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Katiro, Farai

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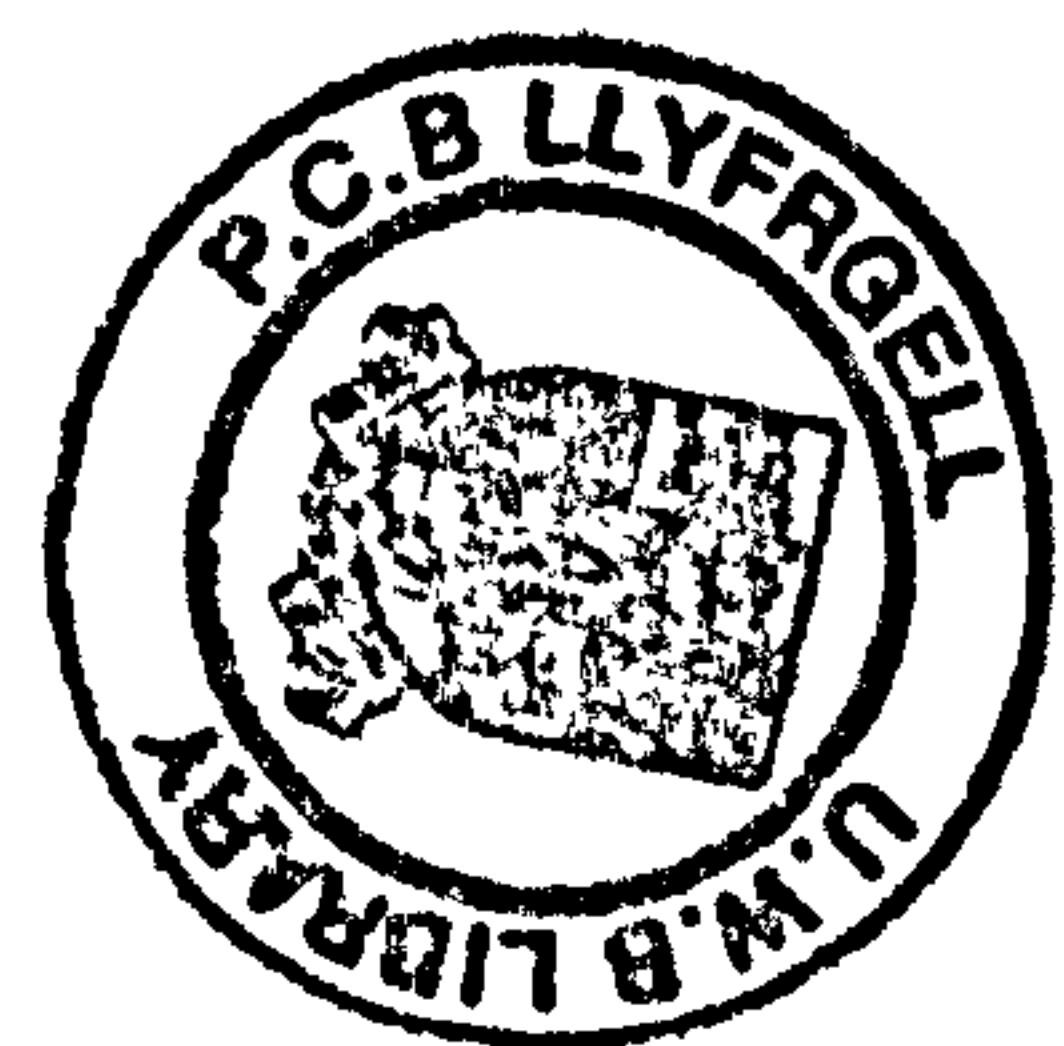
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**DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS**

**Farai Patrick Katiro**



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Page 16, Map of Zimbabwe

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Page 97, Pictures 11 and 12

Page 100, Picture 14

Page 174, Figure 12

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**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO  
STREET CHILDREN WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO  
SCRIPTURE UNION IN ZIMBABWE**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of Bangor, Wales, UK, for the degree of Doctor of Ministry in the College of Arts and Humanities.

This research was carried out at Regents Theological College, Nantwich, UK.

November 2009

## **The Road Less Travelled**

**Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveller, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;**

**Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,**

**And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden back.  
*Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.***

***I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--  
I took the one less travelled by,  
And that has made all the difference.***

**Robert Frost**

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## **ABBREVIATIONS/ ACRONYMS**

<b>AIDS</b>	<b>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</b>
<b>CABA</b>	<b>Children Affected By AIDS</b>
<b>CIA</b>	<b>Central Intelligence Agency</b>
<b>CHH</b>	<b>Child Headed Households</b>
<b>CRS</b>	<b>Catholic Relief Services</b>
<b>DRC</b>	<b>Democratic Republic of Congo</b>
<b>F.A.C.T</b>	<b>Family Aids Caring Trust</b>
<b>FGD</b>	<b>Focus Group Discussion</b>
<b>FST</b>	<b>Family Support Trust</b>
<b>GALZ</b>	<b>Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe</b>
<b>HBC</b>	<b>Home Based Care</b>
<b>IMF</b>	<b>International Monetary Fund</b>
<b>IGP</b>	<b>Income Generating Project</b>
<b>NGO</b>	<b>Non-Governmental Organisation</b>
<b>PAHO</b>	<b>Pan American Health Organisation</b>
<b>PLWA</b>	<b>People Living with AIDS</b>
<b>PVO</b>	<b>Private Voluntary Organisation</b>
<b>SA</b>	<b>Streets Ahead</b>
<b>SAT</b>	<b>Southern Africa Trust</b>
<b>SPS</b>	<b>School of Psychological Services</b>
<b>STI</b>	<b>Sexually Transmitted Infection</b>
<b>STD</b>	<b>Sexually Transmitted Disease</b>
<b>SU</b>	<b>Scripture Union</b>
<b>SUZ</b>	<b>Scripture Union of Zimbabwe</b>

<b>SWOT</b>	<b>Strengths; Weaknesses; Opportunities; Threats</b>
<b>SWS</b>	<b>Social Welfare Services</b>
<b>UN</b>	<b>United Nations</b>
<b>UNESCO</b>	<b>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</b>
<b>UNICEF</b>	<b>United Nations Children's Education Fund</b>
<b>V.F.C</b>	<b>Victim Friendly Court</b>
<b>V.F.U</b>	<b>Victim Friendly Unit</b>
<b>WHO</b>	<b>World Health Organisation</b>
<b>USA</b>	<b>United States of America</b>
<b>ZRP</b>	<b>Zimbabwe Republic Police</b>

## **ABSTRACT**

The twenty-first century presents a hostile face to millions of children in every African country. Firstly, this thesis examines the response of Scripture Union Zimbabwe (SUZ) to the growing problem of street children. Taking Zimbabwe as a case study, empirical research was conducted in its four major cities of Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare and Masvingo. Since SUZ does not operate a street youth project in Harare, the capital city, StreetsAhead (SA), a long established Non-Faith based street youth project in Harare was included to paint a more holistic picture of the street children situation in the country. Secondly, the thesis reveals that street children experience untold suffering in their families and when they try to seek refuge on the streets, their plight is exacerbated by some of those who purport to help them. Thirdly the thesis explores the challenges and lessons learnt by SUZ and SA in their work with street children. It further proposes some Christian basis for street children work, in the hope of provoking further debate. Jesus' words in Luke 18: 16 continue to challenge all those who are involved in shaping the future of nations by nurturing eternal values in children. Within the context of this Christian principle, street children are presented as the poor, who because of their poverty become more vulnerable, making them dependent upon God's protection. Therefore, those involved with children's wellbeing should view them 'as fragile creatures of God who need to be both safeguarded and reformed,' primarily within the family context. Thus the child's future and very existence are of great concern. Lastly, further avenues of development in the field are explored, focusing on the importance of family environment, vocational skills training and employment creation, thereby empowering children to own the intervention and preventive programmes implemented as a means of finding a permanent and sustainable solution to this problem.

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encouragement, and especially for Tino, who unceasingly prayed for Daddy's assignment. I felt loved. I am forever grateful.

Grace and Peace

Farai Patrick Katiro



## MAP OF ZIMBABWE

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<sup>1</sup> Map of Zimbabwe. Accessed at <http://www.is.co.za/Af/maps/zimbabwe> on 17.05.2007.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Rationale

Street children are a fairly recent phenomenon in Zimbabwe, becoming a feature of its society after independence in 1980.<sup>2</sup> A plethora of causal effects, both economic and social, because of poverty and family breakdown, mainly due to HIV/AIDS, are key factors. UNICEF estimates that there are approximately 12,000 street children in Zimbabwe<sup>3</sup>, of whom 5,000 live in Harare.<sup>4</sup> As they struggle for daily survival, street children also face an early loss of childhood and are exposed to the multi-dangers of abuse, drugs, disease, HIV/AIDS, sexual violence by paedophiles, and other street children. The answer to their problem lies, to a large extent, with the Christian community since its special relationship with God reflects the mandate and passion which lie beneath its call and vision. Within this special population, street children stand out as probably the group most vulnerable to family disintegration, poverty, abuse, hunger, exacerbated by the gravity of the HIV/AIDS pandemic..

It is against this background and interest in children that the writer has determined to offer a contribution to child welfare issues in Zimbabwe, mainly focusing on the involvement and response of SUZ with regard to street children work. Considering the potential which children have to excel in life, it may be argued that denying street children rights available to other children creates a two-fold problem. Firstly, the child

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<sup>2</sup>A *Study of Street Children in Zimbabwe*, UNICEF Evaluation Database. A report on street children of Zimbabwe. Accessed at <http://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase> on 22.12.2005. p. 90

<sup>3</sup> Karombo, S., 'Tanya: 'It's Better to Die of AIDS than Hunger'', *New Internationalist*, April 2005, Issue 377. Accessed at <http://www.newint.org/features/2005/04/01/harare-zimbabwe> on 13.10.2006.

<sup>4</sup> Sexton, A., Sexton, A., *Street Children: The Situation in East and Southern Africa and the need for a Strategic Global Response*. A paper presented by Sexton at a meeting by, House Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on Africa, Human Rights and Global Operations, September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2005. Accessed at [http://www.house.gov/international\\_relations](http://www.house.gov/international_relations), on 22.12.2005.

lives an unfulfilled life, and secondly the community buries someone who never received an opportunity to exercise his or her full potential for the benefit of others in the society. In light of this, it can be strongly contended that children are the society's most valuable commodity and yet they are abandoned to face their own fate.

## **1.2 Aims of this study**

The literature available on street children in Zimbabwe mainly focuses on the phenomenon of street children, its causes, intervention and prevention strategies.

However, in Zimbabwe, there has been no major academic research work on the subject, focussing on Christian involvement and a theological basis for significant social action. Thus, this thesis aims

- To produce an academic presentation of the Christian response to the street children phenomenon in Zimbabwe and how SUZ has endeavoured to address this problem in the country.
- To propose a consistent, holistic and Christian based approach to street children work in Zimbabwe.
- To challenge SUZ and the Christian community into formulating workable strategies for responding to the problems of street children such as homelessness, unemployment, substance abuse, sexual abuse and HIV infection.
- To suggest some practical ideas which might provoke further exploration of a scholarly and theological framework currently used by SUZ, in an attempt to reduce the number of street children and those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

### **1.3 Significance of this study**

- The study will enable the Christian community to view the problems of street children as a societal problem in which the children are vulnerable to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and therefore to appreciate SUZ's street youth programmes that seek to combat this deadly epidemic among street children and reunite them with their families.
- It will facilitate key players of the Zimbabwe Christian society to develop a concerted and focused effort to deal with this time bomb in the country. It will also help SUZ to reflect more critically on its theological interpretation and practices, enabling it to 'engage faithfully with the mission of God'<sup>5</sup> and thereby guide the world into the purposes of God.
- It will help to evaluate whether services offered by SUZ are producing the desired effect and whether there is a need for a change in strategies. Results from the investigation will also be used to identify and propose areas of potential development and create awareness of the causes of the street children phenomenon and the impact of HIV/AIDS on street children, their problems and relationship with other issues.

### **1.4 Structure of thesis**

Chapter one presents a rationale and a description of the methodology followed in preparing this study. Chapter two addresses the theoretical framework, presenting the different definitions of the concept of "street children", the general causes of street children and the size of the problem and the Zimbabwean context vis-à-vis street children. Chapter three presents an analysis of the survey findings, while chapter four

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<sup>5</sup>Swinton, J., and Mowat, H., *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*. (London: SCM Press, 2006), p. 25

presents the responses to the needs of street children which have been carried out by SUZ in its endeavour to help this disadvantaged and vulnerable population. It also provides an analysis of the programmes that are being implemented by SUZ. Chapter five offers some lessons that have been learnt by this organisation in its work with street children. Chapter six explores the Christian basis of SUZ's work with street children since it is a Christian organisation, with the view to provoking further debate on a theological basis that can be used by those involved in street children ministry. Chapter seven presents some suggestions which can be implemented by street children workers on potential areas of development, as a way of improving their community services. Chapter eight concludes the thesis by presenting a summary and conclusion.

## **1.5 METHODOLOGY**

Being an informational, intervention and prevention oriented research, ethnographic and anthropological<sup>6</sup> approaches have been employed. The little anthropological and sociological literature available was used to find out what has been said about street children in Zimbabwe, in terms of causes, dangers they are exposed to, and the preventative measures which have so far been implemented. Being qualitative research, it necessitated a commitment to sustained involvement by the researcher to obtain a thorough description of the social and historical contexts of the subjects.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Gilbert, N., *Researching Social Life*, (Ed), (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed), (London: SAGE Publications, 2001), pp.144-148 He states that ethnography is a form of qualitative research combining several methods including genuine social interaction in the field with the people under study, interviews involving key informants, the analysis of documents and direct observation of events. It is closely linked with anthropology which looks at the people's way of life. Eriksen, T. H., in his book, *What is Anthropology*, (London: Pluto Press, 2004), pp. 3-11, offers useful insights on the subject.

<sup>7</sup> Cartledge, M., *Practical Theology*. (Carlisle: Paternoster. 2003), p. 69

Historical studies are briefly explored as a means of trying to shed some more light on the development of the street children problem in Zimbabwe with some minimum references to the wider world. Within this historical context, the political development of Zimbabwe will also be discussed. Psychological and pastoral counselling skills were employed especially during participant observation<sup>8</sup> of after school programmes, and interviews with the street children. This was done with the conviction that street children, as part of the key informants, 'have acquired a culture that is unique'<sup>9</sup>, and they deserve special recognition when considering issues that directly or indirectly affect them.<sup>10</sup> This is also supported by Bryman who states that, 'It is only by getting close to their subjects and becoming an insider that they (qualitative researchers) can view the world as a participant in that setting.'<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the pastoral approach was also employed to explore the spiritual needs of these children and their families.

Theology students who attempt research of this nature find themselves 'located within the uneasy but critical tension between the script of revelation given to us in Christ, and the continuing innovative performance of the gospel as it is embodied and enacted in the life and practices of the church as they interact with the life and practices of the world.'<sup>12</sup> This research shows that it takes human experience seriously, because 'it is where the gospel is grounded, embodied, interpreted and lived out.'<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, such a scenario shows that the situation of street children is complex and multifaceted and therefore demands careful and rigorous examination if

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<sup>8</sup> Swinton and Mowat, pp. 137-138; Robson, C., *Real World Research. A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers*, (Oxford: Backwell, 1993), pp. 194-204

<sup>9</sup> Sarantakos, S., *Social Research*, (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed), (South Yara: Macmillan Publishers, 1998), p. 251

<sup>10</sup> See, Ridge, T., *Childhood poverty and social exclusion*. (Bristol: The Policy Press, 2002), p. 7. He advocates for total involvement of children on researches that involve them.

<sup>11</sup> Bryman, A., *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*. (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 96

<sup>12</sup> Swinton and Mowat, p. 5

<sup>13</sup> Swinton and Mowat, p. 5

meaningful, theological practices are to be implemented. With this view in mind, sound theological interpretations were explored to give meaning and significance to the street children work. Thus, social issues such as orphan-hood, poverty, sickness and healing called for an in depth theological discussion that focused on the biblical basis for social action.

