Re-socialization of Street Children at Open House: A Case Study in the City of Bandung, Indonesia

Didin Saripudin, Andi Suwirta & Kokom Komalasari

ABSTRACT: *People around the world have continually paid special attention to the issue of children problem. One of the problems is the problem of street children. The World Report of children situation has reported that there are about 30 million children living and taking care of themselves in street area. The number of street children in Asia is approximately 20 million. Indonesia is a country representing the increase of street children, especially since 1997 due to economic crisis in Indonesia. The last number recorded is 150, 000 children. Their rights as children cannot be fulfilled, either from educational aspect, physiology needs or even growth and protection needs. Street children is frequently referred to children who behave freely, wildly, cannot be regulated and involve in various criminal cases. For the reasons above, these street children need to be recovered and given protection to make them return to their right way, live normally as other children and enjoy their rights as children through re-socialization program. Re-socialization program of street children at open house must be based on knowledge and self-awareness to be able to handle every challenge and obstacle experienced in daily life.*
KEY WORDS: street children, re-socialization, the concept of open house and its implementation in Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

Many people in the world have concerned about the issue of children problem, such as the problem of children slavery, children jurisdiction, sexual abuse on children and street children. Those matters have also been reflected on various international documents related to the protection of children rights. At least 16 documents related to children problem, such as: (1) *United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice;* (2) *Resolution of United Nation General Assembly*

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1985: The Use of Children in the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs; (3) *Resolution of United Nation General Assembly 1988: Convention on the Right of the Child;* (4) *Resolution of United Nation General Assembly 1989: The Effects of Armed Conflict on Children Lives*; (5) *Resolution of United Nation Human Right Commission 1991: The Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography;* and (6) *Resolution of United Nation Human Right Commission 1994* (UNICEF, 1997a). One of children problem that is continually increasing is the problem of street children. The World Report of Children Situation states that there are 30 million children living and taking care of themselves on the street. While in Asia, recently there are approximately 20 million street children (Tauran, 2004; and Bakrie, 2006).

The effect of economic crisis in Indonesia, in the early 1997, makes the population of street children increase rapidly. Its total number increases every year, therefore the last number recorded is 150,000 street children living in big cities throughout the Republic of Indonesia (*Suara Karya,* 27/11/2006). The increase of street children population due to economic crisis is getting worse. The street children face situation in which their rights as children are not fully fulfilled, starting from educational aspect, life survival, growth and protection (UNDP & Depsos RI, 1997). They are susceptible from negative influences of their environment on the street. Therefore, most of them present social deviant behavior. They are frequently identified as free, wild children who do not want to be regulated, involve in negative activities such as theft, fighting, drinking, drug user, free sex life and so forth (Ertanto, 2003). Meanwhile T.L. Silva (1996) and UNDP & Depsos RI (1997) state that the effort to restore their attitude and behavior into social norm is very important to do through re-socialization activity.

Street Children in Indonesia

The cause of street children phenomena in big cities, according to macro view, is development strategy more directed to industrialization economic development centered on cities. It causes economic imbalance, either among regional agents or even economic agents. The striking difference between cities and villages, or even between small and big cities, has caused many rural people come to cities to earn for living. Big cities are assumed more promising for their future and their family life. With insufficient education and skill they have, their dream is hard to reach. Finally, after arriving at cities, they live in slump area, illegal hut and so on. If such condition continues until they make a family, it will have very important role in creating street children (Parsons & Bales, 1955; Ballantine, 1983; Soetarso, 2001; and Saripudin, 2007).

Meanwhile A. Raksanagara (1999) and Soetarso (2001) also add that generally there are 3 factors causing the problem of street children, such as: (1) Micro level, which is factor related to children and their family; (2) Mezzo level, which is factor in group environment such as peer groups and school mates; and (3) Macro level, which is factor related to macro structure such as wider social environment including social policy related to street children. In

micro level, the factors can be identified from related children and family, and special factor such as running off their family, being asked to work part-time because they are still studying or they have already dropped-out, wandering, playing or being asked by friends. In mezzo level, the factors are derived from the family such as being neglected, parents' disability in providing basic needs, being rejected by their parents, wrong nursing or violence at home, difficulty in communicating with family or neighbor, being separated from parents, wrong treatment on children, limitation in taking care of children which is consequently causing children experience physical, psychological and social problems. While in macro level, the factor that can be identified includes poor society. Children are asset to help family improvement. They are taught to work that leads to school drop-out. In other society, urbanization becomes a habit and children follow it. People reject and assume that street children are prospective criminal (Hakiki, 2000).

