Working With Street Children

MODULE 2
Responsibilities of Street Educators

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

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
Mental Health Determinants and Populations
Department of Mental Health and Substance Dependence
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Introduction

The term street educator applies to anyone who is directly involved with street children and responds to their needs by providing support and care. Street education is one of the most effective ways to support street children because it takes place in the areas where they live and work. This can be on the streets, in the places they visit or seek shelter or in the community where their families live. The street educator must serve as the main link between the children and the community which can provide them with their needs. To do this, a street educator must be in direct contact with street children and must recognise the expanded role and responsibilities of the street educator.

This module outlines the responsibilities and essential characteristics, attitudes, knowledge and basic skills that street educators should possess in order to work effectively with street children. The module also outlines how a trusting working relationship with street children can be established.

Learning objectives

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

- Describe the roles and responsibilities of a street educator.
- Describe the characteristics of an effective street educator.
- Name the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes for street educators.
- Describe the communication process.
- Explain types of communication.
- Demonstrate effective speaking and feedback skills.
- Describe the importance of establishing a working relationship with street children.
- Name two important aspects of understanding the world of a street child.
- Explain the importance of documenting work.
- Name three methods of documentation.
- Explain the importance of confidentiality in record keeping.
Lesson 1 - Responsibilities and characteristics of a street educator

1.1 Responsibilities of a street educator.

The roles and responsibilities can be many and various. Some of them are:

- **Assessment**: obtaining correct and relevant information about the situation of street children and the available resources. This helps in prioritizing the needs and problems of street children (details given in Module 5).

- **Responding to needs and problems**: responding to the immediate needs and problems of street children within the boundaries of available resources (details given in Modules 6 and 8).

- **Teaching/educating**: imparting knowledge, skills and appropriate attitudes to street children to help them in preventing or minimizing their problems and in seeking help when necessary (details given in Module 7).

- **Community mobilization and advocacy**: stimulating both the street children and the community to take action and adopt workable means as solutions by creating awareness about existing needs, problems of street children and about potential resources. Advocating and supporting the street children’s cause can strengthen the political will of the government to provide protection and welfare of street children and family units (details given in Module 9).

- **Management**: planning, implementing, evaluating activities, identifying and linking different resources within the community and ensuring collaboration with relevant government bodies and other organizations (see Module 10).

To be able to carry out these responsibilities it is important to have or acquire certain characteristics, knowledge, skills and attitudes. Experience of working with street children, basic skills of communication and the ability to share information with street children and information on them with other key people and organizations, e.g. government officials, business people, police etc. and basic skills for documenting their work, will be useful.

It is not always easy to work with street children. Street children often become hardened victims of a society that feels threatened by them. Peer pressure, cultural and working conditions of the street are other difficult issues that you will have to deal with. A major task for effective street education therefore is to establish a working relationship with the street children. For this, you will have to spend time on the street to know the world of street children, so that a trusting relationship can be established. The challenge is how to cope with the limitations that you come across.
1.2 Characteristics of an effective street educator.

To be an effective street educator you need to possess or acquire certain characteristics. You should:

- Have knowledge, skills and appropriate attitudes.
- Have the desire to learn continually. This would involve being aware of your limitations and seeking help when necessary.
- Have integrity, maturity, and a sense of responsibility, patience and sympathy.
- Have determination, enthusiasm and motivation.
- Be creative and resourceful.
- Be able to work in a participatory style and encourage everyone to contribute ideas and make decisions.
- Believe in empowering street children by setting up opportunities for them to recognize and develop their own skills by building self-confidence.

**Example**

In the Philippines, street children were asked to state the qualities of a good street educator. This is what they said.

“We like a street educator who is a friend, flexible and loving; a source of encouragement, protection and inspiration; gives immediate service and help, knows self-defence and teaches us how to defend ourselves, plays with us, helps us work.......”

When asked what type of street educator they do not like, they said. “We do not like a street educator who makes promises but does not keep them, preaches and demoralizes, always finds faults in everything we do, sees nothing but our filth and smell and how dirty we look, does not understand our culture, is gullible and easily put off, has favourites, wears too much make up and jewellery”.

