



Struggling to Survive

Children Living Alone on the
Streets in Tanzania and Kenya

Executive Summary

We **fight** for children
living on the streets

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Fighting for street children

Struggling to Survive:

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Tanzania and Kenya

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Railway Children

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Executive Summary

This executive summary highlights the main findings and recommendations stemming from a qualitative research project funded by Railway Children.

Emilie Smeaton was responsible for the research concept and design, carried out fieldwork, analysis and wrote the research report.

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'This research report is dedicated to Rweyemamu Silasi, better known as Ustadhi. Ustadhi was brutally murdered by a mob on the streets of Mwanza, in northern Tanzania on the 5th August 2011 after being accused of stealing a mobile phone. Ustadhi had been living on the streets for over four years but had begun to create a life for himself away from the street; he had stopped sniffing glue, had started a small business and had rented a small room with some friends. Ustadhi's death was not reported in the media and nobody has been charged with his murder. Ustadhi was 17 years old'.

Foreword

Wherever they are in the world, children living alone on the streets do so because they have very few other options. Many are forced to leave home; many more choose to take to the streets as home has become an intolerable cauldron of violence, neglect and humiliation. All too often, however, this is also the very treatment children receive on the streets.

Many people are unaware of these children, or perceive them as a nuisance who somehow want to be on the streets. The children themselves are viewed as the 'problem' rather than the communities and societies that have failed them. Many people do not see these children; fewer still will listen to them. Railway Children sees these children very clearly and we believe it is our duty to give them a voice that society will not only hear but begin to listen to.

Railway Children has been working in partnership with local agencies in Kenya and Tanzania since January 2006. The work done by these agencies is fantastic. Many children and young people in the region who were living on the streets now have positive family relationships, are able to attend school or can support themselves economically as a result of their work. Without the support of these agencies these children would remain living on the streets negotiating a life of violence, drugs and sexual exploitation.

These agencies are not alone in recognising the need of children on the streets. Countless individuals show acts of kindness to children on the streets every day. National and local governments in both Kenya and Tanzania recognise the needs of children who live on the streets and have made genuine attempts to do what they can to support children directly or in collaboration with civil society organisations.

Still, it became clear to us since working in the region that there are a significant number of children on the streets who remain there despite some services being available and the best efforts of civil society organisations and government. We want to gain a better understanding of why this is.

All the children that took part in the research had spent at least four weeks on the streets; some had lived on the streets for years. We want to provide these children with a voice, the children who are hardest to reach, the children with the most compelling and most traumatic stories. This might mean these are the children with the most complex and problematic behaviours: the children that we believe most need our support.

This research is an attempt to give some of these children that voice; to give them the chance to tell their stories so that we can learn from them. The findings of this research will support Railway Children to adapt our existing programmes and where appropriate develop new programmes better able to meet these children's needs. We hope that you, the reader, in whatever capacity you can, will adapt your programme, policy or perhaps just your attitude, to better understand and meet the needs of these children.

I would like to reiterate: the intention of this research is to gain a better understanding of the lives of those children that are hardest to reach. There is no suggestion that all children who move away from home are represented through this research as this research focuses on those who have fallen through the safety nets already in place. Kenyans and Tanzanians should be proud of the many children that live in extremely difficult circumstances but do not take to the streets because of the support provided by extended families, clans, neighbours, and civil society organisations.

I had the privilege of carrying out a small number of interviews in Tanzania as part of this research. I would like to thank all of the children who took part in the research for their bravery in telling their story. We were all moved by their desire for their stories to be understood by others so that future children who take to the streets might be treated with a little more dignity and respect. I would also like to thank Railway Children's partners for their understanding, patience and considerable time given to this research. Thanks also to the lead researcher and author, whose dedication to the well-being of each and every child involved is an inspiration to all of us. Finally, thanks to you, the reader, for taking the time to read this report.

Pete Kent

East Africa Regional Director

Railway Children

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Introduction

Reuben

Reuben is an 11-year-old whose general appearance is that of a younger child. Reuben's parents died when he was young and he was cared for by his older brother. His brother decided to leave home and, with no-one to provide water and soap to bathe and food to eat, Reuben thought he would die if he remained at home. He had been told good things about the town and thought that sleeping outside on the streets would be better than remaining at home as Jesus would protect him. Reuben hoped that a Good Samaritan would allow Reuben to live with him, take him to school and help him secure a good job after leaving school. Then, when he was in a good job, he would care for the Good Samaritan who took him off the streets.

Reuben used to sleep in a shack with other young boys but after witnessing sexual acts between some of the boys, which made him feel uncomfortable, he left the relative safety of the shack and began sleeping on the streets.

After spending two months on the streets, Reuben thinks that street life is not good because someone could take him and sell him, abuse him in other ways or kill him. Reuben thinks his life is in constant danger, particularly whilst sleeping outside and he worries that someone will come and kill him. Reuben described how other children living alone on the streets had been conspiring to steal his jumper by attacking him with a screw-driver.

The only help Reuben receives is from a few women who feed him scraps of food after he has fetched buckets of water for them, and a few people who respond when he begs. He would like to be helped but is aware that somebody could tell you that they will help you but could instead harm you. Reuben would like to stay with someone and be fed, have a bed to sleep on and be taken to school. This, Reuben believes, would give him a comfortable life. Reuben does not think about the future as tomorrow cannot be guaranteed: maybe God will take him and he will not live another day.

