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peuan peuan

## Bangkok Street Children Profile August 2010



Based on information collected between  
January 2008 and July 2010

Prepared by Friends-International  
with the support of



CHILDHOOD  
WORLD CHILDHOOD FOUNDATION

## Abbreviations

BMA	Bangkok Metropolitan Administration
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
FI	Friends-International
GO	Governmental Organisation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoSDHS	Ministry of Social Development and Human Security
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
RTG	Royal Thai Government
SCP	Street Children Profile
SLC	Street Living Children
SLF	Street Living Family
SWC	Street Working Children
UNIAP	United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

# **Bangkok street children profile (August 2010)**

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## **I- PEUAN PEUAN / FRIENDS-INTERNATIONAL THAILAND**

Through its work in Cambodia since 1994, Friends-International observed growing numbers of street children traveling to Thailand. In 2005, Friends-International launched a research project, in collaboration with UNIAP, to explore the situation of Cambodian children and mothers begging on the streets of Bangkok, including how they traveled there, how children and mothers survive and the process of repatriation to Cambodia. The research showed that although trafficking is not as prevalent as previously believed, unsafe/irregular migration for many different reasons is a huge problem which often results in exploitation, or worse, for women, men and children.

As a result of the findings of this research, the Peuan Peuan program was launched by Friends-International in Bangkok in 2006 with the support of UNICEF.

Peuan Peuan (meaning 'friends' in Thai) provides both emergency and longer term support services to Thai, Cambodian, Lao and Burmese marginalized children and their families. This is done in close collaboration with and supported by the Royal Thai Government (RTG), the Bangkok Municipal Administration (BMA) and other organizations.

In 2009, the Peuan Peuan program expanded to Aranyaprathet at the Cambodian border, providing services to Cambodian children working in the Rong Kluang market and to young migrants.

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## II- INTRODUCTION

### *Why a Street Children Profile?*

In order to carry out its work in the best possible way, it is necessary for Peuan Peuan to have a good understanding of the number and of the situations of street children in Bangkok.

Doing such a study on a regular basis allows better analysis and understanding of the ongoing changes within the target group.

### *Defining Street Children*

There is no set definition of what constitutes a Street Child. The UN has defined the term Street Children to include ‘any boy or girl... for whom the street in the widest sense of the word... has become his or her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood, and who is inadequately protected, supervised, or directed by responsible adults’. However, this definition needs to be specified towards the great number of children working and/or living with their families on the streets facing the same potential risks. To overcome this definitional limitation, a 3-fold definition of street children is used by Friends-International distinguishing between: Street Living Children (SLC), Street Working Children (SWC) and Children of Street Living Families (SLF):

**Street Living Children:**

‘Children who have cut ties with their families and live alone on the streets’

**Street Working Children:**

‘Children who spend all or most of their time working on the streets to provide an income for their families or for themselves, but who return to a caregiver’s home very regularly’

**Children from Street Living Families:**

‘Children who live with their family on the streets’

*Note: Friends-International decided to include babies accompanying their begging caretaker on the streets of Bangkok into the category of street living families (although many of them regularly rent a room when their financial situation allows it) because those children spend the large majority of their time on the streets, including night time.*

The 3-fold definition of street children applied in the Street Children Profile is thus ‘not based on the social or economic backgrounds of the children, or the types of activities they perform (which are

mostly viewed as survival behaviours for living), but rather on the physical contact with the street setting as compared to their contact with their families <sup>1</sup>.

The Friends-International target group is children and youth between 0 and 24 years old. However in the present document, only information about children (under 18 years) has been used.

### *Survey Methodology and participants*

Two complementary methods have been applied in the present survey. The first method assembles Street Children Snapshot Surveys and the second gathers the information collected from Case Management forms of individual children.

**(1) A street children snapshot survey** is a periodic count that produces primary data estimating the number of street children on one specific day in one geographical area (in the present document the city of Bangkok)

5 snapshot surveys targeting street children in Bangkok have been conducted between March 2009 and June 2010.

The snapshot surveys were conducted by staff and volunteers of the Peuan Peuan program, together with staff from partner organisations:

- The Bureau of Anti-Trafficking in Women and Children - Department of Social Development and Welfare - MoSDHS,
- Bureau of Social Development – BMA,
- Human Development Foundation (Mercy Center).

On average 23 persons participated in each survey. They were divided in specific teams (8 to 12 teams depending on the surveys) with each team having an allocated area.

