Working With Street Children

MODULE 7
Teaching Street Children

A Training Package on Substance Use, Sexual and Reproductive Health including HIV/AIDS and STDs
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Introduction

Teaching is one of the important tasks of street educators. Educating street children involves helping them acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes in specific areas of need. In order to be effective, the teaching of street children should be planned. You will have to understand the needs of street children and the local situation before you embark on any teaching. It is a waste of resources and efforts to train street children on issues that are not useful or relevant to their lives.

This module introduces you to important considerations in planning to teach street children various skills, knowledge and attitudes. Specific educational areas are addressed.

Learning objectives

After reading the information presented in this module and participating in the learning activities you should be able to:

✓ Explain the terms, knowledge, skills and attitudes.
✓ Identify appropriate teaching methods for use in the teaching of street children.
✓ Identify locally available learning aids.
✓ Develop a lesson plan on substance use and sexual and reproductive health including HIV/AIDS/STDs.
✓ Conduct a teaching session using the developed lesson plan.
✓ Explain the importance of assessment of a training programme.
✓ Identify important topics for educating street children on substance use and reproductive health including HIV/AIDS and STDs.
✓ Demonstrate the teaching of life skills.
Lesson 1 - Basic educational concepts

1.1 Important educational concepts for street education.

To teach effectively, you need to understand some concepts that are important for planning, developing and implementing teaching sessions. In terms of street education, they can be defined as follows:

- Learning is a process by which a child's behaviour is changed as a result of experience, usually on a long-term basis. Learning entails acquiring appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes.

- Learning objectives are statements which describe what the street child should know, be able to do, and how he should feel about issues at the end of a course or session.

- Education refers to learning experiences which are intended to broaden the street child’s knowledge and give him/her a stronger base for future learning.

- Training is a procedure which is intended to foster and enhance learning and build upon the knowledge, skills, attitudes and competencies that the street child obtains though education.
1.2 What street children can acquire during street education.

Street education is aimed at helping street children acquire appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes.

- **Knowledge.** When information is shared with street children, they gain knowledge on the subject, e.g. substance use and sexual and reproductive health. Knowledge helps in bringing about changes in behaviour and can become the foundation for taking appropriate measures for protecting oneself.

- **Skills** can be learnt through demonstrations and practice. The idea is to teach skills by providing information and practice together. This allows the street children to get the facts and practice at the same time.

A street educator teaching pottery to a child.
Attitudes are the tendency to behave or think in a certain way. This involves street children’s values and beliefs. If street children are supported, they can acquire healthy attitudes and a sense of self-worth. However, attitudes are learnt gradually and you must have patience. Appropriate attitudes provide the foundation for learning and adopting useful skills.
## Learning Activity

### 1. Educational needs.

Based on the profile of street children in your area, discuss in groups their needs in the following categories:

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2. A street child has to go to a clinic to take treatment for a substance use related problem. What kind of knowledge, skills and attitudes should she or he possess?

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Lesson 2 - Teaching methods

2.1 Teaching methods for street education.

In this lesson you will learn about some practical methods that can be used to educate and train street children. These methods should be adapted to the needs of street children and to the resources that are available in the community. You can get more information on these methods in the document ‘Trainer Tips’ that accompanies these modules. The common and effective teaching methods that you can use are: group discussions, demonstrations, field visits, games, role play, and brainstorming.

- **Group discussion:** during group discussions, the street children do more talking than the educator. The method provides an opportunity for everybody to participate during the teaching session.

- **Demonstration:** a demonstration is a practical skill presented by the educator. Demonstrations are successful if they are followed by practice sessions for the street children.

*A street educator demonstrating knitting to street girls.*
Module 7 - Teaching Street Children

- **Field visit**: this method enables the street children to experience real situations. To be effective, the choice of the place to be visited should be relevant to the subject you are teaching or what the street children want to learn.

![A street educator visiting a vocational centre.](image)

- **Games**: many educational games are available which could be used to teach street children. The critical part of an educational game is the ‘learning questions’ that come after the active part of the game. These questions are intended to help the street children in analyzing what they have done and in drawing important conclusions. It is important that the games used are culturally appropriate and acceptable in your community. They should also be appropriate to the age of the child. See the Trainer Tips for some examples.

