

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report contains the findings of a “headcount” of children and youth who work or live in the streets of Mwanza, Tanzania as per 2012.

The survey was conducted by the partnership “the Integrated Response for Street Children in Mwanza”, made up of Railway Children Africa, the key local agencies<sup>1</sup> working with street children in Mwanza and the Social Welfare department. These different partner agencies have observed what appears to be a steady increase of children and youth in the streets.

The headcount survey is based purely on observation and the data represents the population of children and youth on the streets of Mwanza at one particular point in time. This population is subject to periodic shift in size depending on the movement of the children and youth across the city.

## 2.0 Background: Mwanza City

The current population is estimated to be just above half a million people with an annual natural growth rate of 3.2% and rural to urban immigration almost 8%.

Many people in Mwanza (70%) live in unplanned settlements. These settlements lack basic facilities like roads, schools and water. Some of them are located on very steep rocky hills, reaching them and providing basic sanitation systems becomes very difficult. Due to urban population growth there has been an increase in the number of children and youth working and living on the streets.

In 2012, 17,776 Most Vulnerable Children were identified within Mwanza City Council communities (Mwanza City Council, 2012) – we know that many of the children on the streets counted in our survey are not included in this number. Equally, many of the identified MVCs across Mwanza are potentially at risk of going to the streets.

Railway Children and several local partners in Mwanza carried out a similar survey in 2008, revealing that 392 children and youth were living full time on the streets. The majority came from homes with either single parents or grandparents, and economic hardship at home was experienced as the leading causal factor for them coming to the streets. Domestic violence was almost as common in triggering a child’s move from home. Just over a quarter had never attended school, while 45% had dropped out. Note that this number was derived from a different methodology than that of the current survey, and we can therefore not directly compare the results of the two.

In 2012 we began to systematically collect statistics of children arriving to the streets of Mwanza, through our street workers, and initial efforts of counting over a few months time showed that between 10-20 children alone and in need of assistance arrive on to the streets of Mwanza on a monthly basis.

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<sup>1</sup> StreetInvest, Mwanza City Council, Mwanza Police, Amani Girls Home, Adilisha, Upendo Daima, Caretakers of the Environment (COET)

### 3.0 Methodology used: Head Count Methodology

The Head Counting methodology is a technique for collecting quantitative data regarding the numbers of street connected children. It doesn't use sampling in any way. The methodology seeks to gain data on *all* observed street connected children within a geographic locality. The skill and experience of the counters is of critical importance. Ideally all participants should be experienced street workers. During the data collection, participants walk in groups and by using their observational skills, they count children and youth in their selected area. There is no interaction with the target groups during the counting process. The area to be counted was Mwanza town.

### 4.0 Mwanza Head Counting Process 2012

The head count exercise took place over a 10 day period; with four days training and 6 days of the actual head count. Prior to the training, 24 counters were identified/selected from organisations in Mwanza. The criteria for selecting the team was mainly people who have the experience of working with children living and working on the streets. Out of the 24 counters, two were police officers from the police child desk; four were Para-social workers that are working in various wards in Mwanza and the rest were staff and volunteers from four charitable organizations namely: Upendo Daima, Amani Girls Home, Caretakers of the Environment (COET) and Adilisha.

#### 4.1 Mwanza 2012 Head Count Categories and definitions:

Those involved in the head counting process adopted the description of Street Connected Children proposed by StreetInvest which would help in defining the group relevant to the head count: ***“Any child whose life is controlled by the street is a Street Child”***.

The age range agreed was between **0-20 yrs**. It was felt that anyone above the age of 20 was an adult and need not fall under the category of child and youth. *According to the Tanzanian law, a child means a person of the age of less than eighteen years.*

The team agreed to divide the children and youth by age group; 0-6yrs; 7-10yrs; 11-14yrs; 15-18yrs; 19-20yrs and by physical ability: non-disability or 'with disability' and gender.

They also allocated the following categories dependent on the activity the children/youth were engaged in at the point of counting.

**Fixed business**- a child working with any kind of business that is settled in a given location; e.g. selling cashew nuts or other basic consumer items or working in a fixed retail premises.

**Moveable business** – a child moving from one place to another with some form of items to sell e.g. water, nuts, bananas etc.

