family 2. I give part of it to my parents / family and save the rest 3. I save part of it and spend the rest 4. I save it all 5. Other / Specify 	
71	<p>If you left work, what would be the result?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No 1. Difficult living conditions / economic situation of the family 2. Unable to continue education 3. Other / Specify 	
72	<p>In your opinion, what is the alternative to your present job?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No 1. Secure a suitable, alternative job 2. Receive assistance 3. Have the government cover my expenses 4. Other / Specify 	

C. Child's Expectations:

73	Will you continue your academic study? 1. Yes, after awhile 2. Yes, and leave work 3. Yes, without leaving work	
74	What are your plans for the future? 1. Leave work and finish my education only 2. Change my field of work 3. Improve my work 4. Improve my living standard 5. Get married 6. Establish a family 7. Other / Specify	
75	What profession do you dream of having? 1. Doctor 2. Engineer 3. Pilot 4. Teacher 5. Craftsman 6. Other / Specify	
76	Are you a member in: 1. Yes 2. No 1. Sports / cultural club 2. Social institution 3. Society 4. Other / Specify	
77	Are you satisfied with your current situation? 1. Yes, absolutely (Go to question number 79) 2. Somewhat 3. No	
78	What are the reasons for your dissatisfaction with your life? 1. Yes 2. No 1. Economic situation 2. Social problems 3. Security situation 4. Other / Specify	
79	In your opinion, how do people view/treat you? (the main answer) 1. With respect 2. They mock me 3. They exploit me 4. They ignore me 5. Other / Specify	
80	Have you ever been subjected to any of the following Israeli occupation measures? 1. Yes 2. No 1. Injury / bruises 2. Arrest 3. Confiscations 4. Other aggression / Specify	
81	Where does your family reside? 1. City 2. Village 3. Refugee camp	
82	How many members are there in your family? Male _____ Female _____ Children (less than 18 years) _____	
83	Are your family refugees? 1. Yes 2. No	

84	How many family members are enrolled? Preschool _____ School _____ College/University _____	
85	How many family members left school or didn't finish 12th grads? Male _____ Female _____	
86	Does the family have health insurance? 1. There is no health insurance 2. Government health insurance 3. UNRWA health insurance 4. Private health insurance 5. Israeli health insurance	
87	Are any of the family members handicapped? 1. Yes. How many? 2. No. (Go to question number 95)	Answer the number of male female
89	Have any of the family members been subjected to any of the following Israeli occupation measures? 1. Yes 2. No 1. Killed 2. Injured 3. Arrested 4. Confiscations 5. Other aggression / Specify	
90	Has the family house been demolished? (1. Yes 2. No) 1. Totally 2. Partially	

3. Details of the Shelter (Where the child lives, regardless of if it is the house of origin or an alternative house):

91	What is the nature of the house where you live? 1. House / apartment 2. Room 3. Shack / mobile house 4. Other / Specify	
92	What kind of ownership does the house have? 1. Owned 2. Rented 3. Free 4. Other / Specify	
93	How many rooms are there in the house where you live?	
94	In the house where you live are there? 1. Yes 2. No 1. Water network 2. Electricity network 3. Sewage network	
95	In the house where you live, are the following available? 1. Yes 2. No 1. Gas cooker 2. Fridge 3. Washing machine 4. Tape recorder / Radio 5. Water solar heater 6. TV 7. Satellite dish receiver 8. Telephone 9. Private car 10. Computer	

96. What do you expect from Defence for Children International/Palestine Section?
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
97. General Comments about the Child (To be completed by the Field Work.)

(Footnotes)

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