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ASIA/BANGLADESH - Around 700 000 children living on the streets

Dhaka (Agenzia Fides) - All over the world there are 250 million "street children": they are the poorest of the poor, completely marginalized, they live, work and sleep on the street. According to estimates by the Spanish organization Plan, in Bangladesh there are about 700 000. Engaged in the Asian country since 2002, the NGO works on the recovery of these victims by funding and coordinating centers where they can be accommodated. They organize courses in sewing, games and activities as well as lessons in literacy, drama and music. The older ones are given professional formation. In these centers, street children go back to being children. Only in Bangladesh it is expected that there will be 1.1 million by 2014. In Dhaka, the capital, 59% of these children vegetate on the streets in search of something to eat and sleep on the sidewalks. About 80% of children are males, however, the situation is particularly serious for girls, who are subjected to the pressure and the stigma of prostitution as well as sexual violence. Many of these children have left their families because they were mistreated. The objective of Plan is to slowly recover them, to give them their dignity and tools to get out of their extreme poverty. The NGO works internationally in 68 countries and promotes development programs in 50 countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America to reduce child poverty. Commitment with street children is focused on the psycho-social and emotional recovery of children by facilitating their access to education through day care centers. So far more than 1.5 million children, girls and their families, and indirectly more than 9 million people have been directly assisted. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 13/4/2012)

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