Reuben thinks that people should help children on the streets in any way they are able by providing somewhere to live, taking them to school and clothing them. Then, in turn, when children have grown up and have a job, they will help those that helped them.

- This research report addresses the experiences of particularly vulnerable and marginalised children: those who have experienced living alone on the streets for four weeks or more in Tanzania and Kenya.

- The children that this research addresses live full-time on the streets and do not return home at night to live with their family or other carers.
- There is a significant body of research addressing children and youths who live on the streets in different parts of the world. The voices of children who live on the streets is lacking from a number of research studies addressing their lives and recommended responses to meet their needs¹. With this in mind, Railway Children made a strategic decision to undertake qualitative research in Tanzania and Kenya². The findings of the research will support the expansion of Railway Children's work in these two countries and the development of a programme of work aiming to meet the needs of children living alone on the streets ensuring positive outcomes for these children.
- The aims of the research were to capture, in their words, the experiences of children in Tanzania and Kenya, who live alone on the streets for four weeks or more whilst under the age of 16; present an up-to-date and realistic perspective of what it means to be alone and on the streets in Tanzania and Kenya; provide a robust evidence base addressing the lives and experiences of children living alone on the streets in Tanzania and Kenya; and to identify a range of policy and practice recommendations to meet the needs of children who live alone on the streets in Tanzania and Kenya.
- The focus of the research was to gain the views and experiences of children who are particularly vulnerable and marginalised such as those who have never received any services and are not known to service providers, or those who are known to service providers, and may have accessed services at some point, but whose cases are particularly complex and current service provision has not been able to meet their needs.
- There are a number of obligations that governments have made to protect and to care for children in both countries, including children on the streets. However, provision of services for children on the streets through government agencies is extremely limited
- Ninety-three children and youths participated in the research in two locations in Tanzania and two locations in Kenya, the majority of whom thought they were aged between 13 and 16. Due to the low visibility of females on the streets, only six females participated in the research. The names of all the children and youths who participated in the research have been changed to protect their identities and ensure anonymity.
- The research report has been organised into a number of overarching themes presented as sections addressing:
 - life before coming to the streets: family and home
 - experiences of living alone on the streets
 - children and youths' experiences of agencies
 - attachment, identity and resilience.

1 This has also been highlighted in a recent article: McAlpine K Henley R Mueller M & Vetter S (2009) 'A Survey of Street Children in Northern Tanzania: How Abuse or Support Factors May Influence Migration to the Street' Community Mental Health 46 pg 26 – 32.

2 Railway Children had previously commissioned research addressing the lives of children who spend time on the streets in the UK and the methodologies and learning from this project were used to inform the research in Tanzania and Kenya.

Policy and Practice

- Both Tanzania and Kenya have made commitments to international law and developed a number of domestic policies and initiatives concerning the rights of children. Some of these relate specifically to children who live on the streets.
- Tanzania and Kenya are both committed to the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). UNCRC is a legally binding international instrument that sets out basic human rights for children everywhere, and includes the right to survival; develop to the fullest; protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; participate fully in family, cultural and social life³.
- Tanzania and Kenya have both ratified the UNCRC and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC).
- The Committee on the Rights of the Child has recommended that the Tanzanian government: develops a comprehensive strategy to address and reduce the high numbers of street children; ensures that the basic needs of street children are met, including nutrition, shelter, health care and education; raises awareness of the issue of street children in order to change negative public attitudes about them, particular among law-enforcement officers; and ensures that street children are provided with recovery and integration services.
- The Committee on the Rights of the Child have made recommendations to the Kenyan government, including that it should identify and address the root causes of children living on the streets; develop strategies to reduce the numbers of street children; ensure that the basic nutritional, educational, health and protection needs of street children are met; raise awareness of and de-stigmatise the issue of street children, particularly among law enforcement officers; ensure that street children are provided with recovery and re-integration services⁴.
- A number of initiatives and policies to provide assistance to children who live on the streets have been developed. In Kenya, the Children Act 2001 (currently under reform) domesticates the UNCRC and the African Children's Charter, providing safeguards for the rights and welfare of children and legislation on issues such as parental responsibility, children's courts, and administration of children's services. In Tanzania the Law of the Child Act 2009 attempts to domesticate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child⁵ by providing for reform and consolidation of laws relating to children; stipulating rights of the child; aiming to promote, protect and maintain the welfare of the child; providing a legal framework for foster care, adoption and custody of the child; further regulating employment and apprenticeship and making adequate provision for children in conflict with law.