**Beggars** – any child asking for food or money as a means of survival.

**Jobless -living in streets** – a child who is not engaged in any kind of income generating activity at the point of counting. Based on our experience, this is the category that represents children and youth that are fulltime on the streets.

**Commercial Sex Workers (CSWs)** – a child either engaging in or advertising herself with a view to engaging in transactional sex. These girls are generally observed at night in strategic locations, although some have also been counted during the day. They are usually identifiable through a combination of their attire, behaviour, and location. This category builds on the assumptions of the street workers and their knowledge of locations for where girls are commonly found engaged in commercial sex work.

**Girls with Babies:-** Girls found on the streets carrying or with babies

**Pregnant Girls:** - Girls observed to be pregnant.

Note that it is difficult through observation alone to determine how many children actually sleep in the streets and how many only come to the streets to work. One of the changes we intend to make to the process in 2013 is to ensure that all groups carry out some counting in the late evening or early morning when it is visible whether children are sleeping in town. This was only done by one of the groups during this head count and only up until 9 o'clock in the evening. We have however made the assumption, based on local experience, that the category of “jobless” children are generally those who are in the streets fulltime and thus we have made this parallel throughout the text.

## 5.0 Head Count 2012 Findings and analysis

### 5.1 Number of children living and working on the streets

CATEGORIES	0 to 6		7 to 10		11 to 14		15 to 18		19 to 20		SUB TOTAL		TOTAL	%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
FIXED BUSINESS	3	5	9	3	62	56	82	42	131	13	287	119	406	21.46
MOV. BUSINESS	14	4	70	10	236	27	227	29	158	3	705	73	778	41.12
JOBLESS - living in streets.	30	17	38	6	203	13	184	18	84	2	539	56	595	31.45
CASUAL/ DAILY WORKERS	1	4	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	4	4	8	0.423
BEGGARS	6	2	18	8	22	1	1	0	1	0	48	11	59	3.277
CSW( Commercial Sex Workers)	0	0	0	9	0	19	0	7	0	2	0	37	37	1.956
GIRLS WITH BABIES	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	5	6	0.317
PREGNANT GIRLS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	54	32	135	36	523	116	497	96	374	25	1,583	305	1,888	<b>100.003</b>

## 5.2 Age Range

The majority of those counted were between ages 11 to 14 years with 639 children counted under this age range. Of these, 523 were boys and 116 were girls.

In our experience, many children who arrive to the streets are 11-14, and the concentration of this age group could have several explanations. First, this is an age where children undergo many changes - adolescence and puberty starts and they increasingly begin to form an identity and become more independent. It is possible that this leads them to question their situation (at home) to a larger extent, and some will be less keen to listen to their parent's instructions and demands – some will have a bigger need than previously to proactively change their situation. In homes which are crowded sleeping arrangements such as co-sleeping with opposite sex parents or siblings, often become more difficult to accept. Other key factors are at play at this age. Financial constraints of families will make it necessary for children in this age group to start working to add to the family's income – this can especially be the case with boys, and even more so where the father is absent. A lack of access to education is experienced by partners to be a key factor for this age group to come to the streets. Having to drop out of school due to financial reasons, or failing the final exams of primary school, severely limits the future options for this age group. When failing primary school exams, it is no longer an option for a student to go to an affordable government secondary school – and private secondary schools are for most poor families impossible to afford. Lastly, street outreach workers generally experience a significant rise in this age group when school closes for holidays or weekends – children come to town areas for recreation or work, and this can be seen as an indication that there are certain problems. This head count was carried out from Monday to Saturday during term time. There were no significant differences in numbers of children counted on any day of the week.

For children aged 7-10 there is a concentration of male children engaged in moving businesses. These are often the boys found selling plastic bags in market areas etc, and in our experience these are often out-of-school children in poor households who are sent to town by their families to work for the family's survival. Many will return home at night, and a number of these are likely to be gradually drawn into street life full time. For boys even at this age to contribute to the family's income is still normal cultural practice in many communities.

Of particular concern is the high number of children under 6 on the streets of Mwanza – 86 were counted in total. 26 of these were counted in either moveable or fixed business or 13 as casual workers or beggars and 47 were found "jobless". Based on the categorization used in this headcount, the jobless category represents those that are fulltime on the streets – it could however be argued that categories related to work or income generation do not always apply to this young group.