Their choice to go through street life which is full of violence is based on the fact that living on the street is the only thing that can accept and give them earn, especially for most of them who do not have formal education and sufficient skill. On such condition, they can still peek at various economic opportunities existing on the street life. It makes their work choice as their means of livelihood become various, such as singing beggar, boot polisher, newspaper boys, street vendor, beggar, *pellets roller* (roll into pellets to resell), and even selling themselves (Ishak, 2000). To get sufficient earn, they need long work hours. Therefore, their existence for long time on the street is an inescapable thing. Consequently, some social problems will occur, as following here: (1) there are a lot of children that are forced to leave their school or even do not study at all. This condition will be worsened by their parents' attitude, which intends to exploit their children to get some money; and (2) continually the children will experience behavior changing toward norm and law violation (Silva, 1996).

UNICEF (United Nations on International Children and Educational Fund) defines street children are "*those who have abandoned their home, schools and immediate communities before they are sixteen years of age have drifted into a nomadic street life*" (UNICEF, 1997a). While UNDP (United Nations on Development Program) & Depsos RI (*Departemen Sosial Republik Indonesia*) defines street children as children who spend most of their time on the street or other public places to earn some money, drifting from one place to another (UNDP & Depsos RI, 1997).

Study result of *Yayasan Kesejahteraan Anak Indonesia* (YKAI) and Childhope of Philipina in 1995, divides two categories of street children based in time spending and activities they do. First is children working on the street (children of the street). Children of this category spend most of their time on the street or in other public places to work and their earnings are used to support their family life. Most of street children belong to this category are still communicated with their parents because most of them are still living with their parents. Second is children living on the street (children on the street). The street children belong to this category spend most of their time on the street or other public places, but

only a little time is spent for working. They are seldom communicated with their family and have tendency to conduct criminal action and drug use. Some of them are homeless, they live and stay somewhere on the street (YKAI, 1995; and Ertanto, 2003).

Then UNDP & Depsos RI (1997) add one more category, which is children who are vulnerable to be street children. This category includes children who are still living and communicating with their parents, and most of them are still studying. In their spare time (after going home from school), they work on the street and their earnings are used to pay school fee or support their family. Street children live in social situation which has various setting. The first setting is social environment consisting of family, school and community where the family of street children live. It is the first environment for a child before he or she experiences some changes that make her or him get out of his social environment and become street children. Those changes are economic difficulty of family or parent divorce, higher school fee, or rejection by surrounding neighbor that make them become victims and cannot live properly to grow normally.

The second setting is street environment that is assumed as the second environment for street children. On the street, children interact with different people, even as personal or on behalf of department. Some of them are the officer of DLLAJR (*Dinas Lalu-Lintas dan Angkutan Jalan Raya*), Head of Station, Head of Terminal, Police, security officer, Community Social Institution officer and so forth. This interaction process can create certain personality forms. For example, street children who have just been raid by the police will feel traumatic, but those who have been familiar about it will think that it is ordinary thing. Polices protect street children who have been close to them from hoodlums exploitation. In this street environment, children also interact with various norms of street authority officer and some resistance forms toward them (Durkheim, 1961; Berman, 1996; and Saripudin, 2007).

The more specific setting of street children is marginal group life. Street is an open place in which everyone can enter in and seek their fortune. These street children with limited competence feel difficult in differentiating positive and negative things, consequently there are internalized behavior in their behavior pattern triggered by survival. Marginal group also becomes comparable situation for street children, so that although there is a force from street authority officer, they will always have a place in which their existence can be accepted and as if authenticating attitude and values they hold (Mifflen & Mifflen, 1986; and Samin & Ipec, 1998).

