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**The situation of social welfare and child
protection for vulnerable street-involved
children in Tanzania: Where is the gap?**

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Abstract

The main objective of this study is to give a holistic analysis of the current situation experiences of street involved children in Tanzania whereas its population today is about 44.9 million inhabitants and children account for over 50 per cent of the population (NBS¹ 2012; Mkombozi 2012). The study is less focused on getting the actual numbers of street involved children but rather getting their experiences from their own voices to examine whether the social welfare and protection mechanisms targeted at them meet their needs. But equally important it seeks understanding on how service providers define the needs of these children, the main challenges they face and how policy implications affect services improvement targeted to these children as well as exploring if such policies-practices have any impact at all.

The methodology adopted to address these objectives is qualitative research method using in-depth qualitative interviews with key respondents via Skype calls. I used the case study of Mkombozi, a Non-Governmental Organization working with vulnerable street involved children on the street in Moshi Kilimanjaro and Arusha regions. The theoretical framework of the Human Rights or the Rights-Based Approach, Social Constructionism, and the Implementation theory are also used in order to shed light on the holistic analytical understanding of the current situation of street involved children.

The findings show that poverty and poverty-related issues form the cluster of reasons for children to run away from home. Also, lack of awareness in the community about the extent of existing abusive systems in the institutions of the family, the police and the schools triggers children to opt for street living. The study reveals that some of these children continue to experience abuses when making their living on the streets from the institution like police.

In addition it also indicate that there is a clear lack of political will as there are many ministries involved with street involved children's affair but there is no clear allocation of responsibilities. Such ministries include the ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children, ministry of Health and Social Welfare, ministry of Education and Vocational Training and that of Home Affair.

I belief that this study will contribute to knowledge not only for policy makers but also to the society in general about the extent of the situation of street involved children in Tanzania.

¹ NBS: The Nation Bureau of Statistics (2012). <http://www.nbs.go.tz/>

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
COBET	COBET Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania
CP	Child Protection
CPC	Child Protection Policy
CSPD	Child Survival, Protection and Development
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Growth National Product
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IT	Information Technology
MoEVT	Ministry of Education and Vocational Training
MoHSW	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
MoC	Ministry of Culture
NCPA	National Costed Plan of Action for Most Vulnerable Children
NFE	Non Formal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
TEN-MET	Tanzania Education Network – Mtandan wa Elimu Tanzania
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child
UNHR	United Nations Human Rights
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
URT	United Republic of Tanzania

1 Introduction

Historically, the responsibility of raising children belonged to the whole community. Therefore, whenever children did something wrong, anyone from the community felt responsible for guiding and correcting them. However, in recent times, this is no longer the case; the value of shared responsibility is disappearing. As a result, people perceive other people's children as a burden, including 'street-involved' ones. For instance, nowadays, if you see a four-year-old child on the street, you find that people walk by without doing anything about it, which shows how far we have left our value of caring. Experience shows that even when social workers try to reconcile abandoned children with their extended families in the absence of their immediate families, no one wants to take up the responsibility; on the contrary, they consider it an extra burden. The need to return to the old value of *shared responsibility for raising children* is urgent.

1.1 Background

The United Nations Children's Fund, formerly the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) reports that around the world 'street-involved' children appear to be the most physically visible of all the children, finding their own ways of living by working mainly in major cities or small towns (UNICEF 2005). However, the paradox has been that they are still invisible when it comes to crucial services, as well as protection. Massive and countless efforts towards helping this vulnerable group worldwide have been in place, yet the number of street-involved children has been reportedly increasing. There are still large discrepancies in estimating the actual number of children residing on the streets around the world, possibly because of the mobile character of this population and difficulties in defining it (McAlpine et al. 2009). Nevertheless, UNICEF stresses that the number runs into tens of millions around the world, with developing countries in the lead (UNICEF 2005, 40–41). Tanzania, one of the developing countries in Africa is also witnessing growth in number of street involved children in its cities, but the experiences so far shows that efforts to support these vulnerable children has been much less than the actual needs.

The United Republic of Tanzania (URT) is located in Eastern Africa (see the map in Appendix A). The URT was formed out of the union of two sovereign states, Tanganyika and Zanzibar. The Tanzanian government is a unitary republic consisting of the Union Government and the

Zanzibar Revolutionary Government. Tanzania has the biggest land area among the East African countries (i.e., Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and now Rwanda and Burundi) (URT 2013). According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), its population is currently about 44.9 million (NBS 2012).

The URT is one of the developing countries characterised by poverty, especially in the rural areas. Its economy relies mainly on agriculture with “more than a quarter of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), providing 85 per cent exports and employing, 80 per cent of the workforce” (Smeaton 2012, 2). NBS estimate shows that about 33 per cent of the population live below the poverty line, earning less than one dollar a day, and 71 per cent of children are reported to be living in ‘absolute poverty’. Nonetheless, the URT is marked as one of the largest recipients of development aid in Africa, with 40 per cent of its national budget in 2008–2009 depending on foreign donors (Smeaton 2012). The URT, similar to the rest of the African countries, has been experiencing rapid urbanisation; about 27 per cent of its 44.9 million populations live in urban areas. UNICEF notes that “one of every four Tanzanian children lives in urban areas and one of every three babies born this year is likely to live in a city before reaching the age of 20” (UNICEF 2012, 7). Children are often the most vulnerable to shocks and stresses attached to poor living conditions, malnutrition and ill health (Mamdani et al. 2009).

Furthermore children account for over 50 per cent of the population in Tanzania; regardless of this high percentage, they are not given priority (Bunten-Wren 2011; Mkombozi 2012). This lack of attention is clearly evident in growing number of street involved children, the most vulnerable group and existence of very few means to address it. The government has no official statistics on the magnitude of the problem; only a few studies covered selected areas and were carried out for different purposes by various government institutions, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and religious institutions. Some of these studies roughly estimated street-involved children to be 437,500 in Tanzania. The available data do not offer reliable estimates of the actual number of children living and working on the streets, but people working with these children believe that their numbers have been rising (UNICEF 2012, 76). The government, through the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW), has articulated in its strategic plan for 2008–2003 that the number of these street-involved children is one of the country’s social problems, although it also

mentions inadequate resources such as human resources, infrastructure, finance and working facilities as hindrances in dealing with these social problems (MoHSW 2008, 1).

The duties and responsibilities for dealing with street-involved children in general are shared among different ministerial positions in the Tanzanian government. These ministries include the Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children; the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare; the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training; and that of Home Affairs. In March 2011, the Minister of Community Development, Gender and Children approved the decision described as a ‘comprehensive strategy’ to prevent and resolve the situation of street involved children as well as other children in urban cities. The aim of the comprehensive strategy was to reduce the number of street children by 75 per cent and also to provide 70 per cent of street children with support for family reintegration by the year 2012 (Thomas 2011).

The population of street involved children has not decreased but has shifted to other cities or parts of the cities (ibid). The Minister for Health and Social Welfare, Dr Hadji Mponda, when addressing the Tanzanian National Assembly in April 2012, pointed out that the survey in 95 districts in Tanzania showed the increasing number of both vulnerable and street involved children. The term vulnerable refers to those children “who are at-risk of becoming street involved” (Buntin-Wren 2011, 1). Thus, vulnerable and street-involved children accounted for 849,054 children, of whom only 33,952 were street involved (Saiboko 2011).

1.2 My Motivation for Doing the Study

I had been a social worker for nearly four years at Mkombozi, an NGO serving vulnerable street-involved children in the Moshi Kilimanjaro and Arusha regions (see the map in Appendix A2). While working as a social worker and Child Protection Officer (CPO), I once encountered a very sad and traumatising experience of a mentally challenged street-involved boy who was beaten to death by *sungusungu*² (community guards); they caught the boy roaming the streets at night and could not understand him. Although the organisation (Mkombozi) together with the family

² In the early 1980s the Sukuma and Nyamwesi tribes in central Tanzania “began to organize their own form of collective policing which became known throughout Tanzania as *sungusungu*. Over time they have become an integral part of the administrative structures of vast areas of rural Tanzania” (Heald 2005, 265).

member of the deceased tried to take the involved persons to court for justice, the latter were released afterwards due to their police connections.

Thus, this and other experiences gained during my work with street children pushed my decision to choose this topic. I wanted to use my already acquired experiences and knowledge (Michael Seltzer³ (2012) called it “experiential knowledge”) to write about the situation of these children, instead of choosing an unfamiliar subject. It is one thing to put to use my experiences from working with this vulnerable group, but most importantly, my study is less focused on getting the numbers of street-involved children; rather, it provides an opportunity for them to share their experiences using their own voices.

1.3 Overview of Mkombozi

Mkombozi⁴ uses educational research, advocacy and outreach programmes to help vulnerable children and youth. Its mission is to empower Tanzania's children to develop holistically (in body, mind and spirit) by partnering with local communities and the government to create a more caring and cohesive society that prioritises children. The organisation envisions a world where all children are actively engaged to grow into productive adults in a just and democratic society.⁵

This NGO's history can be traced back to 1997, when it started as a temporary and ad hoc space for feeding children; after which they would go back to the streets. Progressively, it provided basic services for overnight shelter to the children, and a few years later, started renting and providing full-time housing for boys living on the streets. Today, it works with a target of serving 1,000 street-involved children per year. It divides its services delivery to vulnerable at-risk children below 18 years old into two major categories: children's programme team and community engagement group. These service delivery teams and groups are supported by the executive director, finance and administration team, research, communication and fundraising team, as well as monitoring and evaluation team.