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**Example**

**Game:** Morse Code.

**Objective:** Communication skills, team building, sensitivity.

**Age of participants:** 9 years or older.

**Instructions:**
- Participants form 2 groups.
- Facilitator sits in the middle.
- Everyone places their hands behind their backs.
- The facilitator sends a message (in this case, a certain number) by pressing the hands of each of the first member of each group.
- Each member then relays the same number of presses to the next member in the line.
- The last member of each team speaks out the number. The first team that speaks out the number gets a point.
- Play the game for several rounds.

**Learning Questions:**
Discuss the importance of non-verbal communication. Talk about the skills involved in non-verbal communication (concentration, teamwork etc).
- **Role play/drama**: this is a method in which problems are outlined, acted out and discussed. During role play, the street children act out roles of certain people in real life. The method is useful in teaching attitudes.

  ![Street children acting a 'Role Play' with an educator.](image)

- **Brainstorming**: brainstorming is a fast moving activity during which you gather as many ideas as possible from the participants or street children. It stimulates street children to generate ideas. The method is most useful at the beginning of a teaching session.

  ![A Brainstorming session.](image)
2.2 Selecting the teaching method.

Selection of the type of teaching method to use will largely depend on the following issues:

- What you plan to achieve (the objectives).
- How many children are expected to participate.
- How much knowledge the street children already have on the subject.
- How much time you have (partly based on the time available to the street children) for the teaching session or activity.
- How much participation you expect from the children during the session.
- What resources are available to you for the teaching session.
Learning Activity

Practising teaching methods.

The following learning activities can help you to practice teaching methods. They can be done in groups. Allow each group to present a method, while the other street educators evaluate and comment on the method used, while checking for the following:

- Clarity.
- Relevance.
- Effectiveness.
- What can be improved upon.
- Performance of the presenter (tone of voice, ability to deliver information convincingly).

Role play as a teaching method.

You have organized a course for new street educators. One of the topics you want to cover is how to establish a trusting relationship with street children. Ahmed is a new street child who is often seen at a corner of the busy road, sitting with his head buried in his arms. Your task is to begin communicating with him in order to establish a trusting relationship. Role-play this situation. Observe whether the role-play was an effective teaching method and what could be done to improve it.

Group discussion as a teaching method.

You have organized a group of street children and would like them to learn from each other about their needs and problems and ways they use to cope with some of these problems. Arrange a small group discussion and facilitate the process. At the end of the discussion you should be able to generate information related to the topic of discussion.

Brainstorming as a teaching method.

A group of street children would like to know how they can participate in improving their situation. Use the brainstorming method to generate ideas.

Learning Point: Active participation enhances learning.
Lesson 3 - Learning aids

3.1 Learning aids in street education.

Learning aids are all those things that help a child learn. They could be visual (things that can be seen) or auditory (what the learners can hear). A number of learning aids can be used for teaching street children, e.g. pictures, posters, objects, stories, songs, recording of conversation, overhead projectors etc. Trips and excursions can also aid in learning. Learning aids help in stimulating discussion about the children’s experiences and reality.
3.2 How to use learning aids.

To be effective learning tools, learning aids must meet the needs of street children. The street children should be familiar with them and understand their use. When planning a teaching session, think about the materials that you may need, how they will be used and where they will be used. When teaching, bring them in at the right time and in the right way to help the street children understand. There are a number of reasons why learning aids can be used during teaching.

- To secure interest of the child.
- To transmit information that is difficult to convey with words.
- To reinforce information that other teaching methods have given.

3.3 Enhancing learning.

Learning aids and teaching methods alone will not ensure that learning takes place. Here are some principles that you can apply to enhance learning:

- **Ice breaker (starter):** can serve as a short ‘warm-up’ before beginning a teaching session. It helps in creating a relaxed atmosphere, and provides a good point from which a learning activity can be introduced. This activity in itself also helps children in developing creative expression and observation skills.