Meanwhile E.A.S. Dewi (2004) states that the more specific from marginal group is peer group living among street children. Most of them live in a group established due to similarity of regional origin, fate, hobby and etc. In their group, they develop strategy to make them be able to survive on the street, able to compete and master their work area. Sometimes they create sub-culture adopted from street culture such wearing earrings, tattoo, creating their own language, looking for special place, and safe way if they sleep on the tree and so

on (Ertanto, 2003). So E.A.S. Dewi's research (2004) observes that street economic activities can be analyzed from groups' point of view in which most of street children do their job in group or even they do it by themselves, their peers do the same job in Leuwipanjang Terminal, Bandung, such as street children coming from Indramayu work to mop or wash bus in group and there is time division for them, for example in the morning, in the afternoon and in the evening. The other group coming from Indramayu polish boot in intercity bus station. Singing beggar, newspaper boy, and street vendor seems to be in group when they are working, and even they work alone, their peer who do the same job are near to them. Their gross earnings are between Rp. 5,000 up to Rp. 20,000 per day, not included their meals and snack. Some of them must remit their earnings to the older people or their parents every day or every week.

Generally the jobs of street children are divided into the jobs requiring capital and service. The job requiring capital is boot polisher, newspaper boys, street vendors and other jobs requiring material. Service jobs include singing beggar, beggar, parking boys, "illegal" police (*polisi cepek*), moppe and bus washer, and other jobs requiring power. The second type has exploitation. At first type of exploitation, children are given or lent some capital by their boss and they remit to their boss, then the portion of them is arbitrarily managed by their boss in which their boss still has bigger profit. The second type of exploitation is the boss controls a certain area and job type, and children sell their service to him such as beggar and pellets roller or bus moppe and washer (Hakiki, 2000; and Dewi 2004).

The existence of children in the street shows disturbed children's social functioning. The concept of social functioning refers to the children's situation and relation creating some role and tasks. Children should have been in house situation, school and playing environment in which they relate with people on that situation and have special role such as studying, obeying their parent, playing and so on. The condition of earning for living and wandering by spending most of their time on the street absolutely deviates from social functioning. Therefore, *Depsos RI* (Social Department of the Republic of Indonesia) thinks street children as problem children. There are some situation, relationship and role that they can proceed. Based on that assumption, street children need special and serious handling (Sudrajat, 1998; Depsos RI, 1999a; Irwanto ed., 1999; and BKSN, 2000).

The Handling of Street Children

Generally, the ways to handle these children are categorized as problem category such as waif, street children and children in special situation. It is done through 2 social services which are inside institution (*panti*) system and outside institution system. Social services means that: "*all effort devoted to prevent, handle and rehabilitate various trouble to secure life survival and children's normal growth spiritually, physically and socially*" (Dinsosprov Jabar, 2001:4).

Firstly, inside institution system. This social service is done through government institution or private agency to fulfill all children' basic needs physically or psychologically including food, clothes, housing, education, recreation, health and so forth. The service through institution system is directed to the occurrence or learning process as the suitable education in the intact family because this institution is an institution whose role is as substitution family. *Secondly,* outside institution system. This service emphasizes in social serviced based on society for children outside the institution system which functions to substitute, enhance and complete institution system service. Especially for street children, institution service type has developed open house service and *Mobil Sahabat Anak* (Patilima, 2001; and Hazmirullah & Yudiawan, 2006).

There are 3 service models given by central government in handling street children in Indonesia, which are service through Boarding House, Open House and *Mobil Sahabat Anak* (MSA). Besides the efforts from government, Community Social Institution and Islamic school have also conducted training. For example, in West Java *Pesantren Daarut Tauhid* cooperates with RI Social Department through the model of *Pemulihan Fitrah Insani Anak Jalanan dalam Keluarga Berkah*, *Sanggar Mitra Keluarga* and *Pondok Anak Mandiri*, or even training given by *Pesantren Al-Muchlasin*, Babakan Peuteuy kampong, Ciluncat Village, Bandung regency that specializes in donating and educating street children and orphans. Some community social institutions have also conducted street children handling through open house model as conducted by *Yayasan Bahtera, Yayasan Limas, Matahariku, Yayasan Garis, Akatiga,* and etc (Arief, 2004; and Moeliono & Dananto, 2004).