Arguably, there are some genuine fears from some Christian circles that if social action is given too much prominence, it may overshadow the overarching focus of the church, evangelism. Whilst this view is valid, the persuasion to marry the two is still irresistible since effective evangelism in this area necessitates decisive social action. However, at this juncture, it is sufficient to say the distinction between social action and evangelism often still remains a conceptual one rather than reality.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Sider, R., *Good News and Good Works*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), p. 172. See also the following literature for further discussion on the relationship between social action and evangelism. Booker, M. and Ireland, M., *Evangelism: Which Way Now*. (London: Church House Publishing, 2004); Clarke, J., *Evangelism That Really Works*. (London: SPCK, 1995). Boff, L., and Boff, C., *Introducing Liberation Theology*. (London: Burns and Oates. 1987); Chester, T., *Awakening to a World of Need. The Recovery of Evangelical Social Concern*. (Leicester: IVP, 1993); Chester, T., (ed.), *Justice, Mercy and Humility, Integral Mission and the Poor*. (Carlisle, Paternoster Press, 2002); Nicholls, B.J. & Wood, B.R., *Sharing the Good News With the Poor*. (Paternoster/Baker, 1996); West, G., *The Bible and the Poor. A New Way of Doing Theology*. Rowland, C., (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion To Liberation Theology*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Sheppard, D., *Bias to the Poor*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1983); Sheppard, D., *Built as a City*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton); Sider, R., *Good News and Good Works*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999); Stott, J., *New Issues Facing Christians Today*. (London: Marshall Pickering, 1999); Stott, J., *Evangelism and Social Responsibility*. (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1982); Aeschliman, G., "God's Heart for the Poor", *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 93, 1996, pp. 31-41; Cerillo, A., & Dempster, M.W., "Carl, F. H. Henry's Early Apologetic for an Evangelical Social Ethics, 1942-1956", *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 34/3 (September 1991), pp. 365-379; Dempster, M.W., "Pentecostal Social Concern and the Biblical Mandate of Social Justice", *Pneuma*, Fall 1987, pp. 129-153; Dempster, M.W., "Christian Social Concern in Pentecostal Perspective: Reformulating Pentecostal Eschatology", *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 2 (1993), pp. 51-64; Dempster, M.W., "Social Concern in the Context of Jesus' Kingdom, Mission and Ministry", *Transformation* (1999) 16:2, pp. 43-53; Hughes, D., "Why the Reformed Suspicion of Evangelical Social Action", *Evangel*, Spring 2001, pp.24-28; Maddox, R., "Visit the Poor: Wesley's Precedent for Holistic Mission", *Transformation*, January 2001, pp. 37-50; McGee, G., "Saving Souls or Saving Lives?", *Paraclete*, 28:4 (Fall 1994), pp. 11-23; Padilla, C.R., "Evangelism and Social Responsibility: From Wheaton '66 to Wheaton '83", *Transformation*, July/Sept 1985, Vol 2 No 3, pp. 27-32; Sider, R., "What is the Gospel", *Transformation* (1999) 16:1, pp. 31-34; Troutman, C.H., "Evangelism and Social Action in Biblical Perspective", *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, Winter 1973, pp. 100-110; Gnanakan, K., *Kingdom Concerns* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1989), pp. 209-212

The project was carried out in a participatory manner involving relevant institutions, churches, street children, former street children, both in and out of school, schools, NGOS, parents of affected and infected children and community leaders. Thomas, Chataway and Wuyts<sup>15</sup> contend that this multi-sectoral approach empowers those who are observed, enhancing their own capacities to find long lasting solutions to their social, political and economic quagmires.

The key informants of the project were street children and former street children, their care givers and service providers. Cognisance of the complex nature attached to this research should be taken that it is interdisciplinary, with a theological focus. Hence it embraces historical, political, psychological, sociological, pastoral, gender-oriented and narrative-based disciplines.<sup>16</sup> The major research tool used was individual and focus group interviews, participant observation, questionnaires, focus group discussions and literature consultation. Case studies were also done during the research. The procedure used to analyse the data was both qualitative and quantitative.<sup>17</sup> It was qualitative because most of the methods used provided rich data

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<sup>15</sup>Johnson, H., Mayoux, L., 'Investigation as empowerment: Using participatory methods', in Thomas, A., Chataway, J., Wuyts, M., (Eds) *Finding out Fast. Investigative skills for policy and development*. (London: SAGE Publications, 1998), pp. 153-154

<sup>16</sup>Swinton, J., and Mowat, H. p. 3

<sup>17</sup>The following literature was consulted for both qualitative and quantitative analysis of data that was collected during the research. Swinton, p. 28; Blaxter, L., Hughes, C., Tight, M., *How to Research*, (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed), (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2006), pp. 153-222; Denzin, N. K., and Lincoln, Y. S., (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000), pp. 803-819; de Vaus, D. A., *Surveys in Social Research*, (5<sup>th</sup> Ed), (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 5-7, 58-66, 122, 132-134; Gilbert, N., *Researching Social Life*, (Ed), (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed), (London: SAGE Publications, 2001), pp. 85-104, 123-177; Hosker, I., *Social Statistics. Data analysis in social science explained*, (Somerset: Studymates Ltd, 2002), pp. 70-81; Robson, C., *Real World Research. A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), pp. 307-368, 370-407; Sarantakos, S., *Social Research*, (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed), (South Yara: Macmillan Publishers, 1998), pp. 313-327; 41-45; Sarantakos, S., *Social Research*, (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed), (Hampshire: Pelgrave, 2005), pp. 177-391; Gray, D. E., *Doing Research in the Real World*, (London: SAGE Publications, 2004), pp. 98-346; Bryman, A., *Social Research Methods*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 20-21, 61-457; Boynton, P. M., *The Research Companion. A Practical Guide for the Social and Health Sciences*, (Hove and New York: Psychology Press, 2005), pp. 148-149; Hucker, K., *Research Methods in Health Care and Early Years*, (Oxford: Heinemann Educational Publishers, 2001), pp. 58-145



about real people and situations, in this case, street children, helping the researcher to understand the situation of these children within a wider context.<sup>18</sup> However, due to the short six week field research, consultations to map the magnitude of the problem were done in collaboration with city councils, government department of social services and the police, both primary and secondary schools, churches and local NGOs.

The documents which were reviewed included financial reports, meeting minutes, annual activities reports, and documents on organizational vision, mission, objectives, strategies, newspapers and documentaries of street children work. These sources helped with providing general and detailed information on the work done by SUZ and other street children organizations in Zimbabwe such as SA. What follows is a brief overview of the methods that were used during the research

### **i. Interviews**

Individual and group/pair interviews with service providers, clergy, government officials, street children and schools' heads were sought. Individual interviews took place in a variety of settings including work places, homes and foster homes, in the countryside, in centres and on the streets. The interviews lasted from 5 minutes to one hour depending on the people's concentration spans and willingness to engage in extended and deep conversation. These interviews served to generate information about the programmes' effectiveness and impact while at the same time providing an opportunity for partners and stakeholders to share ideas about the future development of their programs. At times it was necessary to meet the interviewees more than once

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<sup>18</sup>de Vaus, p. 5

in order to fully understand their perspectives on the discussed issues.

Briefly, the interview process comprised three stages as suggested by Swinton and Mowat,<sup>19</sup> namely:

- i. Sharing the nature and purpose of the research in order to help people understand the issues which would be discussed.
- ii. Discussion and information sharing around issues of consent.
- iii. Conducting the interview.

Sometimes informal interviews were carried out with the street children. These interviews took place during the day and at night. Street children were met on the streets, in alleys, gullies, on river banks and in many other areas around the cities. Mainly the street children lived around the central business district (CBD). One of the key principles when working with street children is to build trust and to be patient with them. This helped to elicit some valuable information which the children would not have shared during formal interviews. Former street children were contacted at schools and also from either their town or rural homes. At times, it was difficult to follow up interviewees since street children are very mobile, reflecting the chaotic nature of their lives. Some might have decided to go back home, or have been put in jail for crimes committed, or they might have changed towns, or they may not have the time because they are drunk or looking for money to buy food. Thus obtaining information from them carried anxiety and uncertainty on the researcher's part, making it an exciting and yet difficult task as noted by Lalor.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Swinton and Mowat, p. 237

<sup>20</sup> Lalor, K, J., 'Child Abuse and Neglect', *Street Children, a comparative perspective*, Vol. 23, part 8, 1999, p. 760

Depending on the availability of equipment and willingness of the interviewees, interviews were both video and audio taped and digital photographs were taken. Notes were also taken during the interviews in addition to all the above mentioned equipment so as to reduce the amount of error in correct information capturing. Where any electronic devices were not allowed (this was experienced with the police department), note taking became the sole method used to record the information. Throughout the research, different types of interviews<sup>21</sup> were employed.

## **ii. Focus Group Discussions**

The other element of fieldwork was characterised by focus group discussions held with beneficiaries of SUZ and SA's programmes. This 'technique is especially useful for an in-depth exploration of street children's and service providers' views on the given topic.'<sup>22</sup> The discussions sought, among other things, information relating to the impact of the intervention strategy mainly carried out by SUZ and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Zimbabwe.

## **iii. Observations**

The research involved participation in activities at the contact centres such as staff briefings and meetings, debates, soccer, workshops and follow up visits in the rural areas to gain insight and appreciation of how the program activities are implemented.

As Hucker argues, observations 'give us clues about what is happening around us and

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<sup>21</sup> This included types such as structured, individual and group, biographical, problem-centred, focused, and narrative interviews. These types of interviews are normally employed by qualitative researchers of which this research falls in that category. See Sarantakos, (1998), pp. 247-254

<sup>22</sup> 'Working with Street Children, MODULE 5', *Determining the needs and problems of street children*. A Training Package on Substance Use, Sexual and Reproductive Health including HIV/AIDS and STDS, (Geneva: WHO, Department of Mental Health and Substance Dependence), [www.unodc.org/pdf/youthnet/who\\_street\\_children\\_module4.PDF](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/youthnet/who_street_children_module4.PDF). Accessed on 13.04.2007

how we should react.’<sup>23</sup> It is a good technique which might reveal the inside and hidden community life of street children and their environment. When recorded as new ideas, they may be tested later. It is also a good way to validate the data collected by interviews or questionnaires. However, serious caution was needed when illegal activities such as sexual abuse or drug dealing were under investigation.<sup>24</sup> Decisions to carry out certain actions can be significantly influenced by what has been seen. Both methods of non-participant and participant observation<sup>25</sup> were used depending on the circumstances. To avoid any guilty feelings during observation, the researcher refrained from using the unethical ‘covert participant observation’<sup>26</sup> method. During these activities, such information was sought:

- (i) Challenges faced by the street children, former street children and SUZ in their implementation.
- (ii) Improving the current intervention programs.

#### **iv. Structured Questionnaires**

Questionnaires were given to key participants involved in the implementation of the projects. Two menus were used in trying to get as much information as possible from the key informants, street children and service providers. These are based on the Modified Social Stress Model.<sup>27</sup> This model looks at the social stressing issues or problems that have become consistent without any foreseeable permanent solutions.

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<sup>23</sup>Hucker, p. 129

<sup>24</sup> Due to his direct involvement in street children work, the researcher had experiences where he had to summon police to help investigate delicate child abuse cases of homosexuality.

<sup>25</sup> Robson, pp. 194-205

<sup>26</sup> Gilbert, pp. 55-56

<sup>27</sup> See appendix for the questionnaires for both beneficiaries and service providers.

The questions were mainly targeted at the street children and the service providers and had the same categories such as demographic information sought, stresses, coping strategies, resources, general health issues and risk behaviours.<sup>28</sup> The aim of the questionnaires was not to produce a sophisticated analysis or investigative results of the research, but to gather general information on how both street children, SUZ and the community are responding to the social stresses they have been experiencing. A second questionnaire addressed the stakeholders who partnered with SUZ and SA.

#### **v. Case Studies**

In this research, the case studies<sup>29</sup> were carried out with both girls and boys living, or formerly living, on the streets. Some are now back at their homes and attending school or working. It was also carried out with both boys and girls who have been helped by the service providers. Lastly, case studies were carried out with those children who have shown greatest resilience on the streets. This helped the researcher to identify effective strategies for survival on the streets that can be adopted by other children who still find it difficult to go back home, to be reunited with relatives, or currently feel that life on the street is their best option. However, in almost every case, none of the children described any aspects of living on the streets as better than those in the homes they left, and yet few were willing to be reunited with their families. They appear confused and living a paradoxical life. Sarantakos contends that this methodology is a valid form of 'inquiry in the context of descriptive as well as

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<sup>28</sup> See the questionnaires in Appendix 1.

<sup>29</sup> A case study is a detailed description of one person's or one group's experience with an issue, for example, a description of how one street child began experimenting with sex, became addicted, and then stopped through the help of counselling and pastoral care by service providers. Case studies help to put pieces of information into their proper perspective and they make a greater emotional impact than do statistical data. They are particularly useful for describing individuals or subgroups which do not fit the typical pattern of behaviour.

evaluative and causal studies, particularly when the context is too complex for survey studies.<sup>30</sup>

## **1.6 Ethical code observed**

In line with the University of Bangor research regulations, permission was granted to carry out this empirical project. The researcher was already CRB checked in the UK when he went to Zimbabwe to conduct the field work. Permission was also granted by SUZ and SA to allow interviews with street children and former street children. However, the research team also had the privileges of interviewing street children who did not go to the centres run by these organisations. These children were met in the streets. The team also took cognisance of the freedom and dignity of children with the view of respecting and safeguarding their rights. As a way to protect them, children who participated and referred to in this thesis were all given pseudonyms. Thus, it was explained to children why they were asked to participate in the research, and at times consent was sought from them to capture the information through video, digital images or voice recorders. On very few occasions, parental consent was sought. This was because these children stayed alone on the streets away from their homes and parents or guardians.

## **1.7 CONCLUSION**

In view of this discussion, it is clear that with the nature of this research, it was not possible to use one methodology. Also, the employment of the five methods mentioned above did not provide a water tight situation where all the relevant data were collected, but it reduced the amount of error which could have been caused by

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<sup>30</sup> Sarantakos, (1998), p. 192

engaging fewer approaches. The methods are largely qualitative and can be comfortably used by qualitative researchers due to the nature of information they seek. Throughout the research, those involved in gathering the information were aware of the strengths and weaknesses of each of the methods used, however it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss these issues.

## CHAPTER TWO

### DEFINING STREET CHILDREN, THEIR PHENOMENON AND GENERAL CAUSES

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents some in depth analysis of the term 'street children' paying particular attention to the phrases 'children of', 'children on' and 'children in'. It will later on discuss the history, nature and problem of the phenomenon within the Zimbabwe context.

##### i. Importance of a definition

- It assists in determining the numbers and types of street children.
- It assists in identifying a project's target group.
- It assists in the identification of programming areas

Questions like the following have to be addressed:

- Who are they?
- Where do they come from?
- What are their problems?
- What strengths do they have which could form the basis for developing their future? <sup>31</sup>

Thus this analysis is important in order to make sure that planning takes into account the strengths and weaknesses of the different categories of children and to work out solutions that meet their real problems. The deeper and more accurate this analysis is,

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<sup>31</sup>Dallape, F., *An Experience with Street Children*, (2<sup>nd</sup> edn), (Nairobi: Undugu Society of Kenya, 1988), p. 26



the better, more efficient and more appropriate the planning for such kind of a work will be.<sup>32</sup>

## ii. Defining Street Children

'Street children' is a term that is often used to describe both 'market' and 'homeless' children.<sup>33</sup> 'Market street children' refers to those children who work in the streets and markets of cities selling or begging, but still live with their families at home.

Homeless street children refer to those children who no longer have any contact with their families and they have made the street their home.<sup>34</sup> Thus they work, live and sleep in the streets. This group is at very high risk, more than the latter group.

It is also a term that has been hotly debated among the practitioners in this work.<sup>35</sup>

Kilbourn has maintained that, 'The term generally refers to the children who live or spend a significant amount of their time on the streets of urban areas to fend for themselves or their families; this also denotes children who are inadequately protected, supervised and cared for by responsible adults.'<sup>36</sup> Holding this valuable view, one can safely argue that they are children at risk as studies of street children's lives are now also focusing on the wider issues of poverty, social exclusion, coping strategy, vulnerability and resilience.

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<sup>32</sup> Dallape, p. 26

<sup>33</sup> 'Street children- What are street children?' Accessed at <http://www.mexico-child-link.org/street-children-definition-statistics.htm>, on 21.03.2007

<sup>34</sup> Magbag, J., *Manila Times*, August 23, 2002. Accessed at <http://danilozeno.tripod.com/introduction.htm>, on 27.03.2007.

<sup>35</sup> Sexton, A., A paper entitled, *Street Children: The Situation in East and Southern Africa and the need for a Strategic Global Response*, presented by Sexton at a meeting by, House Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on Africa, Human Rights and Global Operations, September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

<sup>36</sup> Kilbourn, P., Ed, *Street Children: A Guide to Effective Ministry*, (Monrovia, California: MARC, World Vision International, 1997), p. 10. See also Magbag, *Manila Times*, August 23, 2002, who equally states that these children 'might not necessarily be homeless or without families, but who live in situations where there is no protection, supervision, or direction from responsible adults.'

The UNICEF definition of street children makes a distinction between children *on* and children *of* the street.<sup>37</sup> Children *on* the street are that whose family support base has become increasingly weakened, and must share in the responsibility for the families' survival by working in the city streets and market places. In this case, they seek to fulfil their parents' own projections by satisfying their needs.<sup>38</sup> Thus they do not live for themselves but for the whole family, struggling to make ends meet as heavy adult responsibilities are placed on them too early. For these children the home ceases to be the centre for play, culture and daily life. Even though the street becomes their daytime activity centre, many of these children return home most nights.

While their family relationships may be deteriorating, they are still in place and they continue to view life from the point of view of their families.<sup>39</sup> Besides working, some of the children roam on the streets just for fun, to pass time or to escape the overcrowded environment at their homes. This group of children, not yet deeply entrenched in street life, is more easily reached out. Kilbourn suggests that these children, 'especially need to be targeted by prevention programmes'.<sup>40</sup> This approach is valuable as it aims to stop children from going to the streets to have fun and offer them a better community entertainment alternative. This could be in the form of 'youth hubs' where they are occupied throughout the day in a safe and educative environment.

