

**Learning by Ear 2009  
 Children's Rights Series  
 07 Child exploitation**

**Subject:** Exploited children (prostitution, slaves...)

**Author:** Henri Fosto (Cameroon)

**Editor:** Sandrine Blanchard

**Translation:** Anne Thomas

	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Language</b>
<b>IN/OUTRO</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>Unimportant</b>	
<b>Narrator</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>Ca. 25</b>	
<b>Jules Marcel</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>French</b>
<b>Sandrine</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>16</b>	<b>English</b>
<b>Mary</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>16</b>	<b>French</b>
<b>Bertha</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>Adult</b>	<b>English</b>
<b>Xavier</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>French</b>
<b>Guilene</b>	<b>x</b>		<b>Teenager</b>	<b>French</b>

## **LbE soundtrack**

### **INTRO:**

Hello everybody and welcome to the seventh episode of our Deutsche Welle Learning by Ear series on children's rights and working for peace. Today, we're off to the Cameroon. Our subject is children who are forced into slavery – both economic and sexual.

## **Report**

### **1. Atmo Roundabout      1'36**

#### **Narrator:**

We're in Akwa, the business district of Douala, the Cameroon's economic capital. We're in the Rue de Pau at one of the Cameroonian branches of FEED, the Foundation for Children, Education and Development. This organization has set up a center to look after children in difficult situations and to help educate and train them. Marie Josée was born in 1992. She never met her father and her mother died when she was just 13. Her life has been precarious ever since.

**2. Marie-José (French)**

**0'30**

"When my mother died, a woman came to get me in the village. She had promised my mother she would continue to send me to school. But when her husband left her, she became ill and after one school year, she sent me to work in a restaurant. I wasn't paid for my work. I just got the tips that customers gave me."

**Narrator:**

Marie-José had to find another way to make money. A friend of hers suggested one night that she should join her on the Rue de la Joie, which translates as street of pleasure. They sat in a restaurant and Marie-José quickly understood where she was. The two friends started going regularly:

**3. Marie-José (French)**

**0'23**

"I started going to the Rue de la Joie when I was 15. I would go whenever I needed money. If a man gave me some money, we would go into a room next door. If he had lots of money, we would spend the whole night together or go to his place. There was one man who used to invite me to his place for two or three days."

**Narrator:**

Two years later, Marie-José had given birth to a child conceived with a sexual customer. As opposed to many other young girls who abandon their babies, she decided to keep her daughter. Probably because she had found help at FEED.

**4. Marie-José (French) 0'14**

"When I was pregnant with my daughter, I heard on the radio at home that there were NGOs that looked after orphaned children. Since I am an orphan, I found out more and came here to learn a trade."

**5. Atmo keyboard**

**6. Marie-José (French) 0'05**

"I want to be an IT technician and if God helps me, one day I'll have my own business center."

**Narrator:**

Marie-José could choose between various professions: IT, hairdressing, sewing, electricity or car mechanics.

**7. Atmo street 0'51**

**Narrator:**

We're on the road to Ndokoti, to PK12, 12 kilometers east of the town center. FEED also has a centre for "orphans and vulnerable children" here. The building is empty at 5 p.m. The children have gone home. We have to walk 10 minutes to find Guilène, a young girl the NGO looks after.

<b>8. Atmo: Cleaning</b>	<b>0'21</b>
--------------------------	-------------

**Narrator:**

Guilène is cleaning. She has short hair and is wearing a pink dress. She appears younger than she is. When the NGO representative tells her about us wanting to interview her, she bursts into tears. Her mother died of HIV/AIDS and she never met her father. She takes time to talk about the hell she has gone through. When she lived with her aunt, she was abused by her uncle:

<b>9. Guilène (French)</b>	<b>0'23</b>
----------------------------	-------------

"I was at home, doing housework. He was there sleeping. He got up and then threatened me with a machete. I said I didn't want to but he threatened me and raped me. I tell other girls of my age to be very careful."
---

**Narrator:**

Another uncle, Victor, looked after Guilène. He registered a complaint with the police against his niece's rapist uncle.

<b>11. Atmo: traffic</b>	<b>1'36</b>
--------------------------	-------------

**Narrator:**

We're now at the headquarters of the Asseja. This NGO is dedicated to children and teenagers in distress in Yaoundé, Cameroon's capital. This is where we meet Jules Marcel.