(Children’s Laboratory for Drama in Education for the National Project on Street Children. A handbook for street educators, Philippines)
1.3 Knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Street educators must possess appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes to be able to work with street children effectively (The concepts regarding knowledge, skills and attitudes are described in ‘Teaching street children’ – Module 7).

- **Knowledge.**

  Knowledge relates to information and understanding of facts and principles. Knowledge can be acquired by reading reports about street children, talking to street children and other key leaders in the community, conducting assessments on street children and learning from experience.

- **Skills.**

  A skill is the ability to do something well. You will need to learn certain skills in order to transfer them to street children. Skills can be learnt through practice and demonstrations.

- **Attitudes.**

  Attitudes are tendencies to think or behave in a certain way. Attitudes include values and beliefs. They can be expressed in what you say, what you do or do not do, e.g. if you do not recognise the plight of street children and do not believe that they need help, your non-caring attitude can be reflected in the way you interact with them. Attitudes develop over a long period of time and are the hardest to change.

1.4 Learning from experience.

To work with street children you will have to understand the culture of the street and the ambitions and resources available to the child. To be effective, be flexible enough to accept the realities of working with street children. You will need to develop the capacity to reflect and relearn over and over again as you work with street children. For example, if you wish to use peer influence for the betterment of street children, you need to understand how peer groups are organized. Influential peers will have to be identified. Look for individuals who can communicate and express the group feelings, needs and aspirations.

- Mobilize the group for action.
- Organize the group and initiate team spirit.
- Produce workable ideas and encourage group members to adopt and maintain skills and strategies.

By learning through experience you build on the relevant knowledge and skills in the local context. Preconceived ideas about street children may pose great difficulty in working with them.
Learning has taken place

New experiences (perception)

Experimentation (using and trying what has been learned)

Adapting new experiences

Reflection (comparing the old and new experiences)

Rejection (failure to adopt new experiences)

Learning is a continuous process. Acknowledging this fact will help you to be more flexible and adaptive to working with street children.
Learning Activity

1. Responsibilities of street educators.

Review the responsibilities of street educators in the lesson. List the knowledge and skills that you require to be an effective street educator in order of priority.

- Knowledge
  1
  2
  3
  4
  5

- Skills
  1
  2
  3
  4
  5

Use the items you have listed as a guide to acquiring knowledge and skills on street education.

- Attitudes
  Based on what you have studied in this module and Module 1, state what attitudes you need to be an effective street educator.
2. Attitudes based on limited experience.

Masaka has recently joined as a street educator in the city centre of Kampala, Uganda. On his first day at work, he spots a street child stealing mangoes from a vendor along a busy street. Masaka feels disgusted and rushes out to apprehend the street child. He has heard that street children are thieves and feels they should be punished immediately. He takes the child to a police station by the corner of the street. The following day Masaka is back on the street to work with street children. He realises that when he approaches street children, they run and scamper for safety.

● What went wrong?

● How would you have reacted if you were Masaka to avoid getting into this situation?
3. Learning from experience.

On another day Masaka is in the company of other more experienced street educators. He spots the same street child stealing mangoes from another street vendor. Masaka suggests that the child should be apprehended. You are one of the experienced street educators. Share your experiences with Masaka and how your experiences influence your reaction to this situation. Describe the needs and problems of this street child and the reasons.

- Needs and problems.

- Why they exist.

*Your response should be based on the needs and problems of street children.*

A story of one day in the life of Roberto and Antonio is presented below. As you read the story identify some of the positive traits of the boys that can be put to good use in trying to improve their situation.

Roberto and Antonio are two street boys from Columbia. By the time they were ten, they were spending more time on the streets than at home. At the age of 12, they had become very skilled at surviving on the streets. The two boys had made an arrangement with Pedro, a vigilante (men who are hired by one or more households to serve as night guards against potential robbers), to spend the nights in a quiet corner of one of his buildings in exchange for bringing him cigarettes, food, and occasionally, liquor. They would return to this location every night and begin afresh from there every morning.