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<sup>37</sup> Tacon, P., *A UNICEF response to the needs of abandoned and street children*, unpublished, Geneva, UNICEF, 1985:3, p. 4. See also Kilbourn, P., who described them as children who 'seldom go home to their families.' *Street Children*, p. 11

<sup>38</sup> de Mause, L., 'The Evolution of Childhood', in de Mause, L., (Ed), *The History of Childhood. The evolution of parent -child relationships as a factor in history*. (London: Souvenir Press (Educational Academic) Ltd, 1976), p. 7. See also for further discussion; Kilbourn, *Street Children*, p. 23. Many other sources give supplementing their family income as one of the reasons why children are on the streets. See the following; 'Profile of Street Children in Cairo and Alexandra'. Accessed at <http://www.unodc.org>, on 28.03.2007.

<sup>39</sup> Tacon, P., *A UNICEF response to the needs of abandoned and street children*. p. 4. See also Kilbourn, P., *Street Children*, p.11.

<sup>40</sup> Kilbourn, *Street Children*, p.11.

Children *of* the streets are a much smaller number of children who daily struggle alone for their survival without support. They work on the street, do not go to school and seldom go home to their families. While often abandoned, they too might have abandoned their families, tired of insecurity, rejection and violence. Their ties with their homes have been severed.<sup>41</sup> This group includes children from severely poverty-stricken families. Some have come to the city from deprived rural areas; others are 'run-aways'<sup>42</sup>. They run away from their homes because of sexual or physical abuse, parental alcoholism and neglect<sup>43</sup> or mistreatment by relatives. While they are called 'run-aways', some practitioners also want to call them 'throw-aways'.<sup>44</sup> This gives a well balanced impression that it is not only the children who decide to run away from their homes, but they are also chased away by their parents due to many problems which are perceived as 'beyond parents' coping mechanisms.'<sup>45</sup>

Furthermore, whilst 'run-aways' depicts an image of deviant behaviour, 'throw-aways' depicts a victim image. Additionally, for whatever reason, these children have been robbed of their future if nobody cares to intervene in their situation. To them, home has become a place of fear and misery rather than security, love and encouragement, and survival depends on the daily necessity to deploy their skills to obtain food and shelter. They also need to find a sense of belonging among their peers. It is therefore vital to get the children in this group off the street before they

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<sup>41</sup>Tacon, P., *A UNICEF response to the needs of abandoned and street children*, unpublished, Geneva, UNICEF, 1985:3, p. 4. See also Kilbourn, P., *Street Children*, p. 11

<sup>42</sup>Vittachi, A., *Stolen Childhood*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), p. 16

<sup>43</sup>Islam, F., 'Street and Working Children in Bangladesh'. *CWA Newsletter*, Vol. 11, no. 2-3 (Apr.-Sep. 1995). See also, Huston, S., and Liddiard, M., *Youth Homelessness: The Construction of a Social Issue*. (Hampshire: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1992), p. 6

<sup>44</sup> Vittachi, p. 16

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p. 16

become addicted to street life.<sup>46</sup>

In 1983, Inter-NGOs in Switzerland formulated the most common definition of a street child or youth as 'any girl or boy who has not reached adulthood, for whom the street (in the broadest sense of the word, including unoccupied dwellings, wasteland, etc) has become her or his habitual abode and /or sources of livelihood, and who is inadequately protected, supervised or directed by responsible adults.'<sup>47</sup> This shows the extent to which children can be vulnerable if they are left to the streets and decide to make them their dwelling place.

In this thesis, the term 'street children' is used to refer to children who work and/ or sleep/live on the streets.<sup>48</sup> Such children may or may not necessarily be adequately supervised or directed by responsible adults, and include the two co-existing categories referred to by UNICEF as those 'on the street' and those 'of the street'.<sup>49</sup>

Given this scenario, one can maintain that 'Children of the street' are homeless children who sleep on the streets in urban areas; hence there are no rural street children.<sup>50</sup> However, the term homeless is misleading as it implies that these children and youth have no homes or come from families characterised by breakdown or which are dysfunctional. Again it can be argued that the term 'homeless' tends to depoliticise the subject of street children by blaming families when the problem might be due to inequalities, poverty or social seclusion.

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<sup>46</sup> Kilbourn, p. 11

<sup>47</sup> Magbag, J. *Manila Times*, August 23, 2002. Accessed at <http://danilozuno.tripod.com/introduction.htm>. on 27.03.2007.

<sup>48</sup> Hecht, T., *At Home in the Street: Street Children of Northeast Brazil*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 115. He only falls short of including the fact that besides sleeping in, they also work in the streets.

<sup>49</sup> Kilbourn, P., *Street Children*, p. 11

<sup>50</sup> By rural, the writer refers to areas outside population concentrated areas in urban areas. These are large and sparsely populated areas in the countryside.

However, West<sup>51</sup>, through his study of street children in Asia-Pacific area, maintains that while street children are generally seen as an urban phenomenon, there are also rural “street children”—children who are unaccompanied and living and working outside cities but not in agriculture-related activities. Such work includes the transport of goods, particularly across borders.

Louw, Dursin and Doung<sup>52</sup> have correctly argued that the term relays negative connotations, which Magbag has concurred, describing it as ‘overwhelmingly negative.’<sup>53</sup> Although they are conspicuous, it is clear that street children are still shunned, ignored and excluded by the community because they are seen as a source of criminal behaviour. The term ‘street children’ also gives the children an ‘identity and a sense of belonging’<sup>54</sup>, in this case, on the streets. However this conceptualisation arguably associates them with the negative characteristics of the street environment assuming an approach which is both offensive and incomplete.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> West, A., ‘At the Margins: Street Children in the Pacific’, *Poverty and Social Development Papers*, No. 8/ October 2003. Accessed at [http://www.adb.org/Documents/Papers/Street\\_Children\\_Asia\\_Pacific](http://www.adb.org/Documents/Papers/Street_Children_Asia_Pacific), on 23.10.2008.

<sup>52</sup> Many writers concur that this relays a negative connotation to the street children. However, no other term has been suggested that ‘removes’ this negativity. Louw, C., ‘Street Kids wreak havoc in Durban’s amphitheatre’ *Kwana in the City* (Durban free paper) July 21-27, 2006, Umthombo. <http://www.umthombo.org>, Accessed on 26.03.2007; Dursin, R., ‘Street Children Need Government Protection Too’, *InterPress Third World News Agency(IPS)*, 13 July 2000, <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives>, Accessed on 26.03.2007; Doung, A. J., *SAarts Emerging*, <http://saartsemerging.org>, Accessed on 26.03.2007. See also Magbag, J., who notes; ‘Branded as “anti-social,” or demonstrating “anti-social behaviour,” street children are viewed with suspicion and fear by many who would simply like to see them disappear.’ *Manila Times*, August 23, 2002. Accessed at <http://danilozuno.tripod.com/introduction.htm>, on 27.03.2007

<sup>53</sup> Magbag, J. in *Manila Times*, August 23, 2002.

<sup>54</sup> [http://www.geocities.com/livinghope\\_vl/streetkids.htm](http://www.geocities.com/livinghope_vl/streetkids.htm), Accessed on 26.03.2007. This cite notes that street children consider the street as their home because from here they seek food, shelter and a sense of belonging among peers. What they are seeking is ideally supposed to be found in the home where they will be well nurtured into responsible citizens. See also, ‘The state of the World’s Children 2006’, <http://www.unicef.org/sowc06/profiles/street.php>, Accessed on 26.03.2007.

<sup>55</sup> Conticini, A., and Hulme, D., ‘Escaping Violence, Seeking Freedom: Why Children in Bangladesh Migrate to The Street,’ *PRCBP Working Paper No 10*. Accessed at <http://www.prcpb.org>, on 27.03.2007.

Interestingly, those who use the negative terms to describe street children may be put in two groups. Firstly the term can be used by those who want to clear the children from the streets through any means. Secondly the other group of people sympathises with these children and try to reach to them through all possible means with an aim to give them love, dignity and hope.

### **iii. Limitations of the definition**

Although the term ‘street children’ is used because it is short and widely understood, Sexton argues that ‘this generalisation creates problems’<sup>56</sup> such as not fully addressing the complexities of the issue. In his view, wherever possible, there is need to seek the children’s opinion about themselves, because in reality, these children defy such convenient generalisations due to their individual uniqueness.<sup>57</sup> His argument follows that there are many children who ‘fall between the gaps’ in this definition. There is need for precision rather than just using the term indiscriminately to refer to them. For example, he mentions five categories of children which can be identified, namely;

- There are children who come to the streets and live there during the dry seasons, but go home when it is wet or cold.
- There are children who live with their families on the streets.<sup>58</sup>
- We also have child prostitutes who work on the streets during the night and are never found on the streets during the day.<sup>59</sup> These do not quite fit into this

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<sup>56</sup> Sexton, *Street Children: The Situation in East and Southern Africa and the need for a Strategic Global Response*, September, 2005.

<sup>57</sup> Consortium on Street Children UK, Accessed at [www.streetchildren.co.uk](http://www.streetchildren.co.uk), on 22.12.2005.

<sup>58</sup> ‘What are Street Children?’ *Mith Samlanh Friends*. Accessed at <http://www.streetfriends.org>, on 27.03.2007.

<sup>59</sup> Many sources bear witness to the fact that many street children are sexually exploited. ‘With so

definition.

- Some children who are considered *of* the street have occasional contact with their families, while other children who are *on* the streets do not actually live with a relative, but with someone who is unrelated to them, thus they are completely separated from their families.
- Lastly, it can also be argued that the children who accompany a physically challenged parent or other adult are a different category.<sup>60</sup>

Furthermore, Conticini and Hulme prefer the term 'children in street situations'.<sup>61</sup>

This view tries to avoid the stigmatising term, 'street children' because they feel that these children are individuals with different backgrounds and circumstances. The above definition shows that street children are those from whom the street, more than their family, has become their real home. Therefore while the distinction between children '*on* the street' and '*of* the street' has been useful, some overlaps and grey areas still remain.

From the above discussion, it can be argued that the term 'street children' and its various mutants such as 'street kids', 'street boys', 'parking boys', 'car washers', 'teenage beggars', 'street bums', 'children on their own', and '*mutibumba*' refer to a complex phenomenon. The term stirs emotions of either love or hate and focuses on

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much material temptations around them and so much desire for instant gratification, sex for money is inevitable." See 'Pocket Money', *Child Exploitation*. Accessed at <http://childexploitation.org/prostitution.htm>, on 27.03.2007.

<sup>60</sup> Sexton, *Street Children: The Situation in East and Southern Africa and the need for a Strategic Global Response*. p. 2

<sup>61</sup> Conticini and Hulme have argued their preference well, and have explained it this way: 'Children in street situations' is a term which has been preferred to the commonly used expression, "street children". There are a number of reasons for choosing the former expression. Arguably when referring to children as street children, we implicitly associate the negative characteristics of the environment with their childhood, conceptualising them as belonging to the street and assuming an approach which is both offensive and incomplete. Further, the street children concept is a static definition which is unable to recognise the capacity of these children to move among different social environments.'

the problem. It is a problem whose manifestations are deeply rooted in several causal factors which shall be discussed in the following pages.

#### iv. Expanding the definition of street children

One way of resolving some of these limitations is to add a category of street children known as *in* the street children as suggested by Kilbourn.<sup>62</sup> On the other hand Foster<sup>63</sup>, whilst giving succinct analysis of 'children of' and 'children on', he fails to clarify what he means by 'Their ties with home have been broken and they are without families.' At this point, therefore, it becomes expedient to make such a distinction among the three prepositions, 'on', 'of' and 'in' as this will give important insight to the street children workers on the background nature of their clientele.

Children *in* the street consider the streets to be their home, and it is here that they seek shelter, food and a sense of belonging among their peers. Lalor calls them 'abandoned children'.<sup>64</sup> The major distinction and characteristic of this group from the previous two groups is that it represents children who are totally detached from their families and are living on the streets or in shelters. The more they stay in the streets, the more they lose memory<sup>65</sup> of where they came from, especially when they had been away from their homes from early ages before puberty.

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<sup>62</sup> Kilbourn, *Street Children*, p. 11

<sup>63</sup> Foster, G., *Safety Nets for children affected by HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa*. Accessed at <http://www.hsrb.ac.za>, on 28.03.2007.

<sup>64</sup> Lalor, K, J., Child Abuse and Neglect, *Street Children, a comparative perspective*, Vol. 23, part 8, 1999, pp. 759-770. See also Bar-On, A., 'Street Children: A New Liberation Movement?' in Rwomire, A., (Ed), *African Women and Children: Crisis and Response*, (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2001), p. 187. Interestingly Bar-On suggests, on the contrary, that the term '*in the street*' means that the children have constant contact with their families. However, he does not offer any definition of '*on the street*'.

<sup>65</sup> Loss of memory is common among street children who are constantly vulnerable to drug abuse. See UN document on Working with Street Children, MODULE 3, 'Understanding Substance Use Among Street Children', A Training Package on Substance Use, Sexual and Reproductive Health including HIV/AIDS and STDS, (Geneva: WHO, Department of Mental Health and Substance Dependence), Accessed at [www.unodc.org/pdf/youthnet/who\\_street\\_children\\_module4.PDF](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/youthnet/who_street_children_module4.PDF), on 20. 03 2007.



Although Kilbourn is right to note that the group poses a lot of difficulties to work with, there is need to consider the exact reasons that caused them to opt for the streets and cutting all their filial relations. Thus, while their future may appear bleak, they are not beyond rehabilitation and restoration.

Coming up with 'more specific definitions'<sup>66</sup> shows people's desire to intervene and help children in difficult circumstances. West makes a noteworthy suggestion that a 'broader perspective is necessary to make the term more meaningful, especially when considering the effectiveness of particular interventions.'<sup>67</sup> Therefore, following the preceding discussion, the three phrases, children 'of', 'on' and 'in' the street will be adopted in this thesis because they cover most of the types of children which are found on the streets of Zimbabwe.

## **2.2 General overview of street children in the world**

### **i. The history of street children**

Butcher<sup>68</sup> is correct to note that street children are a long standing phenomenon that has been in existence since time immemorial. Historically, in the early eighteenth century, babies were frequently abandoned in public places in the hope that 'some charitable person will find it.'<sup>69</sup> Boswell noted that many children were abandoned

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<sup>66</sup> West, A., 'Street Children in Asia and the Pacific'. This paper is joint product of the Poverty Reduction and Social Development Division and the NGO Centre at the Asian Development Bank. Accessed at <http://www.sssk.org>, on the 29.03.2007.

<sup>67</sup> West, A., 'At the Margins: Street Children in Asia and the Pacific'. This paper is joint product of the Poverty Reduction and Social Development Division and the NGO Centre at the Asian Development Bank. Accessed at <http://www.sssk.org>, on the 29.03.2007.

<sup>68</sup> Butcher, A., *Street Children: The Tragedy and Challenge of the World's Millions of Modern-day Oliver Twists*, (Milton Keynes: Nelson Word Ltd, 1996), p. 43

<sup>69</sup> Norton, R., 'Abandoned Children'. *Early Eighteenth Century Newspaper Reports*. In this report, the *London Journal*, 27 December 1729, states that the child was left by its parents. It is not clear whether it was dead or the parents anticipated its death. See also other reports with same cases of abandoned

throughout Europe from Hellenistic antiquity to the end of the Middle Ages in great numbers, by parents of every social standing, and for many reasons including 'if they could not be bothered with parenthood.'<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, the early church father, Tertullian along with many others also observed and strongly criticised the practice of abandoning children during his time.<sup>71</sup> From the evidence provided above, one can safely contend that whilst 'the birth of modern-day cities led to an explosion in the numbers of children left to fend for themselves,' the 'abandoned and orphaned children have been found from earliest times.'<sup>72</sup> Can Moses' story as a baby 'laid among the reeds' and his sister Miriam, be treated differently, (Exodus 2:3)?<sup>73</sup> Whatever the case, street children, are not a recent phenomenon.

## ii. A problem and victims

The problem of street children is not new in human history, but the scale of the problem is. With the escalating poverty and better reporting methods, the problem's true devastating effects are better understood. This has revealed that street children phenomenon is representing a deep societal problem.<sup>74</sup> Many countries that have

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children: *English Post*, 12-14 November 1701; *London Journal*, 30 July–6 August 1720; *Mist's Weekly Journal*, 4 December 1725; *Weekly Journal, or The British Gazetteer*, 19 March 1726; *Weekly Journal, or The British Gazetteer*, 17 September 1726; *The Flying-Post*, 19 October 1728; *The Old Whig*, 27 November 1735; *Chester le Street*, Oct. 10; *Read's Weekly Journal, or, British-Gazetteer*, 22 December 1739. Although all the reported cases involved babies, it can still be strongly contended that the issue of children abandonment is not a recent phenomenon.

<sup>70</sup>Boswell, J., *The Kindness of Strangers: The abandonment of children in Western Europe from antiquity to the Renaissance*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988).

<sup>71</sup>Schmidt, A., 'The Sanctification of Human Life', *Under the Influence: How Christianity Transformed Civilization*, cites Tertullian, 'An Apology', in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 3, pp. 24-25. See also another source cited by the same author, that shows how the ancient people criticised this Greek and Roman practice of their day. Clement of Alexandria, The instructor, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Roberts, A. and Donaldson, J., (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1982-83), 2, p. 279. Accessed at <http://www.mti.com>, on 31.03.2007.

<sup>72</sup>Butcher, p. 43

<sup>73</sup>Bible, New Living Translation.