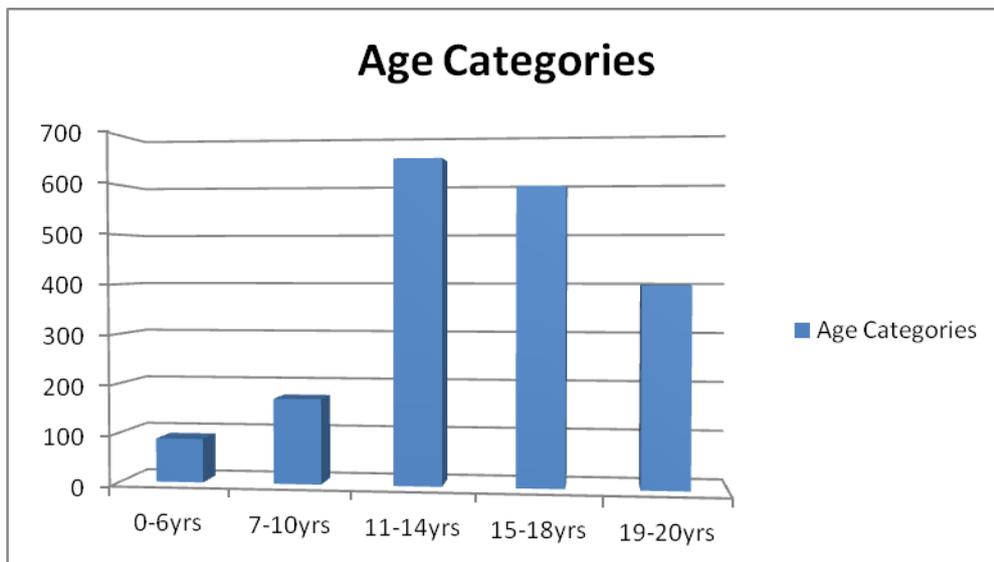
In our experience in Mwanza it is not particularly common for children at this young age to make the decision to run away from home and enter into street life. Some of this population can be assumed to be living in streets with their parents, and some may have been abandoned or lost at an early age. It may be that some of these very young children have been chased away from their homes by members of the family – in our experience this can for example happen where negative relationships with step parents are at play. Also, it is sometimes found that small children of this age group can have been brought by an older sibling who is already in the streets, with the intention of helping or saving them from the situation they face at home.

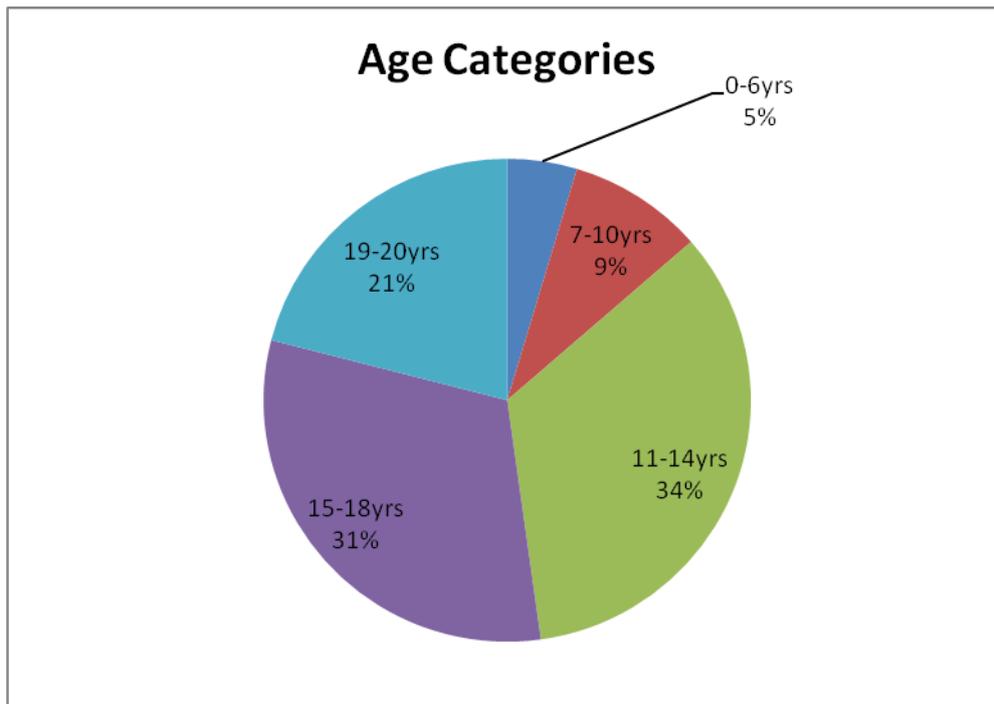
For this age group of jobless children we expect that some of them will be drifting to the streets in the day and will have homes to go back to at night. Irrespective of whether these children are