The areas were defined based on the experience of the outreach workers from Peuan Peuan and from partners. The teams surveyed the areas from 6.00 am to 1.00 am.

Most street children met with the teams in the afternoon and evening, after 4.00 pm and until 1.00 am

All persons participating to the surveys were briefed in advance on the methodology. The guidelines for the snapshot survey are:

- Introduce yourself to the child and briefly explain the purpose of the survey;
- Short interviews based on the FI communication standards
- Never force the child to answer;
- Ask if the child has met another survey staff on the day of the survey

Street children snapshot surveys are providing quantitative information (number of children, age range, gender)

(2)The second analytical frame consists in information on the causes for children to become street children and on the risks they are facing. Peuan Peuan staff have combined information from 45 children's individual Case Management files, drawn from those who have received support from Peuan Peuan between January 2008 and July 2010.

Case management is the process of supporting a specific child to be safe and to build their future. It is a collaborative effort between a Case Manager (a social worker) and a child. It is usually a long term process lasting for a few years until the objectives initially set by the child and the case manager are fulfilled.

Some case management forms were incomplete as children voluntarily provide information and do not always wish to provide all information, such as the reasons to why children have left home. Peuan Peuan staff does not pressure children for explanations in order to avoid possibly reinforcing their trauma. Usually the children express this information when they feel ready and confident.

The figures and statistics cited in this Profile are not representative of the entire street children population in Bangkok and only provide estimations about the numbers and situations of street children in Bangkok.

The Bangkok street children profile was prepared thanks to the continuous support of UNICEF Thailand and thanks to the support of the World Childhood Foundation from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2010.

The views expressed in this document are expressed by Friends-International and do not represent the views of UNICEF or the World Childhood Foundation.



### III- MAIN RESULTS

#### OVERALL

##### *Information based on snapshot surveys*

An average of 175 street children (41% females) were met during each snapshot survey (with a maximum of 210 street children met over one day in October 2009)

23% were street living children

42% were street working children

35% were children of street families or begging babies with their mothers

35% of the sample was between the 0-5 years old;

40% of the sample was between 6 and 14 years old;

25% of the sample was between 15 and 18 years old

62% of all street children were Thai

28% of all street children were Khmer

Another 10% were Burmese and Vietnamese

##### *Information based on children's case managements*

57% of street children mentioned begging as their occupation, making begging the primary activity.

Khmer street children have come to work/live on the streets because of poverty and economic reasons.

Thai street children have come to work/live on the streets because of family problems, domestic violence.

88% of all street children have spent more than 1 year on the streets

34% of all street children have spent more than 3 years on the streets.

87% of all street children have stopped school

9% never studied in their life

15% of all street children said they have been victims of sexual abuse.



## **BY CATEGORTIES**

### **STREET LIVING CHILDREN**

90% were males

3% were 0 to 5 years old

37% were 6 to 14 years old

60% were 15 to 18 years old

98% were Thai children

### **STREET WORKING CHILDREN**

47% were females

23% were 0 to 5 years old

43% were 6 to 14 years old

34% were 15 to 18 years old

68% were Thai (18% Khmer, 9% Burmese and 5% Vietnamese)

### **CHILDREN OF STREET FAMILIES (INCLUDING BABIES WITH BEGGING CARETAKERS)**

50% were females

60% were 0 to 5 years old

39% were 6 to 14 years old

1% was 15 to 18 years old

51% were Khmer

Based on data collected, **Friends-International estimates that there is a minimum of 150 street children** (including street living children, street working children and children from street living families) **at any given time in Bangkok.**

**Due to the mobility of street children, Friends-International estimates that there are between 300 and 1,000 street children in Bangkok over a 1 year period.**

## IV- INFORMATION BASED ON SNAPSHOT SURVEYS

Conducted between March 2009 and June 2010, the purpose of the snapshot surveys is to provide basic information on street children in Bangkok, including a rough estimation of the number.

During the 5 surveys the team met in one day an average of 175 street children ranging in age from 0 to 18 years.

5 snapshot surveys have been conducted by between March 2009 and June 2010.

The surveys have been conducted by the Peuan Peuan teams, with the support of social workers from the MoSDHS, the BMA and the Human Development Foundation.

