

## Priorities: introduction

---

Dhaka is the capital city of Bangladesh. Many of the 9 million people who live in Dhaka are very poor. Some of those who live in greatest poverty are the street children. There are up to 1 million street children living and working on the streets of Dhaka.

Some of the children work, play and spend most of their day with other children on the street but have families to return to at night. These children often help the family earn money by working on the streets.

Other children survive without family, entirely on their own, except for the company of other street children or those willing to help and support them.

This is a part of a more extensive work. For more information about these issues, how some organizations are supporting street children in Dhaka and how we could cooperate too, [click here](#).

### Just for you to think about it!!

There has been an alarming rise in the number of street children in the major cities of Bangladesh. The increase is linked to recent figures released by the government which show that the urban population of Bangladesh continues to grow by around nine percent a year.

It is possible to smell the Demra dump on the east of Dhaka from over a mile away. One of the biggest rubbish dumps in the city, it is a vast area the size of several football pitches. The stench as you walk closer is so over-whelming it is hard for the uninitiated to resist vomiting. This huge wasteland in some respects resembles the a scene after the bombs have been dropped in the movie Apocalypse Now.

It is difficult to believe that anybody can survive in such an environment. But every morning as the sun rises a host of children walk across this vast mound of rotting rubbish scavenging for used plastic water bottles or similar rubbish. They can sell these items for a paltry fee to a second-hand shop that operates on the outskirts of the dump.

**By the BBC's Alastair Lawson in Dhaka**

# Priorities: survey

---

**This activity gives you a chance to learn** more about the problems that street children have to face every day. After you have decided, talk about it with the children sitting around you and decide if you stick to your first choice or you change it. When you finish you will be able to compare your choice with what the street children themselves actually think. Take the list home and do the same with your family. What do you think are the ten most serious problems?

## **Difficulties and dangers faced by children of the street**

- Being hungry and not having enough to eat.
- Being tortured by police.
- Not having a bed to sleep on.
- Not enjoying the work they do on the streets.
- Feeling lonely; not having any friends.
- Not being able to get a job.
- Nowhere to go for protection from the rain.
- Feeling frightened and hopeless about the future.
- Not being able to learn to read, write and do maths.
- Being abused and robbed of their money by adults.
- Not having clean water to drink.
- Adults insulting them or physically hurting them.
- Not being able to get medicines when ill.
- Girls not being able to marry.
- Not having clean clothes to wear.
- Having very little money and earning very little from their work.
- Not having the power to protest against bad treatment by adults.