- **Participatory learning:** involves giving the street children something to do when teaching. Ask them questions, seek their responses and give them feedback about how well they are doing, what was not done well and how they could have done better.

- **Clarity:** to enhance learning, make sure that those you are teaching can hear and understand you. Speak with a reasonable rhythm, clearly and loud enough for those sitting far from you to hear. Use simple expressions. If you have to write, write neatly. Use appropriate learning aids.

- **Ensure understanding:** clarify any concerns and misunderstandings that the street children may have immediately. If you are teaching skills, check that all learners can demonstrate the skills.

- **Individualize:** it is important to realize that street children, as individuals, are different in many ways. They learn at different speeds, in different ways, and have different interests, experiences and abilities. If a street child is facing difficulties in learning, allocate time for discussions with him/ her, determine the problems together and take measures to assist the child.

- **Motivation:** at all times, strive to keep the street children motivated by making the teaching process interesting. Show them that you recognize and appreciate their personal progress.
Learning Activity

Learning aids.

- List or discuss learning aids available in your area, including educational films and videos that can be used for training.

Where can they be obtained?

Where would you obtain them?

How can other street educators obtain them?

- Songs.

Identify some local songs that could be used for training purposes. Learn them and use them whenever appropriate.

- Stories.

Community leaders have expressed interest in helping street children. However, they feel that they need more information about the needs and problems of street children so that they can prioritize their response. After documenting the needs and problems of street children in your area, organize a group of street children to develop individual stories about their experiences as street children for the community leaders. You know that stories can enhance the community’s understanding of the problems and needs of street children.
Lesson 4 - Planning to teach street children

Before developing a plan for street education, it is important to determine what the street children need to learn. Training should only be given on the knowledge and skills that they lack.

Learning needs can be identified through interviews, observation and needs assessment. Needs assessment is a comprehensive investigation which includes interviews, discussions, observations and information about the environment where the street children live (see Module 5 for details).

4.1 Developing the lesson.

In order to develop an appropriate lesson for street children, you should be aware of various features about street children in your area. Also, before developing the teaching plan ask yourself the following questions:

- How relevant is the lesson to the children’s lives and experiences?
- Will the children relate to the content?
- Can they immediately use what they learn?
- How will the street children react to the timing of the activity and style of presentation?
- Does the proposed lesson logically follow the previous one?
- Will they understand the content?
- Will it interfere with their activities?
- Will they play an active part in the lesson or will it be boring or tedious for them?
- What could be potential problems that could hinder learning, e.g. hearing or visual impairment, lack of psychological maturity, ability to follow instructions or low self-esteem?
4.2 The lesson plan.

A lesson plan is a framework that outlines the steps of a teaching session. The lesson plan should include learning objectives, duration of the teaching session, content of the material to be covered, teaching methods, assessment and if you are not well conversant with the subject, possible answers. Remember that a lesson plan is only a ‘skeleton’.

- **Learning objectives:** these are statements of what you expect the street children to have learnt and what they should be able to do after completing the lesson.

- **Duration of the teaching session:** this will depend on the objectives, the teaching methods and whether you plan to have exercises and field visits. Some teaching methods such as demonstrations, group discussions and field visits require a lot of time. Pay attention to the time allocated to each component of the session in relation to the content and teaching method.

- **Content:** this is the list of the issues you plan to cover during the teaching session.

- **Teaching methods:** these should reflect the objectives: For example, if you plan to impart knowledge, use talks or group discussions; for skills, use practical exercises; and for changing attitudes, use role plays.

- **Assessment:** always plan to assess the street children in order to find out if you have achieved the set objectives. Remember your assessment can be formal or informal.

The use of lesson plans can help in maintaining consistency in what you teach. Even when you are not present, another street educator can continue from where you left off by referring to the lesson plan you had developed. Lessons should be designed to promote the street child’s sense of self-esteem and confidence that their actions can help to improve their lives.

4.3 Planning for a teaching session.

The following details have to be taken care of, to ensure that the teaching sessions are effective:

- **Time:** schedule the sessions in agreement with the street children. Avoid long sessions. Allocate time for breaks.