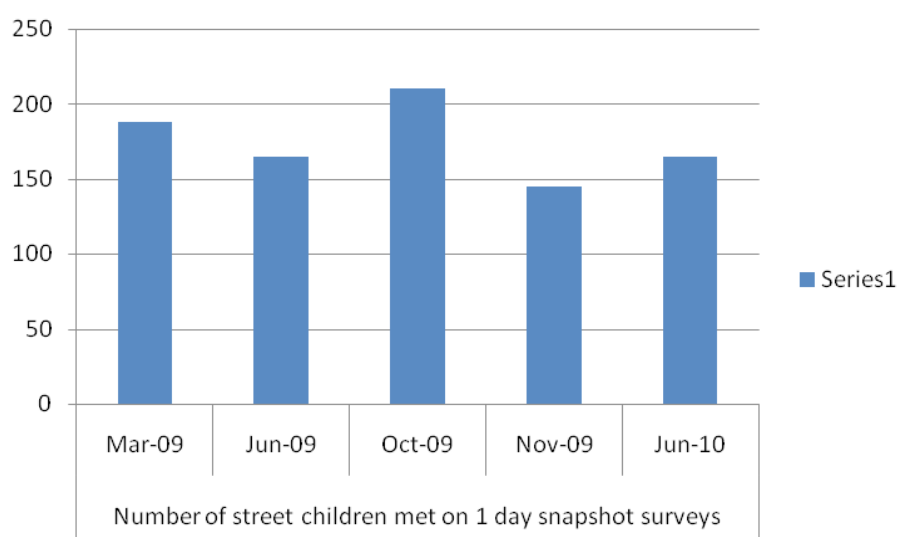
1st snapshot survey was conducted on the 17th March 2009: 188 children were met

2nd snapshot survey was conducted on the 12th June 2009: 165 children were met

3rd snapshot survey was conducted on the 6th October 2009: 210 children were met

4th snapshot survey was conducted on the 18th November 2009: 145 children were met

5th snapshot survey was conducted on the 12th June 2010: 165 children were met



### A- GENERAL FIGURES – ALL CATEGORIES

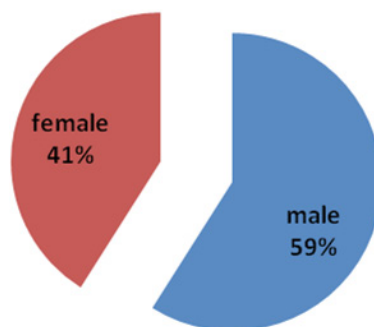
The first part of this quantitative analysis shows the characteristics of the whole street children population in Bangkok; it will be followed by a specific analysis for each category of street children in order to identify the specific trends and characteristics of each category.

#### Gender

Over the 5 surveys the team has met an average of 175 street children during each survey, 41% of

them were females.

## Gender



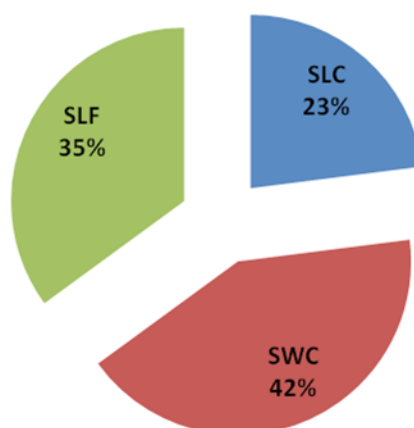
The gender distribution shows a majority of males (59%); however this distribution varies in the different street children categories.

## Categories

On average over the 5 snapshot surveys:

- 23% of children met were street living children
- 42% of all children met were street working children
- 35% of all children met were children of street families or begging babies with their mothers

## Categories of street children



The high proportion of street families (23%) is to be explained by the much higher level of economical

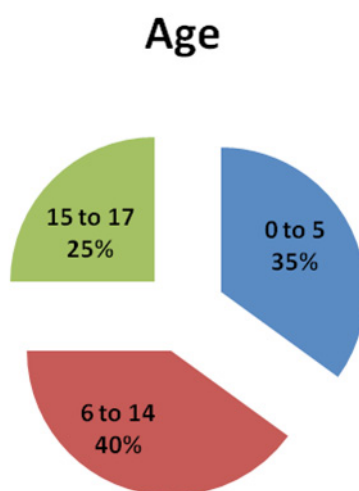
development of Thailand compared with neighboring countries such as Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar. Thailand, Bangkok in particular, is perceived by very vulnerable families as a place where begging can easily generate important income.