<b>12. Jules Marcel (French)</b>	<b>0'14</b>
----------------------------------	-------------

"My name is Jules Marcel. I'm 16. My mum put me in a rubbish bin when I was born and I was adopted by nuns. When I was seven, they decided to sell me to a man. He bought me for 500,000 francs (about 760 euros)."

**Narrator:**

One day, Jules Marcel fell ill. His boss sold him to another man whom the young boy served until he died. His heirs chose not to keep Jules Marcel in their service.

**13. Jules Marcel (French) 0'19**

"I spent two months on the streets at first. I slept outside. One day, a man, the village chief, took me. I worked for him as a slave. I had no time to rest. I worked from six in the morning to 11 at night. I couldn't go to bed until everyone else had gone to bed. I had to wait and then I had to guard the door because I was also the watchman."

**Narrator:**

Jules Marcel was able to find refuge at the NGO thanks to a chance encounter with a man who was worried about him.

**14. Atmo Welcome song 0'13**

**Narrator:**

The misery of children is also tangible in the Anglophone north-eastern part of Cameroon, in the region of Bali. The 16-year-old Sandrine is holding a baby in her arms. Although it's her baby, she doesn't know whom the father is. When she was a small girl she cleaned for a lady. When she had finished primary school, her boss decided she could start working full-time. Sandrine was 10 years old.

**15. Sandrine (English)**

**0'39**

"So every morning I had to get up at 5 o'clock, do the cleaning, prepare breakfast for the children and bring them to school before 8 o'clock. I was selling soup, selling food and then went to work in the fields. I had to do the laundry and make sure her husband had eaten something before going to get the children at school. This woman had promised my mum she would pay me but she never did. In the end, she told me to fend for myself and that's how I ended up roaming around until I got pregnant with this child. Then she kicked me out."

**Narrator:**

Back in her home village, Sandrine was taken in by N'kumu Fed Fed. Young people can receive training here and also do therapeutic music and theater. They sing and act out scenarios to help overcome their traumas.

<b>16. Atmo percussion</b>	<b>0'41</b>
----------------------------	-------------

**Narrator:**

The economic or sexual exploitation of children is nothing new. But the phenomenon is growing in the Cameroon as poverty increases. Bertha Titanji is the co-ordinator of N'Kumu Fed Fed. She explains that some poor parents have started giving their children to the highest bidder instead of to their relatives as they used to do.

<b>17. Bertha (English)</b>	<b>0'06</b>
-----------------------------	-------------

They use the children in any form, exploit them and then take money from them.

**Narrator:**

Today, some 6,000 children – most of them victims of sexual exploitation – have been rescued by NGOs and other institutions such as the International Labor Organization, the US embassy and the Cameroonian government. To help these young people in distress, Cameroonian NGOs are trying to warn the political authorities and alter public opinion. This is what Asseja does. Xavier Zingui is the secretary general. He explains that his organization works in three phases: identifying young people in distress, rehabilitating them by offering them professional training and then reintegrating them into society:

**18. Xavier Zingui (French) 0'22**

"This means that these children have learnt something. They exercise their profession and are integrated into a family. It's only at this stage that we can be proud that we've reached our goal. But we don't stop there, we follow things through to make sure that the children don't fall, that they don't end up in a state of vulnerability again."

**Narrator:**

Despite the efforts of the NGOs, prostitution and the exploitation of children are far from being eradicated in the Cameroon. The International Labor Organization office in central Africa has published a map, which shows that many children - boys and girls alike - take the sea route to West Africa, crossing the Cameroon to get to Gabon or Equatorial Guinea. More than once, West African ships trafficking children have sunk in Cameroonian waters. Palms are well-greased on the Cameroonian circuits. There are children from Cameroon and abroad, some are victims of sexual exploitation, others are used as servants in shops or on plantations. These are exhausting and traumatizing experiences which impede the children's physical growth, their health, their mental development and their future as free adults.

**End music**

## **OUTRO:**

This report was writtenmade by Henri Fotso in the Cameroon. Learning by Ear is over for today, but you can hear the programs broadcast by Deutsche Welle again by going to our website at: [www.dw-world.de/lbe](http://www.dw-world.de/lbe)  
Thanks for being with us and don't forget to tune in next time!

**End music**

END