³ In a personal correspondence on September 3, 2012

⁴ In Swahili language, Mkombozi means "liberator" or "emancipator" <http://www.mkombozi.org/>

⁵ Mkombozi: <http://www.mkombozi.org/about/> (*ibid*)

Additionally, the children's programme's team offers direct social welfare and child protection services to the children who are already living and working on the streets of the two northern Tanzanian regions of Moshi and Arusha. The main interventions included are street work, mainstream and formal education, non-formal education – MEMKWA, youth livelihood, psychosocial support, self-actualisation recreation and leisure, and group and transitional housing – children's home and half-way housing for youth in the communities (Mkombozi 2000).

1.3.1 Mkombozi work on the streets

Mkombozi street educators spend day and night contacting street involved children.⁶ They meet with new ones every day, offering friendship, building trust and introducing them to its services. Some of the children agree to become recipients of the organisation's services, and they are linked to social workers who fill intake forms for them and start helping them in many aspects of their lives. Some of the identified children are taken back to their homes to live with their families and continue to receive support and follow-up while living at home. Other children who do not have families are taken to live with foster carers in the community, while continuing to meet with Mkombozi staff. Some of the street-involved children do not want to get away from their lives on the streets, and these are also served by the organisation. Where necessary, it also provides psychosocial support, counselling, parental skills and economic empowerment to the families of reunified children (Mkombozi 2009; 2010).

The staff members (such as social workers, nurses, street educators, day supervisors, night supervisors and coordinators) offer their attention, quality time and psychosocial support to the children and youth in the form of one-on-one and group support sessions. Through one-on-one sessions, the staff members build a friendly relationship and trust with children and therefore easily influence them to open up and share all the difficulties they are facing in their lives. The staff members also use these meetings to assess the children's life situations and design interventions.

Moreover, the NGO regularly organises group support sessions geared to impart children and youth with life skills that enable them to cope with difficult situations, improve their behaviour

⁶ Mkombozi street outreach programme: http://www.mkombozi.org/programs/street_popup.html

and pave the way for reintegration into society. Some of the children have severe psychological problems; they are then offered an opportunity to meet with the government psychologist once a month. Some of the children have severe mental health problems, and they are referred to mental health hospitals for further treatment (Mkombozi 2007; 2009).

Through one-on-one sessions and the assessment of the child's life situation, many other services can be offered to the child upon his or her consent. The children's programmes offer educational services that link children to formal education, i.e., primary, secondary and tertiary (college or university). The NGO also runs a non-formal education programme (NFE) for street-involved children who are out of school, living and working on the streets or living on a temporary basis at the Mkombozi transitional home in Moshi town. These children have special emotional, behavioural and learning needs. Moreover, recreation and leisure, sports and games, healthcare services and health education, life skills and family life education are also offered to the children who live on the streets or in the transitional home (Mkombozi 2009).

1.3.2 Mkombozi work in the transitional home and housing

Mkombozi also runs a transitional home for boys ranging from 7 to 15 years of age. This centre is a safe place for vulnerable children, as illustrated in the case study of the youth who describes it as "his most significant change" (Mkombozi 2008, 5). It can house a maximum of 40 children at any given time and provides basic services (food, shelter, clothing and healthcare), as well as NFE and self-reliance opportunities. This facility aims to provide short-term shelter to the children to a maximum of one year, while family reunification options are being explored (Mkombozi 2009).

The centre also prepares children and youth for independent living by offering them with opportunities to attend vocational training colleges, teacher training colleges, entrepreneurship and business training, job preparation training and apprenticeships, and linking them to job placements. Some of these street-involved children and youth do not have access to shelters; therefore, the NGO offers them a half-way housing facility called group and transitional housing (*ibid*).

Furthermore, the organisation engages children and young people in the arts, peer support groups, drama, sports (such as jump rope, rugby, soccer, basketball and volleyball), information technology (IT), recreation (such as Evening of Artist and Jahazi on the last Saturday of the month, fun events through planned outings and extracurricular activities) and leadership activities to enable them to discover their talents, form positive relationships, learn life skills, be healed from the pain and trauma they have experienced, as well as build resilience (Mkombozi 2009).

Additionally, the NGO supports the children's committee session, a weekly forum held by the children to voice any concerns and bring up any issues they felt were unresolved by the staff during the week. The idea behind having this committee is to encourage the children and young people's participation in the decision-making processes in matters directly affecting them and which are vital to their development (Mkombozi 2000; 2009).

1.3.3 Mkombozi work in the community

Apart from offering direct social welfare services to the street-involved children, Mkombozi is active in prevention work through its community engagement team. It focuses on the communities which produce most of the street-involved children, as identified from the census on street-involved children conducted every two years. It also partners with local government leaders, parents and common people to prevent or minimise the number of children opting for street lives (Mkombozi 2000; 2009).

Similarly, the NGO works in the communities to raise awareness on children's rights issues. It advocates, promotes and protects children's rights in collaboration with different duty bearers, partners and actors who live in the communities that produce the majority of street-involved children. It also runs different interventions that are geared to strengthen child protection systems in the communities, as well as programmes such as happy and sad boxes, whereby children share all abuses they experience in schools (*ibid*).

Furthermore, it establishes and strengthens the capacity of children's protection committees working in wards, providing training to committee members, monitoring their activities, and

evaluating their monthly and annual reports. Additionally, it manages children's rights radio programmes that enhance the knowledge of community members by offering opportunities to ask questions and share all abuses suffered by children (Mkombozi 2011; 2012).

Likewise, in cooperation with community members, local government officers and school administrators, the organisation builds walls around the schools that have many truancy cases of children. In most cases, truant children end up living and working on the streets if no follow-up is done to them or if no remedial measures are taken. Lastly, in collaboration with lawyers, courts and prisons, it works on child abuse cases and deals with the abusers (*ibid*). This overview leads to the aim and focus of this study.

1.4 Research Aim and Focus

First, this study attempts to conduct a holistic analysis of the current situations and experiences of street-involved children in Tanzania. Second, it will examine whether the social welfare and protection mechanisms meet these children's needs. It will also find out how social welfare and child protection service providers define these needs, the main challenges identified by social service providers, and the organisational and institutional parameters they consider as impinging upon their work.

This study also aims to explore how policy affects practice in the local and global contexts. It will outline the policymaking and practice implications for improving services and the children's access to them, and for changing any negative perceptions and attitudes toward them. Moreover, it intends to find out whether such practices and policies have any effect at all.

1.5 Research Questions

In this study, I have developed three questions, each building on or complementing the others. The first question focuses on the current situation of children living and working on the streets of Tanzania, describing the characteristics of their everyday life. The second question pays attention to the policies, interventions and models of care that are directed to meeting these children's needs, from government and community initiatives. Although the perceptions of these vulnerable groups towards social services and protection will be covered in the second question, the third question intends to bring in the perceptions of the professional service providers in working with

these children. The last part of the question will also examine the existing gap between policies and implementation.

Research Questions

- What is the situation of the street-involved children in Tanzania?
- Are the existing social welfare services and protection currently meeting the needs of street-involved children? To what extent are their needs met?
- How do professional service providers perceive their work with these street-involved children? Where is the gap between the policies and the implementation in this area?

1.6 Limitations of the Study

One of the main constraints in my research was the limited time frame provided for this master programme and the lack of resources, which made it difficult to travel back to Tanzania for primary data collection. Hence, after discussion and agreement with my supervisor, I decided to conduct interviews via Skype and phone calls.

The time constraint was also partly responsible for my inability to meet more government officials as I had wished, due to their tight schedules. The fact that these government officials I had targeted had no Internet access in their offices made it difficult to organise interviews with them through Skype.

Another main limitation is the maximum length for this thesis at 40 pages. This was a big challenge, as some areas could have been further developed, but I chose a balance and had to leave out a lot of additional information.

2 Literature Review on the Street-Involved Children in Tanzania

A number of academic, government and nongovernmental studies have been done on street-involved children since this phenomenon emerged in Tanzania in the 1980s. Ruth M.C. Evans notes that the “visible presence of children and young people living independently on the street in towns and cities” has greatly increased throughout the 80s and 90s in Tanzania (2004, 69). Most of these studies’ discourse concentrates on the “characteristics of these children or the host of

remedial NGOs and other institutions established to cater for these vulnerable group's needs" (*ibid*).

Furthermore, much of the literature focused on the street children's experiences of these NGOs or institutions' interventions and their impacts on these children's future. An example is Nalkur's (2009) study which reveals, among other things, that street youth are highly aware of educational and vocational opportunities but have indifferent, ambivalent or negative visions of the future, given their present conditions. Such studies suggest that high-quality rehabilitative care can be instrumental, enabling children to prioritise preparing positively for the future (Benitez 2010).

McAlpine et al. (2009) have conducted repeat surveys to assess the impact of Mkombozi's⁷ outreach interventions. Their study on the organisation focused on the families and communities where these children came from, what could help them identify in the first place the vulnerable children in their communities before these children migrate to the streets. The researchers' emphasis was on addressing how abuse or support factors influence migration of children to the streets. Their finding has played an important role in reshaping Mkombozi's programme. It was also helpful in putting in place services that engage the communities to support local families and vulnerable children (McAlpine et al. 2009, 27).