Street working children represent the majority of street children. The category of Children of street families is relatively important, which can be explained by the economic opportunities in Bangkok attracting poor families from the neighboring countries to beg on the streets of Bangkok.

The proportion of each category in the total was rather stable throughout the different surveys, with the exception of the first snapshot survey (March 2009). At the beginning of the project the team did not identify all locations where street living children were staying and thus counted a higher percentage of street working children. Also during the 1st snapshot survey, the babies accompanying their begging caretakers were classified as street working children (SWC) but from the 2nd survey they were classified as Street Living Families because they are effectively living on the streets in the day and the night, accompanying their caretaker. FI recognizes this has an implication towards the interpretation of the data on the categories of street children but considers it is minor.

### Age

- 35% of all children interviewed were between 0 and 5 years old
- 40% of all children interviewed were between 6 and 14 years old
- 25% of all children interviewed were between 15 and 18 years old



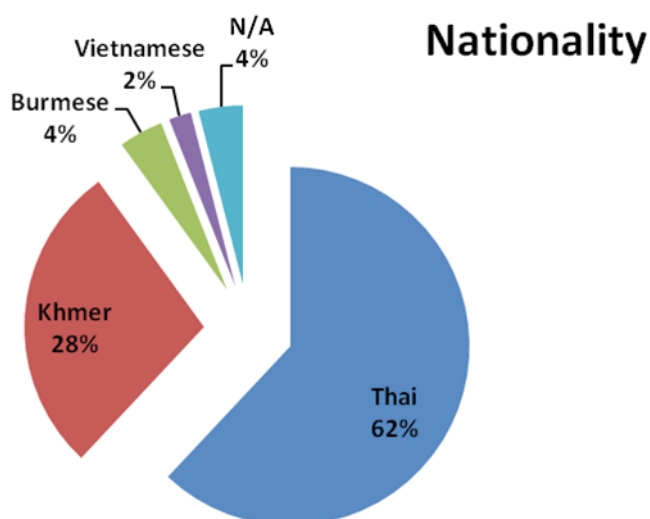
The importance of the 0-5 year old group (35% of the total) can be explained by the high proportion of children of street families among the street population in Bangkok. This explanation is supported by the similar percentage of children between 0 and 5 years old and the percentage of children of street families (both 35%).

It is very common that adult beggars (mostly females) are carrying babies in order to earn more money from begging activities. The importance of the 0-5 age group (accompanied by mothers, relatives or caregivers and coming largely from Cambodia) is one of the main characteristic of the street children population in Bangkok.

25% of the sample was composed of children 15-18 years old.

### Nationality

- 62% of all street children met were Thai
- 28% of all street children met were Khmer
- 4% of all street children met were Burmese
- 2% of all street children met were Vietnamese
- In 4% of cases the information was not collected by the teams



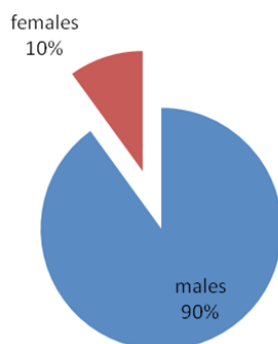
The surveys show a majority of Thai (62%) and Khmer (28%) street children. The second part of the Street Children Profile will study the different characteristics of Khmer and Thai street children.

## B- STREET LIVING CHILDREN

### Gender

The category of street living children (17% of the total; 30 individuals) has a much lower proportion of females (10%) than all other categories.

**Street Living Children - Gender**

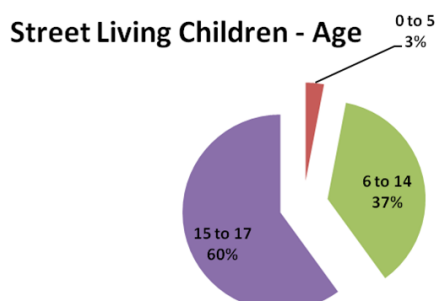


The gender distribution within the SLC category reveals an outstanding number of males, reflecting the vulnerability of both young children and females living alone on the streets and the likelihood that they (females) will be channelled into forced labour or sexual exploitation.