- **Learning aids:** ensure that they are appropriate for the group and are in working order.

- **Size of the group:** teach a manageable group.

- **Place:** select a convenient and comfortable place, which is free from noise and interruptions.

- **The actual lesson:** break up the lesson into manageable portions. Ensure they are presented in a logical manner.
4.4 Assessment.

- **Assessing street children.**

  Assessment focuses on knowledge, skills and attitudes. It is aimed at determining the street children’s performance and progress. This provides feedback to the trainer and the street child about the progress made. Corrective measures can be taken if things are not going well. Most of your assessments will be informal and take place during the teaching session. Formal assessment could be of an oral, written or practical nature. Assessment can be conducted at the following times:
  - Before the training begins (pre-test).
  - During the teaching process (continuous assessment).
  - At the end of the course (final assessment).

- **Self-assessment.**

  To make improvements on the teaching approach, make an assessment on how you presented a particular session. This could help you in planning your next teaching course better. There are several ways in which the teaching material could be evaluated. You could ask the street children to evaluate you or you could record the session on a cassette and assess your own performance. The information gathered should tell you whether the learning objectives have been achieved, what went well and what went wrong. Ask the street children to talk about what they have learnt and what benefits they have attained.

4.5 Programme evaluation.

Evaluation can provide important information for future educational activities with street children. Ask yourself and/or street children the following questions:

- To what extent did the street children think the training programme was enjoyable, informative, worthwhile and stimulating? Do they have any suggestions for improving the teaching and learning process?

- Have the aims of the teaching been achieved? What kind of change occurred as a result of training? Did they learn facts, principles and skills? Did the programme change their attitudes? (Look at their end evaluation, follow up activity).

- Did the programme affect their life in a positive way? What did they learn about themselves? Do they do things differently after having gone through the programme?

- Are there any areas in which street children need more teaching/educating?
Learning Activity

1. Developing a lesson plan.

Choose a topic for a lesson. Develop a lesson plan for conducting a teaching session using the framework provided in lesson 4, (in the same sequence, topic, content, learning objective, content of the topic, training method, learning aids and questions for evaluation). See also lesson 5 for topics.

Present the lesson plan to other members of the group. After the critique, revise the plan and teach it to other group members who will act as street children or community members. When the presentation is over, assess yourself and allow others to assess you on the basis of:

- Clarity of information.
- Relevance of information.
- Effectiveness of method of presentation.
- What can be improved upon.
- Performance of the presenter (tone of voice, ability to deliver information convincingly etc.).

2. Assessment.

Specify how you are going to assess the street children to determine whether or not the objectives have been achieved after the above lesson (learning activity 1) has been delivered.
Lesson 5 - Educating street children on substance use, and sexual and reproductive health including HIV/AIDS and STDs

Education is a part of efforts directed at health promotion and preventive activities. It is aimed at minimizing or avoiding the consequences of substance use and problems related to reproductive health among street children. Information that forms the basis for such educational activities is given in earlier modules: Understanding substance use among street children (Module 3), Understanding reproductive health including HIV/AIDS and STDs among street children (Module 4), and Responding to the needs and problems of street children: general issues (Module 6).

5.1 Topics on substance use for street children.

The street children can be taught about many issues in relation to substance use. For example:

- Substances that are used locally.
- The effects of substances.
- The consequences of using these substances.
- Relationship between substance use and STDs/HIV/AIDS.
- The dangers of injectable drug use and safer injection practices (e.g. cleaning injection equipment).
- Available services for treatment of substance use.

Another important topic is reducing the risk from overdose among street children. You can educate street children regarding:

- The danger of using multiple substances and of using substances when alone. If an overdose occurs when a child is alone, there is no one around to revive him/her or to call for medical help.
- The fact that one cannot be sure of the strength or composition of substances that are bought illegally.
- Any myths that they may have about management of an overdose.

5.2 Topics on reproductive health, STDs/HIV/AIDS for street children.

The street children can be educated about some important issues on STDs and HIV:

- Common reproductive health problems among street children.
- Reducing the risk of acquiring and spreading STDs, e.g. through safer sexual activity.
- The dangers of STDs, such as infertility and death and increased risk of HIV.
- Information on where they can receive treatment and how to use condoms.
Messages on safe sex among street children.