<sup>74</sup>Kilbourn, P., *Street Children*, pp. 8-10. See sources that agree with the assertion that street children are a problem. Cecchini, G., *Street Children: A New African Problem*. Accessed at <http://www.adolescenceweb.org>, on 31.03.2007. The Life of a Street Child. Accessed at <http://www.steppingstonesnigeria.com>, on 31.03.2007. The Evolution of Vietnam's Approach to Street

undergone political, social and economic upheavals have also inevitably experienced this problem. Moorehead says of the nature of street children problem:<sup>75</sup>

Street children are born of the failures of development and overwhelming social pressures. They are there as a result of the migration from the countryside into the cities, of poverty, of unemployment, of broken families and the growth of vast urban conglomerations now decaying and bursting under the weight of people.

Concurring with Moorehead, Agnelli goes further to argue that while there are differences in the cause and effect of street children's lives between the West and developing countries, there are also many features in common. She states clearly:

'All those on the street, everywhere, can be described as victims of the crisis of the family. The breakdown of family structure and traditional values...'<sup>76</sup> When this happens, children are left alone to 'cope with complex situations either in their own life or someone's'.<sup>77</sup>

Drawing from the views above, it becomes more convincing to argue that any inability or unwillingness by the planners to come up with a strategic plan should provoke genuine discussion on how the problem can be addressed. With the magnitude of the problem of street children becoming more relevant in most countries, it increasingly becomes difficult to 'call ourselves a successful society as

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Children. *Human Rights Watch Publications*. <http://hrw.org>. Accessed on 31.03.2007. Street Children in East Africa. Accessed at <http://www.lord.org>, on 31.03.2007. 'Exploitation of Children- A Worldwide Outrage', *CASA ALIANZA*. Accessed at <http://www.hiltonfoundation.org>, on 01.04.2007.

<sup>75</sup> Moorehead, C., (ed.), *Betrayal*, (Doubleday, 1990).

<sup>76</sup> Agnelli, S., *Street Children: a growing urban tragedy* – report for the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues, presented by Susanna Agnelli (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1986), p. 15

<sup>77</sup> Donnellan, C., *Dealing with Homelessness*. (Cambridge: Independence Educational Publishers, 2004), p. 1

long as there are people living on the streets.’<sup>78</sup> However, although this is an appealing insight, its apparent limitation is that it seems to use the presence of street children as the only criterion to measure success of any society. Experience has shown that even the most developed and industrialised countries in the world still have people who live on the streets. Thus, unfortunately though, one can conclude that street children, like the poor, will always be present in every community, causing never-ending dilemmas,<sup>79</sup> and they are viewed by the society as ‘a source of embarrassment to be despised and avoided.’<sup>80</sup> They are viewed as a problem and victims conceptualised in terms of social hygiene and represent a disease of a dysfunctional society which has failed them.<sup>81</sup> However, Hecht argues further and carefully rejects the idea that street children should be reduced ‘to something to be cured’, but instead treats them ‘as socially significant protagonists’ who represent one of the most serious global challenges.<sup>82</sup>

### **2.3 Historical background of the street children phenomenon in Zimbabwe**

According to Grier, the problem of street children in Zimbabwe is not new.<sup>83</sup> He traces the history way back from the 1920s to the 1950s. He contends that it was noted that native youths aged 10 to 14 years were attracted to towns, mines and other centres. Due to this development, colonial officials became concerned with the way

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<sup>78</sup> ‘Kids’ horror is winning awards’, Parentguide supplement in *Parentwise*, October, 1994.

<sup>79</sup> Dallape, F., *An Experience with Street Children*, (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). (Nairobi: Undugu Society of Kenya, 1988), p. 11

<sup>80</sup> Ochola, L., ‘The Undugu Society Approach in Dealing with Children at Risk to Abuse and Neglect’, in Verhellen, E., (ed.), *Monitoring Children’s Rights*. (London: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1996), p. 856

<sup>81</sup> Ennew, J., ‘Outside Childhood- Street children’s rights’ in Franklin, B (ed), *The new Handbook of Children’s rights- Comparative Policy and Practice*. (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 201-214

<sup>82</sup> le Roux, J, and Smith, C, S., ‘Causes And Characteristics Of Tile Street Child Phenomenon: A Global Perspective’, *Adolescence*, in *Journal of psychopathology and social science*, Fall, 1998.

<sup>83</sup> Grier, 1996, A paper on street children in Zimbabwe (*Study on street children in Zimbabwe*, 90)

young people were surviving on the streets. Many of these youngsters were then employed as domestic servants and gardeners in white and black homes.

Thus with the European intrusion, social and economic life among Zimbabweans became 'disorganised' and the balance of man to his physical environment was upset as people rushed to urban areas for employment from the rural areas. Those who could not get the domestic work early had to sleep on the streets since they did not have anywhere to go except to their rural homes, which may have been far from the urban centres. This, in Grier's view, may have been early indications of the street children problem that the country is facing today.

Though this might have been the case, it is generally agreed that the problem of children seen working and living in the streets is a recent phenomenon in Zimbabwe. Grier rightly notes that 'Prior to Independence in 1980, it was almost impossible for children to work in the streets as vendors, car-washers, beggars, or parking boys as Municipal by-laws that restrict this were brutally enforced.'<sup>84</sup> Such enforcements became slack and unpredictable after independence.<sup>85</sup> That might have been caused by the overwhelming developmental commitments which the government got concerned with at the expense of these children. Being a street kid was and is still an embarrassing thing in Zimbabwe. Oliver Mtukudzi, in his song '*Street Kid*'<sup>86</sup>, sang and advocated for their acceptance from the society.

On 19 May 2005, with no warning, the Government of Zimbabwe embarked on an

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<sup>84</sup> Muchini, p. 90

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, p. 90

<sup>86</sup> Mtukudzi, O., *Street Kid*. Oliver Mtukudzi Collection, 1991-1997.

operation to clean up its cities. It was a crash operation known as 'Operation Murambatsvina', also referred to as Operation Restore Order. This action by the government became popularly referred to as 'Operation Tsunami' because of its speed and ferocity. It resulted in the destruction of homes, businesses and vending sites. To this day, it has been estimated that more than 700,000 people in the cities across the country lost their homes, their source of livelihood or both.<sup>87</sup> Although there are no figures released in connection with any increase in street children numbers due to this operation, it is highly likely that some children resorted to the streets after their urban homes were swept by the 'Tsunami'. One woman said of the effects of the operation, reflecting the bleakness that is faced by the thousands of the silent majority;

We are only alive because the churches give us some food, but I am very frightened for my children. They are no longer in school and they are now begging at the roadside. I cannot see what will become of us.<sup>88</sup>

Historically the Government's response to street children in Zimbabwe has been varied. This is not the first time that 'clean up' operations have taken place. In 1996/7, children were removed from the streets into the bush and were left there or were taken to a refugee facility beside the Gonarezhou National Park called Chambuta. Many children escaped from this place through literally lion infested bush, and found themselves on the streets again. In 2004, some street children in Harare were removed from the city and dropped in the bushes during rainy season. Some perished but some found their way back to the streets. This is a short-sighted approach as the government relocates vulnerability and compounding the related issues of

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<sup>87</sup>Tijabuka, A. K., UN Envoy on Human Settlement Issues, Report of the Fact Finding Mission to Zimbabwe, to Assess the Scope and Impact of Operation Murambatsvina, July 2005, Sexton Paper, 1995.

<sup>88</sup>Johnson, R. W., 'Zimbabwe, the land of dying children', *The Sunday Times*, January 07, 2007. Accessed at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/article1290268.ece>, on 21.02 2007.

marginalisation, traumatising and isolation. More recently, the department of Social Welfare, Council and other stakeholders have been organised into Task Force on Street Children with funding from UNICEF in an endeavour to solve this problem.

## **2.5 General causes of street children phenomenon in the world**

The phenomenon of street children, an offspring of the modern urban environment, represents one of humanity's most complex and serious challenges. Their dramatic increase in number has been closely linked to societal stress associated with rapid industrialization and urbanization.<sup>89</sup>

Many scholars<sup>90</sup> have given significant proposals as to why children are on the streets. They mention industrialisation, in the name of urbanisation, poverty, family disintegration and sexual exploitation or abuse and other natural disasters. A study on the phenomenon shows that it is a complex issue and it does not have easy answers as to why children are on the streets. The next sections are going to look at some of the causes of street children under the following headings:

- Family disintegration
- Socio-political issues

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<sup>89</sup> Agnelli, S., *Street Children; A Growing Tragedy, Report for the Independent Commission on the International Humanitarian Issues*, (London: George Weidenfield and Nicolson Limited, 1986), p. 36

<sup>90</sup> Agnelli, S., *Street Children; A Growing Tragedy, Report for the Independent Commission on the International Humanitarian Issues*, (London: George Weidenfield and Nicolson Limited, 1986), p. 15

The following sources seem to agree on the causes of street children; Blanc, C. S., (ed). *Urban Children in Distress*. UNICEF. pp.104-111; Butcher, A., *Street Children: The Tragedy and Challenge of the World's Millions of Modern-day Oliver Twists*, (Milton Keynes: Nelson Word Ltd, 1996), pp. 43-54; Swart, J., *Malunde: The Street Children of Hillbrow*. Johannesburg: University of South Africa. (Research study of street children in Johannesburg); Muchini, *A Study on Street Children in Zimbabwe*, p. 98; Culnane, T., 'Why are children on the streets?' Kilbourn, P., (ed). *Street Children: A Guide to Effective Ministry*. Monrovia: MARC, 1997, pp. 19-29; McDermid, M., 'Sexually Exploited Children', Kilbourn, P. *Children in Crisis: A New Commitment*. MARC, 1996, pp. 29-42; Grigg, V., *Companion to the Poor*. Monrovia, California: MARC, 1990, pp. 10-12; Grigg, V., *Cry of the Urban Poor*. Monrovia, California: MARC, 1992, pp. 69-72; Children in the Street, The Palestinian Case. Accessed at <http://www.reliefweb.int> Accessed on 7.06.2007.

Although they are not the only causes, these two headings have been selected because of their macro-spectrums which would cover most of the significant issues relating to the causes of street children. Some other causes will be explored in the next chapter with particular reference to the field research that was conducted.

### **i. Family Disintegration**

The preamble to the Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises,

That the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community .....[and] that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.<sup>91</sup>

The above quote shows the significance placed upon family stability by the United Nations. However, the value is strongly related to the welfare of children, and, according to Schaffer,<sup>92</sup> the family is the 'basic unit within which the child is introduced to social living.' Thus the absence or instability of homes robs children of parental role models, resulting in media or peer modelled children.<sup>93</sup> In regard to this view, it is through the family institution that both adults and children are supposed to experience the highest form of love, acceptance, nurturing, development and empowerment.<sup>94</sup> Thus, the family, according to Davies, should remain the source of

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<sup>91</sup>Blanc, C. S., (Ed). *Urban Children in Distress*. UNICEF. 1994, pp. 323-330

<sup>92</sup>Schaffer, H, R., *Social Development*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Inc, 1996), p. 204

<sup>93</sup>"Adolescence, Youth Ministry and World Mission", *Transformation*, Vol 11 No 2, April/June 1994, p. 17. This is a summary of a report from an international consultation focussing on the need to develop youth ministry as a missiological activity.

<sup>94</sup>Much literature that gives emphasis on the value of marriage and family unit has been published. Its



primary socialisation for children and young men and women so that they may 'attain sexual and civic maturity.'<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, and agreeing with this assertion about family significance, Berger contends that it is here, and not at the planning boards of governments that the syntheses productive of any meaningful changes occur.<sup>96</sup>

However, it is not only meaningful changes that are influenced through the family, but even the negative ones. Therefore, the family unit needs to be protected from any internal and external challenges that threaten its sanctity. Unfortunately, according to Agnelli, this family unit has been severely affected by the breakdown of extended families and community structures which used to offer healthy safety nets necessary to affirm members' self-esteem and control over their lives.<sup>97</sup> With such nature of a study on children, Stone has argued that, 'it is impossible to study children in isolation from those who killed them off or fed them, neglected them or nurtured them, beat

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breakdown whether legitimate or not, has great negative repercussions on those closely related to it, especially children, both nuclear and extended. The following references are part of the intensive and extensive research work done on the significance of the family as a symbol of social stability and traditional moral virtue; Agnelli, pp. 42-56; Domonian, J., *Marital Breakdown*, (Middlesex: Penguin Books and Darton, Longman & Todd, 1968), pp. 129-139; Howarth, G., (MP), *The Cost of Family Breakdown: A report by Family Matters, produced for the Lords and Commons Family and Child Protection Group*, (Bedford: Family Matters, 2000); Drane, J and O., *Happy Families? Building Healthy Families*, (London: Marshall Pickering, 1995), pp. 14-18; Larson, B., *Larson's Book of Family Matters*, (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Incl, 1986), pp. 156-162; Erera, P, I., *Family Diversity: Continuity and Changes in the Contemporary Family*, (London: Sage Publications, 2002), pp. 1-16; Johnston, O, R., *Who Needs The Family? A survey and a Christian assessment*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979), pp. 18-19; Grunlan, S, A., *Marriage and the Family: A Christian Perspective*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), pp. 25-26; Clapp, R., *Families at the Crossroads, Beyond Traditional and Modern options*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), pp. 9-26; Scott-Evans, P., *Preparing to Parent Teenagers*, (Carlisle: Alpha, 1999), pp. 98-105; Steel, L., and Kidd, W., *The Family*, (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), p. 1; Allan, G., (ed), *The Sociology of the Family; A Reader*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1999), pp. 2-3; Wyse, D., *Childhood Studies: An Introduction*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), pp. 33-37; Hetherington, M, E., 'Coping with Family transitions: winners, losers and survivors', in Woodhead, M., Light, P., and Carr, R., (eds), *Growing up in a Changing Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 115-136.

<sup>95</sup> Davies, J., 'The Family - R.I.P.? Religion, Marriage, the Market and the State in Western Societies', in Davies, J., (ed), Berger, B., and Carlson, A., *The Family: Is it just another lifestyle choice?* (London: The IEA Health and Welfare Unit, 1993), p. 1

<sup>96</sup> Berger, B., 'The Bourgeois Family and Modern Society', in Davies, p. 24

<sup>97</sup> Agnelli, p. 49

them or fondled them, namely their parents.’<sup>98</sup> This is correct if one looks at the factors that cause these children to live on the streets, from the view of husband and wife relationships that are ‘fractured by internal struggles’<sup>99</sup> caused by a multiplicity of issues. Since parents are the ‘significant others’<sup>100</sup> to their children, the breakdown of nuclear family therefore, has long term negative emotional, psychological and social impact on the children’s development and character.<sup>101</sup>

The results of such family instability and disintegration show, through single parent and child-headed families, divorce and remarriages, desertion, poverty, child abuse, child neglect, family violence, lack of bonding and lack of parental discipline. These neglected children, in desperate genuine efforts for survival, end up in the streets, where they hope to experience life free of heavy responsibilities and abuse. However, while the view that family stability has experienced insurmountable challenges is correct, Swindoll<sup>102</sup> contends that being an endangered species does not mean that the family is doomed. Thus, husband and wife can both make a conscious effort to protect the sanctity of their marriage, with the view to curb the street children phenomenon at the micro level and yet the very heart of every healthy community. The family, as

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<sup>98</sup> Stone, L., ‘Children and the family’, in Barnes, P., Oates, J., Chapman, J., Lee, V., and Czerniewska, (eds), *Personality, Development and Learning, A Reader*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton and Open University, 1984), p. 17

<sup>99</sup> Swindoll, C., *The Strong Family: Growing Wise in Family Life*, (Portland: Multnomah, 1991), p. 13

<sup>100</sup> Parents are, in most cases, the ‘significant others’ to their children. This means that they have been accepted by their children as role models. The concept falls under social learning theory which was developed by Bandura, A., in his book, *Social Learning Theory*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1977), quoted by Hayes, N., in her book, *Foundations of Psychology: An Introductory Text*, (Surrey: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd, 1994), p. 250. Social –learning theory emphasised the importance of limitation in the acquisition of novel forms of behaviour, and of identification with role models in learning general styles. Together these learning processes formed the foundations of individual personality. Thus the family is supposed to create a positive conducive socialisation environment for its members. The absence of a positive father-figure ushers the family into disarray since there is no one the children can identify with.

<sup>101</sup> For further reading on effects of divorce on children see also; Conway, H., *Domestic Violence and the Church*, (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1998), pp. 31-33. She argues that it is a myth that children can be effectively protected from the violence which goes on in their own home. Although they may not be physically abused, they will still be affected by just being in the same environment with the violence.

