

Critical Summary:  
Tanzanian Childhoods

Evans, Ruth M.C. (2004) *Tanzanian Childhoods: Street Children's narrative of Home. Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 22(1): 69-92.

Ruth M.C. Evans is a teaching fellow at the School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Nottingham, UK. She wrote an article to paint a picture of the life of some of the children that live in Tanzania. In her article, Evans shows how poverty (insufficient provisions) and corporal punishment have driven Tanzanian children away from their homes and into the streets.

Most of the children who are living on the streets have come from families that live in poverty. They often go to bed hungry and never have enough to eat. These children have chosen to escape their world of poverty and hunger to find an easier world to live in. However, poverty is not the only thing that drives these children to the streets. Evans suggests that the major influence on a child's decision to leave their home was the use of corporal punishment by adults. This is the beating of children when they do something wrong. The effects that corporal punishment has on children is very negative, it decreases trust and conversation between parents and children. This in effect causes the children to have a negative view of home life. On the other hand, this is part of the Tanzanian culture. Many fathers who beat their children were probably once beaten themselves for the same acts. Now they are carrying on the tradition handed down by their parents, overlooking the negative effects this has on their own children.

There are many reasons why Tanzanian children are running away from their homes. Usually, it is not just one factor but a combination of many factors that lead to the displacement of these children from their homes to the streets. These situations cause

many children to look for something better. They begin by going into town to beg for money and food. Gradually they begin to stay overnight until over time they become permanent residents of the streets (Evans 73).

(This paper was taken from the summary of Tyler Ellis a student at USU)