sleeping on the streets or not, they represent an extremely vulnerable group.

There are a significant number of youth in the streets of Mwanza. Between the ages of 15 to 18 years 497 males and 96 females were counted. While between 19 to 20 age range, 374 males and 25 females were counted.

It is worth noting that this group can be experienced as more difficult to count than the younger children. This is because one can arguably say that all younger children on the streets are relevant for us to count due to the risk they face of being in the streets at such a young age, no matter why they are there. For youth on the other hand, there are many young people who are in town areas for various reasons but who are living mainstream lives. Keeping this in mind the data collectors had to make a number of extra considerations. When counting older youth in particular, there were distinctions made between youth simply seen working or spending time in the streets and those appearing to be youth who are more street involved and/or living in the streets. Data collectors with long experience of street work based this count on their experience of the street youth in particular – their awareness of individuals or groups, their demeanour and behaviour, the types of activities they were engaged in etc, in order to more accurately interpret whether they should be counted as 'street youth' and not just young people who work in town.





## 6.0 Locations

The general observation by the head counters was that the children would normally be found in three places; where they eat, sleep and where they go for recreational activities. It was observed that most children were found at market places, dumpsites, at the lake and bus stands. At the market places the children were either looking for food, or engaged in activities to enable them get some money. At the bus stands, this would be the entry point for children coming from outside the city or some children would be involved in carrying luggage for people for a small fee.

-Igoma and Nyegezi, the two main bus stands where the long distances buses stop, the head counters found many school going age children that were believed to have come from the rural areas and were now either involved in some form of work to get money or begging.

-In Kirumba a high number of children were observed. The head counters believed that the children around this area came from a nearby settlement (residential area) to look for food and would normally go back home at the end of the day.

-Around the bus stands and market areas, there were an overwhelming number of children that were moving around – this made it difficult to count them and increased the risk of double counting. In these locations, the data collectors observed an increase of the number of children after 2pm mainly because some children who had gone to school in the morning came to the streets in the afternoon, either to go to the market or sell things on the streets.

-The participation of street outreach workers in the head count was crucial as it helped identify spots where children could be found. For example, in a certain area a good number of children were found under a bridge and would probably have been left uncouned had the data collectors not had prior awareness of this location.

## 7.0 Conclusion

This survey counted a total of 1888 children and youth living and/or working in the streets of Mwanza town. We believe that some stakeholders and readers of this report may find this number to be high, and others to be low.

We cannot determine whether this number represents an overall increase or decrease of children and youth during the past few years since no other survey has been carried out before using this methodology. Rather it offers a baseline against which to measure the numbers of coming surveys so that we may learn about trends over time. Outside the scope of this headcount, we do however know from ongoing data collection by street workers that there is a constant flow of new children arriving to the streets of Mwanza every month. We are currently in the process of establishing a fair picture of the magnitude of this flow through recording the identities and numbers of new children on a monthly basis – and what we have recorded so far is indeed of great concern.

This headcount was the first of its kind to be carried out in Mwanza town, and even in Tanzania, and has therefore offered a great opportunity for learning. In order to track the number and situation of street connected children and youth over time, and to obtain further information about them, this survey will be repeated with regular interval in the future. Based on lessons learnt from this first exercise, the next headcount we conduct in Mwanza will aim to better count children and youth who live fulltime in the streets through carrying out data collection during late evening/early morning. Furthermore, the next survey needs to have better coverage of female children and youth in the streets.