Research Methods

- Exploratory work was undertaken to inform the methodology of the research due to the cross-cultural nature of the white British lead researcher undertaking research in Tanzania and Kenya.
- All the street interviewers were bilingual and able to carry out interviews with children and youths in Swahili, except for the lead researcher and Railway Children's East Africa Regional Director, who carried out interviews with an interpreter. Significant consideration was given to ensuring that accurate translation and conceptual equivalence were achieved, both linguistically and culturally. After agreement had been finalised of the translated interview, analysis could take place. Despite all the measures that were taken to limit the impact of translation, it should be noted that 'translation-related decisions'⁶ can have an impact upon the research.
- To achieve significant understanding of the lives of children who live alone on the streets in Tanzania and Kenya, field work took place in research participants' environments to capture their social actions and activities in their own settings.
- The majority of the children and youths who participated in the research were accessed on the streets, where semi-structured interviews were carried out. Street interviewers spent time on the streets with a professional who was known to children and youths who were potential participants, and who was able to introduce interviewers with individual and groups of children. Some children and youths approached the street interviewers requesting to participate in the research. Sometimes children and youths spoke to interviewers on more than one occasion.
- Effort was made to ensure children and youths who were not known to support services were included in the research, and to gain the perspectives of children and youths who have spent time in centres and received other interventions for children who live on the streets.
- Due to the low visibility of females on the streets, three females were accessed through a centre for children who live on the streets.
- A small number of interviews were also carried out with older youths above the age of 16, who had experienced being on the streets for four weeks or more under the age of 16 but no longer live on the streets. This allowed data to be collected that gave an insight to the experiences and views of older youths who have lived on the streets for a number of years and to consider possible longer-term outcomes.
- A grounded theory approach⁷ was adopted to generate small-scale theories that are fully grounded in data and represent what is taking place in the real world. Analysis was undertaken in two stages. The first stage took place alongside fieldwork. The second stage analysis used the software package Atlas.ti to identify themes and issues and make comparisons and connections across the body of data.

3 www.unicef.org/crc/ 12th August 2010.

4 Committee on the Rights of the Child, 44th Session: Consideration of the reports submitted by state parties under Article 44 of the Convention. Concluding remarks: Kenya

5 Law of the Child Act 2009

6 Birbili M (2000) Translating from One Language to Another' Social Research Update Issue 31.

7 Glaser B & Strauss A (1967) The Discovery of Grounded Theory Chicago: Aldine.

- A great deal of consideration was given to ethical issues, such as ensuring that children and youths who participated were fully informed about the research, were able to give informed consent and were assured of anonymity and a high level of confidentiality. Children and youths were debriefed and given the opportunity to withdraw from the research if they wished. The safety of the interviewers was also an ethical consideration during the research.

Life Before Coming to the Streets: Family and Home

Turusifu

Turusifu lived with both his parents until they separated and he remained living at home with his mother. One day, aged nine, Turusifu was lighting the stove and the curtains caught fire. His mother beat him severely and told him to leave and live with his father. As he did not know where his father was, Turusifu lived on the streets in his home town, staying with a group of children who slept in video kiosks.

Turusifu's mother became unwell and moved to a larger town. Turusifu returned to live with his mother and helped care for her until her death. After his mother died, Turusifu was cared for by a number of women in the local area until he met his uncle who took him to live with his maternal aunt and grandmother in another town. Turusifu was then taken by his grandmother to his paternal grandfather in a rural area so that he could attend school. However, after his grandmother left, Turusifu was beaten ruthlessly by his grandfather and cut with knives. He was forced to work as a herdsman looking after goats instead of attending school. Turusifu found this maltreatment very difficult and went to the police, telling them he was an orphan and that he had a grandmother in another town. The police put Turusifu on a bus destined for where his grandmother lived. Once there, his grandmother told him to return to his grandfather and gave him the bus fare to return but Turusifu went to the town where he had lived before being taken to his grandmother. He looked for, and found, his uncle who was an alcoholic and was not able to provide anywhere for Turusifu to live so Turusifu, aged ten, came to the streets where he has lived for the past seven years.

- The children who participated in the research lived in a number of different family forms including single parent families and reconstituted families. Issues arising from different family forms could directly or indirectly lead to a child living alone on the streets.

"I thought I was better to separate and stay alone than stay with one parent ... so I also separated from them and came to town to try to fend for myself."

- Some children did not know their mothers because their mothers had left, or had been forced to leave home. Mothers experienced a range of difficult issues that were recognised by their children. In some cases, whilst living on the streets children supported their mothers financially.

"My father had another elder wife; that is when my mother decided to leave so we left to live with that elder wife. My mother left us and never came back."

- Many children did not know their fathers. Some fathers abandoned their families, causing poverty for the family and difficult emotional circumstances.

"Life was good at home but my mother and father had a quarrel. My father left ... which made life difficult: the father who should have been the breadwinner was nowhere to be seen."

- Issues and problems with step-parents often played a role in children living alone on the streets. Whilst a small number of children had very positive relationships with a stepmother, difficult relationships and maltreatment by step-parents were common.

"She started mistreating me: she denied me food; I decided to leave."

- Following the death of a parent children were often dependent upon older siblings. Often siblings were separated when a parent died or when parents or step-parents parted. Some children and youths wished to see siblings, and others returned home from the streets to visit them. Marriage of a sibling could result in a change of circumstances for children.

"I don't feel good (living on the streets) because ... I miss my sisters and my brothers."

- Many children were cared for by grandparents, most frequently grandmothers. Some children had found this to be a positive experience, but for others it was problematic. Other extended family members also cared for children. Again, some children had a positive view of their experiences, whereas other children highlighted problems with kinship care.
- Parents and carers' alcohol misuse, domestic violence and mental health issues could impact negatively upon children and frequently played a part in children moving to the streets.