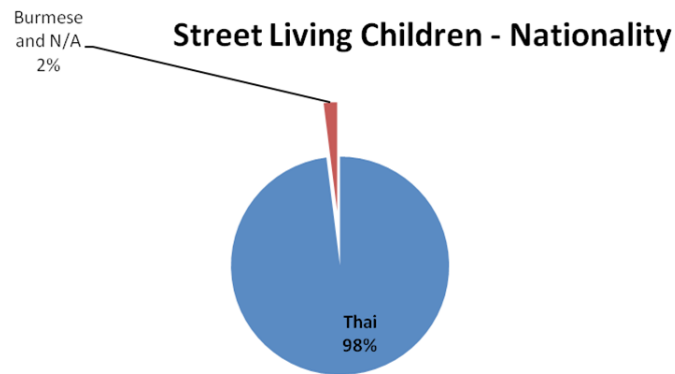
### Age

- 3% of street living children were between 0 and 5 years old
- 37% of street living children were between 6 and 14 years old
- 60% of street living children were between 15 and 18 years old

The Street Living children age structure is very different from the overall age structure with a large majority of children (60%) over 15 years old.



## Nationality



98% of street living children were Thai children.

This high percentage of Thai children can be explained by the fact children coming from other countries are in a large majority coming with the objective of earning money, most often with relatives or caregivers.

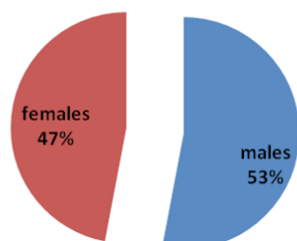
It is also important to remember children coming from other countries live in illegal situation, without visas or working permits. It is thus more difficult and dangerous for foreign children to be living on the streets where the risks of police arrest are higher.



## C- STREET WORKING CHILDREN

### Gender

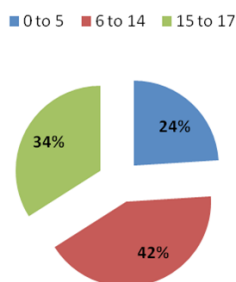
#### Street Working Children - Gender



The street working children category has a balanced gender distribution (47% females and 53% males).

### Age

#### Street Working Children - Age



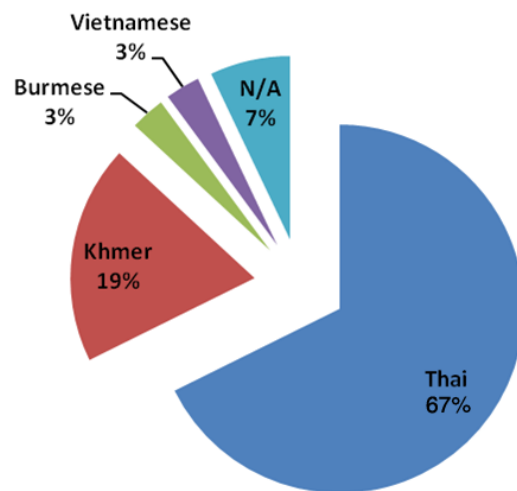
- 24% of street working children were 0 to 5 years old
- 42% of street working children were 6 to 14 years old
- 34% of street working children were 15 to 18 years old

On the contrary to the Street Living Children category, the majority of Street Working Children (66%) were under 15 years old;

### Nationality

- 67% of street working children were Thai
- 19% of street working children were Khmer
- 3% of street working children were Burmese
- 3% of street working children were Vietnamese
- 7% of street working children were of unknown nationality

## Street Working Children - Nationality

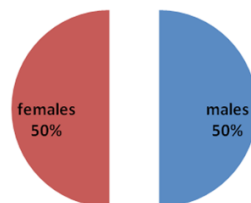


The proportion of children from other nationalities was higher among Street Working children than among street living children; due again to the fact most children coming from other countries are migrating to Bangkok in order to gain money (from begging, scavenging or other informal activities) and often come with relatives or caregivers.

### **D- STREET LIVING FAMILIES**

#### Gender

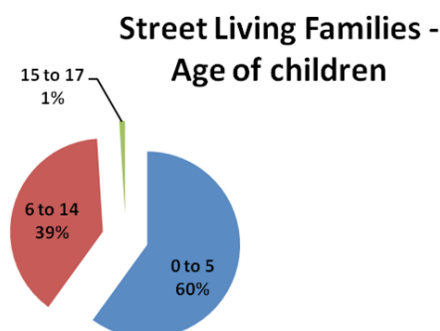
#### **Street Living Families - Gender of children**



The group of Children of Street families and begging babies with mothers had an equal gender distribution.

