

Rurevo, Rumbidazi and Michael Bourdillion (2003) *Girls on the Street*. Harare, Zimbabwe: Weaver Press.

This book is a poignant study of the plight of street children in Zimbabwe. Due to a rapid growth rate and urbanization, in addition to a lack of resources, there is a large percentage of people in poverty. The book was written from the study performed by Rumbidazi Rurevo, who interviewed 13 girls and their parents about their individual lives. In doing so, she began to discover how their lives got to the point that they did, what they are doing to cope with it, and the options these children have to get out.

The book is partly written as a narrative telling the story of each of the individual girls. In doing so we see these girls' lives who have been driven to poverty and must resort to life on the streets, either selling trivial objects or, in many cases, selling themselves as sexual slaves. These children represent the bottom rung of society. Their parents are often criminals or alcoholics and are unable to take care of them. There was even a reference of a mother saying to her daughter to "be nice to men so that they would not starve." Many of the children suffered abuse especially from their fathers.

There are a range of causes for the children to get where they are. However, in each case, the girls are forced into a life of abuse, neglect, poverty and a high risk of HIV and AIDS. Any path out of this lifestyle must come from without, such as donor-funded charity groups.

One of these groups is "Streets Ahead," a donor funded non-governmental organization that helps children get the things they need to get off the street. Particularly, they provide education to the children to help them become "spiritually, physically, and financially self-sufficient." It also provides food, shelter, cleaning and recreational facilities where the children can go.

The study that Rurevo did shows the ability of humans, and children in particular, to adapt to their surroundings. He also shows how the children cope with problems in the social system. Additionally, Rurevo helps us to know how we, as a society, can better the lives of children by getting them out of a situation that is so harmful to their well-being.