<sup>102</sup> Swindoll, C., *The Strong Family: Growing Wise in Family Life*, (Portland: Multnomah, 1991), p. 13

argued by Berger, must therefore remain 'the one and only haven in a heartless world.'<sup>103</sup>

## **ii. Socio-Political Issues**

Due to colonisation and development, urban areas became appealing to many poor rural residents who believed that they were going to achieve their hopes and dreams there. However, they encounter harsh realities which destroy the dream that originally pushed them to the cities. These immigrants to the city from rural areas are more willing to take a wide range of jobs in order to provide for their family. The high unemployment rate in the country forces most of the older family members to roam the streets in search for money to supplement the little being provided by the bread winner. Besides the micro-economic and political issues, there are macro-economic and political issues that strongly influence the policies of the government. Thus, the government does not make free and independent choices. It is influenced by another concentric circle of international finance since the world is increasingly becoming a global village. As argued by Vittachi, these global parents need to be included in any consideration of family welfare, for their decisions are matters of life and death to children.<sup>104</sup>

## **2.5 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the above discussion reveals the magnitude of street children problem considering the fact that these children are supposed to be living in safe environments, such as the families. It is noted that this is not a new phenomenon, but has been in existence for many years, only that with industrialisation and vigorous campaigns for

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<sup>103</sup> Berger, B., 'The Bourgeois Family and Modern Society', in Davies, p. 19

<sup>104</sup> Vittachi, p. 25

children's rights, the children have become a more visible reality in the communities. The problem of street children is therefore experienced by all nations with varying degrees depending on the country's stage of development.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter seeks to present a profile of street children in Zimbabwe, based on the research methodology discussed in the preceding chapter. The data collected represents the outcome of interviews, Focused Group Discussions (F.G.Ds), meetings, brain storming sessions, general observations, as well as previous research findings on the problem of street children in Zimbabwe. It discusses the age range, their sex ratio and reasons behind the street children problem as revealed by the samples selected. The chapter also discusses areas where street children come from and where they stay, and the characteristics of these areas, which encourage them to reside there. The chapter goes on to include a description of the nature of activities that street children engage in, and the problems they face while on the street. Sexual activities resulting in Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS infection and substance abuse among street children, types of substances consumed, reasons for substance abuse as indicated by the interviewees, extent of substance abuse, and health and psychological effects on the abusers, will be highlighted.

#### **3.2 Situation in Zimbabwe during research period**

The research was done in the months of August and September 2007, over a period of six weeks. During that time of research, Zimbabwe was facing unprecedented economic, political and social crisis.<sup>105</sup> The economy has shrunk so much, resulting in

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<sup>105</sup> Zimbabwe: A Regional Solution? *Africa Report*, No. 132, 18 September 2007, pp.i-ii. Accessed at

sharp drop in investment, both domestic and foreign. The inflation rate is pegged at more than 66,000%, the highest in the world,<sup>106</sup> and International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicted it would reach 100,000% by the end of 2007.<sup>107</sup> Revealing the seriousness of Zimbabwe crisis, the government has recently introduced a 10 million dollar note as a way to tackle the runaway inflation.<sup>108</sup> This spiral inflation has caused a diminished capacity of the country to export and earn foreign currency essential for the importation of key inputs such as fuel. At the moment, October 2007, the shops in the country are literally empty<sup>109</sup> and the nation is facing starvation, resulting in some women committing the most horrendous acts of baby dumping because they are unable to feed the innocent children.<sup>110</sup>

The tight debt deficit situation has a direct impact on key social services, with a decrease in the per capita expenditure on health, education and social welfare and has reduced the population to a begging nation with the rate of poor people reaching unprecedented heights. The call for debt cancellation in the country is complicated by

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<http://www.crisisgroup.org>. on 28.01.2008. See also the following reports on the current political and economic situation in Zimbabwe; Zimbabwe: An End to the Stalemate? Africa Report, No. 122, 5 March 2007, pp. i-ii. Accessed at <http://www.crisisgroup.org>. on 28.01.2008; Evans, G., 'Zimbabwe: Is There Any Way Out? Notes for Panel Presentation, by Gareth Evans, President, International Crisis Group, to Royal Commonwealth Society Conference, Zimbabwe: Preparing for Change, London, 2 July 2007. Accessed at <http://www.crisisgroup.org>. on 28.01.2008; Shapiro, R., 'ZIMBABWE ECONOMY IN FREE FALL', in *The Christian Science Monitor*, 27 August 2007. Accessed at <http://www.csmonitor.com.2007>. on 28.01.2007.

<sup>106</sup>; DPA, 'Zimbabwe's inflation figures unavailable because of empty shops', *Africa World News*, 27 November, 2007. Accessed at <http://www.earthtime.org>. on 28.01 2008; CIA puts the inflation rate at 6072% and ranks Zimbabwe last in the world followed by Burma with only 40.20% which is far way behind Zimbabwe.

<sup>107</sup> 'IMF: Zimbabwe inflation could reach more than 100,000 percent', *Reuters*, July 31, 2007. Accessed at <http://www.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/africa/07/03/zimbabwe.prices.reut>. on 28.01.2008

<sup>108</sup> 'Zimbabwe introduces \$10 million note', *New Zimbabwe.com*. 16. 01.2008. Accessed at <http://www.newzimbabwe.com>. On 28.01 2007.

<sup>109</sup>The researcher personally experienced this situation during his field work in Zimbabwe in August and September 2007. See also: Meldrum, A., 'Shops emptied as panic grips Zimbabwe', *The Guardian*, July 5, 2007. Accessed at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/zimbabwe/article>. on 28.01.2008; DPA, 'Zimbabwe's inflation figures unavailable because of empty shops', *Africa World News*, 27 November, 2007. Accessed at <http://www.earthtime.org>. on 28.01 2008.

<sup>110</sup> Lamb, C., 'Desperate mothers throw away 20 babies a week as Zimbabwe starves', in *The Sunday Times-World*, 2 April 2006. Accessed at <http://www.timesonline.co.uk>. on 28.01.2008.

deteriorating domestic governance. Drought and HIV/AIDS and high levels of unemployment, estimated at 80%,<sup>111</sup> causing people to live in poverty, have resulted in the emergence of street children phenomenon. According to Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A) statistics on Zimbabwe's HIV/AIDS prevalence, 24.6% of its population is infected, making it the fourth most infected country in the world after Swaziland, Botswana and Lesotho.<sup>112</sup> Once hailed as one of Africa's promising nations, Zimbabwe is now currently regarded as one of the world's poorest countries.<sup>113</sup>

### 3.3 Profile of the street and former street children

#### 3.3.1 Demographic information on street children

##### i. Gender of interviewed street and former street children

**Table 3**

#### **Street children**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Boys	36	52.17%
Girls	33	47.83%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>111</sup>Meldrum, A., 'Shops emptied as panic grips Zimbabwe', *The Guardian*, July 5, 2007. Accessed at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/zimbabwe/article> on 28.01.2008.

<sup>112</sup> World Fact Book, CIA, 24.01.2008. Accessed at <https://www.cia.gov/library> on 31.01.2008.

<sup>113</sup> 'Zimbabwe: Adult Population to Die Before Age 40', IRIN, 7 April 2006. Accessed at <http://www.ilri.org>. on 28.01 2008. See also World Fact Book, CIA, 24.01.2008, which ranks Zimbabwe second to last poorest nations on earth just ahead of DRC. Accessed at <https://www.cia.gov/library>. on 31.01.2008.

**Table 4**

**Former street children**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Boys	59	56.73%
Girls	45	43.27%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>100%</b>

Whilst table 3 and 4 show correct statistics that boys living on the street interviewed are slightly more than girls, it is not a true reflection of the reality because the number of boys is much higher than the one reflected on the tables. The slight difference is a result of some boys who did not want to be interviewed individually because they mistrusted the researchers who they did not know, or they did not have the time for engagements which had no prospects of some financial gains. Their main task on the street is to make as much money as possible<sup>114</sup> so that they can survive in that harsh environment. Thus any activity that does not promise some monetary gain takes second place in their lives.

**ii. Reasons why girls are fewer on the streets**

It can be ascertained that there are fewer girls on the streets of Zimbabwe than street boys. This is for several reasons. Firstly, in many African cultures, there is much greater pressure for girls to stay at home than boys.<sup>115</sup> Girls are socialized to remain at home so as to preserve their sexual purity and to make them desirable as women and

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<sup>114</sup> 'Preamble to the problematic of street children', *REPER*. Accessed at <http://www.enfants-des-rues.com> on 31.03.2009.

<sup>115</sup> Peach, L. J., *Women in culture: a women's studies anthology*. (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1998), p. 285



mothers. Thus they are seen by their parents as future investment in terms of *lobola* (marriage dowry) when they get married. Therefore they are kept at home and are trained to endure high levels of any form of mistreatment. Research<sup>116</sup> shows that girls will put up with abuse at home for longer periods than boys, but that once girls make the decision to leave home, the rupture is more permanent than for boys. This means, those who finally find themselves on the streets soon realise that they become more vulnerable to abuse as their original 'support systems only break down further,'<sup>117</sup> forcing them to succumb to too many abuses especially sexual, because they want company and protection from the abusers. However, the protection becomes 'another guise of exploitation.'<sup>118</sup> Secondly, boys are more resilient to difficult circumstances in the streets than girls.<sup>119</sup> Thirdly, girls are more prone to sexual abuse from the street boys, rich people and brothel owners, making them less visible on the streets. Thus being sexually exploited by street boys and other people becomes their biggest fear which deters them from getting into the streets.

Fourthly some girls are not seen much in the streets because they hide themselves from the public during the day and come to the streets during the night when they engage in prostitution.<sup>120</sup> It was observed that those who spent their day at the drop in centres left the place very smart<sup>121</sup> at the close of business. During their initial days on

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<sup>116</sup> Rurevo, R., and Bourdillon, M., 'Girls: The Less Visible Street Children of Zimbabwe', *The Journal of Children, Youth and Environments*, Vol 13, No.1, Spring 2003.

<sup>117</sup> 'Girls on the street; Alone and at risk around transport terminals', *Railway Children*. p. 1. Accessed at <http://www.streechildren.org.uk/reports/Girlsonthestreets>. on 26.01.2008.

<sup>118</sup> *Railway Children*, p. 1

<sup>119</sup> Rurevo, R. and Bourdillon, M., "Girls: The Less Visible Street Children of Zimbabwe." *Children, Youth and Environments* 13(1), Spring 2003. Retrieved 06.04.2009 from <http://colorado.edu/journals/cye>.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> M. Bourdillon, 'The Children on our Streets' . . *Reading for Child and Youth Care Workers*. Issue 35, December 2001. Accessed at <http://www.cyc-net.org>. on 29.01.2008.

This is the first of a two-part article based on a workshop by Professor Micheal Bourdillon of the University of Zimbabwe.

the streets, they may not be willing to indulge in sexual activities, but they soon realise that they do not have many options for survival except to use their bodies in exchange for money. One girl commenting on their desperate situation said, '*Panenge pasisina yekutamba*'<sup>122</sup> (There won't be anything else to do). To them, although aware of the inevitable dangers, it is their last and only viable option for survival.

### ***Case study 1***

*Chipo, Elizabeth, Rachel and Muneyi*<sup>123</sup> are all girls aged between 15 and 20 years. They were found in the bush at their base in Masvingo. Their boy friends provide food for them. They confessed that if they are not found at the base by their boyfriends, they will be beaten. Two of the girls admitted that they had STI, increasing their vulnerability to HIV infection as they did not use any protection during their sexual activities. This was confirmed by Elizabeth who revealed that her boyfriend refused to use condoms. Asked why they are not interested in going home, they indicated that there is nothing exciting at home and would rather be in the bush with their boys, whom they call husbands. Chipo showed us a bottle of some mixture of medical concoction which she said would help her in her pregnancy, but it later came out that her real intention was to abort the pregnancy. This exposed her to a very risky outcome of the possibility of death or physical genital mutilation and harm.

The girls have very minimum exposure to many developmental opportunities they would have been able to explore because their boyfriends prevent them from constantly getting involved in contact centres' activities. SUZ and StreetsAhead offer

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<sup>122</sup> This was said by one of the girls during a FGD conducted by the researcher, with former street children living at the Tafara House in Harare. She was contributing on the issue of the problems that girls face during their stay on the streets.

<sup>123</sup> To ensure confidentiality, all case studies names in this thesis are pseudonyms.

opportunities for both girls and boys to go back to school or to do skills training at vocational centres around the country. The organizations are able to pay for their school or training fees. This poses a challenge to all street children workers to create more radical and exciting programmes that seek to address the plight of the girl child in the country.

### iii. Ages of respondents for street children

**Table 5**

**For boys**

<b>Age of respondents</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
5 - <10	1	2.78%
10 - <15	23	63.89%
15 - <20	12	33.33%
20 - <25	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 6**

**For girls**

<b>Age of respondents</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
5 - <10	0	0%
10 - <15	5	15%
15 - <20	25	75.76%
20 - <25	3	9.01%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

The teenage period covers the most important phase of growth in one's life. Both past and present research confirms that people make their most important life decisions during this period.<sup>124</sup> If young people spend their time on the streets where they are vulnerable to all forms of abuse and dangerous lifestyles, they become increasingly immersed in a lifestyle typified by the absence of the necessary nurturing and appropriate life learning to produce socially and emotionally developed individuals. They are denied the opportunity to be people who are capable of making wholesome, positive life choices. Thus, they remain not only victims of their immediate circumstances, but their immediate circumstances potentially perpetuate their victim status, as it ill equips them with the tools to be able to access a lifestyle free from abuse and dependency.

Knowledge of this demographic information helps street children activists to come up with both intervention and prevention programmes that are particularly relevant to this age range, aiming to exploit the young people's potential so as to equip and prepare them for independent living. Street children's needs are not only physical but also multi-dimensional. That is, if HIV/AIDS attacks the body, the mind and the spirit are also attacked because they are inseparable and should be treated as 'a unified whole.'<sup>125</sup> Their curriculum can thus be classified as advocating a holistic approach that focuses on a critical person's developmental issues including physical, psychological, social, spiritual and emotional development.

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<sup>124</sup> Smith, P. K., Cowie, H., and Blades, M., *Understanding Children's Development*, (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed), (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), p. 231; Herbert, M., *Developmental Problems of Childhood and Adolescence*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), p. 199

<sup>125</sup> S.H. Travis, 'Psychology' in R. P., and P. H., (eds.), *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and its developments*. (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1997), p. 986; See also E. Ram, 'Preventing and Treating HIV and STDs' in Kilbourn, (ed.), *A Guide...*, p. 115

**Table 7**

**iv. Street children going to school**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Going to school</b>	<b>Not going to school</b>
Streetsahead	0	17
Thuthuka	1	6
Simukai	2	4
Chiedza	3	21
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>48</b>

According to table 7 above, it was established that once children get into the streets, they eventually stop going to school or they have the highest truant behaviour in the school.<sup>126</sup> Once on the street, children become independent from any adult guidance making it easy for them not to go to school. Of the 54 children who were interviewed about going to school, only 6, which is 11%, said that they attend. Five of them were boys. 88% of these street children do not go to school.

**Case study 2**

*A very rare case was of a boy called Tendai who continued going to school from the street. His father, who was the bread winner, had died leaving the family with nothing to depend on. Tendai being the first born he left home for the streets of Bulawayo to beg for food and money so as to support the family. Initially he would return home, but he later on decided to stay on the streets. His mother stayed at home looking after his young siblings. He wrote his GCSE coming from the streets and passed four subjects. After making contacts with Thuthuka, he sat for the examinations again*

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<sup>126</sup>This was shared by some project staff from Simukai, Chiedza, Thuthuka and Streetsahead.

*when he was staying at the training centre and passed two more subjects. He proceeded to do A level and he is now at the National University of Science and Technology doing his first year degree in Economics.*

Whilst what Tendai did shows a very high level of commitment and discipline on his part, it also shows the potential that some street children have to excel in their education under such horrendous circumstances. However, his case remains an exception.

When children fail to go to school, for whatever reason, and decide to go to the streets, they create a certain clique of people in the society who have a street culture which is difficult to deal with. In this light, the streets produce deviant people, such as prostitutes, thieves and disobedient juveniles. These children are a symptom of an ailing society which makes it difficult for them to find any meaningful employment that enables them to live independently. As they grow up, they begin their own families in poverty and bearing poverty-stricken children.

#### **v. Origins of street children**

It was established that most of the children come from urban areas and a few from the rural. However, the Chiedza staff in Masvingo indicated that most of their street children come from the rural areas with some coming from Mucheke Township. In Mutare, some street children come from Mozambique, and Bulawayo's children come from surrounding locations and all over the provinces. The SA staff in Harare pointed out that most of the street children come from Epworth, Mbare and Chitungwiza and

this was confirmed by the quick street survey which they did in the city.<sup>127</sup>

Knowledge of their origins can help an organisation in several ways. Firstly, the organisation strategically plans the nature of programmes it wants to implement, for example, poverty reduction initiatives such as peanut butter making. Whilst poverty is not the only thing that causes children to go on the streets, it can be strongly contended that its reduction in any family setting helps to reduce the occurrence of other causes such as abuse and delinquency, which also have high frequencies as causal factors. The approach of involving the community from the initial stages empowers the people to own the project and gives them a sense of independence, self sufficiency and self-worth.

Secondly, the organisation can investigate the child's family background without involving him or her. The staff may visit the family to establish the actual reasons why the child is on the street and also to prepare the care givers or guardians for their child's reintegration into the family.<sup>128</sup> Thirdly, if the origin is known, and there is another similar organisation working in the area where the child comes from, the child will be taken to that organisation to work on the case. Besides saving resources in terms of fuel and time, this work arrangement highlights and strengthens the value of networking and partnership among organisations doing the same work.

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<sup>127</sup> SA termed it a 'quick street survey' because one donor agency asked the organisation to initiate community based projects in Harare and Epworth within a specified period of time. This quick survey was done within three weeks and it came up with the results which were used as a basis for their identification of the neediest areas. Although the quick survey may not have given them the most accurate results, they however provided a springboard to start off work with an entirely community based and initiated project. A workshop to train the community people on needs assessment procedure was held with the people who lived in the area where children came from.

