

Boys and Girls Project: HIV Preventive Measures for Brazil's Street Children

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Background

- Brazil has been able to effectively decrease the total deaths caused by HIV, however, the number of children living with AIDS is steadily increasing.
- According to World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 50,000 children and adolescents in Brazil are HIV positive, and this number is expected to increase in the next years².
- In response to Brazil's problem UNICEF in partnership with Brazil's Ministry of Health developed the pilot program "Street Boys and Girls".
- Several organizations from different sectors work together to create a program that will reduce vulnerability to HIV and other STDs amongst street children⁴.

Methods

- Working Groups are created to ensure that the government, NGO's, and other benefactors prepare the future staff by discussing the needs of the target population.
- Instructors from several departments teach the staff the curriculum that varies from city to city
- Courses teaching children about human anatomy and sexuality were often taught in the form of play therapy.
- Additional activities included computer classes, capoeira, percussion, and ballet. Some of the activities teach children and adolescents hobbies or skills that could be useful in the workforce⁴.

Results

- Strengths: Working Groups were able to negotiate provision of health services to children with AIDS irrespective of their identification status⁴.
- Limitation: Lack of political priority slowed down policies to create funds for the program to help these children leave the streets⁴.

Conclusion

Overall, the program Street Boys and Girls has developed a comprehensive approach to reach children living in the streets. Despite several political and economic setbacks, the projects have pushed for advances in public policies while addressing the needs of the helped children. An increase in children receiving medical help has been shown.

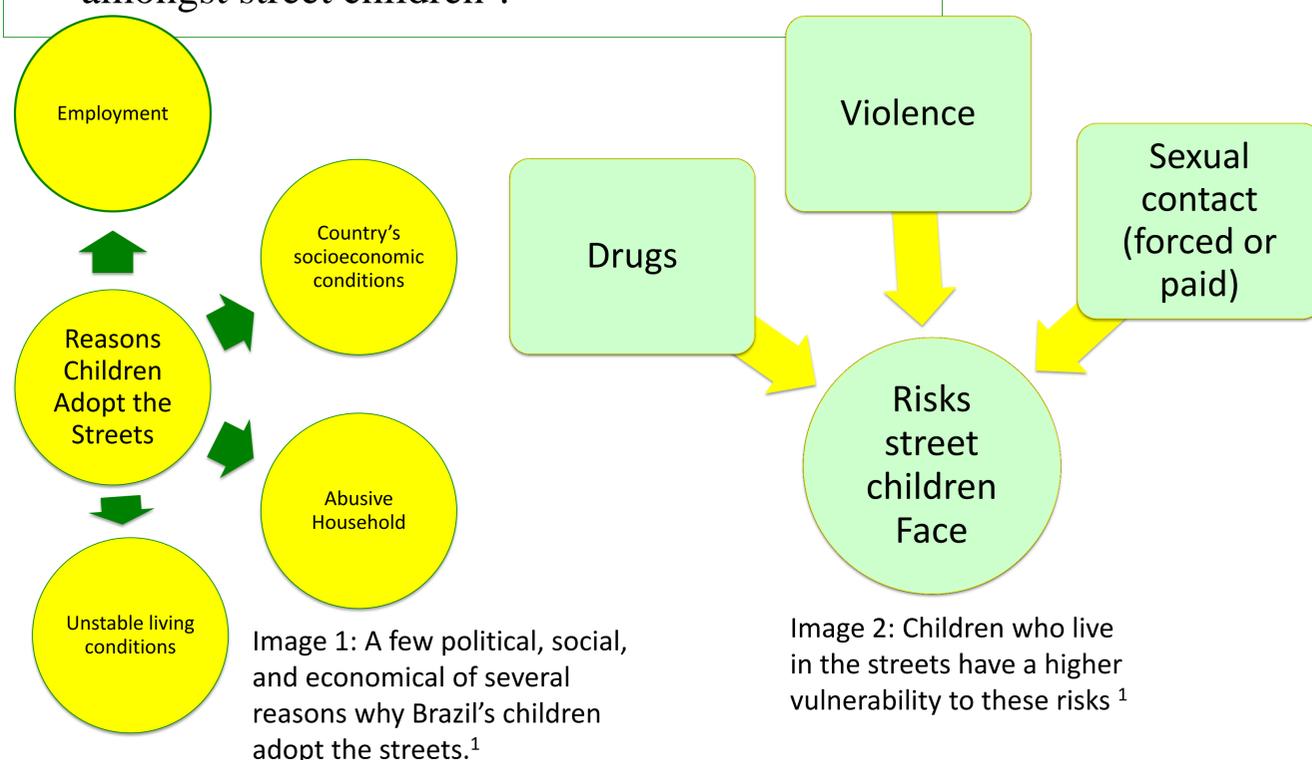


Image 1: A few political, social, and economical of several reasons why Brazil's children adopt the streets.¹

Image 2: Children who live in the streets have a higher vulnerability to these risks¹

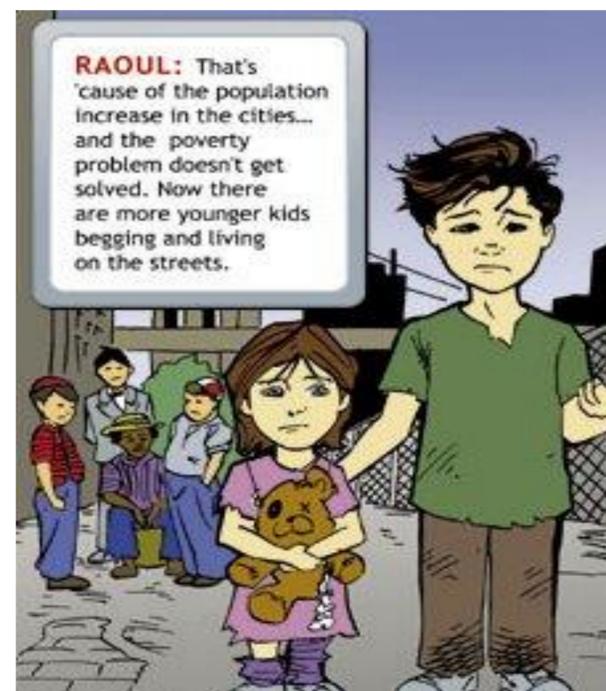


Image 3: Another reason why many children live on the streets. This is a result of several social and economical implications.

References

1. Fernandes, G.T., & Vaughn, M.G. (2008). Brazilian Street Children: Contextual Influences, in Relation to Substance Misuse. *International Social Works*, 51, 667-681.
2. Inciardi, J., & Surratt, H. (1997). Children in the Streets of Brazil: Drug Use, Crime, Violence, and HIV Risk. 1-18.
3. Image retrieved from: www.google.com/search?q=brazilian+street+children&source=lnms&tbn=lsch
4. UNICEF (2011). Weaving Networks: An experience in the prevention of STD/AIDS among street Boys and Girls. Brasilia. UNICEF. 1-146.