The Development of Open House

The application of open house concept for street children in Indonesia began with the pilot project in 1994 by Open House for Street Children (OHSC) by *Yayasan Kesejahteraan Anak Indonesia* (YKAI) located in Pulogadung, East Jakarta. OHSC is a semi-institutional agency with centre simple and open form function as facilitator between children and their family. The main purpose of OHSC is to return the children to their family with another alternative such as: living with their parent, living with their relatives, getting into boarding house, renting house by themselves or following their substitution (*Kompas*, 12/9/1996). YKAI (1995) reports the result of the program that it is known that open house can be well accepted by children because they feel that they are not treated formally, and they still have freedom to do their work on the street or terminal, it can be a place for them to express their mind and feeling and with the existence of open house they feel it as their own home and they know the term of "return or go home".

The result of OHSC pilot project is sent to RI Social Department, then in 1997 pioneering test in 7 big ports (Jakarta, Bandung, Semarang, Yogyakarta, Surabaya, Medan and Ujung Pandang) cooperated with United Nations on Development Program [UNDP] (UNDP & Depsos RI, 1997). In 1997, there was a leap of street children population along with the economic crisis hit Indonesia.

Therefore, to do the acceleration in handling street children in 1998/1999 in Indonesia, *Anggaran Biaya Tambahan* (ABT) or Additional Budget was provided, cooperated with Asian Development Bank (ADB). In handling those street children, some open houses in Indonesia were established, especially in big ports. Some of the open houses were managed by government, and the rest are managed by local NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) cooperated with international NGO (Berman, 1996; Depsos RI, 1999a; Depsos RI & ADB, 1999; Irwanto, 1999; and Ishak, 2000).

Open house is defined as a place which is prepared as an agent between street children and people or parties who will help them (UNDP & Depsos RI, 1997:2). Meanwhile T.L. Silva (1996) and Soetarso (2001) define that open house is not a means to solve all problems, but rather an informal process which gives re-socialization situation for street children toward value and norm system prevailed society. Open house is the initial step for a child to get further service, so that it is important to build open house as comfortable, safe and enjoyable place for them. Open house is a special service model for street children that gives possible situation to perform learning process and as the initial step for the next steps. The efforts in handling street children are conducted through 5 steps:

Step I: *Reaching Out.* Reaching out is done by social agent to the central of street children activities intended to establish introductory contact and trust of children on the agent and also to socialize semi-institutional alternative education to make street children willing to follow learning activity in open house.

Step II: *Assessment.* Assessment is done after the children get into open house to find out their problems (problem assessment) and to know their learning needs (learning need) experienced by them including their motivation to follow the study. Problem assessment and learning needs can be reference in formulating learning strategy and process which will be done in open house.

Step III: *Learning Preparation.* From the result of learning needs assessment, children, with open house officer (social worker, tutor and the head of open house) participation formulate the intention, time, material, method, strategy, facilities, media and learning evaluation based on pleasing situation. It can be supported by the rule prevailed in open house through working agreement between officer and children and among children.

Step IV: *Learning Performance.* In learning performance, social workers or tutors function as facilitators who facilitate the children in achieving their needs, either the needs of knowledge acquisition or competence achievement, and give guidance in solving the cases experienced through children's potency enhancement.

Step V: *Termination.* Termination of learning is performed after all the intended needs have been reached, with productive and independent indicator, returning to their parents, substitution family, getting into Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) or children getting better job.