<sup>128</sup> Feeny, T., 'An Exploration of the Concept and Practice of Family Reunification for Street Children', *The Consortium for Street Children*, January 2005. Accessed at [http://www.streetchildren.org.uk/reports/FINAL Family Reunification Report Dec 2004.doc](http://www.streetchildren.org.uk/reports/FINAL%20Family%20Reunification%20Report%20Dec%202004.doc), on 20.01.2008.

Fourthly, there are times organisations have to repatriate foreign children from neighbouring Mozambique. In this case, the staff need ample time to prepare travel documents for the children and themselves and make relevant contacts with the nearest social welfare services in the area from where the child comes. International repatriations open opportunities for information sharing among organisations of different countries, and thus making street children work more enjoyable to engage in. Fifthly, if many children are coming from the same area for one reason, for example abuse, the organisation may arrange an advocacy outreach targeting that area. In view of the above mentioned benefits of knowing the origins of street children, it is therefore crucial to get the correct information about each child during investigation time.

### **3.4 REASONS FOR CHILDREN BEING ON THE STREETS**

The problem of street children in Zimbabwe cannot be related to any one single cause or factor. Unlike the situation in other countries where a single cause such as extreme poverty,<sup>129</sup> abuse,<sup>130</sup> civil wars,<sup>131</sup> or natural disasters<sup>132</sup> might be the leading cause, this research confirms that the problem of street children in Zimbabwe is multi-dimensional, in which a combination of factors often leads to a single child ending up

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<sup>129</sup> Rusere, P., 'Some Improvement In Zimbabwe Food Situation, But Risk Ahead' – FEWSNET, Washington, 05 November 2007. Accessed at <http://www1.zimbabwesituation.com>, on 12.12.2007. The article claims that about four million Zimbabweans will be in critical need of food by April next year. At the moment the country's populace is facing critical food shortages where shops are literally empty of basic commodities. See also; Kilbride, P. L., Suda, C. A., Njeru, E. H. N., *Street Children in Kenya. Voices of Children in search of Childhood*, (Greenwood Publishing Press, 2000), p. 6

<sup>130</sup> Thomas de Benitez, S., 'State of the World's Street Children: Violence', *The Consortium for Street Children*, 2007. Accessed at <http://www.streetchildren.org.uk/reports>, on 07.04.2009.

<sup>131</sup> Ajia, O., 'Drumming up pride among post-war Burundi's street children', Unite for Children, UNICEF. Accessed at [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/burundi\\_39331.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/burundi_39331.html), on 07.04.2009

<sup>132</sup> van Leer, B., *Early Childhood Matters: Response to Young Children in Post-emergency Situations*. July, 2005, Number 104. Accessed at [www.streetchildren.org.uk/EarlyChildhood](http://www.streetchildren.org.uk/EarlyChildhood), on 07.04.2009.



being on the street.<sup>133</sup> Tables 8 and 9 below show some of the main reasons given on why children are still on the streets.

**Table 8**

**Reasons for leaving home given by the 56 interviewed children who are still on the streets.**

Reason	Simukai	Thuthuka	Chiedza	Streetsahead	Total	Percentage
Poverty	3	2	5	0	10	17.86%
Abuse by adults	2	2	7	8	19	33.91%
Death of parents	0	1	6	5	12	21.43%
Rejection by parents /care givers	0	1	0	1	2	3.57%
Peer pressure	0	0	0	1	1	1.79%
Divorce of parents	0	0	1	0	1	1.79%
Delinquency	1	1	5	4	11	19.64%

<sup>133</sup> UNICEF, *Hope Never Dries Up: Facing the Challenges. A situational assessment and analysis of children in Zimbabwe 2002 update*. (Harare: UNICEF, 2003), p. 74. See also, Harare Task Force on Children Living and/or Working on the Streets, July 2004, 'Situation Assessment of Children living and/or Working on the Streets in Harare and Chitungwiza', December 2003 – January 2004. Accessed at [http://www.kubatana.net/docs/chiyou/zncwc\\_assessment\\_of\\_street\\_children.pdf](http://www.kubatana.net/docs/chiyou/zncwc_assessment_of_street_children.pdf), on 16.04.2009.

**Table 9**

**Causes of street children according to accessed files from organisations from 2002 to 2007**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Poverty	76	59	86	103	48	54	426	37.93%
Abuse (Sexual and physical) by adults	45	38	96	56	28	24	287	25.56%
Delinquency	19	13	30	30	19	14	125	11.31%
Death of parents	14	14	17	21	10	13	89	7.93%
Runaway	1	28	33	24	18	28	135	12.02%
Rejection	2	8	7	10	16	15	58	5.16%
							<b>1123</b>	<b>100%</b>

Comparison of the information from tables 8 and 9 helped to reduce the margin of error in regard to the reasons given by children during the research and those given by a number of children who passed through the organisations over a long period of time. This helped to establish the major reasons causing children to be on the streets. The combined results show that the major four reasons are poverty, abuse by adults, death of parents through HIV/AIDS and delinquency.

According to some research done by Kanyerere, on the causes of street children in

Zimbabwe,<sup>134</sup> it is clear that the above mentioned causes were also identified as the main ones. These four major causes are discussed in the following sections.

### **i. Poverty**

This research agrees with many other researchers,<sup>135</sup> that the other important underlying and basic causes for children onto the streets lie in the increasing number of families surviving under extreme poverty and unemployment. As the children grow in poor conditions, it is likely they will become poor adults and become deprived of many opportunities in life because of their conditions, posing a greater risk of getting no employment. Williams contends that 'children living in poverty are three times more likely to suffer from a mental illness than children from wealthy families.'<sup>136</sup>

Thus the continuous poverty, to which street children are subjected, exposes them to mental health problems that, makes them more likely<sup>137</sup> to commit crime and get in trouble with the police. The assertion is correct if viewed in the light of children subjected to conditions of perpetual poverty which forces them to continuously engage their minds into solving serious life issues that are far beyond their mental capacities. They become fenced in by 'fear and desperation with anxiety as their

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<sup>134</sup> Kanyerere, J., "An investigation into the extent to which child abuse and poverty lead children into the streets of Harare: A case study of children living in the street of Julius Nyerere Way". A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the BSc Degree in Counselling with the Open University of Zimbabwe. See also, Bourdillon, M., (ed), *Earning a Life. Working Children in Zimbabwe*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 2000), pp. 46-49

<sup>135</sup> Swart, J., *Malunde: The Street Children of Hillbrow*, (Pretoria: Witwatersrand University, 1990), p. 62. See also Donnellan, C., *Dealing with Homelessness*, (Cambridge: Independence Educational Publishers, 2004), p. 2; Burrows, R., Pleace, N., Quilgars, (eds), *Homelessness and Social Policy*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 83; Huston, S., Liddiard, M., *Youth Homelessness: The Construction of a Social Issue*, (Hampshire: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1992), p. 20; Lalor, p. 762; The State of the world's cities 2004/2005; *Globalization and Urban Culture, United Nations Human Settlements Programme*, (London: Earthscan, 2004), pp. 126-127; Martins, S.B. and Ebrahim, G. J., 'Street Children', *Journal of Tropical Pediatrics*, Vol 39 Number 5, October 1993, p. 265

<sup>136</sup> Williams, J., *50 facts that should change the world*. (Cambridge: Icon Books Limited, 2004), p. 248

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, p. 248

constant companion.’<sup>138</sup>

During field work in Mutare, many families were seen living in one big shared room in Old Location, Sakubva. These families have been placed in these inhumane conditions by the Mutare city council after the government’s unpopular Operation Murambatsvina (drive out rubbish) in 2005.<sup>139</sup> This abhorrent terminology is indicative of a government woefully detached from its own culpability, in creating, perpetrating and increasing the numbers of people existing in poverty. By attributing them this definition, the government seemingly justifies its own arrogant, misguided stance which considers it acceptable to view, at their will, any other individual as a sub-people unworthy of humanity, dignity, respect, and life and therefore unwanted and easily dispensable.

The operation left a total of 700, 000 homeless people. In such cases of homelessness, children are left with no other option other than the streets. Its ambitious Operation Garikai<sup>140</sup> (live well), a housing project meant to provide houses for these displaced people, has failed to meet the demand for accommodation from the citizenry. This failure to accommodate its own people indicates deep economic-socio-political conditions that need immediate attention at both national and international levels. Whilst the responsibility of providing resources for its citizenry lies totally on the country’s leadership shoulders, unfortunately national governments in developing

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<sup>138</sup> Wilson, p. 10

<sup>139</sup> Zimbabwe: Evicted and Forsaken Internally displaced persons in the aftermath of Operation Murambatsvina, *Human Rights Watch, Volume 17, No. 16(A)*, December 2005. Accessed at <http://hrw.org/reports>, on 12.12.2007.

See also, Tibaijuka, A, K., A UN ‘Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe to assess the Scope and Impact of Operation Murambatsvina by the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe’. Accessed at <http://news.bbc.co.uk>, on 12.12.2007.

<sup>140</sup> ‘Meltdown’- Murambatsvina one year on’, *Solidarity Peace Trust*, 30 August 2006. Accessed at <http://www.solidaritypeacetrust.org/reports/meltdown>, on 12.12.2007.

countries do not make free choices because they are incapacitated by debt and poverty. They are greatly influenced by 'another concentric circle'<sup>141</sup> which operates the circle of international finance. Thus it has its 'global parents'<sup>142</sup> who need to be included in any consideration of family welfare, 'for their decisions are matters of life and death to children.'<sup>143</sup> The situation is even worsened if these global parents find satisfaction in seeing third world countries suffer in poverty.

Commenting on poverty and its relationship to street children problem in Zimbabwe, Bourdillon contends that what the society sees as a problem, for example, stealing or prostitution, may be seen by these children as a solution to their problems of hunger and poverty.<sup>144</sup> Due to hunger and poverty, feelings of frustration and hopelessness are bred, and when people live in constant frustration for a long time, their entire value system becomes bankrupt.<sup>145</sup> To them, stealing or prostitution is solving an immediate problem with an urgent solution. However, stealing or prostitution still remains a problem from whatever angle it is looked, as long as the children's actions are infringing other people's rights and threatening their safety.

As Fonseka<sup>146</sup> suggests, the pressures of urban poverty result in a concentration of problems such as violence, abuse, deprivation, exploitation, and child labour which impact particularly on street children. This research established that almost 90% of those children living on the streets do not attend school. By making the streets their

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<sup>141</sup> Vittachi, A., *Stolen Childhood*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), p. 25

<sup>142</sup> Vittachi, p. 25

<sup>143</sup> Ibid, p. 25

<sup>144</sup> Bourdillon, *Street Children in Zimbabwe*, p. 4

<sup>145</sup> Wilson, B., *Whose Child is this?* (Lake Mary: Creation House, 1992), p. 7

<sup>146</sup> Fonseka, L., is the former South Asia's UNICEF Regional Adviser on Urban Social Planning and Protection Rights of Children. Presented a paper entitled, *Urban Poverty and Street Children / Street Families*. This report is taken from "A Civil Society Forum for South Asia on Promoting and Protecting the Rights of Street Children", 12- 14 December 2001, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

main residence, they subject themselves to hunger, sickness, powerlessness and very low self esteem and struggle to hold to their human dignity.<sup>147</sup> Although this mainly applies to all third world countries, it has also been correctly noted that developed countries have street children due to poverty caused by chronic unemployment.<sup>148</sup> Due to this condition, some of the children leave home because they feel they can survive better on their own rather than stay with their poverty stricken parents or care givers.<sup>149</sup>

Debating on poverty, Moran and Castro<sup>150</sup> assert that it 'is certainly not the sole or root cause' but there are more subtle and deep causes of street children. In their view, neglect and abuse at home are the major causal factors. They contend that if poverty is the cause of street children, most of the third world streets would be full of children because many families are living in abject poverty. Agnelli<sup>151</sup> concurs with this view and Aptekar asks this important question, 'Why is it that certain children leave their homes while their siblings, who are as poor and presumably as abused or neglected, stay at home?'<sup>152</sup> Their view is correct to a certain extent, and more emphasis must be placed on promoting healthy marriages so as to prevent family disintegration caused by inadequate marriage and parental skills. This can be viewed as showing the deep embedded poverty of character that exists among parents, which is perpetuated

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<sup>147</sup>Nicholls, B, J., 'Priorities in Our Common Task', in Nicholls, B, J., and Wood, B, R., (eds) *Sharing the Good News with the Poor*, (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996), p. 3

<sup>148</sup>The State of the world's cities 2004/2005, *Globalization and Urban Culture*, United Nations Human Settlements Programme, (London: Earthscan, 2004), pp. 124-129

<sup>149</sup> This observation was made by Chikowore, T., the UNICEF information officer in an interview with IRIN, 30 July, 2004.

<sup>150</sup> Moran, R., and Castro, C., *Street-children and the Inter-American Development Bank: Lessons from Brazil*, Discussion paper, March 1997, Accessed at <http://www.dreamscanbe.com>. on 17.06.2007; See also Aptekar, L., *Street Children in the Developing World: A Review of Their Condition*. Accessed at <http://www.sjsu.edu> on 17. 06.2007.

<sup>151</sup> Agnelli, S., *Street Children; A Growing Tragedy, Report for the Independent Commission on the International Humanitarian Issues*, (London: George Weidenfield and Nicolson Limited, 1986), p. 44

<sup>152</sup> Aptekar, p. 10

by shaky governmental policies that underestimate the significance of family values built through healthy marriages.

## ii. Child Abuse, Neglect and Abandonment

Amid the debate about causal factors impelling children onto the streets, there is substantial agreement among researchers that neglect, abuse and abandonment play major roles.<sup>153</sup> Most homes from where these children come have become devoid of 'nurture, guidance, and support from parents or surrogate parental figures.'<sup>154</sup> What the children said about their home situations before going to the streets reveals that many of them, if not all, have endured substantial abuse and neglect such as psychological and physical, including sexual.<sup>155</sup> Grant<sup>156</sup> confirms the above situation by asserting that domestic violence mostly results in child abuse. She is right because the home environment and psychological state of the responsible care givers will not be stable, giving rise to continuous anger and violence towards the minors.

Most street children are forced to escape or leave their homes and reside in the street because of the maltreatment, abuse and exploitation they witnessed from both parents,<sup>157</sup> fathers, step fathers or mothers,<sup>158</sup> older brothers or relatives, and while working informally as maidens in private homes. Analysis of the children's answers

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<sup>153</sup> Moran and Castro, 1997; Muchini, B, *A study of street children in Zimbabwe*; UN document on 'Rapid Situation Assessment of Street Children in Cairo and Alexandria', Accessed at <http://www.undoc.org>, Accessed on 17.06.2007. See also the following for further reading on abuse; Porter, D., *Children at Risk*, (Eastbourne: Kingsway Publications, 1986), pp. 139-158; Le Roux, J., Smith, C. S., 'Causes and characteristics of the street child phenomenon: a global perspective', *Adolescence*, Fall, 1998. Accessed at <http://findarticles.com/p/articles> on 08.04.2009.

<sup>154</sup> Moran, and Castro, 1997.

<sup>155</sup> See Archard, D., *Children Rights and childhood* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 196 for an insightful definition of child abuse.

<sup>156</sup> Grant, H., *Escape Domestic Violence*. (London: Cox and Wayman Ltd, 2007), p. 70

<sup>157</sup> Kilbourn, P. *Street Children: A Guide to Effective Ministry*, (Monrovia: MARC Publications, 1997), pp. 24-26. See also the following literature on child abuse; Browne, K. and Herbert, M., *Preventing Family Violence*. (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 1997), pp. 1-40

<sup>158</sup> Makope, V., *A Zimbabwean Street Story*, (Harare: Dewers Printing Services, 2006), pp. 16-17

on what caused them to go to the streets reveals that step-mothers are the worst abusers. It is worth noting that abuse is not only a result of poverty but also frustration due to remarriage or divorce. Abuse,<sup>159</sup> in most cases, took the form of severe beating and insults for trivial mistakes. This might be perpetrated by the pressures which parents or care givers go through. In the case of Zimbabwe, poverty, HIV/AIDS pandemic and unemployment increase are extra sources of this intense pressure and frustration. These pressures strike at the very foundation of the community and produce the calibre of street children that is unique to Zimbabwe and Africa in terms of hunger, abuse and high risks to HIV infection.

Some of the street children in Zimbabwe come from affluent families. The question 'Why this child, and not the other?' needs to be addressed. Some psychologists contend that it is more than just abuse but some hereditary predisposition, irrespective of family conditions. These conditions force the child from home to the streets on his or her own initiative. This is because their mindset desires early freedom and independence from parental control. By abandoning their families, they are seeking a greater autonomy and an active involvement with the social environment which is still too complex for their tender ages. Furthermore, they are not aware of the implications of their actions as they search for early freedom from authority. Whilst this might be an attractive theory, Agnelli argues that it fails to state parameters necessary to substantiate its conclusions, considering the unstructured environment the children are living in. Her doubts on how the psychological pull can be separated from the

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<sup>159</sup> Dwivedi, K. N., 'Child Abuse and Hatred', in Varma, V., (Ed), *How and Why Children Hate. A Study of Conscious and Unconscious Sources*, (London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1993), pp. 46-67



environmental push,<sup>160</sup> provokes the idea of more research on the psychological predisposition of those children who end up on the streets whilst they come from well off families. Mesmerised by such unexplainable behaviour, street workers said 'Ndezvemweya' (It is spiritual). This means the child's behaviour has some external spiritual forces that are making him or her do such unthinkable acts. Thus, according to the African Traditional Religion, one might be possessed by *ngozi* (an angry spirit).<sup>161</sup> The Zimbabwean populace believes that *ngozi* brings havoc in the family in many different ways such as death, confusion and perpetual poverty.