"I was in town and heard that my mother was admitted to hospital. When I went to see her, I found that she had been cut with a machete. ... He (stepfather) cut my mother with a machete."

- Abuse and maltreatment by parents and carers was frequently experienced by many children. Brutal physical abuse included use of sticks, knives and wire. Physical abuse in the home and school often led to children running away. Many children experienced neglect, rejection and abandonment to such an extent that it was impossible for them to remain at home. Being denied food or schooling often led to children leaving home.

“My father needed to lock me inside, tie me with a rope: that is when he could beat me. ... He used to tie my hands and legs with a rope.”

“One night I had been locked out and the following day I went to the street. When I returned (home) that evening, I had to kneel down pleading but as I knelt there she (grandmother) came behind me and hit me with a wire. I was so seriously beaten that I will never forget it.”

- Some children acted as carers for younger siblings or ill parents. Sometimes a child or youth left the streets to care for an ill parent, returning to the streets after the parent died.
- Many children are orphans which renders them particularly vulnerable. Several orphaned children were placed in the care of relatives who did not treat them well.
- Poverty in the home plays a significant part in children living alone on the streets as living in poverty prevents provision of a nurturing environment, hinders parents and carers from providing for their children and exerts pressure on family relationships. Some children left home in order to survive and sought employment in urban centres only to find that they continued to experience poverty on the streets.

“My mother is already passed away and I never saw my father. ... I was living with my aunt who wasn't able to provide for me and all her children so I was compelled to leave.”

- Whilst living at home some children received support from others in the community in the form of food, the means to remain at school or the prevention of others from beating them.
- Some children and youths retain some contact with their family whilst living alone on the streets, often retaining a strong sense of responsibility for family members and providing financial support when possible. A small number of children and youths received some support from parents or carers but, in many cases, parents or carers did not ask about their children's lives or question how they were surviving.

“She (mother) was looking for me. She gave money to some people and asked them to seize me and take me home in case they saw me. ... When my mother saw me, she fainted with joy ... and said I shouldn't run away but rather come to see her and leave (that is, visit her but remain living at home).”

“Mum used to look for me but we just passed by each other (missed each other) until she parted company with me.”

- Children and youths who participated in the research were asked for their ideas and recommendations about what could be done to improve the lives of street children, specifically relating to family and home. Children and youths' recommendations focused on: recognition of the diversity of reasons that cause children and youths to live alone on the streets; the

role of government in ensuring children remain living at home; provision of support to parents to meet their needs; the necessity for children and parents to treat each other well; and returning children home to parents but ensuring that both child and parents are supported so that the child can remain in the home.

“Just talk to them because each person has his own problem. Each left home due to different reasons.”

“The government should have plans to help the children and the youths before they reach the street.”

“I would like to say, parents treat the children as everything which can be useful; don't treat them like their future is rubbish. A child is a child. ... If you throw away a child, how will he feel? And you, you brought a child into the world and now it is right that you take good care of him ... because our future will build the world.”

“You should take children back home to their families, speak to the families so that they take care of the children and live peacefully; they (families) should not harass them (children) but love them. ... If you ... talk to their families, telling them to be considerate about the needs of the child ... you should continue visiting them from time to time, maybe twice or three times a month or monthly to see how the child progresses. You build good relationships with their parents and get to know how they are doing. Maybe if the lifestyle at home is changed a little, it may help the child stay comfortably at home.”

Experiences of Living Alone on the Streets

Turusifu

When Turusifu was aged ten, two older boys raped him whilst he was trying to sleep. After being raped, Turusifu felt terrible, found a tunnel and slept for two days, only leaving the tunnel when hunger forced him to do so. Turusifu describes himself as having lost all hope at this point in his life.

A short time later, Turusifu was given a small amount of money by a kind man. The boys who raped Turusifu saw that he had been given this money and followed him to the river where, after buying soap, he was washing his clothes. The two boys raped Turusifu again and stole his clothes, leaving only Turusifu's underpants. Dressed only in these, Turusifu went to the garbage dump to look for some clothes and found some trousers and a shirt. The two boys returned and tried to force Turusifu to accept what they wanted to do to him:

“The boys came back and tried to force me down to sodomise me. I refused; fought back. They took a knife and started stabbing me on my knees.”

As a result of these injuries, Turusifu spent some time in hospital and was released once he could walk and returned to the streets.

Turusifu started to run away when he saw the two boys to avoid any confrontation with them but retaliated with violence to protect himself when they attacked him. Their usual strategy was for one of the boys to hold Turusifu down whilst the other hit him on the head with a stone so they could rape him whilst he was unconscious:

“They normally come two of them, one of them hits me with a stone, I start bleeding and lose consciousness; that is when they sodomise me.”

The two boys who have raped Turusifu are still on the streets and have raped other boys known to Turusifu.