Smeaton's (2012) study has taken a further step by exploring the experiences of children and youth living alone on the streets of Tanzania and Kenya. It discusses a range of social factors from the voices of these street-involved children which might lead them to end up being on the streets. Among others, poverty, conflicts with parents or carers and school-related issues are mentioned as contributing reasons. Nevertheless, Smeaton (2012) argues that the causal relationship between poverty and children living alone on the streets should be explored further, considering the numbers living in poverty in both Tanzania and Kenya who do not migrate to the streets (Smeaton 2012, 78). This argument contradicts those of other researchers, such as that of Evans (2004) who assumes a direct relationship between the two variables. Evans notes that "it is clear that poverty severely constrains the family's ability to provide for their children... poverty affect[s] [the] majority of the participants... three quarter[s] of the young people interviewed

⁷ An organisation working with street-involved children in Northern Tanzania, as explained in section 1.3

cited the family[‘s] inability to meet their basic needs as a major factor in their decisions to leave home” (Evans 2004, 71).

Nearly 13 years ago, Kopoka (2000) warned that the then existing initiatives to tackle the problem of street-involved children were “too little to make a differen[ce],” which exactly seems to be the case now:

“The emergence of the problem of street children may itself point to gaps in coverage. Typically, each Ministry may have far more urgent problems on its hands than street children, and none will be prepared to take overall responsibility. Departments tend to determine and shape their programmes in accordance with the policies they are given. These policies are usually aimed at aiding families and are rarely flexible enough to cope with exceptions” (12).

Erosion of the extended family system due to political change and the cultural modernisation process, which took away the traditional security net, can be pointed out as one of the crucial factors for children migrating to the streets in Tanzania (Farestveit 2004). This and many other political aspects are rarely discussed in the literature about street-involved children. Thus, to understand realistically and holistically these children’s situation, crucial aspects of politics need to be addressed as well.

3 Definition of the Key Concepts and Theoretical Framework

3.1 Short Definitions of Key Concepts

This section offers definitions of the three key concepts crucial to this study: street-involved children, social welfare and child protection.

3.1.1 Street-involved children

Street-involved children or street children, as used by several scholars, is the concept which emerged from contested definitions. The United Nations has defined street children as “any boy or girl for whom the street has become his or her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood and who is inadequately protected, supervised or directed by responsible adults” (Panter-Brick as cited in Lusk 1992, 294). Smeaton (2012) cautions that the term ‘street children’ can be used in a

“range of ways,” for example, to “describe children who live on the street with their families, work on the streets or spend time on the streets and return to their family home” (Smeaton 2012, 2). However, in defining these children, one should not only focus on the role of the streets, but rather, their experiences prior to coming to the streets. As Smeaton (2012) describes:

“It also emphasis[es] the role of the streets when the findings of the report reveal inherent of these children’s lives are their experiences prior to coming on the streets and in the environments away from streets” (2).

In this study, the term ‘street-involved children’ refers to children under 18 years old (based on the Tanzanian legal definition of childhood) working and/or sleeping on the streets. Such a definition includes the two co-existing categories referred to by UNICEF as children “on the street” and “of the street” (Agnelli, as cited in UNICEF 2001, 34). The former refers to homeless children who live and sleep on the streets in urban areas (full-time street-involved children). They are totally on their own, living with other street children or homeless adult street people. The children “of the street” earn their living either by begging or working on the street during the day and return home at night (part-time street-involved children). This second category has or maintains contact with their families, while the first one might not (Benitez 2011).

Regardless of how we define these children, we cannot deny that they have the same rights as any other children to live free from “risk and harm” in order to enhance their physical and mental development so that they can reach their potential. Therefore, they should not be “labelled by where they live but recognized as individual children with diverse characteristics and needs” (Smeaton 2012, 2).

3.1.2 Social welfare

The term welfare itself can be referred to as “the state or condition of being well, good fortune, happiness or wellbeing (of a person, community or thing); thriving or successful progress in life, prosperity” (Wilding, as cited in Fitzpatrick et al. 2006, 1513). On the other hand, social welfare “consists of arrangements predicated on the notion that people can exercise solidarity with other[s] to ensure individual wellbeing” (Dominelli, as cited in Fitzpatrick et al. 2006, 1306).

3.1.3 Child protection

The term child protection (CP) can be used to describe the philosophies, policies, standards, guidelines and procedures in place for preventing intentional and unintentional harm to children. The harm can be in the form of physical injury or sexual, emotional or physical neglect (McAlpine 2008, 4). The objective of CP is to promote, protect and fulfil children's rights as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC1989)⁸.

The UNCRC's fundamental articles on CP that this study embraces include:

- Article 9 on family separation;
- Article 10 on family reunification across borders;
- Article 11 on illicit transfer of children;
- Article 16 on right to privacy, honour and reputation;
- Article 19 on protection from violence, injury, abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation;
- Article 20 on alternative care;
- Article 21 on adoption;
- Article 23 on children with disabilities;
- Article 24 on harmful practices;
- Article 34 on sexual abuse and exploitation;
- Article 35 on abduction, sale or trafficking of children;
- Article 36 on other forms of exploitation;
- Article 37 on juvenile justice and protection from torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;
- Article 39 on recovery and reintegration; and
- Article 40 on children in conflict with the law.

Other articles that provide important approaches to securing children's protection rights include: Article 5 on support for the parent, extended family and community;

- Article 7 on birth registration and protection of identity;

⁸ UNHR: United Nations Human Rights; Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/crc.pdf>

- Article 18 on parental responsibility;
- Article 26 on social security;
- Article 27 on adequate standard of living and social protection;
- Articles 28 and 29 on education; and
- Article 31 on play and leisure⁹ (Save the Children 2013).

3.2 Theoretical Frameworks

3.2.1 The theory of social construction

The theory of social construction traces its development from Berger and Luckmann (1967) who hold that all knowledge, even the taken-for-granted knowledge about the reality of everyday life, is constructed and maintained by social interactions. Critically Ian Hacking adds that “any idea that is debated, assessed and developed is situated in a social setting. The explicit idea emerged at a definite time, at [a] definite place in the discussion of some authoritative people” – making the point that “saying the idea is socially constructed is to insist that it is not inevitable but is the product of a very specific social history that might have been very different” (as cited in Delanty & Strydom 2003, 423). Panter-Brick (2002) argues that street-involved children’s statistics are problematic because they reflect the particular agendas of the organisation that collects them; therefore, they are part of the construction. Thus, one can argue that understanding this social issue and its ever changing social dynamics is crucial.

The paradigm shift has been noticed in both research and work with and for street-involved children, as illustrated by Ennew and Swart-Kruger (2003) in Table 1.

Table 1: Matrix showing the key elements of a paradigm shift in research and work with and for street-involved children

Shifting from ideas that:	Through ideas of:	To the following consequences:		
		Theory	Research	Practice
Street children are	Space	Street children	A variety of	Use the street as a

⁹ Additionally, Articles 2 on nondiscrimination, 3 on the best interests of the child, 4 on accountability, 6 on survival and development and 12 on children’s right to be heard, are crucial to CP as important complements to the articles mentioned above. Save the Children (2010) <http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/node/1366>

homeless and abandoned victims.		create meanings for using street spaces and form supportive networks.	triangulated methods is required to research street children's lives.	space for programming; build on existing strengths and networks.
Street children's lives are chaotic; they will become delinquents.	Time	Street children have changing careers on the street, and their increasing age is an important factor.	Longitudinal studies are vital.	Age-sensitive, long-term programming with follow-up to ensure the development of potential.
Adults know best; adult control and supervision is necessary to ensure children's welfare.	Social construction of meaning	Children are active agents in their own lives; they construct meanings and are subjects of rights.	Children-centred participatory research is not only a necessity, it is also a right for children.	Take a rights-based, children-centred approach; children should be involved as partners in all aspects of programming.

Reproduced from Ennew and Swart-Kruger (2003)

As highlighted in the matrix, one of the shifts involves the idea that “adults know best;” their control and supervision in ensuring children’s welfare is then necessary. The mentioned idea is no longer the reality; instead the workable reality lies in the fact that these children are “active agents” in their lives. One can agree with Ennew and Swart-Kruger that in social construction theory, children “construct meanings and are subjects of rights.” Thus, taking the rights-based, child-centred approach is optimal because it encourages children’s involvement as partners in all aspects of the programming (Ennew & Swart-Kruger as cited in Benitez 2010).

3.2.2 A rights-based approach-human rights framework

Another relevant theoretical framework used in this study is that of the human rights-based approach. This approach can be traced back to 1993 when the UN hosted the World Conference on Human Rights that put in place the Vienna Declaration. The declaration, together with the programme of action, advocated human rights, linking them to democracy, sustainability and development (Hamm 2001 as cited in Babaci-Wilhite 2012). Significantly, in 1997, the UN Secretary General called for “a mainstreaming of human rights” into all UN works. As a result, various organisations and agencies came together in 2003 to develop “government responsibility in insuring [the] rights-based approach” (Babaci-Wilhite 2012, 18).

The human rights approach works on a paradigm shift from “aid” to “moral duty imposed through the international consensus of human rights” (Babaci-Wilhite & Geo-JaJa 2011). The approach identifies rights’ holders and their entitlements, and corresponding duty bearers and their obligations (Babaci-Wilhite et al. 2012; UNICEF 2004, 91). In this context, street-involved children are potential “rights holders;” in the human rights approach, their capacity to make claims is strengthened, and governments, as “duty bearers,” are compelled to meet their obligations (UNICEF 2004).

3.2.3 Implementation theory

As it has been stressed, part of this study’s objectives is to explore the policy-practice relation for those policies concerning street-involved children in Tanzania and to examine their implementation. Thus, the implementation theory becomes central in understanding this relationship in this context.