#### Age

- 60% of children of street families were 0 to 5 years old
- 39% of children of street families were 6 to 14 years old
- 1% of children of street families were 15 to 18 years old

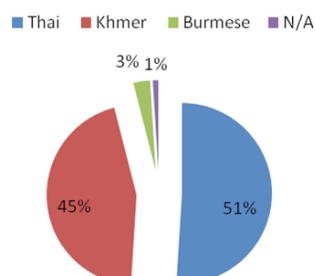


The Street family category shows a completely different age structure compared to other groups. This is linked to the motivation of the street families, migrating to find money in Bangkok mostly from begging, and very often “carrying” very young children which are more likely to attract people’s charity.

### Nationality

- 51% of children of street families were Khmer
- 45% of children of street families were Thai
- 3% of children of street families were Burmese

### **Street Living Families - Nationality**



The category of children of street families and begging babies with mothers is composed in majority (51%) of Khmer children. This can be explained by the fact Cambodian families coming to beg on the streets of Bangkok are using young children under 5 to maximize the revenues of their begging activities.

## V- INFORMATION BASED ON INDIVIDUAL CASE MANAGERMENTS

This 2010 Street Children Profile is the first survey of this type conducted by the Peuan Peuan team in Bangkok. For this reason, the data on individual children from Peuan Peuan Case Management system includes the years 2008 to 2010.

For the qualitative analysis of the Profile of street children in Bangkok, the Peuan Peuan team has collected information from 45 children's individual Case Management files. These 45 children had been registered by Peuan Peuan Case managers between January 2008 and July 2010.

The information in this part is not representative of the global street children population in Bangkok; it gives a profile of a limited number of street children who have been registered with Peuan Peuan services between January 2008 and July 2010. This information, combined with the snapshot surveys quantitative data, will bring a clearer view of the profile and situation of street children in Bangkok, Thailand.

### Gender

Category	Males 0-5	Males 6-14	Males 15-18	Males Total	Females 0-5	Females 6-14	Females 15-18	Females Total	TOTAL
All	4	25	8	37	0	5	3	8	45
%	11	67	22	100	0	62	38	100	100

The qualitative data shows a large majority of males (82%) among the total number of children registered by Peuan Peuan. This figure is rather different from the gender distribution analyzed in the snapshot surveys results. This is explained by the fact that the Peuan Peuan team focused on case managements of children living on their own without or with very limited adult care, who are in most cases male.

### Categories

Category	Males 0-5	Males 6-14	Males 15-18	Males Total	Females 0-5	Females 6-14	Females 15-18	Females Total	TOTAL
Street living	0	10	7	17	0	0	1	1	18
Street working	0	14	2	16	0	5	2	7	23
Street family	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	4

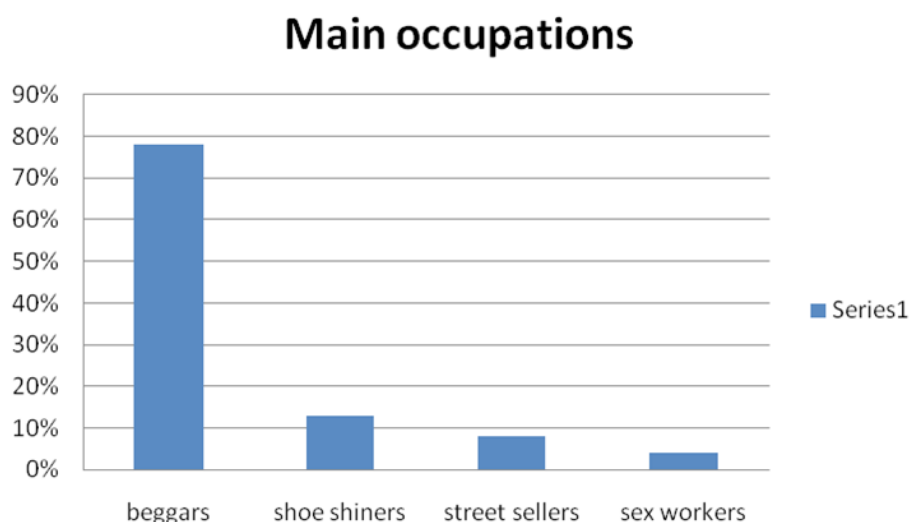
The qualitative data show a higher proportion of Street living children among the total of all street children (40% compared to 23% of the snapshot survey sample), an important proportion of street working children (51%) and a much smaller percentage of children of street families (9%).