Turusifu has a younger sister who lived with their maternal uncle. One day Turusifu’s father, who had returned to the town where Turusifu lived on the streets, approached Turusifu and asked him to go and get his sister who was 13. Turusifu told his father that he did not have the bus fare to get his sister and his father told him to beg on the streets until he had enough money to get his sister and return with her. Turusifu began to think about how he could raise this money:

“I met my friend who had a tendency of stealing side mirrors from the cars. On that day he persuaded me to go and steal. I told him ‘I can’t; I don’t know how to steal’. He told me he would teach me. Since I had a problem (raising money to collect his sister), I agreed. ... I was lured into that business since I saw how fast my friend made money and since I had problems, I managed to steal three side mirrors. I then left and went to find my sister.”

Turusifu lied to his sister, telling her that their father was in a good situation and able to care for her. As her life was difficult due to being mistreated and given lots of work, his sister was glad to leave. Turusifu took his sister to where his father was staying and was told by his father to return to the streets. Turusifu got a job working in a garden and was happy to be working, viewing it as a means to ending his problems. One day he had a feeling that something wasn’t right and decided not to work but to visit his father. When he arrived, Turusifu was told that his sister was at the ten-cell leader’s place and that his father was at the police station after raping Turusifu’s sister. To provide evidence, Turusifu’s sister had to have tests in hospital. After Turusifu’s father raped his sister, Turusifu once again stole side mirrors so that he could pay for his sister to receive medical attention. Turusifu then realised that stealing was wrong and dangerous:

“So I stayed on the streets and realised if I continue stealing side mirrors, it’s wrong and I would end up dead, I decided to involve myself in small businesses and the little I get I am satisfied

with, like now I sell plastic bags and I pick up scrap metal which I sell.”

The tests confirmed that Turusifu’s sister had been raped so Turusifu and his sister went to the police. Turusifu and his sister were told to return the following day so that their father could be taken to court. As requested, Turusifu and his sister went to visit the ten-cell leader so he could further assist them. They did so and some elders came to see them to persuade them not to press charges against their father by describing how their father would not be granted bail, would go to prison which would mean that they would be left with no father because he may die in prison and they would be responsible for burying his corpse. Turusifu and his sister refused to go along with the elders’ wishes but after visiting their father and finding him very thin thought he may die and decided to forgive him. Turusifu realised that neither he nor his sister could stay with their father and sought a sympathetic worker from the centre he had stayed in to help with finding somewhere for his sister to live. This worker agreed that his sister could live with her. This is where his sister lives to the present day and she attends school whilst Turusifu still lives on the streets. Turusifu described how the rape of his sister and the rape he has experienced makes him angry and not at peace. Sometimes Turusifu feels very low and cries.

- Experiences of arrival upon the streets were diverse. Some children were welcomed by other children and youths who advised them how to survive whilst others were met with violence.

“It was good. I was nicely welcomed ... by my friends (those made on the streets). I happened to meet them here and (we) began walking together.”

“I was taken (by the police) and I was beaten. I was told not to go back again to the streets.”

- Some children and youths experienced little difference between living alone on the streets and being at home.

“It is the same for me: here (living on the streets), home.”

- Deciding who to live with is an important survival strategy. Most children and youths formed groups to support safety, security, identity and economic survival, but some preferred to be alone.

“I just liked to stay alone. ... I avoided staying with friends lest I end up being taken to the police.”

- Being shrewd, cunning and able to fight are characteristics that serve children and youths well whilst living alone on the streets.

“And to be good at fighting; that is good on the streets.”

- Many undertake work not guaranteed to result in any income such as carrying luggage or other goods or collecting and selling scrap metal, firewood, charcoal or bottles. A few children and youths were able to consistently earn small amounts of money through more regular work.

"I go and look for a sack and I pick up firewood ... I go and sell it; when I sell it, I go and put the money somewhere then I go and combine it all and buy clothes and sweets ... then I sell them."

- Stealing is a dangerous survival strategy that can have grave consequences if a child or youth is caught or wrongly accused of stealing. Children and youths also steal from one another. Some do not steal but there is a sense of inevitability that they will start to steal if they remain living on the streets.

"You have to steal because you can't say when you are going to get any (money)."

- Begging is a common survival strategy for younger children who sometimes solely rely upon it as a means of gaining money or food. Begging may also be a last resort for older children and youths when attempts to earn money have failed. Those who rely upon begging often go without food for periods of time.

"During times when I'm hungry, I go and beg from someone."

- Children and youths often look out for one another and encourage, often unsuccessfully, younger children to return home.

"We normally tell them to go home; we force them to leave the streets and go home. ... Those bigger ones usually force us to go home. ... The good ones (amongst the older boys) are the older ones who persuade us to go home."

- Many children and youths use substances, particularly glue, as a coping strategy to manage living alone on the streets and relieve some of the difficulties they experience there. Children and youths are often introduced to substances by others who use them. After becoming aware of the dangers of using glue, some children and youths have ceased using whilst others are unable to stop despite a desire to do so. Using glue is also viewed as inevitable if a child or youth remains on the streets for long periods of time.

"(When using glue) you don't feel hungry."

- Fatalism is common and a child or youth's faith can be important to managing living on the streets and maintaining a positive outlook about themselves and their circumstances. Witchcraft and bewitchment is also offered as an explanation of how they found themselves living alone on the streets.
- Children and youths described receiving support from others in the community. Some support is offered under false pretences or does not materialise. Support from Wazungu⁸ was also experienced but this could cause distress for individual children or youths and problems for those seeking to work with children and youths.

