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## Providing hope for children in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

This chapter covers three different projects undertaken for Hope for Children (HfC), an Ethiopian NGO that seeks to help AIDS orphans in that country. These children are some of the most marginalised people in one of the poorest country in the world. Ethiopia has for many years now suffered from the compound effects of drought, famine, conflict and an AIDS pandemic. These have left many isolated and disadvantaged, as children have been orphaned, livelihoods have been abandoned and people have had to flee their home communities in search of safety, food or work. Despite Ethiopia's recent vigorous economic growth, the size of the problem is expected to grow as population increase and more displaced people add to the needs while famine and conflict threaten the country's agricultural economic base.

Lacking a formal safety net, many of these people drift to the capital, Addis Ababa, in the hope of finding what resources and opportunities are available. These people may be refugees, orphans or people in need of health care, or they may fit into all three of these categories. Once in the city they join the ranks of street dwellers with little hope of escaping homelessness. They end up living in the shadows along the cities avenues, inhabiting spaces under verandas, shrubs or makeshift corrugated iron shelters. Many are children. UNICEF estimates that there are '150,000–200,000 street children nationally, with a further one million vulnerable or at risk of ending up on the streets' (UNICEF, n.d. a). They are likely to live out the remainder of their relatively short lives there, to suffer great indignities and to die on the street.