Early in the morning, they walked over to the centre where the early market was open. On their way, they passed through the major park where they paused for a few minutes to watch a storyteller, who in return for talking about the mysteries of women in the Amazon, passed around his hat for money. By offering to do this for him, the boys were able to earn a few pesos. Moving on, they stood very close to a fruit vendor, neither leaving nor asking for anything. They were eventually given a piece of pineapple, which they ate quickly, then they walked on.

A few blocks later they stopped at the El Paradiso restaurant where they go each morning to exchange washing the front sidewalk with a hose (which they also used for washing themselves) for leftover food from the previous night. Antonio put the plastic bag of leftover food over his shoulder, and the boys went to a quiet side street and sat down in the shade to eat. After eating what they wanted, they took the remainder a few blocks away to where they knew a blind man who used a corner for begging. In exchange for their leftovers, they received a few pesos and some cigarettes.

Getting on the bus that was going to the cemetery, the boys asked the driver to let them ride for free so that they might ask for food, since, they said, they were starving. On the bus, Roberto put on a pitiful expression and began to sing sorrowfully about the difficulties of having a sick mother whom he was trying to support. The song concluded with, “could you give my mother a few pesos so she could go to the doctor?” He got a few pesos, enough to pay for their ride to the cemetery. Meanwhile, Antonio positioned himself in the exit, standing in the way of passengers, offering them his hand so that they might climb down more easily.

In the evening the two boys went to the sexta (an avenue of fashionable shops and restaurants). They stopped on a side street where a rather young affluent couple was dining at an open-air restaurant, a few feet from the street. When the boys asked them for food, the couple tried to ignore them. The two boys sensed that they were intruding on a special occasion and so were
insistent, thinking that they were likely to be paid to leave the diners alone. Finally, the man who was dining told them in a loud voice to leave. When they did not, he called the waiter for help, who half-heartedly told the boys to go. They went across the street, maintaining minor eye contact with the diners, who were losing the pleasure of their occasion. As the waiter disappeared for the moment inside the restaurant, Roberto approached from one side and asked once again for something to eat. Antonio came from the other direction and grabbed a piece of meat off the man’s plate. Running and laughing, they receded into the darkened street. They carried the piece and returned to Pedro, the vigilante. They gave him part of it as they tiredly entered their vacant corner, which they called their ‘home’.

(Text adapted from “Psychology of Colombian Street children” by Lewis Aptekar, 1989)

Do you think that Roberto and Antonio can do the following?

- Communicate and express group feelings/needs and aspirations. Yes/ No
  Give reasons for your response.

- Mobilize peers for action. Yes/ No
  Give reasons for your response.

- Organize and initiate team spirit. Yes/ No
  Give reasons for your response.
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<th>Response</th>
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<td>Produce workable ideas.</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give reasons for your response.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage group members to adopt and maintain skills and strategies.</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give reasons for your response.</td>
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The information from this case study is useful in identifying ways of involving young people in the project.
Lesson 2 - Communication

2.1 What is Communication.

Communication is the process by which a message is passed from one individual to another. It is one of the most important tools that you have to influence the life of the street child. It is a key to understanding the street children, their world and a means to establishing a trusting and working relationship with them and the community. A street educator communicates all the time, for example when taking on the responsibility of imparting knowledge, influencing attitudes and teaching street children skills. Communication skills are also important for advocacy and community mobilization. Working with street children requires you to have effective communication skills.

2.2 The Communication Process.

Communication is a two-way flow of information. It involves both sending (sender to audience/receiver) and receiving (audience/receiver to sender feedback) information. The second part of the process (audience to sender) is also referred to as ‘feedback’. Communication can be through the use of words (written or spoken) or without words (gestures and appearance).

- Verbal communication.

Verbal communication involves three main processes: (a) listening, (b) speaking and (c) feedback. One needs to develop certain skills in each of these areas to be able to communicate effectively.