In this approach, I draw heavily from Carol H. Weiss (1998), who argues that “implementation implicitly incorporates a theory about what is required to translate objectives into on-going services delivery and program operation.” It is basically moving from intentions and plans to sound programme activities. The assumption behind the theory is “if the activities are conducted as planned with sufficient quality, intensity and fidelity to plan the desired results will be forthcoming” (58).

4 Methodology

This study is mainly based on the qualitative research method, since the method seeks to find out “what people think and how they act” (Chambliss & Schutt 2009, 22), why they act like they do, and the meanings they attach to their actions. The qualitative method is suitable for my study because the objective is to explore children living and working in street situations, describing their experiences and characteristics of their everyday life. This method focuses on a few cases and goes into detail in the sense of exploring many aspects of the informants’ lives, views, experiences or actions.

In this case, one can agree with Chambliss and Schutt (2009) that qualitative research is exploratory. Hence, it uses an inductive research process, that is, to “collect the data” first, then “develop a theory” that explains the data collected (ibid, 25). On the contrary, the quantitative method is deductive; it starts with a theory or a hypothesis and then uses data to confirm or deny it. Its processes involve a large number of respondents and so-called “representative samples” (cf. Chambliss & Schutt 2009, 111; Dietz & Kalof 2009, 14).

This study does not intend to develop a theory to explain the street children’s situations. However, as Bridget Byrne (2004) points out, themes of a sensitive nature (such as the street-involved children’s experience with violence) need to be addressed with suitable techniques such as the qualitative method.

4.1 The Design of the Study

Initially, I thought of doing only a literature review on the subject matter, due to the limited time frame provided for this master programme, as well as resource constraints, as it was difficult to travel back to Tanzania for primary data collection by myself. Thus, I decided to take advantage of IT by conducting interviews via Skype and phone calls after a thorough discussion with my supervisor.

4.2 Collection and Interpretation of Data

4.2.1 Intensive or in-depth interviewing

I used in-depth qualitative interviews with key respondents, including children who are experiencing or have experienced street living conditions, staff from the NGOs working with them, and government officials responsible for securing their welfare and protection. The decision to use the intensive interview method was because it provided the researcher the opportunity to ask the research subjects open-ended questions in a relatively unstructured way (Chambliss & Schutt 2009, 236). Additionally, this method is considered to be a very good way of accessing “people’s perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality (Punch 2005, 168; cf. also Chambliss & Schutt 2009). It is also well suited for “seeing the social world as the research subject sees it [...] and for understanding subjects’ interpretations of that world” (Chambliss & Schutt 2009, 224), as well as for accessing information about the meanings people attach to their behaviour. The qualitative, intensive interview technique also allows the respondents to “speak in their own voices and with their own language” (Byrne 2004, 182). The type of data generated through the above-mentioned technique is hence what I needed to answer my research question.

4.2.2 Document review

The document review has been carried out with journals, articles, the Tanzanian government’s policies and its relevant official web site. The review extended to NGO reports and publications, and reliable Tanzanian newspaper articles that appeared pertinent to my study. Different search engines have been used, including but not limited to Google, Google Scholar and Bibsys.¹⁰

I also went through some of the identified government policies related to street-involved children in Tanzania, such as the Child Development Policy 1996, National Policy on HIV/AIDS 2003, National Multi-Sectorial Strategic Framework on HIV/AIDS 2007, Government Policy for Child Survival, Protection and Development (CSPD) 2001, and the development of National Guidelines for Community-Based Care, Support and Protection of Orphans and Vulnerable Children. I have as well read legislative framework that also pertained to street-involved children,

¹⁰ BIBSYS is a supplier of library and information systems for all the Norwegian university libraries

such as the Law of the Child Act 2009, National Costed Plan of Action for Most Vulnerable Children in 2007-2010, National Plan of Action to Prevent and Respond to Violence against Children, and Tanzania Development Vision 2025.

International and national NGO reports and publications of different organisations have also been used, such as the current study on the children's knowledge of their rights and feelings of protection by Mkombozi 2012 and *Struggling to survive: Children living alone on the streets in Tanzania and Kenya* by Railway children 2012.

4.3 Selection of Samples for the Study

4.3.1 Street-involved children

I conducted interviews via Skype calls with 10 street-involved children aged 12–17 years old. Five were from the Arusha streets and another five were from the Mkombozi transitional home in Moshi Kilimanjaro. The reason for choosing equal numbers from both regions was to have equal representation.

4.3.2 NGO staff working with street-involved children

I also conducted Skype interviews with three NGO staff members working with street-involved children; two were from Moshi and one was from Arusha. The purpose was to gain knowledge of their experiences as practitioners serving these children.

4.3.3 Government officials

From the policy makers' perspective, I carried out two interviews with government officials to obtain their responses regarding their perceptions and government initiatives towards this marginalised group of children and young people.

4.3.4 Coding of the interviews

To ensure the respondents' well-being by avoiding harm to individual reputations or feelings, as well as addressing the issue of identity disclosure versus anonymity, I used the following coding system:

- A1 to A5 for children living or working on the streets in the Arusha region

- M1 to M5 for children living in the transitional home from the Moshi region
- SW A1 for NGO staff working with street-involved children in the Arusha region
- SW M1 and SW M2 for NGO staff working with street-involved children in the Moshi region
- P1 and P2 for the two government officials.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethical questions have always been considered when conducting a qualitative study. First of all is making sure that respondents' participation in the study is voluntary and not forced or conditional. Special attention was paid to these children, as they are considered to be a vulnerable group who cannot rationally decide for themselves. This situation has been addressed by consulting social workers who work with these children on a daily basis. I have sent them the interview guide and the study proposal. The social workers who assisted me in organising the interviews with these children explicitly shared the study proposal with the latter. Hence, all the respondents voluntarily participated in the interviews.

Another ethical consideration is making sure that respondents' well-being is maintained by avoiding harm to individual reputations or feelings, and addressing issues of identity disclosure versus anonymity, and confidentiality (Chambliss & Schutt 2009, 242– 243; Berg 2001, 57). The organisation that works with these children has a child protection policy (CPP)¹¹ that protects these children; hence, informed consent from the children was obtained, and I assured the study participants that their names would not be mentioned.

The methods used has not only enriched this study but has also provided support in the analysis, because policy documents always explain what should be done, but the theory does not necessarily match the practice.

¹¹ The child protection policy is “a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children from harm and makes clear to all. It outlines what is required in relation to the protection of children. It helps to create a safe and positive environment for children and to show that the organization is taking its duty and responsibility of care seriously.” UNICEF CP Manual (2013) <http://www.unicef.org/violencestudy/pdf/CP%20Manual%20-%20Stage%201.pdf>

5 Discussion and Analysis of the Findings

This section presents a holistic analysis of the current situation of street-involved children in Tanzania. Based on the interviews with children and the staff working with them, the findings on how social welfare and protection mechanisms meet their needs are discussed and analysed. This section also examines the main challenges social service providers identify as characterising their work with this vulnerable group.

Prior to the analysis, I would like to first shed light on the strategy used for data analysis. I have segmented and categorised the data to facilitate my analysis. Based on a thematic and interactional analysis of the interview results, I have grouped the arguments into themes. One can agree with Bryman (2012) who argues that “the search for themes is an activity that can be discerned in many if not most approaches to qualitative data analysis” (578). It basically starts from constructing “an index of central themes and subthemes” that are products of “a thorough reading and recording of transcripts and field notes” comprising the data. Then the framework is “applied to the data which is organized initially into core themes and the data are then displayed in terms of subthemes within the matrix and for each case” (*ibid*, 578-579). I have also used direct quotes from the interviewees.

5.1 Situation of Street-involved Children in Tanzania

First, this subsection presents some of the main reasons that lead these children to end up on the streets, their experiences of living on the streets and/or in the children’s transitional home, and their expectations towards their future lives. It also discusses their awareness of human rights, specifically their own, and their shared experiences with protection and welfare systems. These street-involved children continue to be at risk of all forms of abuses.

5.1.1 Reasons for running away from home

One of the major reasons identified by the children who participated in this study is poverty or poverty-related issues. Poverty in this context can be observed in different forms. One that is mentioned by the children is their parents’ inability to provide for their needs, which at the end has made them seek refuge on the streets. Elstad (2000) argues that as some families find themselves in more difficult social situations because of less income or resources (lower status),

they are “often less capable of fostering sound patterns of attachment [to] their children” (75). Evans (2005) further emphasises that chronic poverty hinders families’ abilities to provide for their children, which in most cases can be presented in its extreme form within the domain of the family and social environment.

Consequently, this study reveals that children cannot attend school due to the lack of money to pay for tuition fees and/or other expenses such as uniforms, textbooks and exercise books. They have often returned home for these reasons.

Another major reason is violence from the caregivers. Some of the children interviewed highlight physical violence either from their parents or close relatives who were taking care of them. Other instances of violence have been experienced in school in the form of corporal punishment from teachers, either because of their mischief at school or missing school items or fees. Interviewee M5 reports:

“I used to wake up in the morning first with no tea; when you get to school you get punished, because you have not paid school fees. Then I did not have full uniforms; when you get there, you get beaten” (M5, February 12, 2013).

Other children have experienced physical violence from either their own parents, relatives or stepparents (mother or father) who were taking care of them. Child M2 says:

“I left home, because my little brother broke a tea bottle. Then my mother beat me up, and then I left at once” (M2, February 11, 2013).