This can be explained by the fact that the Peuan Peuan case managements have been focusing street living children as they are living on the streets on their own and are facing higher risks than other categories.

### Nationality

49% of all street children for which Peuan Peuan opened a case management are Khmer and 51% are Thai. This suggests an important proportion of Cambodian children on the streets of Bangkok, which is confirmed by the information collected by the snapshot surveys estimating 27% of children met on Bangkok streets were Khmer. Khmer are over-represented in the number of case management opened by Peuan Peuan due to the higher risk and vulnerability they are facing in Bangkok because of their illegal status. The links between FI projects in Thailand and FI projects in Cambodia, the initial focus of the Peuan Peuan project on Cambodian children in Thai Government shelters, and the fact that a number of Peuan Peuan social workers are Khmer speakers, are all contributing factors explain the high proportion of Khmer children among Peuan Peuan target group.

### Occupation

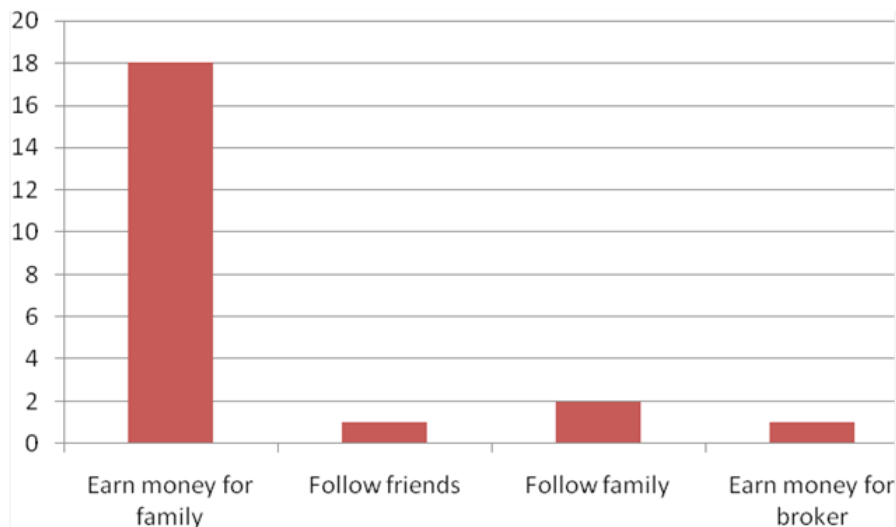


78% of street children mentioned begging as their primary activity, making begging the main occupation.

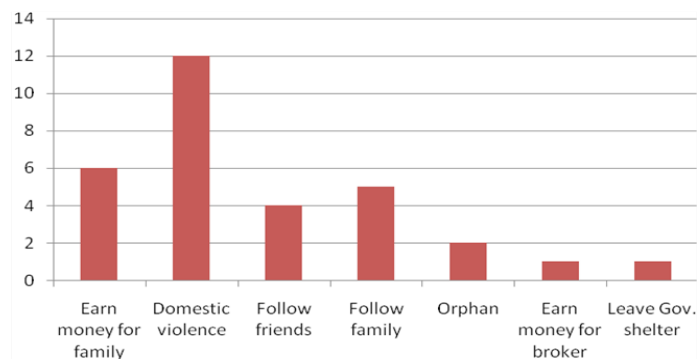
Shoe shining (13%), street sellers (8%) and sex work (4%) came as the following main answers.

## Reasons for working/living on the streets

Answers given by Thai children:



Answers given by Thai children:

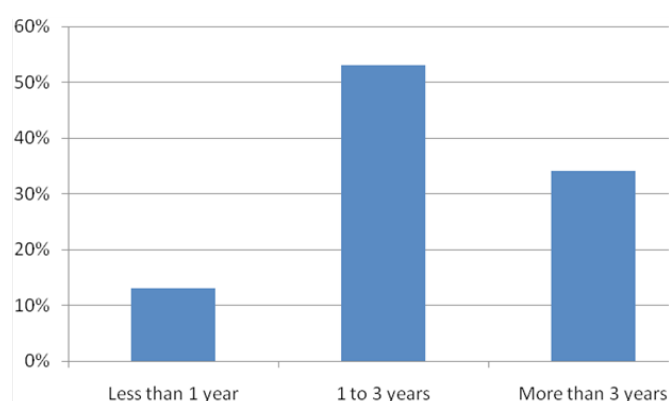


The comparison between the reasons given by Thai and Khmer children confirms some of the findings in the first part of the Profile;

A larger number of Thai children have come to the streets due to domestic violence or following their friends; this explains why a majority of Thai street children are living on the streets and have cut ties with their family.