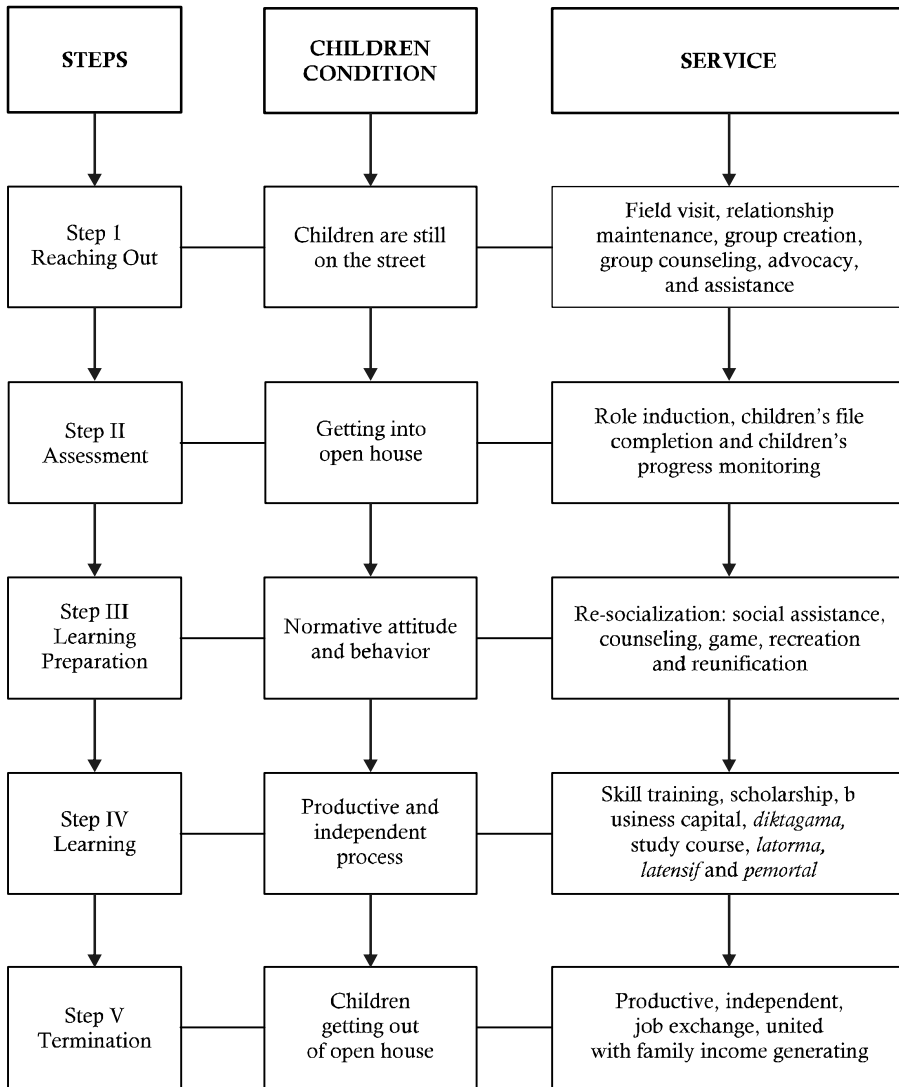Those steps can be described as follow here:

STEPS	CHILDREN CONDITION	SERVICE
Step 1 Reaching Out	Children are still on the street	Field visit, relationship maintenance, group creation, group counseling, advocacy, and assistance
Step II Assessment	Getting into open house	Role induction, children's file completion and children's progress monitoring
Step III Learning Preparation	Normative attitude and behavior	Re-socialization: social assistance, counseling, game, recreation and reunification
Step IV Learning	Productive and independent process	Skill training, scholarship, b usiness capital, *diktagama,* study course, *latorma, latensif* and *pemortal*
Step V Termination	Children getting out of open house	Productive, independent, job exchange, united with family income generating

Table 1 Service Steps
Source: Modification of Depsos RI (1999a:39)

The purpose of open house is to assist street children in handling their problems and finding out the alternative to fulfill their living needs (UNDP & Depsos RI, 1997:3). While its specific purposes are: (1) to re-establish children's attitude and behavior suitable with value and norm prevailed in society; (2) to strive to return them to their home, if possible, or to the institution or other substitution agents, if

needed; and (3) to give various alternative service to fulfill children's needs and prepare their future to be citizen.

Re-socialization of Street Children at Open House

Street children are frequently identified as wild, free children who do not want to be regulated and do some negative activities such as fighting, drinking, drug using, free sex, etc. This condition happens due to the estranged or sometimes broken relationship with their parents. They live on the street without control and attention, moreover some of them are dissipated by their parents or consciously leave their family. Living without parent make them possible to do whatever they want. The influence of street and their peer on the street makes their personality gradually adapt with the life of people on the street. The longer they live on the street, the stronger the influence on their attitude and behavior (Ishak, 2000; and Riehm, 2000).