**Listening skills:** listening carefully to street children can assist you in understanding their interests, ideas and needs. Few adults in the life of street children have bothered to listen to their worries and difficulties. Attentive listening conveys to them that you believe they are important and have the right to be heard. Listening to them when they talk about their problems also makes them feel better. Experience suggests that listening may be more important than talking for eliciting co-operation and building relationship. Skillful listening involves:

- Making eye contact with the child. This shows that you are interested and do not disapprove of what the child is saying, and that you are not embarrassed by their situation. Avoid eye contact with the child if it is considered impolite or threatening in the local culture.
• Paying attention to the street child. Do not appear distracted or in a hurry when the child is speaking. Allow the child to finish sentences before making comments. Communicating is more than spoken words. The tone of the child’s voice, the rate of speech, the expression on his or her face can tell you what he/she might be thinking.

• Treating the street child as an individual. Try not to make assumptions about the street child based on the behaviour of the group. Avoid being judgmental and show acceptance of the child.

Speaking skills: Good communication between two people requires using a common language. Street educators and street children sometimes have difficulty in fully understanding each other because of differences in language. If you have not spent time on the streets, you may not know the special words and expressions that street children use. The following can assist you to speak effectively:

• Speak clearly, coherently and audibly.
• Use clear expressions and words.
• Complete the message and stay on the subject of discussion.
• Encourage the child to speak by nodding your head or using short phrases like “hmm,” “really?” “What happened next?” or “What else happened?”
• You could also use key words as prompts, e.g. a street child may say, “He is good to me, but...” you could just respond by saying “but?”
• Avoid pushing the child to say more than he or she wants to say.
• Remember, talking only helps when a person is ready to talk. Respect a young person’s right to be silent.

Feedback: Providing feedback can be a two way process. Repeating to an individual what they have said can provide helpful clarification to them. It also provides them with an opportunity to tell you if you have misunderstood what they have said. Give feedback to the street child, but also encourage the child to give you a feedback about what he or she feels about the communication. Feedback is effective when it is:

• Constructive and not judgmental.
• Clear, specific and essentially correct.
• Given immediately after the message or action.
Non-verbal communication.

- **Gestures and appearance:** Communication without words can help in understanding the street child and to be understood by him or her. Facial expression, body movement, gesture, posture, type of clothing and distance between the street child and street educator are important determinants of the communication process. Non-verbal communication says a lot about your attitudes or those of the street child. To be effective, ensure that both non-verbal and verbal communication are conveying the same message. When communicating with a child or another individual, avoid letting eyes wander while listening as you might miss some information. Pay attention to any disparity between verbal and non-verbal communication. It may suggest the need to shift strategy, e.g. if the street child’s eyes become tearful even though he is speaking smoothly, you may have to stop your exploration on a particular subject. When you work on the street wear simple clothes. If you do not want to be perceived as distant, accept food if a street child offers you food, or join in a game but wear simple dignified clothes for advocacy work.

- **Maintain an encouraging posture:** In some cultures, leaning forward may encourage communication, whereas slouching and crossing the arms can indicate lack of interest and create a barrier to free communication. Smiling and showing approval, e.g. by nodding, if this is appropriate, can encourage a street child to continue speaking.

**To identify with street children, try and be like them.**
**Wear simple clothes while working on the street.**

**You may be perceived to be distant by the way you dress.**
2.3 Other components of the communication process.

- **Communication strategy.**

  The audience for a message may be street children or members of the community. It is important to pick a communication strategy that will reach your intended audience. A personal unstructured approach works best for most of the communication with individual street children. For this approach the street educator is guided by street children’s needs, and the opportunities that come up, so that no fixed schedule for imparting messages is followed. This approach may not be the best approach for advocacy. A more focussed strategy in which the intended message is put across in a precise manner would be preferable.

- **Methods of communication.**

  You may want to consider the following methods of communication when planning activities on the education of street children and advocacy:

  - **Communication using speech:** this can be by formal face-to-face meetings or informal conversations (either directly or through telephone calls) or by a public address system.
  