A4 points out that when his mother married another man, the stepfather did not accept him; the former used to beat him often. He explains:

“...that stepfather did not want to see me at home. It reached a point that he even cut off my fingers. He chased me away from home and told me he doesn’t want to see me” (A4, December 8, 2012).

Children also have heavy workload at home or too many domestic chores, which are other major contributing factors. They wake up early in the morning and do lots of tasks, including fetching water, doing dishes, cleaning the compound and taking care of younger siblings. Some of them

were asked to do those chores before and after school. At school, they also perform the same kind of duties before starting classes every day.

Another reason is the influence from other children who either have already been on the streets or have experienced living in residential centres or transitional homes. However, this cannot be seen in isolation from the above-mentioned factors; these children have been influenced because they already are at risk due to those other factors. M4 says:

“I met a child called (name of the child). He told me there is a place called Mkombozi. When he told me that, he said, let’s go. I told him let me tell my mother and when I told my mother, she said okay” (M4, February 12, 2013).

Separation from parents is also a contributing factor for children to run away from home, as mentioned by some of the children interviewed. When parents separate, one parent takes the children, usually the mother. Because fathers are the breadwinners, with the separation, the mother finds it difficult to provide for her children; in most cases, she is a single parent with no income. Children decide to leave home, since they are no longer provided for as they used to be. In other cases, the mother remarries to secure survival for her and her children, and then issues of maltreatment from the stepfather arise.

The orphanage is another reason. There are children who have lost both parents, so no responsible adult is left to care for them. In some cases, like the one shared by A2, there could be a relative from the extended family who traditionally claims the responsibilities, but ends up abandoning the child. It can also be that the one left to take care of the children is too old to fulfil the responsibilities. A2 explains:

“What caused me to leave home is because my parents died. I was then living with my grandma and my cousin. My cousin left me with our grandmother, and fled to Dar es Salaam. Then I decided to come to the city, as grandmother was unable to go even to the *shamba*¹² because she was very old” (A2, December 3, 2012).

This is equivalent to Evans’ (2005) findings that children cared for by grandparents are not only vulnerable to malnutrition and diseases, but also these caregivers lack “potential protective

¹² Refers to a piece of land or a field used for farming or agricultural activities (translated by the author)

factors such as support from the extended family or social networks with neighbors and friends” (116), which could have helped with risk mitigation.

5.1.2 The experience of living on the streets

Children interviewed were either currently living on the streets or residing in the transitional home, but have also been on the streets before in one way or the other, at the time the interviews were conducted. When responding about how they felt and how to describe their lives, all of them admit that street life is bad; others say that street life is difficult. They point out different challenging experiences encountered on the streets daily. Some children express that there is no food; they sleep on a bench at the bus stop or in verandas at the marketplaces, and it even gets worse when one is sick.

Interviewee A1 says:

“Life on the street is difficult... when the evening come[s], you find your *rago*,¹³ and you find a veranda to sleep [in]. Some days it is raining; you just have to let it rain over you; you just have to deal with it” (A1, December 3, 2012).

Having money is mentioned to be crucial for survival on the streets; these children have been involved in all sorts of activities or services to earn money. These activities include collecting and selling empty bottles or scrap metals, washing car mirrors at the traffic lights, calling for passengers at the bus stops, carrying passengers’ luggage at the bus stops, selling plastic bags, begging, and working for food vendors at the marketplace.

A4 argues that money is very important for surviving on the streets because:

“Without money you cannot eat; if you don’t have money, you cannot drink tea; if you don’t have money, you cannot find clothes... And getting money for us, street children, is very difficult” (A4, December 8, 2012).

They also share that even with whatever hard work they do on the streets to survive, earning is not always guaranteed; sometimes, they are paid so little or not paid at all. As illustrated by A5:

¹³ Normally it is an empty sack or something to cover one’s body.

“I wipe car mirrors at Mianzini, [by] the traffic lights. Each one gives you any money he/she wishes, even if it is fifty (50 Tanzanian shillings)... Others they tell you no, if they don't have. Others tell you later. Not all of them pay you” (A5, December 8, 2012).

Nevertheless, some of these children have to support their families with whatever they earn on the streets. Both M4 and A5 report that when they receive money, they would set aside a certain amount for their daily use, and the rest would be taken by or given to their mothers, respectively. They say:

“Some days I did not sleep at home, I just went picking scrap metals. There is a day I got ten thousand; I gave it to my mother” (M4, February 12, 2013).

“When I get money, I set aside little that I normally use, the little bit rest I take home. I give it to my mother” (A5, December 8, 2012).

There were incidences of abuses experienced by some of these children. Some suffered from bullying by older children on the streets. The younger ones were asked to find money for the older ones. One can concur with Philippe Bourgois (2003), who argues that “... upward mobility in the underground economy of street dealing requires a systematic and effective use of violence against one's colleagues, one's neighbor and to [a] certain extent against oneself” (24). Also, some of these children experienced police harassment, and in some cases, they ended up being taken to jail. Some of them experienced the same form of harassments from *sungusungu*. A3 and A5 share:

“Your money is taken away; older ones take away your money. Others are beating us. So often, we are chased by the police. Every time they find us asleep at night, they start chasing us. They want us to return to our homes. Once the police found us on the street, we were washing our clothes, and they caught us. We were then taken to jail for two months and released afterwards” (A3, December 8, 2012).

“Sometimes we are harassed by the police or if not by the police, then by the *sungusungu*, although with *sungusungu*, only once in a while. They arrest and beat you without doing any crime and then they leave...With the *sungusungu*, it is often at night but in the case of the police, it is any time” (A5, December 8, 2012).

Additionally, others suffered indirect abuses, as they observed their friends being hurt, and none of the responsible adults dared to intervene to help, not even after the incident. M2 has witnessed such police brutality and traumatising experiences:

“One day a vehicle came with policemen; children were arrested; others fled, and others were injured. There was one [who] ran up and hit the mirror of a car; the car mirror broke into pieces; some pieces stuck [to] his leg... but no one cared” (M2, February 11, 2013).

5.1.3 Relationships

The majority of the children who participated in this study seem to have no good relationship or no contact at all with their family members, whether the parents or extended families. It could be the nature of the abuses experienced that made them run away from home or just loss of contact with their family members. However, they seem to have good bonding among themselves, especially those ones of the same age, with shared interests or hobbies, or are involved in the same activities on the streets. They provide mutual support, especially in cases of illness or trouble with the police; for example, one buys medicine for another or they escort each other to the hospital. As explained by A1 and A3:

“My relationship with other youths on the street is not too bad... when my friend is sick or I get ill, he [goes] to the store and brings me some pills. He might be unable to buy food for me but [just] medicine (pills); he won’t lack a hundred shilling to buy me pills” (A1, December 3, 2012).

“If I am sick, I ask my friends to buy me medicine” (A3, December 8, 2012).

The few with some relationships with their family members in most cases happened to be with their mothers. As described by A1 and M5:

“At home, apart from my mother, I have no one else, and now my mother is already dead...” (A1, December 3, 2012).

“Yeah, well, I communicate with my mother. My mother just gives me advice about life” (M5, February 12, 2013).

5.1.4 Awareness of their own rights

On one hand, about half of the children who participated in the study show a lack of awareness about their rights, mostly those living on the streets when the interviews were conducted. Nevertheless, they seem to share some common sense about the obligations and responsibilities of the duty bearers (parents, families, communities or the government) to these street-involved children.

On the other hand, a few (especially those residing in the transitional home during the period of the interviews) demonstrate awareness of their rights. They mention some of these rights or components of them, such as the right to be heard or listened to, the right to be respected (not to be harassed, scolded or beaten), the right to education, the right to protection and safety, and the right to get proper accommodation and clothing.

However, the majority of them point out clearly that these crucial rights or components of these rights are not realised for them at all, particularly for those living and/or working on the streets. As explained by A4 and A5:

“No, they are not realised. For my side they have not been implemented...” (A4, December 8, 2012).

“Street children do not get any of those rights. I don’t know how to tell you. I have not seen any rights yet” (A5, December 8, 2012).

5.1.5 Children’s own future expectations

Despite the difficulties, hardships and all forms of abuses characterising street-involved children’s lives, it is equally important to realise that they cherish ambitions and dreams, similar to any other children in the world. Some of the dreams and expectations of these children are attainable, while others have desires far removed from their present circumstances.

“I want to be President” (A3, December 8, 2012).

“I then want to become a soldier to defend my country” (A1, December 3, 2012).

“I want to be [a] driver or even [a] pilot” (M2, February 11, 2013).

Some of the children interviewed wish to be taken home and to acquire an education while living at home, as they have expressed their tiredness of their current situation on the streets. Others want to live independently, have their own homes and start their own families. As A3 and A4 share:

“I would love to return home, if they decided to help me to return home. I'm tired of this life here. I am going to study at home” (A3, December 8, 2012).

“I would like to have my own family, to live my own independent life... have my unique life... to have children with my wife” (A4, December 8, 2012).

Some of them wish to become teachers so that they can teach the community. Others express their desire for support to develop their talents, such as acting or music.

“...starting from when I was seven or six years old, I have had my dream to be a film actor, and then I will be an artist. Like Roma Mkatoliki”¹⁴ (A5, December 8, 2012).

“I want to be an artist...like Daimond,¹⁵ and I want to get [in touch with] people who can guide me about art” (M5, February 12, 2013).

5.2 Social Welfare and Protection Mechanisms

This section discusses the protection and welfare mechanisms in place for street-involved children in Tanzania. It also examines how these mechanisms meet street-involved needs. In contextualizing and understanding the current situation, it is vital to bring into perspective the legislative and human rights arrangements for securing the welfare and protection of these children.