"We were later surprised to see the way he abandoned us. ... I felt very bad."

- Violence is ever-present on the streets and children and youths can be both victims and perpetrators of violence. Children and youths can experience violence from others who live with them on the streets; older males are often perpetrators of violence against younger children. Violence was also experienced from the police, other officials and guards.

"There was a young man who once told me that he would kill me if he found me asleep at night: he was forcing me to give him the money which I earn."

"During the night the police and city council people beat us."

"We are afraid of the police very much."

- Many males described being raped and females experienced rape or attempted sexual assault. There is often a fine line between consensual sex and rape amongst males. Being sexually assaulted was often very humiliating and traumatic. Certain older youths attempted to protect younger children from being sexually assaulted. There was some normalisation of sexual assault. Perpetration of rape can be expressions of power and anger. Patterns of sexual behaviour and assault raise concern for the transmission of HIV/AIDS and other STDs, mental well-being and development of sexuality and sexual relationships.

"The ones who are big come to our base at night and have sex with people, especially the small children."

"If you slept in open places, you might be caught by some watchmen who have bad behaviour ... a watchman may come and sodomise you whilst you are asleep."

- Many children and youths experience health problems resulting from injuries, illness and assault. Health problems also arose from poor diet and living conditions. Mental health issues were also experienced.

"You go through the (rubbish) dump finding something to eat ... and suffer from serious stomach complications like stomach-ache, diarrhoea and sometime that can make you lie down struggling with pain."

- Children and youths' lives can develop in a number of directions when living alone on the streets. Some children and youths appear to survive better than others; some children and youths appear to become more resilient and better manage their life on the streets as time moves on whilst others continually experience violence and abuse. For some, there is no change in their life on the streets over a number of years. A few older youths no longer sleep on the streets but remain street involved. Some children and youths had ambitions that were far removed from their current situations.

"Perhaps I will be the next Barack Obama and be a president."

- Recommendations from children and youths focused upon: awareness-raising of support services for children and youths who live alone on the streets; providing services to meet their needs; that support should be provided by a range of individuals and the government; providing training and employment opportunities; treating children and youths with kindness; ensuring centres are able to adequately provide for the children and youths in their care; providing support specifically for females; recognising that it is not possible to help all children and youths who live alone on the streets; and to educate children and youths who live on the streets to live peacefully with love towards one another instead of fighting.

"I just think these children (who live alone on the streets) should go to orphanages and let it be announced on TV or radio so that those who don't know where orphanages are may get to know."

"I would like to ask them (the government) that they build for us a safe place where we can live."

"To send them to school so that their future life becomes good."

"I want to educate those that fight so that if we stay (living on the streets), we can live peacefully; to live with love."

Children and Youths' Experiences of Agencies

Turusifu

After being on the streets for a couple of years and not receiving any support to enable him to move away from the streets, Turusifu decided to go to a centre for children living on the streets. Whilst living in the centre, Turusifu experienced some problems with an older boy who also lived there:

"One of them really liked to mistreat me. Anytime we were given chores, he always pushed everything to me: to clean the floors and do the dishes. I felt like I was being exploited."

Children attended martial arts classes that were taught in the centre. Turusifu did not like these lessons as the martial arts teacher used to hurt the children:

"I was not satisfied with it because the teacher used to slap anyone who got the moves wrong. One day I had a splitting headache he hit me so hard. I was so mad that I left and went back to the streets."

Turusifu has not sought access to a centre since being back on the streets but would like to receive support so that he can train to develop a skill, get a

job and be able to leave the streets by earning a wage and being able to provide for himself.

- In all four locations where the research took place there was support specifically for children and youths who lived on the streets. However, the nature of this support differed in each location.
- Children and youths did not access support because they were unaware of existing support in their area; the support offered did not meet their needs; they did not like how the support was offered; or support had not been offered to them.

"I have seen no support."

"I don't know where they are. ... I would go if I knew."

"X (name of the organisation)? They have done nothing for me."

- When residential services ceased operating, children and youths had to return to the streets.
- Some children and youths were not able to access services after presenting unacceptable behaviour.
- Some support services do not possess the resources to meet the needs of children and youths in their care.
- Costs of schooling are prohibitive to some children and youths attending school and can cause conflict between children and their parents or carers.

"My father refused to pay money for exams. ... He refused ... and told me 'I will beat you!' Then, the day of the exams, I stayed outside (the school) with other children who couldn't pay."

- Some children and youths have never attended school but many have experienced limited schooling.
- Education is highly valued by children and youths who live alone on the streets.

"Getting education is what would help me."

"I would like to go to school."

"(Life) will not be good if I am not educated."

- Lack of access to free health care can prevent some children and youths from seeking health care when they are ill or injured. Referral from support agencies working with children and youths on the streets can enable access to health care, although the quality of some of this healthcare was reported as being low.

"There at the hospital, they didn't treat me very well. They just washed me and put on a bandage. ... They wanted money and I didn't have any money."

- Many children and youths are arrested and spend time in police cells and remand centres. Children and youths are often kept with adults. Violence and sexual abuse are experienced in remand homes.

"I was jailed together with adults."

"There was a lot of beating there (in the remand home). I ran away."