  - **Communication using written words:** this can be through articles, letters, books, leaflets, poems or songs.
  
  - **Through visual means:** this can be through films, videos or illustrations.

- **Environment.**

  For effective communication to take place, the environment should not be too noisy. There should be as little distraction as possible. If the topic is of a sensitive nature, privacy may need to be ensured (issue of confidentiality will be discussed in **Module 5**). Try going to the corner of a room or taking a walk together.
Learning Activity

1. Effective communication.
   - List some barriers to effective communication with street children.
   - State how you can minimize these barriers.

2. Non-verbal communication.
   Read the example given below and answer the questions that follow.

   Leah is a new street educator on her first day at work with street children. She is very enthusiastic and flexible and wants to alleviate some of the problems of street children. She believes in looking smart for work. She is wearing a suit, three gold necklaces, dangling gold earrings and four gold bangles on each of her wrists. In addition, she is wearing high-heeled shoes.

   - Discuss or list non-verbal messages Leah is conveying to street children.
   - How would you dress if you were the street educator working with street children? Give reasons.
   - Discuss the importance of non-verbal communication.
3. Listening, speaking and feedback skills.

A 14-year-old street girl from the neighbourhood arrives at a drop-in centre. She appears unusually quiet and withdrawn. The street educator wants to find out what is troubling her. Role play this scenario to demonstrate effective speaking and feedback skills. After the role play, discuss what was done well and areas that need to be improved upon.

4. ‘Ice breaker’ (starter): Communication and observation skills.

This activity in itself helps children to develop creative expression and observation skills. Role play this ice-breaker (Street educator and a group of street children)

Instructions:
1. Facilitator writes pairs of names of different animals on small pieces of paper.
2. Each participant picks one piece of paper.
3. Each ‘animal’ looks for partner without saying the name of the animal, i.e. by making movements and sounds of the animal such as waddling and saying “quack, quack”, or crawling and saying “meow, meow’, etc.
Learning Questions:

- How did it feel to try and communicate without talking? Was it easy or hard?

- What are examples of other situations where people depend on sounds (other than talking) and what they can see to understand what is going on or take action in real life? (e.g. hearing a whistle and knowing that a train is coming, or seeing a flag waving and getting to know that one should move out of the way, or seeing two people starting to fight and knowing that they should get help or get out of the way).

- Why is being observant a useful skill?
Lesson 3 - Establishing a trusting work relationship

3.1 Importance of a trusting work relationship.

The fundamental work of street education is to build relationships with street children that are based on mutual trust, respect and a commitment to personal growth. The process of establishing trust with street children is often difficult because many street children have learned not to trust people. The street educator must come across as a person who is genuinely committed and who practices what he or she stands for. Communication plays an important role in establishing such a trusting working relationship with street children.

3.2 How to start building the relationship (engaging).

Engaging is the process of encouraging a street child in having a relationship with you. One good way to start the process of building a trusting relationship is to join in when they play games such as football, pinball, hide-and-seek or in something that they normally like to do. You can also join in when street children are working. Help them wash cars, search for food, or carry things. Avoid imposing activities as it would make you appear as an authority figure rather than a facilitator and a friend.

*Do something with them that they like to do.*
3.3 Understanding the world of a street child.

Street children are more likely to trust you and spend time with you if you already know something about their world.

- **Language**: many groups of street children have their own special language, which is not known to outsiders. This special language helps to unite them. Learn some aspects of their language in order to understand them and communicate effectively with them. Using the terms they use can help build their trust in you.
Community: knowing the physical and social characteristics of the area or locality where street children spend their time can assist you in your work. The physical characteristics are structures such as streets, sidewalks, markets, theatres, recreational areas, public buildings, and empty spaces. The social characteristics of the neighbourhood include sources of food, danger zones, sleeping locations, work places, and areas for using substances. Once you have made a map of the neighbourhood, you will have some idea of where to go in order to engage the street children. The social characteristics can be marked with a code that is explained at the side of the map. A street educator’s map might look like this:

Spending time on the streets: the next step is to spend time in the places where street children are found. This may be in the park, the market place, or the bus or railway station. Talk to all the children you meet and allow them to get to know you first.
Example

Understanding the life of a street child.