5.2.1 Existing social welfare and protection mechanisms

The development of these legislative and human rights platforms and policies in Tanzania, similar to other countries, has been influenced by international instruments. The URT government ratified the UNCRC in 1991, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) in 2003, and other relevant legal and policy documents, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (Smeaton 2012).

¹⁴ The famous Tanzanian musician doing the hip hop or rap genre

¹⁵ Another famous Tanzanian musician doing bongo

The enactment of the Child Act of 2009 was a step further towards the domestication of the UNCRC and other international conventions to which Tanzania has committed. Street-involved children are also covered by the Child Act in various sections. For instance, sections 12 and 13 prohibit “any person from engaging a child in any activity that is harmful to the child’s health, education, mental and physical or moral development” (Smeaton 2012, 11). Section 16 of the Act defines children who are in need of care and protection, including “a child who is wondering and has no home or settled place of abode or the one who is begging or receiving alms” (URT 2009, 17). Additionally, section 94 (4–6) of the Act affords street-involved children with protection, as it imposes a specific duty on local government authorities (LGAs). The LGAs are supposed to identify the most vulnerable children in their areas of jurisdiction, provide them with assistance, including housing when needed, as well as reunite them with their families whenever possible (*ibid*).

Other crucial frameworks for street-involved children that the Tanzanian government has put forward include the Plan of Action on the Most Vulnerable Children, National Plan of Action to Prevent and Respond to Violence against Children, and the Strategic Plan for Street Children in Tanzania.

Furthermore, during the interview with the two government officials about the need for protection of these street-involved children, both P1 and P2 not only insist on the existence of policies and strategies at the national level, but also emphasise the initiatives for such mechanisms at the community level. P1 and P2 elucidate:

“...the Child Act of 2009...insists very well on the protection and safety of the child. Policy exists and strategies are the same to ensure that those guardians, stakeholders are raising those children in the centres; those children are safe... For those who work in accordance with legal procedures, the government give[s] subsidies whenever [they are] available. It gives licence to open and run the centres [for street involved children]. It oversees and provides [them with] advices” (P1, February 8, 2013).

“Right now we are trying to establish small committees for dealing with issues on street children. In every *mtaa*,¹⁶ there are child protection committees. And now it becomes easier if there is the problem of violence, to report to the appropriate relevant bodies. There is a special unit of the gender and children's desk. So now we are working in collaboration with various departments which are also the police and the courts” (P2, February 13, 2013).

Additionally, these mechanisms for protecting and securing social welfare for these children are captured in the study of Ross (2011). The study involves mapping out the exercise through which formal child protection services are or should be in place. It presents an overview of the available child protection services and their relevant functions (Table 2).

Table 2: List of available child protection services in Tanzania

Community location (e.g., ward/district level)	Available child protection services	Official function of the service	Do they have service protocols?
District level and station/post	1. Police	Referrals Juvenile remand homes Probation officers Community police dealing with domestic, gender-based violence Intervention/initiative to promote child safety, e.g., road safety – traffic police	Follow national laws – no mention of internal procedures in our baseline interviews
Ward level	2. Ward Development	Oversee the development of the ward and collection of	Chairperson is the councillor of the ward. Secretary is the

¹⁶ *Mtaa* is a small urban area or geographical division of a ward in urban areas, and it is the smallest unit within the ward of an urban authority, synonymous to *kitongoji* in the rural areas. Local government systems in Tanzania: [http://www.tampere.fi/tiedostot/5nCY6QHav/kuntajarjestelma_tansania .pdf](http://www.tampere.fi/tiedostot/5nCY6QHav/kuntajarjestelma_tansania.pdf)

	Committee	levies. Oversee the protection and security of the ward (involving the police). Oversee the plans and budgets. Advise and coordinate the social services in the ward (education, etc.)	Ward Executive Officer (WEO); members are the Village Chairpersons, and other invited members are the Village Executives and other service providers, both government and private. Three main agendas are: Protection and security. These roles are stipulated in the constitution, #7) Planning and finance Social services management
Ward level	3.Ward Security Committee	Ensure security of the ward for adults and children. Discuss the security agendas that would be taken to the Ward Development Committees. Monitor government resources.	WEO is chairman of the committee. Secretary is the Officer Commanding Station (OCS). Members are the Village Chairpersons. Others are invited to the meetings, including all service providers, religious leaders, Councillor and influential people.
Ward level	4. <i>Baraza la usuluhishi la kata</i> (Ward Conflict Resolution Committee)	Conflict resolution of smaller issues in the ward (such as local court) to reduce the amount of court cases.	Members are community members (over 18 years old and not affiliated with the government). Chairman is elected by the committee. The secretary is chosen by the Municipal Director. They

			report to the WEO. For bigger issues, the WEO takes it to the municipal council where a legal professional gives advice. They have the mandate to jail a person for up to six months.
Ward and district level	5. Courts	Reunification Adoption Family counselling Interventions in neglect cases	No information available
Ward level	6. Most Vulnerable Child Committee (MVCC)	Protection Nutrition Education	Currently no guidelines as it is new system Follows Clan Leaders' advice
Ward and district level	7. NGOs	Education and advocacy on children's rights Shelter Food and basic needs	Internal child protection policy Internal constitution National guidelines on adoption, fostering, labour, etc.
Ward level	8. Child Protection Committees	Implementation of child protection services in the ward Identification of vulnerable children and subsequent referrals Awareness raising in the local community	Written internal policy Ward-level child protection policy Can vary per ward

		Documentation of abuse cases	
Village level	9. Clan Committees	Act as a court in discipline issues in the community Divide property/inheritance Provide guardianship/support of orphans	Elected members/hierarchy system
Village/street level	10. Small Christian Committees	Solve abuse/neglect cases (adults and children) Provide informal social support	Elected committee members

Reproduced from Ross, 2011

However, the study also highlights some of the major factors hindering the full functioning of these systems; such challenges include corruption, the lack of transparency and coordination among different service providers, unavailability of resources and lack of awareness in the community (Ross 2011, 17). Some of these challenges have been mentioned in this study as well and further in the challenges section.

5.3 The Experiences of Service Providers: The Case of Mkombozi

In practice, the social welfare and protection of these street-involved children solely rests on the work of NGOs. These NGOs, such as Mkombozi and its like-minded counterparts, offer different interventions. These include but are not limited to providing basic needs services such as temporary shelter, food and clothing, healthcare, and paying for school fees and expenses. Psychosocial support and reunification with the children’s families or reintegration to the community, whenever possible, are other ways of intervention. The NGOs also offer entrepreneurship or business training and a small capital to the older street-involved children (Street Business Toolkit Programme) (Mkombozi 2000; 2007; 2009).

Sensitisation and awareness-raising campaigns in the community form another package of their intervention at the community level, as well as advocacy at the national level. More importantly,

the establishment of Child Protection Committees in villages has also been fruitful work pioneered by these NGOs. They also support families by giving them business capital to start income-generating activities that help them take care of their children and prevent the latter from running to the streets (Mkombozi 2009; 2011; 2012).

5.3.1 Working with street-involved children

Staff members working with street-involved children have described the latter's lives as being difficult and facing many challenges in getting their needs or for their survival. The staff members admit that it is very challenging work because of the street environment these children come from. They also emphasise that these children learn bad manners and immorality on the streets. The children misbehave and engage in drug or substance abuse as their way of relaxing and forgetting their past; some are sexually abused, and others are turned into thieves by the older ones. Some of them, especially the younger ones, beg on the streets and in high-traffic areas; most of the older ones engage in manual labour. Most of these children work very hard to make money for buying their own food and clothing or paying to sleep indoors. In most cases, these settled street-involved children form groups; they make their own rules and abide by their street-life culture. Some of them spend long hours playing games and gambling; others pay to watch movies in theatres for a long time. The most important thing for them is their freedom to move from one place to another.

Many of the children with whom Mkombozi works, have been abuse victims in the past. Some of them are still suffering from different forms of abuse, violence, poverty, trauma, stigma, discrimination, neglect, diseases, and single or multiple losses. Most of them have been through many difficulties in their previous lives; they have been neglected by their caregivers, guardians and parents, and worse, most of their basic rights were denied by society. Most of them have experienced prolonged social, physical, sexual, mental and emotional abuses and violence; thus, they have built strong walls around their lives and do not trust other people anymore, especially adults.

While the family has been stated as the core source of the problem, the community at large is responsible as well, especially in their perceptions of this vulnerable group of children. SW A1 and SW M2 share:

“I have got an experience in this job. I have investigated, analysed and observed the lives of street-involved children... the main challenge and source of this problem is the family setting of these children” (SW A, February 7, 2013).

“Children who live and work on the streets in [the] Tanzanian context are negatively perceived by the community members; they are seen as robbers and thieves or useless, ignored, unwanted children. Some people whose families have never experienced a street child problem [they] believe that these street-involved children are rapists and hooligans” (SW M2, February 13, 2013).

Therefore, to help these vulnerable children and young people heal from their pains and build resilience that will help them manage their current and future lives, Mkombozi conducts periodic censuses and research studies, among other interventions (as presented in section 1.3). These initiatives help the organisation know the reasons for the children’s coming to work and/or living on the streets and where they come from. This information is useful for identifying their needs in order to provide them with appropriate direct and indirect social welfare and child protection services.