According to UNDP & Depsos RI (1997), T. Sudrajat (1998) and M. Ishak (2000), the effort to restore their attitude and behavior toward social norm is very important to do through re-socialization activity. Re-socialization emphasizes in children's attitude and behavior changing. It should be done before the enhancement program is applied on them. Re-socialization gives them knowledge, resuscitation and strength for their own competence in facing their daily life and solving their problems. Therefore, the purpose of street children re-socialization in open house is to make street children have good and positive attitude and philosophy of life, perform good social behavior, the competence to manage themselves and the competence to handle their life obstacle.

In re-socialization of street children, tutors apply friendship and equality principle. Although they are still young, their experience on the street has made them more mature. Re-socialization avoids instruction pattern and gives continual suggestions in which children are objects. Street children are placed as subject for change that will be made on them. The prevailed principle is that tutors cooperate with street children, not work for street children. Tutors and street children discuss to formulate activities, give consideration and motivate selected effort. In the last re-socialization, street children are hoped to be able to help themselves (UNDP & Depsos RI, 1997; and UNICEF, 1997b and 2000).

Some activities in street children re-socialization are general or daily social assistance consisting of the first, daily attitude and behavior such as self-health, selecting and eating rule, taking care of health, speech courtesy, literacy, religion, house cleanliness, relationship with parent, peer and neighbor, work security, role induction, recreation and teaching of social norms. The second is case assistance, which is a guidance to handle obstacle in street children life consisting of avoiding, reducing and stopping of smoking, drinking alcohol, drug, cocaine, free sex, cut class, fighting, stealing, hating or compete against their parents and hostile with their friends (Depsos RI, 1999c). Street children re-socialization is conducted especially when there is a problem or case that needs assistance. General or daily

assistance is done continually. Case assistance is performed when the problem occurs and its handling time depends on the problem experienced by children. It may need short or long time if the case has been big problem (Depsos RI, 1999a).

Methods used in street children re-socialization are: (1) Personal social assistance, which is assistance for children personally or one by one, either for guidance or cases; (2) Group social assistance, which is assistance done in group in giving material or information to all children or assistance for children who have similar problem; and (3) home visit, which is visiting and guiding children and their family and involving their parent or other family members (Depsos RI & YKAI, 1999; and BKSN, 2000). These assistance and learning use discussion technique, advice giving, socio drama, role playing, quiz, test, reward and punishment giving, writing, story telling, motivation giving, advocacy, information giving, experience exchanging and feeling expressing (Depsos RI, 1999a; 1999b; 1999c; and 1999d).

Conclusion and Recommendation

The performance of street children re-socialization program (open house) by government, or even NGO, has been quite successful. The evaluation result shows some findings such as: *firstly,* perception of street children, parent of street children, facilitator of open house and social perception about open house appreciate positively because open house can give advantages physically or non-physically; and *secondly,* the concept of open house implemented is a response toward some of children's needs and situation experienced on the street (Sugiarta, 2002; and Saripudin, 2007). While E.A.S. Dewi's study finding (2004) presents that there are still some weaknesses in the program of street children re-socialization in open house, such as: (1) the number of street children is not significantly decreased since this program conducted from 1999 to 2004; (2) the limited open house number makes not all street children can follow this program; and (3) the given service is not suitable with their needs, the problem of street children and the growth level of street children age.

Street children are complex social problem phenomena. The factor causing this problem is very multi dimensional, either internal or external. Therefore, the approach toward them should be integrated; it means that it is not intended only for individual children but also for the people surrounding them such as family, friends, peers, schoolmate or close society. Moreover, if we understand that the problem of street children are related to wider macro issue such as poverty elimination, it will cause closed access to human resources in society and social service including health and education, and even will relate to the government policy in providing service for society.

The approach toward street children should be packaged based on their needs, problems and growth level of children age. Besides that system approach is also done considering that children's problem is a product of environment, either the smallest environment of family, community or national and even international. The pattern of approach for children re-socialization and its

environment is designed in the form of curriculum in line with the problem and needs experienced by street children. Thus, the whole component on the curriculum must be prepared such as material, method, media, purpose, process and output or result.

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