

## **Short Profile Off Road Kids Foundation**

In Germany up to 2'500 young people run away from home every year. More than 300 children and adolescents, from 12 years of age and up, are finally living on the streets. Unlike in developing countries, the phenomenon of German street children is not a symptom of poverty, but the result of social dysfunction. Most adolescent runaways are fleeing mistreatment, abandonment and abuse.

Working to ensure that young runaways don't end up living on the streets permanently, Off Road Kids was established by journalist Markus Seidel in 1993. Its street social work program attaches great importance to inquiring about the children's best possible future prospects. Due to the foundation's extensive network throughout Germany, young people can more easily be reunited with their families or alternatively reach a youth welfare office or therapy center regardless of the distance. Off Road Kids also offers a free-of-charge 24-hour emergency hotline for young people in need of help and advises parents whose children are threatening to run away or have already done so.

Young runaways who don't find help in their families or in their home town youth welfare, are given accommodation and assistance in two of the foundation's children's homes in Bad Dürkheim. The children's homes offer intense care and support so that youngsters can start studying for their final school exams or a professional training program of their choice.

## **Brief History and Milestones**

- 1993: Journalist and author Markus Seidel founds the association Off Road Kids in Donaueschingen, Germany
- 1994: Off Road Kids conceptualizes and develops an innovative countrywide street social work program for street kids
- 1996: Off Road Kids establishes and operates a contact hotline for young people in need. The association also purchases, renovates, and operates the first children's home for former street kids in Bad Dürkheim
- 1997: The first street social work-branch opens in Berlin
- 2000: Establishment of Off Road Kids as a charitable trust (in addition to the association)
- 2005: Off Road Kids establishes and operates a parents hotline and opens new street social work-branches in Hamburg, Dortmund, and Cologne
- 2006: Construction of second children's home in Bad Dürkheim
- 2008: Off Road Kids establishes the Institute for Pedagogic Management IfPM in Bad Dürkheim as an initiative that allows youth workers and educators who lack an academic secondary school degree to acquire university-level entrepreneurial training while also employed – a novelty for Germany.
- 2008: Establishment of Off Road Kids as autonomous foundation.