When boys living on the street were asked: “When you were out on the streets, did you have a special friend with whom you could share everything?”

The following were their responses as reported in the report on the 1994 WHO, PSA Focus Group Discussions:

- “No. No one, we could only trust ourselves.”
- “No, they would take you off right away. They would tell someone, call the police”
- “They would invite you for a meal and then take you away”.
- “You can’t trust anyone”.
- “No, no one, who you could confide in. A cop? He would take you away.”

The general response was negative and this is a challenge for you as a street educator.
Learning Activity

1. Engaging: starting the process of building a trusting relationship.

A street educator has just met an 11 year-old street boy who is begging outside a church. The educator wants to get to know him and find out what his needs are.

- Demonstrate how you can establish a trusting relationship with this child through a role play.

2. The world of the street child.

Draw a map of the area where you will be working using your own symbols and codes. If you are not certain about some of the social characteristics, ask some street children or other street educators for information.
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3. The language of street children.

What words or expressions do street children in your area commonly use for the following people and things?

- **People.**
  - Police.
  - Other street children.
  - Children and youths who are not on the street.
  - Enemies.
  - Friends.
  - Street educators.
  - Adults.
  - Parents.
  - Themselves.

- **Places.**
  - The streets.
  - Police station.
  - A place of safety.
  - A place to use substances.
  - A health centre.
  - A place to play.
  - A place to sleep.

- **Activities.**
  - Working.
  - Begging.
  - Having sex.
  - Selling sex.
  - Using substances.
  - Drug trafficking.
Lesson 4 - Documenting and Reporting

Documentation helps in monitoring the progress of the individual street child. Recording and reporting can also help in monitoring progress and in identifying problems in a street children’s project. Documents are necessary for communicating with other agencies and are a source of information for other people who want to become involved in street education.

4.1 Systems of record keeping and reporting.
Some programmes have a provision for keeping records on individual street children and for recording daily, weekly or monthly activities. Each team will have to decide what would work best.

- **Intake forms.**

  Street educators usually like to keep a record of how many and what type of children they are working with. They use an intake form for this purpose. The form is usually completed after a street educator has met the street child a few times on the street or at a centre. This information helps in the case assessment and development of action plans. Some programmes include assessment information and initial action plan as closing sections on the intake form, while others ask street educators to document the case assessment process separately. Find out about the type of forms used in your locality to document information about street children. You can then develop your own form. Key areas on which information should be obtained are:

  - Identification e.g. name, age, gender, date of birth, usual address, family background.
  - Description of the child, physical appearance, physical and emotional problems.
  - Other information e.g. reasons for leaving home, any arrests, special needs.

- **Log books.**

  A log book is a record of daily encounters between street educators and street children. Log books are often used by street educators who move frequently from one location to another. Each day, the street educator records the names of the street children met, the locations visited and the work done. When you make an entry in a log book, think about answering questions such as **who? what? where? when? why? and how?**
Case progress notes.

Some street educators, especially those who work in centres or institutions, prefer to keep information about each street child separately. These records are called case progress notes. If the workers see a street child daily they may make only one entry each week, but if they see the child only occasionally, they may write a progress note after each meeting.

Example

A log book

Date: December 3, 1996
Time: 4:00 PM
Location: Central square next to the fountain.

After leaving the area around the train station, I visited the ‘fountain children’ Marco, Antonio, Paula, and Theresa. A boy new to the street, named Carlos was begging with them. Carlos said he had come from a neighbouring village on a bus to watch the football match on Saturday, but did not have enough money to return home. He was now trying to earn enough money by begging to buy a ticket back home. Carlos appeared distressed and it was clear that he had been crying recently. I encouraged Carlos to go to the centre for a meal, a bed, and perhaps some help in returning home. He said he was not sure he wanted to go to the centre. It may be that Carlos does not want to go home, despite his current distress. The other children have told him that he will be ‘captured’ if he goes to the centre. The other children were fine, except that Marco complained that he had an earache. When I looked in his ear, his ear was full of dirt and dried blood. I showed Marco how to clean his ear and I encouraged him to keep his ear clean.