Since Zimbabweans have a 'strong belief in the power and activity of *ngozi*,'<sup>162</sup> street children phenomenon therefore goes beyond the natural and scientific explanations, to a spiritual dimension. This means the problem also needs to be dealt with using spiritual strategies.<sup>163</sup> The challenge which this presents to the street workers is to be able to discern and separate the spiritual from the natural causes so as to appropriate the suitable solution. Below is an example that was cited by some street workers as representing spiritual cause.

### **Case study 3**

*Takudzwa is a boy aged between 18 and 20. His parents live in one of Harare's posh suburbs and his father is a manager of one of the leading supermarkets in the*

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<sup>160</sup> Agnelli, pp. 46-47

<sup>161</sup> Bourdillon, M.F.C., *The Shona Peoples: An Ethnography of the Contemporary Shona, with special reference to their Religion*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Revised Edition), (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1982), p. 225

<sup>162</sup> Samkange, S. and Samkange, T. M., *Hunhuism or Ubuntuism: A Zimbabwe Indigenous Political Philosophy*. (Salisbury: The Graham Publishing Company, 1980), p. 53

<sup>163</sup> The spiritual strategies may involve seeking help from spirit mediums, witchdoctors or churches to diagnose the cause of the problem and offer possible solutions. Unfortunately, such actions may plunge the families into blaming each other for casting bad spells on each other's children so that they may not succeed in life. This is a very common belief and practice in the African Traditional Religion (A.T.R) and custom.

*country. He ran away from home and went to live in the streets of Masvingo, about 300km from Harare. For a long time his parents did not know where he was until he gave their address to Chiedza staff who then contacted them. When his parents went to Masvingo to take him home, they were surprised to see him living in the bush with friends. Chiedza manager was invited by Takudzwa's parents to visit their home so that he may see where he was running away from. To his surprise, and contrary to many homes he had visited in the past, Takudzwa had most things which young people of his age would crave for, and yet he ran away from home. The reunion with his family was short lived as he ran away again from home and went to live in the streets of Harare. Unfortunately after some time, his parents were called by police to identify his body. He was run over by a car and died on the spot.*

Street children workers have found Takudzwa's scenario to be a rare case in that his parents are willing to have him back at home but he never wanted to stay with them. In trying to explain this case, with the information that was available about Takudzwa, the workers concluded that the case needed a spiritual solution because it went beyond the theoretical framework of their operations. It can be argued that this shows a strong traditional belief system or a feeling of disempowerment or both, of the street workers.<sup>164</sup>

Neglect leads most of the children to have direct daily contact with street life. This is due to various reasons including parents' constant work and lack of supervision, parents' attitudes to them as burdens due to large family size, sickness of a parent/guardian especially fathers, favouring females to males or the opposite, and

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<sup>164</sup> Mawoneke, S., Sexton, A., Moyo, K., 'AIDS and Street Children in Zimbabwe'. Accessed at <http://www.streetchildren.org.uk/reports/streetchildrenandaidsinzimbabwe.pdf>, on 08.04.2009.

neglect due to divorce or separation.

Children who are abused and neglected often have social, cognitive, and economic difficulties in adulthood.<sup>165</sup> This is manifested in poor academic achievement, poor coping and decision-making skills, and failure to develop adequate and positive social support. Due to this lack of healthy parental guidance during their early developmental stages, they develop 'a very limited emotional tool box'<sup>166</sup> causing them to be controlled by anger most of the time. Vittachi argues against parents that abuse and neglect children, as they can be especially catastrophic because society relies on them 'to act as the child's bulwark against exploitation.'<sup>167</sup>

Violence within the family produces children who are at a high risk of becoming violent themselves, particularly toward their own children and or spouses.<sup>168</sup>

However, it is not always true that a maltreated child leads to an identifiable antisocial behaviour such as delinquency or any form of criminality.<sup>169</sup> Thus, if a child is later on placed in an environment conducive for development, he or she has the potential to positively change. The Christian faith also teaches that when a person is in Christ he becomes a new creature (2Cor. 5:17) whose character is constantly changed by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the absence of a loving caregiver, it is highly likely, as

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<sup>165</sup> Schaffer R. H., *Social Development*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), pp. 172-173. See also 'A Coordinated Response to Child Abuse and Neglect: The Foundation for Practice. What Are the Consequences of Child Abuse and Neglect?' *Child Welfare Information Gateway*, 2003. Accessed at <http://www.childwelfare.org>, on 12.12.2007.

<sup>166</sup> Lindon, J., *Understanding Children and Young People*. (London: Hodder Arnold, 2007), p. 314

<sup>167</sup> Vittachi, p. 19

<sup>168</sup><sup>168</sup> Dwivedi, pp. 60-66, gives a useful account of the effects of abuse on children. See also, 'Effects of Child Abuse and Neglect on Children', *Greater Richmond SCA.N*.

Accessed at <http://www.grscan.com> on 07.07. 2007. It has also been contended that most children are abused by those people known to them, especially immediate family members. Porter, pp.139-142, provides some fascinating facts about child sexual abuse.

<sup>169</sup> Starr, R. H. JR., MacLean, D. J. and Keating, D. P., 'Life-Span Developmental Outcomes of Child Maltreatment', in Starr, R. and Wolfe, D. A., *The Effects of Child Abuse and Neglect*. (London, New York: The Guilford Press, 1991), p. 2

argued by Egeland that the abused child 'will enter into abusive and unsatisfying relationships as adolescents and young adults.'<sup>170</sup> However, in view of the above, it can be strongly contended that, whilst there is need for intervention, it is best to prevent a situation, because curative measures are more costly than preventative programmes. Thus they can be prevented from going to the streets by promoting the extended family safety net system which has been in practice

### **iii. Death of Parents through HIV/AIDS**

Many children have lost their parents due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. This is one of the main causes of family disintegration in Zimbabwe among other issues such as polygamy and divorce. Zimbabwe is one of the countries that have been seriously affected by this HIV/AIDS epidemic.<sup>171</sup> An estimated 34% of adults are HIV-positive in Zimbabwe,<sup>172</sup> and more than three quarters of the orphans have lost a parent to AIDS.<sup>173</sup>

The International AIDS Alliance contends that Zimbabwe has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the world. According to their 2005 statistics, 20.1% of adults aged 15-49 are living with the virus which is an estimated 1.7 million Zimbabweans. Of these, 160,000 are children. The latest figures estimate that 1.1 million children have

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<sup>170</sup>Egeland, B., 'A Longitudinal Study of High-Risk Families: Issues and Findings', in Starr, R. and Wolfe, D. A., *The Effects of Child Abuse and Neglect*. (London, New York: The Guilford Press, 1991), pp. 51-52

<sup>171</sup>Sarin, R., 'Orphans Increase Due to AIDS Deaths from Vital Signs 2003'. *Worldwatch Institute*, 30 July 2003, p. 1. Accessed on 28.01.2008 at [www.mindfully.org/Reform/2003/AIDS-Orphans-Increase30jul03.htm](http://www.mindfully.org/Reform/2003/AIDS-Orphans-Increase30jul03.htm) - 12k; See other related articles on AIDS' impact on Zimbabwe children; *HIV/AIDS Orphan Statistics - POP - Play Our Part*. Accessed at [playourpart.org/facts\\_and\\_figures/hiv\\_aids\\_orphan\\_statistics](http://playourpart.org/facts_and_figures/hiv_aids_orphan_statistics) on 28.01.2008. Zimbabwe-Accessed at [www.dfid.gov.uk/Zimbabwe-factsheet.pdf](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Zimbabwe-factsheet.pdf) on 28.01.2008; HIV/AIDS Report, *Kaiser Daily*, 19 July 2007; Zimbabwe: A Regional Solution? *Africa Report*, No. 132, 18 September 2007, p. ii. Accessed at <http://www.crisisgroup.org> on 28.01.2008.

<sup>172</sup>Sarin, p.1; See also UN report on Zimbabwe situation, 'Humanitarian Situation in Zimbabwe', Issue number 28, Reporting Date, 4 January, 2008, Year 2007 in review, pp. 3-5. Accessed at [ochaonline.un.org](http://ochaonline.un.org). on 28.01.2008.

<sup>173</sup> Sarin, p. 1

been orphaned and made vulnerable by the epidemic, causing tremendous strain on communities.<sup>174</sup> This places children in very difficult situations which disempowers them to do anything. Furthermore, according to Botha's view, whilst the usefulness of statistics for strategic planning purposes cannot be denied, the high speculativeness of HIV/AIDS statistics reinforces the feeling of helplessness.<sup>175</sup>

A common situation is when one or both of the parents die and leave children who UNICEF terms 'double orphans'.<sup>176</sup> At times, the children find out that none of their relatives is willing to live with them. In the situations where the mother dies first, the father remarries. Through discussions with street children, most of them revealed that they were mainly abused by their step mothers. If she has her own children from a different marriage or children with the same husband, she favours her children. At times even if the children report these cases of abuse to their father, it is rare that he takes their side. At the end, when they realise they are fighting a losing battle, the children see going to the streets as the only option for them. The same situation repeats itself if the father dies and the wife remarries another man. Subsequently the children go to the streets seeking for survival<sup>177</sup> and freedom from the wrong place.

The concept of a nucleus family has taken precedence over the extended family because of poverty. Under the impact of HIV/AIDS it appears that a significant number of households cease to exist. What used to be safety nets in the past no longer

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<sup>174</sup> Zimbabwe-International HIV/AIDS Alliance. Accessed at [www.aidsalliance.org](http://www.aidsalliance.org), on 28.01.2008.

<sup>175</sup> Botha, N., 'HIV/AIDS Discourse and the Quest for a Rebirth in Africa: A Theological Perspective', in Adogame, A., Gerloff, R., Hock, K., (Ed), *Christianity in Africa and the African Diaspora: The Appropriation of a Scattered Heritage*. (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2008), pp. 152-164

<sup>176</sup> UNICEF, 'Africa's Orphaned and Vulnerable Generations: Children Affected by AIDS.' Accessed [http://www.unicef.at/fileadmin/medienn/pdf/Africas\\_Orphaned\\_and\\_Vulnerable\\_Generations\\_Children\\_Affected\\_by\\_AIDS.pdf](http://www.unicef.at/fileadmin/medienn/pdf/Africas_Orphaned_and_Vulnerable_Generations_Children_Affected_by_AIDS.pdf), on 08.04.2009.

<sup>177</sup> Chirwa, Y., and Wakatama, M, 'Working street children in Harare', in Bourdillon, M., (ed) *Earning A Life. Working Children in Zimbabwe*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 2000), p. 47

exists. This resulted in more than 318, 000 child-headed households<sup>178</sup> which are now a common feature in Zimbabwe since the advent of HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS has its greatest impact on poor people and deepens “poverty among the already poor”.<sup>179</sup> To these children, it is poverty in the sense of inadequate food, homelessness and absence of valuable parental guidance. Some still have one or both parents, but unfortunately they will be ill. This makes the children move from being nurtured to nurturing<sup>180</sup> as they strive to look after their ailing parents. They are forced to exchange roles with their ailing parents.

Children existing in these dire situations experience untold psychological trauma of having to perform adult duties whilst they are still children, thus subjecting them to life situations, such as the reality of impending death of parents, which are beyond their emotional and psychological capacities. It is therefore apparent, as argued by Ashton and Ramasar, that ‘Apart from its more obvious direct effects on the health and well-being of individuals, HIV/AIDS also exerts an enormous variety of indirect influences on every sector of society.’<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> ‘Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, Zimbabwe’, UN, Doc, CRC/C/15/Add.55 (1996), section 17. Accessed at <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/crc/crc-zimbabwe96.htm>. on 29.01.2008. See also, ‘Zimbabwe: Dramatic increase in child-headed households to HIV/AIDS’, *International Federation of Social Workers*, 17 November, 2005. Accessed at <http://www.ifsw.org>. on 29.01.2008; *Hope Never Dries Up: Facing the Challenges. Situational Assessment and Analysis of Children in Zimbabwe*. (Harare: UNICEF, 2003), p. 87; Foster, G., Makufa, C., Drew, R. and Kralovec, E., Factors Leading to the Establishment of Child-Headed Households: The case of Zimbabwe (Family Aids Caring Trust). *Health Transmission Review Supplement 2* to Vol 7, (1997), pp. 155-168.

<sup>179</sup> Impact of HIV on African Communities.

<sup>180</sup> Hecht, pp. 80-92.

<sup>181</sup> Ashton, P. and Ramasar, V., ‘Water and HIV/AIDS: Some strategic considerations in Southern Africa’, in Turton, A.R. A. and Henwood, R. (eds.), *Hydropolitics in the Developing World: A Southern African Perspective*, Pretoria: Africa Water Issues Research Unit (AWIRU), pp. 217-235 Accessed at <http://www.hivan.org.za> on 19.02.2008.

#### iv. Delinquency

In this research, delinquency is used to refer to any anti-social behaviour committed by teenagers.<sup>182</sup> Some of the children, who were interviewed, admitted that they left home because they had committed petty crimes such as stealing money and food, breaking things at home, neighbourhood or school, and they are now afraid of being reprimanded. Some girls left homes because of prostitution. They wanted more freedom assured by their friends, to do these clandestine activities without any inhibition from elders. This myopic sense of pleasure leaves some infected with STI and HIV/AIDS. Their friends assured them of good life and safety during their initial days when they would spend some few hours on the streets and then go back home.

Closely related to this category is another causal factor such as 'Runaway' with 12.02% (Table 9). The street children expressed their desire for freedom which can be rightly interpreted as sensation seeking, because they view street life as full of fun and free from any social constraints imposed by parents and care givers. According to some research in Brazil, one child confirmed this view by saying, "the street is better than home. You can move freely, go to the cinema, and play games. It is not that bad"<sup>183</sup>. During this research, one boy shouted back to the reserchers, '*Handidi zvekugara pamba senhapwa*' (I don't want to live like a slave at my own home), after being asked why he did not want to be at home. This shows their belief in finding joy

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<sup>182</sup> Newcombe, N., *Child Development Change Over Time*, (8<sup>th</sup> ed), (New York: Harper Collins College Publishers, 1996), pp. 480-486; See also the following work which gives more insight on the issue of delinquency. Clarke, J., 'Childhood and Juvenile Delinquency', in Wyse, D., (ed), *Childhood Studies, An Introduction*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), pp. 83-87; Herbert, M., and Harper-Dorton, K, V., *Working with Children, Adolescents, and their Families*, (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), pp. 116-118; Epps, K., and Hollin, C, R., 'Authority and Hatred', in Varma, V., (ed), *How and Why Children Hate. A Study of Conscious and Unconscious Sources*, (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1993), pp. 146-147

<sup>183</sup> Hecht, T., *At Home in the Street: Street Children of Northeast Brazil*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.), p. 47. See also, UN report on Street children in Egypt. 'Report Rapid Situation Assessment: Street Children of Cairo and Alexandria.

in the streets, away and independent from any adult discipline and control. This was also echoed by one of the Brazilian boy who responded to the question whether they have a chief. He said; 'When you're in the street, you do what you want,....No one bosses me around, the one who bosses me around at home is my mother, my father ....Now in the street, no one tells me what to do. Just God.'<sup>184</sup>

In the light of the above, it is also important to address the causes of delinquency, focusing primarily on the multi-faceted factors which cause delinquent behaviour among children. This shows the need for a multi-level approach in dealing with the problem of juvenile delinquency, which is caused by issues such as poor parenting skills, poverty, industrial development, peer pressure, sexual abuse, emotional and physical and drug abuse

The causes of street children discussed above are not exhaustive but appeared to be the most common ones mentioned by the street children of Zimbabwe. However, other factors such as natural disasters, for example famine caused by drought, refugees of war, ethnic rivalries, political moves by governments and floods also play a major part in some other countries. Therefore, what may be the main cause of street children in one country or area may not be the same main cause in another area. Most importantly, it can be strongly contended, in view of the causes discussed above, that street child phenomenon must not be perceived as the disease itself, but as a symptom of a disease.<sup>185</sup> They are a reflection of the unjust social, economic and political manoeuvres that have been constantly perpetuated by both national and international

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid, p. 47

<sup>185</sup> Nederstigt, F.W.P.M., "Broad Legal Assistance": Defence and Realization of Children's Rights: A Legal Assistance Project for Street Children in Rio de Janeiro', in Verhellen, E., (ed.), *Monitoring Children's Rights*. (London: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1996), p. 843



leaders. Thus generalisations may not be very helpful if the research is to be used for programming purposes.

### **3.5 LIFE OF CHILDREN LIVING ON THE STREETS**

Interviews done with street and former street children, service providers and stakeholders revealed that children experience difficult situations during their stay on the streets.<sup>186</sup> This section focuses on the areas street children stay during their time on the streets, tragedies or risk behaviours they are exposed to and some of the coping mechanisms which they employ as a means for their survival.

#### **i. Locations of street children**

Site visits and interviews with street children and service providers revealed that street children have designated areas they call bases. They stay in these bases in groups comprised of three to ten people. From these areas they feel secure and safe to carry on with their independent life-style. It was observed that these bases are in every area of town including some in the outskirts with an approximate distance of one kilometre from the town centre. These areas include streets, shop corners, public gardens, abandoned vehicles, open spaces such as grounds, river banks, behind durawalls of firms or institutions, bus ranks, drainage pipes, under bridges, near fast food shops and abandoned buildings.