A number of achievements in their work with these street-involved children have been witnessed by the staff. These successes include a reduced number of street-involved children through reunification, reunified children staying at home and attending school, parents changing their attitudes, and community members acquiring adequate knowledge about children’s rights and protection issues. These developments have contributed to minimising negative perceptions towards street-involved children, supporting the community to assume the responsibilities of taking care of their children, and encouraging the changes of behaviour by police forces.

5.3.2 Challenges faced during their work

Alcoholism of caregivers, such as parents, is mentioned as the biggest challenge faced by the staff working with these street-involved children. This is the case when they are in the process of initiating reunification, which includes visiting these children's families. Social worker SW M1 stresses:

“You may find that the father and the mother are there, but they are alcoholics. They leave in the morning without anything left for [their] child...I have come across almost 40 per cent of the children who returned home and faced that challenge” (SW M1, February 12, 2013).

Another challenge is the low level of awareness by some community members about the roles, responsibilities and duties of government instruments such as the police and local government authorities, especially when they come across cases of child abuse. SW M2 elucidates in the interview:

“The child may be raped; the families of the raped and the rapist will sit down to talk about the case instead of reporting this criminal case to the police in order for the court to decide. This will be the mere discussion of the two families to resolve the case; however, that leaves behind the child who is now highly traumatised, physically harmed and badly affected psychologically and mentally” (SW M2, February 13, 2013).

There is also the issue of exclusion, neglect and stigmatisation of certain categories of children from some communities, especially those with disabilities. A case has been witnessed by SW M2:

“Recently there was a child who was locked inside and burnt to death by his mother” (SW M2, February 13, 2013).

5.3.3 Partnering with the government

Although children's welfare is the primary responsibility of the government, yet it does not perform its duties of supporting the street-involved children. The NGOs working with these children find it difficult to collaborate with some government officials on this matter because of negative attitudes towards these street-involved children. SW A1 shares in the interview:

“Some of the government officials, sometimes in the meetings they invite us [and] talk very negatively about the lives of street-involved children, and that makes us angry [with] them. For instance, recently in Arusha, the city council has got a campaign of making the city clean. We talked to them on how they can assist these vulnerable children and youth by giving them some cleaning jobs or arresting community people who are making the city dirty. We gave them the names of these street youth, but nothing has happened so far. On the contrary, one of the government officials dared to talk in the meeting that street children are responsible for making the city dirty” (SW A1, February 7, 2013).

Apart from negative attitudes by the government officials, the bureaucratic procedures and unnecessary delays are another challenge shared by staff members from the NGOs working with these children. This is especially true when obtaining government permission or a licence to implement a certain programme or when requesting required government documents. Sometimes they are just ignored, as pointed out by SW M1:

“They have protocols, their whole system, because you go somewhere, they tell you somebody is not there. Or maybe he/she is there but does not feel like talking to you. They ask you to come tomorrow. Tomorrow again you are going; they tell you [to] come the day after. They only give you dates” (SW M1, February 12, 2013).

To some extent, progress has been made towards relationship building between the NGOs working with these children and the government. A current example is the work of the Community Police Department, which was established by the government and is now advocating for the rights of street-involved children. The department also holds accountable those who violate these children’s rights.

Moreover, the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) has also played an important role in providing support in matters that require their attention, despite the insufficient resources¹⁷ and the relatively small budget allocated to them by the central government. As illustrated by SW MI:

¹⁷ The National Costed Plan of Action for Most Vulnerable Children (NCPA) present that by 2008 “the DSW placed Social Welfare Officers in about 30 percent of the 199 districts in Tanzania” (2008, 27) while other remaining districts had either no coverage or relied on regional coverage with few officers.

“They give us support, because sometimes you find that you have reached the point that you maybe need help from the police; they help us. In [the] case of [the] Social Welfare Department, they support us; they listen, and also if there is an issue, they can help; maybe the child needs to go to another organisation; maybe you have to transport a child out of Tanzania like Kenya, they help us a lot” (SW M1, February 12, 2013).

Another partnership now exists between the two sides of the healthcare services, as a result of the NGOs’ lobbying campaign for healthcare services from the government. Some hospitals have agreed to waive consultation fees for these children. However, some of the children have reported complaints about being stigmatised and ignored by the nurses. SW A1 explains:

“When they get sick and go to these government hospitals, they get discouraged by bad treatment, stigma and labelling they encounter from the nurses. They therefore decide to ignore going back to these hospitals for the treatments and [they] rather continue to be sick” (SW A1, February 7, 2013).

Furthermore, relatively good cooperation has been established with the government. Government officials actively participate in meetings and workshops organised by NGOs working with street-involved children. The development of memoranda of understanding between government departments and the NGOs is a form of the existing partnership. SW M2 shares:

“We are getting big support from the government. When we invite them to our meetings, like the councillors or local government leaders from the municipal level, they respond very positively; they all attend, listen attentively to us and participate very well in our meetings” (SW M2, February 13, 2013).

The staff members working with street-involved children clearly indicate that the government has very good policies in place, but the challenges lie in their implementation.

5.3.4 Recommendations from staff working with street-involved children

The campaign for the government to support stakeholders who are addressing the problem of street-involved children is crucial. Among others, it includes prioritising support for the committed NGOs that provide services to these children. They also request the NGOs’

involvement in government planning, especially when dealing with children's issues, since these NGOs have in-depth knowledge about the situation. As SW A1 claims:

“They should be happy to involve us when they discuss about children's matters. They should invite us [to] their meetings in order for us to contribute our ideas on what the children's experiences on the streets are. We have a lot of information about the lives of the street children. We are the ones who know more than anyone else the challenges street children face on the streets. Most of the time, they come to our offices to [access the] street-involved children database and other information about them” (SW A1, February 7, 2013).

Another recommendation is the call for the government to improve its social welfare services and ensure that these reach all children, including the most vulnerable ones. On the other hand, the staffs working with street-involved children argue that the community should take responsibility for caring for the children. Interviewee SW M2 emphasises:

“To take responsibility does not end with paying some money but also reporting the case of where and what is happening to the child” (SW M2, February 13, 2013).

6 Conclusion

In conclusion, based on the experiences shared by both interviewed street-involved children and the staff working with them, it is clear that poverty or poverty-related issues form the cluster of reasons for children to run away from home. However, there is a lack of awareness in the community about the extent of existing *abusive systems* in the institutions of the family, the police and the schools that trigger children to opt for street living. At the community level, many people do not realise that the traditional practices could be abusive. Since many parents lack awareness about what constitutes child abuse, some children may tolerate the situation and stay, while others choose to run away from the environment they perceive as hostile.

Additionally, as observed in this study, these children are often viewed by the police as unwanted or undesirable on the streets. The police force often resorts to actions that allow the removal of undesirable persons from public places; they take the children from the streets and remand or

force them back home, which is often the environment that they have run away from. Therefore, these practices do not address the root of the problem, but only act as a quick solution.

The negative perception is evident from the fact that the street-involved children are often blamed for everything bad that happens on the streets. As they are living or making their living there, they are often associated with robbery and theft on the streets, as seen from the experiences they have shared in this research.

This study learned from its inquiry that the department under the Ministry of Social Welfare is responsible for issues related to street-involved children. However, the study also found out that this department is also accountable for other vulnerable groups. The Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training and that of Home Affairs also share the responsibility. There is a lack of clear allocation of responsibilities. Moreover, with all these agencies involved, a lack of coordination and joint effort among these ministries has been observed.

The lack of clear regulations so far is another challenge. The legislation itself being fairly new, enacted in 2009 under the Child Act, together with lack of resources as well as political will are some of the other major reasons for the difficulties in implementing the Act almost 4 years now after taking effect. There is no coordination yet among existing NGOs working for the protection and welfare of these street-involved children despite the couple of organisations that have served in this field for many years.

The government does not operate orphanages and homes for these children as such, but its role so far has been to monitor centres run by NGOs. The government is doing its best with what it has allocated. If there is a need to allocate more budget and human resources, it is not prioritised by the government yet. Due to this constraint, monitoring and control is inadequate, and some centres do not meet the required quality standards. The lack of community outreach is a major shortcoming in the government's response to this issue. There is a lack of political will to address the issue, although it is seen as a growing problem.

Regarding the solutions to all these issues, one can argue that modern times obviously demand changes in the ways children are raised. For example, corporal punishment, although practised traditionally, is no longer acceptable. Rigid attitudes, such as the resistance of teachers to reform their practice of disciplining students, are another reason for the children to drop out of school.

It is also vital for the government to allot more resources, both financial and human, for advancing this worthy cause. Furthermore, there is a serious need to bring together the efforts of various organisations through networking to avoid overlapping responsibilities. Sufficient monitoring and regulation of these NGOs by the government is required.

Finally, since there is currently no reliable statistical source, nobody knows the exact figure of street-involved children in Tanzania. It is therefore critical that the research, studies, reports and statistics from the various NGOs be pooled and a central database be created. More comprehensive findings will reveal the magnitude of the problem and facilitate initiatives towards feasible solutions.