Street children should be educated about safer sexual practices, which reduce the risk of passing STDs and HIV infection from one street child to another. Specific messages that should be included are:

- Using condoms for all types of sexual intercourse.
- Practicing non penetrative sex such as hugging and kissing, (where this does not conflict with cultural values and beliefs).
- Reducing the number of sexual partners.
- Avoiding sex when a street child has open sores or any sexually transmitted disease.
- Seeking care when they have a STDs.

Although the situation of street children makes it difficult for them to negotiate for safer sex, providing them with a variety of choices gives them an opportunity to adopt an appropriate strategy.
Pregnancy and contraceptives.

Educating street children about the importance of seeking help at health facilities reduces the chances of complications from pregnancy, abortion and childbirth. Some of the issues that you may discuss in relation to this topic are covered in the sections above. However, you can also educate the street children about:

- The importance of developing and maintaining healthy relationships.
- The importance of contraceptives and the varieties that exist (if this is permitted in your culture) and advise them to use them.
- The need to discuss sexual issues.
- The menstrual cycle and how pregnancy comes about.
- Life skills (to be discussed in next lesson).
- The dangers of abortions, pregnancy and childbirth.
- Existing resources related to pregnancy and contraception.
Learning Activity

1. Lesson plans.

Draw up a lesson plan on each of the following topics. List the issues that should be covered and the methods you would propose to use:

- Substance use.

- HIV/AIDS/STDs.

Practice teaching in a group. Later, deliver the same lesson to a group of street children.
Lesson 6 - Teaching skills

Substance use, violence and involvement in risky sexual behaviour are some of the ways in which street children cope with the harsh reality of their lives. Street children need to develop healthier, more constructive coping strategies that help them to deal with their difficult circumstances. Positive coping strategies stem from the acquisition and practice of psychosocial skills or life skills, practical skills and performance, vocational and livelihood skills. These have been discussed in Module 6: Responding to substance use, sexual and reproductive health including HIV/AIDS and STDs.

6.1 Life Skills

Life skills or psychosocial skills include decision making and problem solving, creative thinking and critical thinking, communication and interpersonal skills, self-awareness and empathy, and coping with emotion and stress.

Demonstration, feedback and practice, group discussion, role-play, and games are key activities that help in developing basic psychosocial skills. Another way to learn a skill is to analyse important aspects of the skill.

Example

Teaching decision making.

Decision making involves the following steps:

Step 1: Ask questions:
For example: Can I trust the person who is offering me this choice e.g. a respected adult or friend? Will I get hurt or will someone else be harmed if I do this?

Step 2: Think:
Think about the answers to the questions. If the street child feels comfortable about the answers, he or she can choose what to do. If not, he or she should think carefully all over again.

Step 3: Choose:
The street child makes a choice when he or she has ‘asked questions’, thought about the choices, and is clear as to which one he or she is going to choose.

The street educator helps the children to apply the steps of decision making to low risk, non-threatening situations, e.g. whether or not to accept food from another street child. Later, the street educator helps the children to apply the steps to more difficult decisions such as whether or not to accept an offer to sniff glue, or whether or not to enter into a sexual relationship with another street child.
Teaching problem solving.

**Situation:** You work as a waiter/errand boy at a roadside restaurant. The owner is annoyed with absenteeism of employees. He has threatened to fire employees who have been absent on more than two occasions in the last month, without exception or excuse. You are one of those who was affected and had been ill for three days and had visited a clinic with the street educator.

You could solve the problem through the following choices:
- Ask the street educator to talk to your employer.
- Produce a medical certificate.
- Go to the employer with a friend who will vouch for your having been genuinely sick.
- Talk to the employer about your unblemished past record.

Teaching self-awareness.

You have a longstanding cough. You visited the local dispensary and were given medicines. You did not take the medicines and did not attend the follow-up because you were afraid that the lady doctor would scold you. The cough got worse and you had to go to the dispensary again. Unexpectedly instead of scolding you, the doctor did not scold you. She said that you looked anxious and wanted to understand your behaviour a bit better.