- Whilst some positive experiences of staying in centres were described, many children and young people were not positive about living in a centre because their needs or expectations were not met; they were forced to undertake hard work; they experienced abuse from staff and violence from other children and youths; or they perceived that staff were misusing resources. Children and youths also described how they were provided with education in centres pitched at a level far below their capabilities.

"I ran away from that centre because there wasn't enough food there."

"One thing that made me not to stay there (at the centre) was that we used to wake up in the morning and dig in the farm when schools were closed. We had to dig seriously and you could be beaten if you were left behind others as you were digging."

"So there (at the centre) we were learning. We were writing nicely, doing well and leading in the class but it was like a nursery."

- Some children and youths clearly find it difficult to live within centres with rules and boundaries after living with relative freedom on the streets.
- Children and youths were not always happy with the support services from organisations developed to meet their needs as they did not perceive that service always maintained their commitment to them or that any longer-term change was forthcoming as a result of their interventions.

"When I made a follow-up, I was told these people are no longer in town; they had moved and would be found around near this road but I couldn't find them. I just had to leave it like that. ... I no longer have morale."

- Children and youths' recommendations addressed ensuring children and youths living alone on the streets received an education and that staff working in centres were unable to engage in forms of exploitation.

"They should build a children's centre for bringing up children and for educating them as well."

"They should not keep exploiters in those institutions."

Attachment, Identity and Resilience

- Experiences of children and youths who live alone on the streets, both prior to living alone on the streets and whilst living on the streets, suggest that there are significant consequences relating to forming insecure and disorganised attachments which can predispose a child or youth to violent behaviour, result in psychological damage and impair development in general and negatively affect future relationships.
- The importance of development of identity is noted. Middle childhood and adolescence is a time of developmental advancement that establishes children and youths' sense of identity at a time of change. Children and youths who live alone on the streets often have to face changes such as becoming self-reliant at an earlier stage than others and often do not receive support to manage these changes.
- Development of internal identity can be problematic due to difficult relationships with carers and siblings, parental death and the lack of belonging experienced by many children and youths who live alone on the streets.
- Being in the environment of living on the streets impacts upon identity development, as does the way that children and youths are treated by others.
- Children and youths who live alone on the streets often show remarkable resilience despite the lack of protective factors in their lives.

Concluding Comments

A number of factors can shape how children find themselves living alone on the streets in Tanzania and Kenya, including poverty, conflict with parents or carers, parental or carer death and issues relating to school, or to a lack of opportunities to attend school.

Perceptions and treatment of children in Tanzania and Kenya play a part in how children find themselves living alone on the streets and how they are treated once on the streets. The process of carrying out fieldwork in Tanzania and Kenya and the research findings revealed that children and youths who live alone on the streets are viewed and treated in different ways by officials and others in the community. These perceptions often result in these children and youths being treated as an aberration which justifies violence and sexual assault that is unlikely to be tolerated in the same way against other children and youths. Some of the treatment of children and youths living alone on the streets is dehumanising; this can be seen in presentations of them as a 'problem' and in the charges that can be brought against them such as 'dumping' and 'littering' which treats them as objects rather than as human beings.

There is a need to undertake awareness raising activities within those institutions mandated to protect children that remind them of their obligations under national and international law, but also, inform their understanding of the circumstances that lead children and youths to live alone on the streets in Tanzania and Kenya. There is also a need to provide awareness raising activities within the communities from which children and youths leave, and

the communities they enter in to when they migrate to the streets

The normalisation of violence towards children and youths is a significant factor in the children and young people moving to the streets and in their experiences on the streets. Violence in the home that is experienced by many children can lead to insecure or disorganised attachment. Many children also experience violence in schools. Once on the streets, the cycle of violence continues. Sexual violence is also experienced with its traumas and consequences for mental and physical well-being and future sexual relationships.

There is a need for increased awareness and acknowledgement of the impact of violence upon children: of the distress it causes, its impact upon development of insecure and disorganised attachment which is problematic for individual children, upon their future parenting of children and for the wider community. This acknowledgement should start with the state and any state sanctioned violence towards children including corporal punishment must cease.

Sexual violence had become a routine part of life for some of the children and youths who took part in the research. It is important to work to gain children and youths' trust and ensure that they feel comfortable to disclose male rape and seek support. Awareness-raising activities also need to take place with children and youths who live alone on the streets to support children and youths with keeping themselves as safe as possible from sexual assault and engaging in safe sexual practices.

Children and youths who live alone on the streets reveal many remarkable survival strategies as they develop skills to cope with very dangerous and chaotic circumstances. Other positive attributes included caring for those more vulnerable than themselves, preventing others from carrying out actions that would harm others and working hard so that they are not only able to feed themselves that day but can provide their families at home with food or money.

Education is very important to children and youths. Prevention of attending school can act as a contributing factor to a child or youth leaving home and coming to the streets. Education is desired by children and youths on the streets and identified as important to enabling a child or youth to leave the streets. The strong thirst for education that is evident from many children who participated in this research can be a means to engage with children and youths. However, it is important for agencies to consider that if a child or youth is presented with educational support of a standard far below the level of education attained, the child or youth is likely to disengage.