The majority of Khmer street children have come to Bangkok in order to earn money to support their families, which explains why a majority of them are only working on the streets, keeping more or less regular contact with their parents, relatives or caregivers.

### Time spent on the streets:



87% of all children registered in Peuan Peuan have spent more than 1 year on the streets

34% of all children registered in Peuan Peuan have spent more than 3 years.

The analysis of the time spent on the streets shows similar results for the different nationalities. A large majority of children have spent one or several years on the streets.

### Education

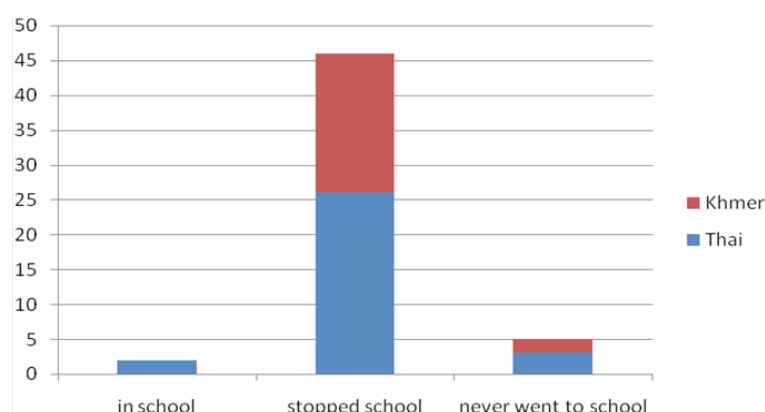
87% of all children registered in Peuan Peuan have stopped school

9% never studied in their life

Only 4% were studying in school at the time of the survey.

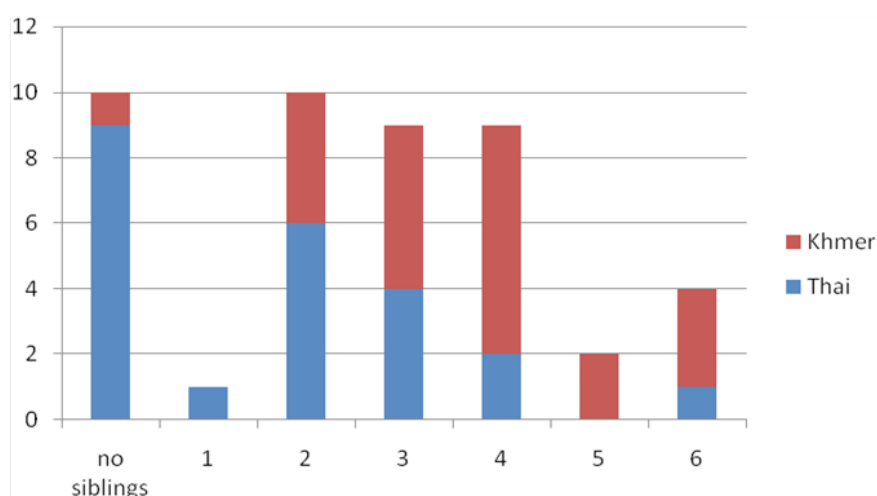
The percentage of children currently registered in school was very low; only 4% of children were studying at the moment of the survey, showing the crucial need to support street children in Bangkok to access non-formal education programs and to reintegrate the public school system.

The cross analysis of children educational level with their nationality or gender didn't show significant differences.





## Number of siblings



66% of Khmer and only 33% of Thai children had 4 siblings or more.

The graph proves a clear tendency of Thai children having on average fewer siblings than Khmer children, which is consistent with the general demographic tendencies in both countries (Cambodia's fertility rate in 2005-2010 was 3.2<sup>2</sup> ; Thailand's rate was 1.82 for the same period).

## Sexual Abuse

15% of all street children registered in Peuan Peuan between 2008 and 2010 said they have been victims of sexual abuse.

This high percentage reinforces the need of providing protection and support services to street children in Bangkok.





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