



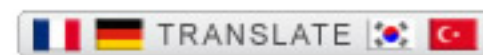
Record numbers of children are living on the streets on the island republic of Mauritius

Written by [Jean-Yves Bignoux](#) on April 5, 2012.

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Street in Mauritius

Children living on the streets are on the increase, and Mauritius has no immunity to this enigma, the association Safire in co-operation with Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Association outlines in a report, reckoning the conditions of street children in the island nation 6,780 children are currently on the streets, according to their recent report and this figure is likely to grow. The NGO SAFIRE SAFIRE (Service d'Accompagnement, de Formation, d'Insertion et de Réhabilitation de l'Enfant (Support Service for Training

Integration and Rehabilitation of the Child) cooperated with the Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Association (MFPWA) to lead a study to establish the statistics and dire situation of street children and understand the root of this problem, a first in Mauritius according to Safire

Months of investigation and research have enabled the team of researchers to approach children, vulnerable and isolated from the Mauritian society to grasp the enormity of the problem. One finding concludes that inherent dangers of being in the street situation ties in economic deprivation, lack of adult protection and meagre socialization, rendering children exceptionally vulnerable, as strive to develop survival "techniques" to cope with hazards of life on the street.

The study exposed that there are currently approximately 6,780 children in street situations in Mauritius. Most are aged between 11 and 16 years, do not go to school and were engaged in employment since the age of 13. These children are often victims of abuse, sexual abuse, drugs and are exposed to numerous dangers on the street all around the Indian Ocean Island, according to the report entitled Study of Street Children in Mauritius. Safire's study showed that the real problem of children living on the street was actually cantered around those who work in the street, since the majority of children affected by the study have a roof to sleep under and the socio-economic reality that exists in Mauritius in low-income families.

However, the Mauritian authorities continue to deny the existence of this problem in Mauritius. Director of Safire, Ismahan Ferhat, told the Africa Review, the report and its findings were necessary, highlighting that there has never been any study about this situation in Mauritius and that the government has not awarded any money thus far, to stem the problem. "There is a state of denial about this issue in Mauritius; these children are at risk from many hazards like sexual exploitation and economic exploitation," she said.

There are no policies that address this issue, we are the only ones to have tackled this issue so far, the findings are reality, we expected it no surprise for us," she added. Furthermore, the report described in a recommendation that decision makers must be sensitized to the concern of children in street situations and the societal menaces to which they are exposed.

Submitted by [Jean-Yves Bignoux](#)

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