She asks you the following questions:
- What would you like other people to know about you?
- What things about yourself would you tell only to your close friends?
- What do people think about you? Do you think they are right about their opinions? Why do you think they have formed such opinions?
- Are there things about you that you have told no one?

This is the first time that such questions have been put to you. You feel that the doctor can be trusted and you confide in her. What did you learn about yourself?

Teaching life skills to contain aggression.

Aggressive behaviour and other anti-social behaviours are likely to be an important part of being accepted into the street culture and being seen to be ‘streetwise’. This can become a barrier to re-integration of the child into family and home life, if such an opportunity is available. Work with street children includes activities aimed at:
- Changing their interpersonal behaviour.
- Changing their perceptions of themselves.
- Changing their attitudes towards life and society.

To be able to do this, street children would have to learn to critically assess the factors that influence their behaviour, to cope with anger, to ask for help, and to work together to identify constructive solutions to their problems. Learning to be assertive can help in preventing the negative consequences of aggressive interpersonal conflict amongst street children.
Group facilitation for life skills.

A starting point for training the street educator as a life skills educator will be the training required to become a group facilitator. The street educator should be able to listen to what the street children have to say about their experiences and their needs, and be able to facilitate open and constructive communication in the group (communication is discussed in Module 2: Responsibilities of the street educator). These include: paying attention to the street child who is speaking in the group, asking open-ended questions, repeating key words to prompt further communication where any uncertainty exists, checking with individuals as to what they really want to say, providing feedback, and noticing disparities between verbal and non-verbal messages. Some techniques are fairly specific to group work. To facilitate group work, you should:

- Encourage street children to lay down the rules for behaving in a group, such as the need to take turns while speaking or the need to listen carefully when one member is speaking.
- Summarize what has been communicated. This provides an opportunity for you to check that you have heard accurately what has been said. It also enables the individual speaking to build a better picture of the total situation.
- Before finishing a discussion on a topic take time to check that everyone who wants to contribute has had the opportunity to do so.
- Discern situations when the discussion doesn’t move towards the tasks that the group is trying to achieve. If you notice this happening you may have to explore what is going on. A good way to do this is to reflect back to the group the process you have observed and find out whether others in the group share your perceptions. If they do, you can try to discover what is stopping the group from ‘working’ or achieving its aims.

There are no easy ways for developing these skills. Some people find it useful to concentrate on one strategy at a time and practice it in groups of which they are members, or with friends and colleagues. Like all other skills, the more practice you have of group facilitation, the better you become, and the easier it is to be an effective and sensitive group leader.

What to avoid when facilitating life skills with a group of street children.

A number of behaviours can be unhelpful or counterproductive in group work. These include:

- Displaying boredom, impatience or hostility.
- Distracting body gestures like fiddling with a pen.
- Being patronizing.
- Devaluing, by minimizing, disbelieving or laughing inappropriately.
- Insisting that your perceptions and beliefs are the only correct view.
- Passing judgement.
- Favouring one person.
- Joining in with the group to scapegoat or bully a particular member.
- Talking too much.
- Filling in a silence too quickly.
- Interrupting.
- Asking too many questions when a child is trying to think something through.
- Drawing conclusions prematurely.
Practicing life skills.

After a skill has been acquired, it should be practiced in the safe environment of the group. Role play, where the children act out short scenes from their daily lives, is a very useful method for this. It gives each child the opportunity to try out a skill in situations that are likely to arise in their daily lives. The street children should be asked to:

- Take up different roles, e.g. a street child, a policeman, or a drug dealer.
- Role play a typical scenario and its consequences.
- Go through the same scenario a second time to see how a life skill, e.g. communication skills, can help improve a situation.

How to enhance the application of life skills in real life?

Street children will need to be given the chance to experience the positive effects and consequences of positive, pro-social behaviour.

- Give street children positive feedback (positive reinforcement) about their use of life skills.
- Help children develop confidence in their ability to use life skills and in their positive consequences.
- Help them in applying and practicing the life skills in normal everyday situations.