Future Plans.

Not sure what has caused Marco’s ear condition, will need to encourage Marco to visit a health facility so that the cause of the condition can be determined and appropriate treatment given. Will also try to talk with Carlos to find out more about why he left home, try to decrease his fear about going to the centre, will take him to Centre if he wants to go.
**Example**

**Case progress note**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child’s name: Loochi Bancale</th>
<th>Age : 15 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date: 14 June 1995</td>
<td>Worker’s name: Ana Reves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Loochi appeared at the centre early this morning for the first time in 3 weeks. Her eyes were blood-shot and she was not well groomed like she normally is. She said that she had come straight from work at the bar where she dances and that she had not yet slept and that her boyfriend had gotten very angry at her the previous night at the bar when she became friendly with another young man. Her boyfriend started a fight in the bar with the other boy and was thrown out of the bar. The boyfriend threatened to kill Loochi the next time he saw her. She had come to the centre to seek protection.

I gave Loochi some breakfast and arranged for her to sleep in an empty room upstairs while the other children were out. I also contacted one of the outreach workers who knows Loochi’s boyfriend. The worker will try to find him and discuss the situation with him. I will encourage Loochi to stay at the centre until the problem is resolved.

| Date: 15 June 1995 | Worker’s name: Ana Reves |

Loochi appeared calmer. Her eyes are clearing. She has expressed interest in staying at the centre in order to participate in some of the skill training programmes.

### 4.2 Effective record keeping and reporting.

The way records and reports are kept can contribute to their effectiveness. Whatever methods of recording and reporting are used, they should be of value.

**They must:**
- be clear and readily understood (they should have no complicated terms)
- be presented in logical sections
- stress important points
- be precise (avoid unnecessary details and repetitions)
- be kept confidential such as not using names on sensitive documents that might be incriminating
- be kept in a secure place
- be accessed by a limited number of people and not by the general public
Learning Activity

1. Existing records.

Review various types of records you use during your work. Through group discussions, you can modify and improve upon them. In the groups, discuss the following:

- What type of information will you need to keep on the Intake Form?
- What systems will you use to help street educators record information when they actually make contact with street children in the street?
- How will you keep the collected information confidential (to protect the privacy of street children)? Who should have access to the information? Are there special concerns about keeping information safe from gangs or criminal groups?
- Are there any legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of records in your area? Are there any guidelines from professional groups regarding the confidentiality of records about street children and their families which could help in determining appropriate policies for your project?

2. Field visit.

In small groups or individually, make a visit to an organization running a street children project.

- Review the recording systems.
- Following the visit, identify the strengths and weaknesses of the recording system.

3. Intake form.

You are planning to develop a project on shelter for street children. Develop an intake form that you will use to document information about a street child when he or she enters your shelter. Use the strengths of record systems that you have seen on the field visit.
Bibliography and further reading


Key Messages

- The essential responsibilities of the street educator include determining needs and problems, responding to needs and problems, teaching, community mobilization and advocacy.

- To be an effective street educator, you need to possess or acquire certain traits, knowledge, skills and appropriate attitudes, and experience of working with street children.

- Communication is a two-way flow of information from sender to receiver and back. Feedback ensures that the message is received and understood or perhaps not understood.

- Communication without words such as by gestures, expression and appearance is very important. This should always be taken into consideration as it can have major implications in the communication process.

- Skills in effective communication are fundamental in developing a trusting work relationship with street children.

- Knowing about the “world” of street children can help to enhance the communication process and the confidence that the child has in you.

- Documentation of information about your work is an important communication tool. Whatever information is documented, it must be clear, easily understood, accessible and must be shared with appropriate persons.