

TAKING ON

The Rights of Children in Care in Brazil



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In the Amazon Region, the state of Pará has one of the highest number of violations of children's human rights ranging from torture and murder to trafficking and sexual exploitation. Children are often removed from their families and placed in collective care institutions due to parental abandonment, domestic violence, addiction to chemical substances, imprisonment or sexual abuse. Some are orphans living on the streets for reasons of poverty alone.

An EU project run by Christian Aid is tackling all forms of violence against children in Brazil with the focus on giving a voice to 800 children in care and justice institutions in the State of Pará.

Exposure to violence and exclusion invariably leads to poor and underprivileged children dropping out of school and joining street groups and gangs before they end up in state institutions.

It has been ascertained that torture is common practice in these institutions, and that education is almost non-existent. Among the forms of violence identified are the constant use of handcuffs; physical aggression, including with iron bars and truncheons; prohibition from using the refectory, obliging children to eat in their cells; solitary confinement; limiting the right to schooling; lack of programmes for drug-dependents; delays in medical attendance; very poor nourishment provoking illness among children; lack of hygiene material and interference with correspondence.

At the end of three years the project will have trained 800 children and 600 families to defend their rights and report and draw attention to violations. The project is also targeting 1,200 professionals responsible for the protection of the rights of children in care and justice institutions – many of whom have life stories full of violence and abuse themselves.