

## **Tajikistan's Homeless Children**

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Social and economic problems leave many children in Tajikistan fending for themselves on the streets. Figures from 2007 indicate there were 4,000 minors living on the streets. They take any work they can find such as pushing handcarts at the country's markets.

The police pick them up and either return them to their parents or place them in children's homes.

Some may be orphans, but more often they end up on the streets after running away from home. To take a fairly typical case, an 11-year-old boy, nicknamed "Einstein" by his peers because he is good at science, drifted away when his parents left him with an aunt and joined the hundreds of thousands of Tajiks heading for Russia in search of work.

Now he has been placed in a special school in Dushanbe which takes displaced children, some with records of petty crime, and teaches them a trade.

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