There is some diversity in children and youths' lives both prior to coming to the streets and whilst living alone on the streets in Tanzania and Kenya as well as shared experiences. It is important for service providers to consider the differences between children and youths who live alone on the streets for short lengths of time and those who live alone on the streets long-term. Female children and youths face particular risks when living alone on the streets, staying in centres for children or working

as house girls or in other employment to avoid spending time on the streets. It is therefore critical to develop specific services that meet females' needs and protect them.

Current services provide a variety of interventions to varying degrees in different cities in the region; more resources need to be allocated to agencies working with children and youths on the streets to allow for a greater variety of interventions to be available in all cities in which there are children and youths living alone on the streets. Service provision should focus upon interventions meeting physical needs such as a place to live, food, health care and clothing, providing support in the form of education, training or work experience that supports a child or youth to be able to provide for themselves. It is important to realise that the experiences of children and youths who live alone on the streets can reduce their ability to trust. Those working with children and youths who live alone on the streets should allow time and develop rapport for relationship-building based upon listening to children and youths and gaining their trust to allow support to be received.

Work which takes place on the streets with children and youths who live alone on the streets can hold certain dangers. Given these dangers and children and youths' issues and experiences, it is very important that those working with children and youths who live alone on the streets are appropriately supported to ensure both their physical and mental well-being.

The findings of this research reveal how well-intended attempts to provide support for children and youths who live alone on the streets in Tanzania and Kenya that do not materialise can result in damage and heartbreak for children and youths whose hopes are raised, as they are led to believe that they will shortly be leading very different lives, only to be dashed by yet another rejection or abandonment.

Key Actions for Policy, Practice and Research

- The findings of this report indicate that children and youths living alone on the streets in Tanzania and Kenya do not receive many of the rights enshrined in Tanzanian and Kenyan policy and law, both domestic and international. To ensure that children and youths living on the streets realise their rights it is imperative that the following actions are taken:

International Policy and Law

- Specific indicators should be included in the measurement of the Millennium Development Goals that relate to children and youths living on the streets.
- Specific funding streams that relate to children and youths on the streets must be included within any development assistance that targets children.
- Specific funding streams must be made available within international development agencies that recognise the need for therapeutic interventions for children affected by violence.

National Policy

- Processes outlined in law for children's homes to be registered should be reviewed and enforced and an independent inspectorate appointed to monitor compliance.
- As per recommendations made by the United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution on Street Children 2011, both governments should adopt policies and promote practice that recognises that 'survival behaviours such as begging, loitering, vagrancy, truancy, running away and other acts, be dealt with as a child protection issue and guarantee that laws on such behaviours do not constitute an obstacle to effective assistance.'
- All national policies that relate to children, such as those addressing barriers to universal education, orphans and HIV/AIDS, must include particular reference to the specific needs of children and youths on the streets and outline clearly how their needs will be met.

Specifically in Tanzania:

- In the Plan of Action for Most Vulnerable Children, Most Vulnerable Children Committees (MVCCs) in Tanzania need to be given the remit of identifying missing children from their communities and supporting CSOs and Social Welfare in their efforts to return them. Equally, in defining at risk children in their communities that can access support available within the Plan of Action, MVCCs must broaden the indicators that they use to identify at risk children to include children living within particularly violent and or neglectful homes.
- The national plan of action to prevent and respond to violence against children should ensure the experiences of children and youths who live alone on the streets are addressed and multi-sectoral preventative and responsive measures adopted that meet their needs.
- The Strategic Plan for Street Children in Tanzania should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it matches the experiences and realities of children on the streets and meets their needs.

Specifically in Kenya:

- Children and youths who live alone on the streets should be recognised and treated in accordance with the National Policy on Orphans and Vulnerable Children.

Practice

- Protocols must be developed between the police, social welfare/children's departments and local CSOs that clearly define appropriate responses to children and youths living on the streets and how each agency will work together to best understand and meet their needs. Street based workers must be an integral part of this response.

- Therapeutic interventions that are relevant in the context of Kenya and Tanzania must be developed for children and their families that recognise the traumatic impact of violence and reduce the impact on insecure and disorganised attachment.
- Practice responses should be set in place to meet parents' needs and support offered to both parents and extended family members to enable kinship care to take place.
- Amongst children of an appropriate age there is need for general awareness-raising and promotion of positive sexual activities and relationships, the right to say no to unwanted sexual attention and prevention of HIV/AIDS and other STDs. This should be delivered in schools and children's centres by trained staff.
- There is also a need to engage with children and youths who live alone on the streets to raise awareness of the dangers of substance misuse.

Research

- There is a gap in knowledge about the experiences of young females who live alone on the streets which highlights the need to commission research based upon the words and realities of females living alone on the streets in Tanzania and Kenya.

Conclusion

- Both the Tanzanian and Kenyan governments have made significant steps to improve the lives of children in their respective countries. However, there is more to be done to ensure that children and youths, who are important social actors as children and future adults, are able to reach their potential and flourish to positively contribute to the economy, parent the future generation and form sustainable communities. A co-ordinated response is required to meet the needs of all vulnerable children and ensure interventions are set in place at the individual, family and community level that tackle macro issues such as poverty, health issues and access to education alongside addressing personal issues and circumstances of individual families and children. This can only be achieved through working in partnership with national government, civil society, local communities and families and children.

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