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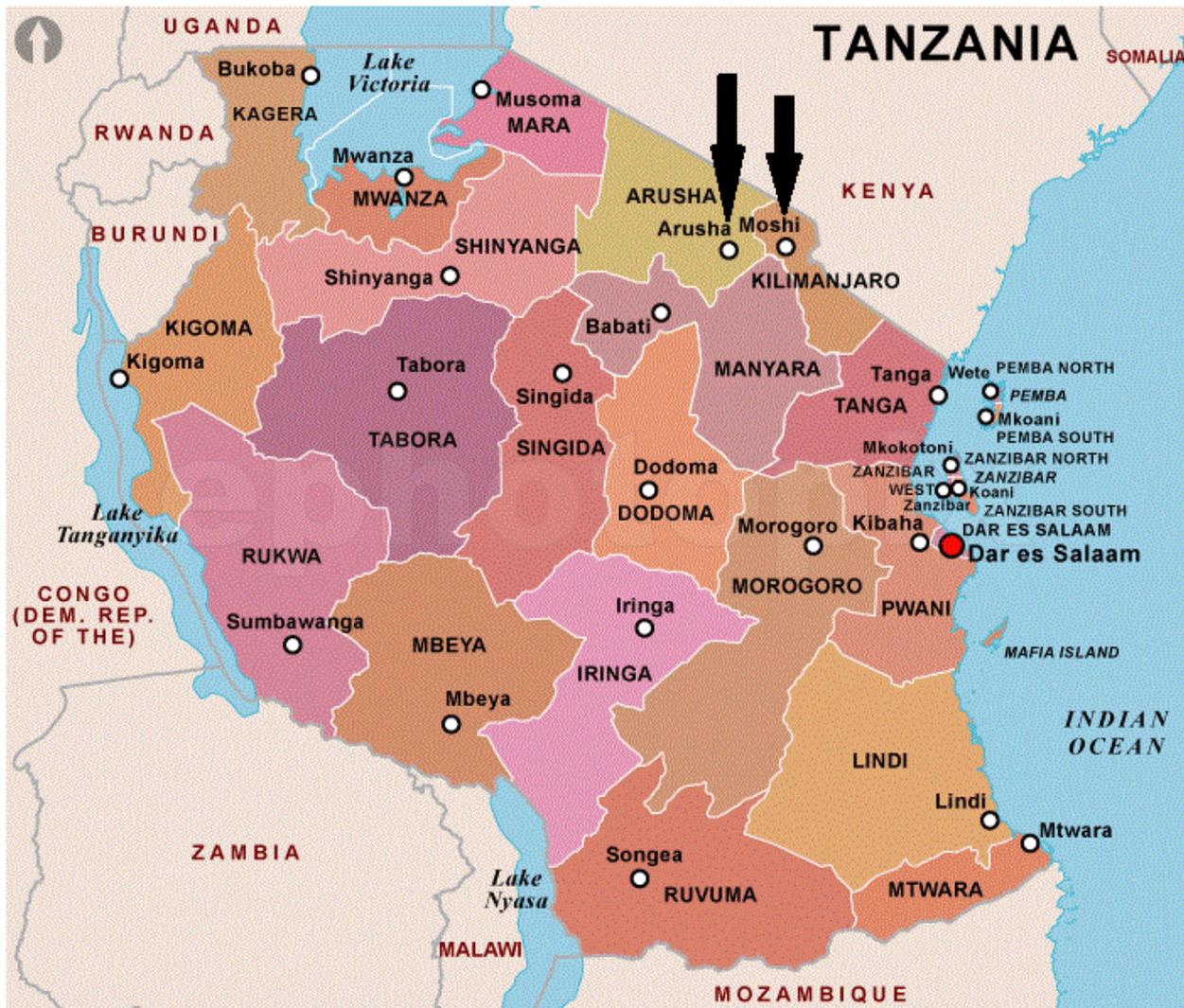
Appendixes

Appendix A1¹⁸: Map of Tanzania



¹⁸ Accessed June 30, 2013: http://www.btepgirls.org/Images/MAP_OF_TANZANIA.gif.

Appendix A2¹⁹: Map of Moshi-Kilimanjaro and Arusha where Mkombozi work



¹⁹ Accessed June 30, 2013: http://www.google.com/imgres?q=tanzania+map+regions&biw=1280&bih=907&tbn=isch&tbnid=OupwGxd1TLkQPM:&imgrefurl=http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Regions_of_Tanzania.svg&docid=VsXlm4Am-tDlqM&imgurl=http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/74/Regions_of_Tanzania.svg&w=3096&h=2947&ei=kovQUZWdNMHnswaNvYHGcQ&zoom=1&ved=1t:3588,r:34,s:0,i:192&iact=rc&page=2&tbnh=176&tbnw=185&start=25&ndsp=33&tx=136&ty=122#imgdii=OupwGxd1TLkQPM%3A%3BV8F5KIQXFbe-SM%3BOupwGxd1TLkQPM%3A

Appendix B: Interview guides in English and Kiswahili

Interview guide N.1 to children living or working on the streets with Swahili translation

1. Would you like to tell me your age and where are you from?
 2. Where do you live and what are you doing at the moment?
 3. How did you end up living on the street/transitional home?
 4. How do you find life on the street?
 5. How can you explain the life on the street?
 6. Would you tell me where do you go when you need help?
 7. How is your relationship with your immediate or extended family member? What contribution do they have on you daily life?
 8. Do you know any of the basic human rights? If yes, what does that mean to you?
 9. How do you meet your basic needs (for example food, shelter, health care and education)?
 10. What do you want to become in the future life? What is your dream?
 11. What do you want to see happening in your life now and in the future?
 12. What would you need to live successfully and independently?
 13. What do you suggest the government should do for children living and/or working on the streets?
1. Ungependa kuniambia umri wako na mahali unapotoka?
 2. Unaishi wapi na unafanya nini kwa sasa?
 3. Ni kitu gani kilichokusababisha wewe kuishia kuishi mtaani/ kituoni?
 4. Unayaonaje maisha ya mtaani?
 5. Unawezaje kuyaelezea maisha ya mtaani?
 6. Unaweza kuniambia unaenda wapi ukihitaji msaada?
 7. Mahusiona yako na wanafamilia yako yakoje? Na wanamchango gani katika maisha yako ya kila siku?
 8. Unafahamu mojawapo ya haki za msingi za mwanadamu? Kama ni ndio, zinamaanisha nini kwako?
 9. Unapaje mahitaji yako ya msingi(kama vile chakula,malazi, huduma ya afya na elimu)?
 10. Unataka kuwa nani baadae katika maisha yako? Ni nini ndoto yako?
 11. Unataka kuona nini kinatendeka katika maisha yako ya sasa na baadae?
 12. Ungehitaji nini ili kuishi maisha kamili ya kujitegemea?
 13. Ungependekeza serikali ifanye nini kwa watoto wanaoishi mitaani?

Interview guide N.2 to NGO staff working with street involved children, with Swahili translation

1. Could you tell me your profession, where do you work and your position?

2. How would you explain street involved children?

3. How do you find your work with street involved children?

4. How do you fulfill these children needs (welfare and protection)?

5. What are the achievements with working with these street involved children?

6. What are the challenges do you face when working with these children and how did you deal with them?

7. How would you explain the role of the government in dealing with these street involved children?

8. What sort of support do you get from the government institutions on your work?

9. What are the challenges you are facing when working with the government?

10. What would be your suggestion for the families, community and the government regarding these street involved children?

1. Unaweza kunieleza taaluma yako, unafanya kazi wapi na nafisi yako ya kazi?

2. Unawaelezeaje watoto wanaoishi mitaani?

3. Unaonaje kazi mnayofanya na watoto waishio mitaani?

4. Mnawatimizia vipi mahitaji yao (ustawi wao pamoja na kuwalinda watoto hawa)?

5. Ni mafanikio gani unayoyaona ya kufanya kazi ya watoto waishio mitaani?

6. Ni changamoto zipi mnazokumbana nazo katika kufanya kazi na hawa watoto na mnakabiliiana nazo vipi?

7. Unaelezeaje jukumu la serikali katika kushughulikia suala la watoto waishio mitaani?

8. Ni msaada gani mnaoupata katika kazi yako toka serikalini au kwenye vyombo vya serikali?

9. Ni changamoto gani mnazokumbana nazo mnapofanya kazi na serikali?

10. Una mapendekezo gani kwa serikali pamoja na familia na jamii kuhusiana na watoto hawa waishio mitaani?

Interview guide N.3 to government officials, with Swahili translation

1. Could you tell me your profession and your position?

2. What is your role in the government?

3. How does the government perceive street involved children?

4. How does the government respond to the needs of children living and/or working on the streets?

5. How does the government realize the rights and welfare of these street involved children?

6. Are there government policies in place and strategies for protecting these street involved children?

7. How does the government implement those policies and strategies?

8. How does the government perceive the professional service providers work with these street involved children?

9. How does the government support the organizations or institutions working with these street involved children?

10. What are the challenges that the government face in dealing with these children?

11. What is a right? Does the government believe on its definition?

1. Unaweza kunieleza taaluma na nafasi yako ya kazi?

2. Ni lipi jukumu lako serikalini?

3. Serikali inawachukuliaje watoto wanoishi mitaani?

4. Serikali inakabiliana vipi na mahitaji ya ungezeko la watoto wanaoishi na kufanya kazi mitaani?

5. Serikali inatekeleza vipi haki na ustawi wa watoto waishio mitaani?

6. Je, kuna sera na mikakati ya serikali ya kuwalinda watoto waishio mitaani?

7. Serikali inatekeleza vipi hizo sera na mikakati hiyo?

8. Serikali inachukuliaje kazi ya watoa huduma wanaofanya kazi na watoto hawa wanaoishi mitaani?

9. Serikali inazisaidiaje taasisi na mashirika yanayofanya kazi na watoto wanaoishi mitaani?

10. Ni changamoto zipi serikali inayokumbana nazo katika kufanya kazi na watoto hawa wanaoishi mitaani.

11. Haki ni kitu gani? Je serikali inaamini katika ufafanuzi wake wa Haki?