6.2 Physical skills.

Street children could be taught:

- Method of using a condom.
- Games and sports.

6.3 Performance, vocational and livelihood skills.

Street children can use and learn a variety of skills that help them survive on the streets. Vocational skills help them earn some money. Vocational education may include:

- Crafts such as jewellery, toys or woodcarvings.
- Performance skills such as music or dancing.
- Domestic work skills.
- Skills on how to search for jobs.

Vocational training should be individualized to fit into the street child’s life, interests and goals. A child who begs in buses may be taught how to sing; if a street child works as a vendor in a tourist spot, he may be taught words of a foreign language to enhance his chances of earning money.
6.4 Other topics for street children’s education.

- **Health promotion and disease prevention.**

  Health promotion and disease prevention involves educating street children on what they should do to be healthy. Street children can be educated regarding:
  - Promotion of health and prevention of common diseases, e.g. diarrhoea, problems related to cuts and wounds etc.
  - Personal hygiene and how to keep food and water clean.
  - Importance of seeking help at health facilities.

- **Rights and laws about street children.**

  Street children’s lives are not regulated by formal rules. The only contact they may have with the rules and authority of mainstream society may be negative. For example, the police may detain them for invalid reasons. Consequently, street children may not understand why laws are necessary in a society and how laws can be the basis for their personal rights (see Module 9). Street children need to be made aware of the following:
  - Definition of a law, who are the law makers, and who are the law enforcers.
  - The rights of individuals who live on the streets and their rights when in custody.
  - How to access legal counsel and advice.
  - Facilities that cater for abused/homeless children.
  - Laws regarding minimum age for employment, working hours, type of work and minimum pay.

  These topics could be taught to the street children through games and field visits, e.g. to police stations, courts and to a legislative assembly.

- **Improvement of literacy.**

  All children need and deserve the opportunity to receive basic education. They need knowledge and skills in order to have self-esteem. However, most children on the street have received little or no formal education.

  Despite barriers to attending school, some street children may be interested in entering the mainstream school system. You can teach them: **reading, writing, and simple arithmetic.** You might be able to help some children prepare for an entrance test, accompany them for admission to school, help in obtaining uniforms or supplies, and tutor them in subjects that they find especially difficult.
Learning Activity

1. ‘Ice breaking’: Learning and applying life skills.

The first task is the creation of a safe and supportive group environment. This is achieved through group building exercises, which aim to reduce anxiety and help group members get to know each other better. Practice amongst participants.

- **Accumulative name game.**
  Ask the group to sit in a circle. Start by introducing yourself. The person on your left should then give your name and his/her name, e.g. “This is.....and I am”. The next person speaks out the two names followed by his or her own name, and so on around the circle.

- **Changing places.**
  Ask the group to sit in a circle, while you stand in the middle. Ask all the participants to move places when “if” is shouted out. For example, “change places if you are wearing trousers, have long hair etc.” While the participants are changing places, find a chair for yourself, which means that someone else will be in the middle and will now have to find a chair. Continue until everyone is relaxed.

2. Decision making.

Select volunteers from the group to act out situations where a decision should be made (choose situations relevant to the lives of street children).

- Ask the group to follow the three steps of decision making. Ask them about their decision.

- Ask the group what questions will help them to make a decision about different types of situations: e.g. pressure to use substances, offer of a place in a shelter for street children, etc.

- Ask the group the following questions:
  - Name the steps you would use for making a decision?
  - Name a few people whom you can trust?
  - What questions can you ask yourself when you have to make a decision?
  - How will you know that you are making the right decision?
Bibliography and further reading


Key Messages

- Education for street children must relate to the actual situation that exists in their environment and issues that confront them in their daily lives.

- Teaching methods and learning aids must take into consideration the needs of street children.

- Effective learning can be achieved if street children are active participants in the process.

- A lesson plan is essential for teaching purposes as it can serve as a reference point for other street educators.

- Life skills can prepare street children mentally to cope with the harsh situations of street life. But the ultimate goal should be to get them off the streets.