Some of the bases are chosen because children do not want to stay or sleep at places which draw people's attention. This would jeopardise their chances of continuous stay

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<sup>186</sup> Ngugi, M., 'Called to Restore Lost Humanity', *Transformation*, Vol 15 No 1, January/March 1998, pp. 11-12. She briefly gives a helpful outline of some of the problems that are experienced by street children, with particular reference to Kenya. However, the characteristics of these problems are universal and therefore applicable to Zimbabwe situation.

at the same place especially since some people see them as social misfits. Talking to Duncan who sometimes sleeps on the pavements in Masvingo, he revealed that it is very difficult to have a decent sleep. He said that he is always conscious of what is happening around him whilst he is asleep because of fear of being attacked. This shows that their minds and bodies never get enough rest, thus impairing their judgement and making them irritable. Furthermore, their reaction time is reduced, causing them to be involved in accidents more than other children who have decent sleep and are not involved in drug and substance abuse.

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**Picture 2.**

*Protection mechanism. The strong thin wire, about ten to fifteen metres away from the base, is tied between two small trees directly opposite each other across the path that leads to their base. It trips any 'enemy' who might be coming to fight them and alerts them of the danger. Consequently this gives them chance to escape or attack.*

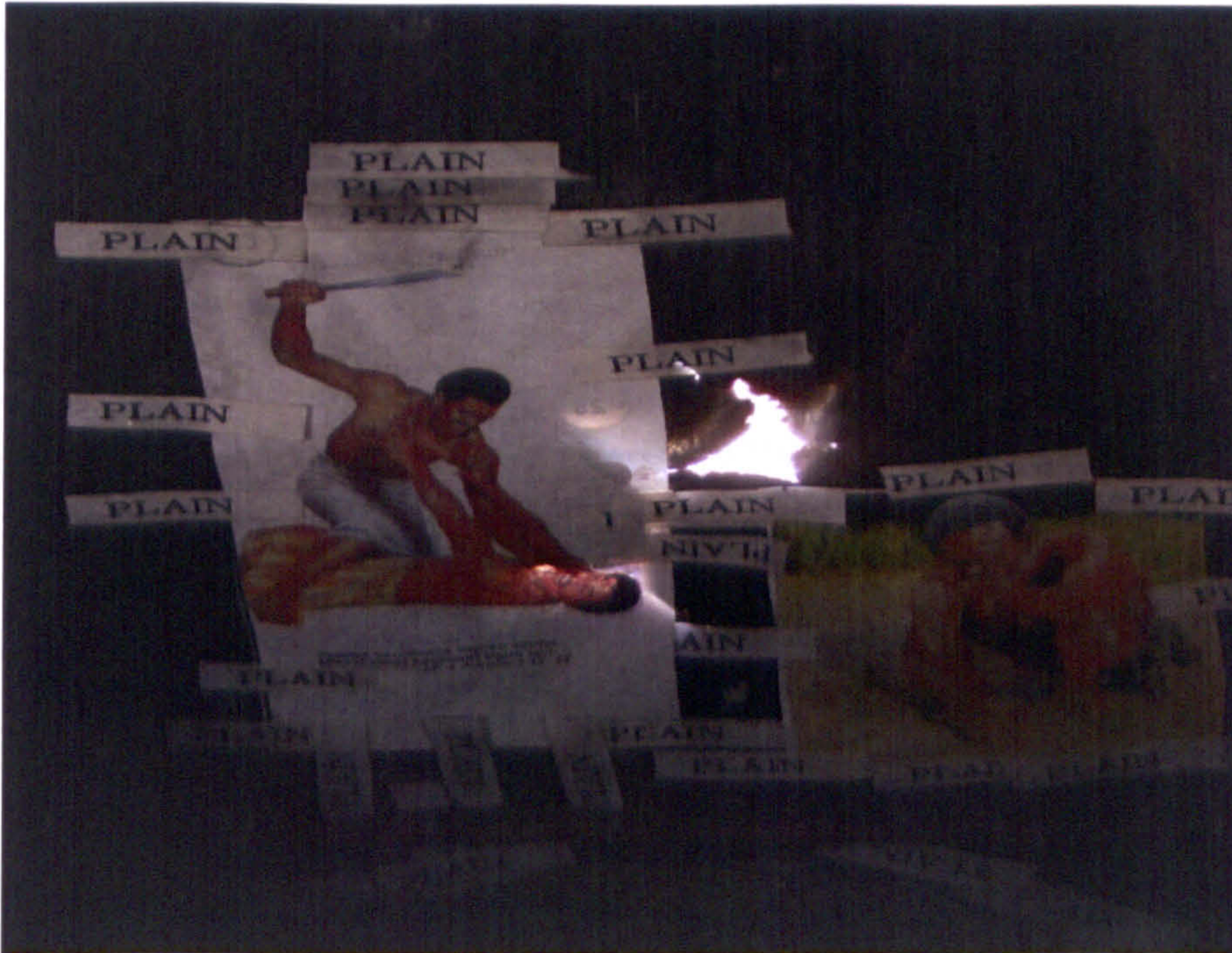


**Picture 3.**

*Street children stay in these shacks in the bush. They only shift to other safe places when it begins to rain.*

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**Picture 6.**

*This was seen in Masvingo. The picture shows the posters inside some of their base shelters. This depicts the violence which they are vulnerable to as they live away from their families.*

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In Mutare, street children have their bases in the following areas; under the bridge

near Mutare Civic Centre Hall, at the District Social office entrance, and at Moto Moto bar (This is for security reasons, entertainment and they easily find prostitutes) In Bulawayo, they can be found in the following areas; near Evelyn Girls High School, just outside the Magistrate Courts, Sports Club, Harare Road Bridge and Chicken Inn. In Masvingo, the children were found at; Alpha Cottage (Just outside its durawall along the Shakashe River), along Mucheke and Shakashe Rivers, at the bus rank in Mucheke township, Kyle College, in Rhodene area. In Harare, the children have their bases in some of the following areas; Sports Dinner, Megawatt Building, Mbare Bus Terminus, Harare Gardens, the Fly Over, along Mukuvisi River banks and QV Pharmacy.

From the observations and interviews with street children and service providers, it can be concluded that their bases are not healthy for human habitation. Those children who slept in 'decent' shelters built shacks with plastics and sacks. They become very vulnerable to ill health such as scabies, bilharzias, stomach ailments, consistent colds respiratory problems, especially during winter seasons. Used condoms around some of these areas were evidence revealing their dangerous sexual activities. The children also confirmed that they are very sexually active, exposing them to STDs and HIV infection. The following section is an analysis of the tragedies street children in Zimbabwe are exposed to during their stay on the street.

## **ii. Problems being faced by street children**

As street children move away from their family environment, they find themselves exposed to many life threatening situations. This separation intensifies the fear that

normally grips most teenagers even those who do not go to the streets.<sup>187</sup> The interviews with street children, former street children, service providers and stakeholders, and observations revealed the horrors these children face. These tragedies are caused by different groups of people namely; Street children themselves to other street children, the public, politicians, the business people, professionals and uniformed forces. The tragedies are listed according to the frequency they were mentioned by 154 respondents.

**Table 10**

**Problems faced by street children**

<b>Type of problem/tragedy/risk behaviour</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Sexual abuse/sodomy/rape	62	40.30%
Drug abuse/cannabis/alcohol/glue sniffing	50	32.50%
Dirty and poisoned food from bins	40	26.00%
Robbery/ stealing	38	24.70%
HIV/AIDS/STI/diseases and sickness	37	24.00%
Sexual activities/ Prostitution	36	23.40%
Cold	32	20.80%
Police arrests and harassment	29	18.80%
Death of peers	29	18.80%
Bullying/ Beaten by other people and peers	26	16.90%
Fighting among themselves	22	14.30%
Abuse-not sexual	22	14.30%
Hunger	18	11.70%

<sup>187</sup> Strauch, B., *Why are they so weird? What's really going on inside a teenager's brain?* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2004), p. 25

Table 10 reveals that there are thirteen types of most common problems, tragedies and risk behaviours which street children are vulnerable to as they continue to stay on the streets. Although the above list is not exhaustive, it however shades some light on the nature and frequency of the problems street children face. They are also harassed 18.80% (Table 10), by government and council police<sup>188</sup>, and at times soldiers are involved if cities are to be cleansed of these 'unwanted' children. This normally happens when the government is under pressure on how to deal with this problem.<sup>189</sup> At times they are arrested even if they are not the culprits, because police rely on them for information since most of the time, day and night, they are on the streets. It has been interestingly argued that street children are well placed to know the crimes that are committed in the cities, and therefore serious crimes 'have been solved through their co-operation'.<sup>190</sup> Whilst police have never acknowledged the important role played by these children, one can argue that the resourcefulness of street children could be the reason why at times the government does not come up with a permanent solution to solve the problem. Furthermore, this also reveals the lack of crucial competencies needed by the police to apprehend criminals without involving vulnerable children.

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<sup>188</sup> This was revealed by many children who were interviewed during the research. In Mutare the boys who were interviewed in the streets expressed their hatred for Simukai staff and the police because they had been raided at the Contact Centre by the dog section police at the request of Simukai. It was because the boys were becoming very aggressive to Simukai staff and the public in the city.

<sup>189</sup> 'Police Round Up Street Kids', *The Herald*, Harare, July 18, 2006; Blair, D., 'Children of the Streets feel wrath of Mugabe', *Telegraph*, UK, 17 June, 2006; 'Plot to Dump Street Kids in Youth Camps', *The Financial Gazette*, November, 25, 2004. These sources reveal the extent to which the government of Zimbabwe has gone in trying to solve the problem of street children in the country. At one time the government rounded up street children in Harare and dumped them in remote rural areas during rainy season, hoping that they would not come back to the city. Many managed to go back to the cities, but unfortunately some of them drowned in the rivers as they tried to cross through the waters. This temporary stop gap measure only shows how the government has run short of ideas on how to handle the problem of street children in the country. It remains a time bomb, unless permanent solutions are sought, implemented and followed through.

<sup>190</sup> Chirwa and Wakatama, p. 50



Those who mentioned death 18.80% (Table 10), narrated some heart-rending experiences of witnessing peers being run over, 'ku-ayinwa' (literally, *being ironed*), and killed by cars and some got involved in fights which resulted in one killing the other using broken beer bottles or knives. Some die because of HIV/AIDS.<sup>191</sup>

It was interesting to note that whilst hunger is supposedly one of the most common problems experienced by street children, table 10 data reveals that it was the least mentioned. This means that the children might be generally getting food, though unfortunately from the bins. On the other hand it may mean that the effect of hunger on them is overwhelmed by other problems which they might have never experienced in their home settings, therefore ushering them into serious life threatening tragedies and thereby making hunger a second priority in their struggle for survival on the streets. The following discussion focuses in detail on the first six of the tragedies on the list which are; sexual abuse/sodomy/rape, drug abuse, dirty and poisoned food from bins, robbery/ stealing, HIV/AIDS/STI/diseases and sickness and sexual activities/ prostitution.

#### **a. Sexual Abuse**

The analysis of research results reveals that many street children suffer the violence of sexual abuse.<sup>192</sup> This 'unfettered promiscuity, the gravest and saddest problem of our age,'<sup>193</sup> leaves children feeling helpless, and it erodes their self-worthiness. This

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<sup>191</sup> The researcher experienced two HIV/AIDS related deaths when he was still working at Simukai as Programme manager.

<sup>192</sup> Nason-Clark, N. and Ruff, L., 'What is Sexual Violence?' in Ammicht-Quinn, R., Haker, H. and Junker-Kenny, M., (Eds), *The Structural Betrayal of Trust, Concilium*, 2004/3, (London: SCM Press, 2004), pp. 21-28

<sup>193</sup> Williams, E. S., *What is going on in Christian Crisis Pregnancy Counselling?* (London: The Wakeman Trust and Belmont House Publishing, 2005), p. 8

demands that children be given full support during this difficult time in their lives.<sup>194</sup>

Sexual abuse as experienced in the streets comes in various forms such as rape, sodomy and any form of inappropriate sexual contact including exposing children to indecent acts such as pornography and prostitution. Sexual abuse also means the fondling of breast and genital viewing, a forced kiss and inappropriate touching.

Whilst such acts are normally carried out by caregivers and well known relatives in the family setting, the perpetrators in the streets as mentioned by children and service providers are; bigger boys on small boys, boys on girls, older women on boys and girls, older men on girls and boys, police,<sup>195</sup> soldiers and some professionals.

Those mainly abused are smaller boys and all girls. Some of the small boys claimed that they are sexually abused by bigger boys in homosexual activities as a way of payment for being protected in the streets. Although the smaller boys may appear as consenting to the activity, they normally do it against their conscience. This could be for the following reasons. First and foremost, they are afraid of being beaten because bigger boys would not accept any refusal. Secondly, refusal can be interpreted as jeopardising their protection which they had been enjoying from them. Girls also expressed the same sentiments of fear concerning boys who force them to have sex or face beating and withdrawal of protection.

In Zimbabwean culture, homosexuality is an unacceptable practice which has been publicly denounced by the president of the country.<sup>196</sup> Thus, to the smaller boys, they

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<sup>194</sup> Eckersley, J., *Helping Children Cope with Anxiety*. (London: Sheldon Press, 2006), pp. 53-54

<sup>195</sup> Black, M., *Children First: The Story of UNICEF, Past and Present*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 144

<sup>196</sup> Van Breda, S., 'President Robert Mugabe Condemns Homosexuality'. In his opening speech at the Zimbabwe International Book Fair, on the theme: Human Rights and Freedom of Expression, castigated the Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ). He categorically stated, 'I find it extremely

would be reduced to social misfits by some of their older peers in the streets.

Abuse of children's rights was also noted during the research when it was revealed that girls as young as 7 years are taken into brothels by elder women to be used as prostitutes and get paid. These 'business' women then pay a little amount to the girls for their services to their male clients. Other young girls get abused by older girls who expect them to bring money to them so that they receive protection, and they raise the money through sexual activities.

Street-living girls are extremely vulnerable to human rights abuses both on the street and when they are in police cells. They confessed to being asked for sexual favours so as to be released from cells after some clean up operations in the city that are occasionally done by the government. Some girls confessed that they were forced to do a '*cele dance*' (This is a popular Rhumba music dance with overtly sexual connotations) in front of the police officers. This shows the perverseness of law enforcing agents, who ignore their professional and moral duty to protect children, because they wanted to fulfil their uncontrolled sexual desires. Such inconsideration reduces the children to seeing themselves as sexual objects, thereby instilling a negative view of yet a very valuable intimate relationship to be enjoyed within the premises of marriage.

To both girls and boys, sex becomes a readily available weapon or tool to use when one wants some favours from anybody. Furthermore, their hopes of receiving

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outrageous ...to my human conscience that....homosexuals should have any advocates in our midst... If we accept homosexuality as a right...what moral fibre shall our society ever have to deny organised drug addicts, or even those given to bestiality, the rights they might claim and allege they possess under the rubrics of individual freedom and human rights....' Accessed at <http://www.grd.org/ORD/world/africa/zimbabwe/excerpt.of.mugabe.speech-08.03.95>, on 08.12.2007.

protection from the law enforcement agents are very slim because their cases are not treated with the urgency and attention they deserve. SUZ and all other child servicing organisations face the daunting task of challenging the law enforcing agents and the community to champion children's rights in the society, exposing all criminal behaviour against them.

One research project<sup>197</sup> has provided a helpful summary of the meaning attached to sexual experiences, especially abuse, by street children. Firstly, comfort sex has been described as 'play between friends', by street children. However, it is exploitive even though it provides the victim with shelter, basic needs and protection. Secondly, there is sex for power. Whilst other street children succumb to the demands for sex from bigger boys due to fear of being beaten, others do it with girls because they want to show their manhood and invincibility over others. This shows how sex is used as a control tool, confirming gangster leadership hierarchies on the streets.

Thus, those who assume leadership positions on the streets have the privileges of having sex with more street children than others, making him and others more susceptible to sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS, because in most cases, these boys do not use condoms. At Streetsahead, those who get condoms, both boys and girls, sell them to the public. Although some street children know the benefits of using condoms, they are not willing to use them because they think since they are already infected by HIV; there is no more need for any protection. This shows their ignorance about the disease and how they have given up hope for the future. To them, they are going to die soon.

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<sup>197</sup> Sexual Abuse Effects'. Accessed at <http://www.child-abuse-effects.com/sexual-abuse-effects.html>, on 08.12.2007, p. 1

Thirdly, there is initiation sex. This is used to initiate new children to the group, so that they feel accepted and create in them a sense of belonging. Attachment to peers is very important to street children because it gives the newcomer the sense of identity to a group. Those who refuse are threatened, making this 'initiation ceremony' almost an inevitable event for all street children. Considering the sexual activities of street children, one can contend that the 'initiation ceremony' is done by the gang leader or someone whom he gives consent to do it. Sex for punishment is practised on anyone who breaks the rules of the group or anyone who becomes unfaithful to her partner. A story is told of one girl in Harare who had two boy friends. When she was caught by one of the boys, he called his friends, surrounded the girl, and raped her in the presence of the other boys. They cannot report it to police because they are afraid of being beaten or killed. The victims of such abuse remain with emotional scars which, even if they decide to leave the streets, take a long time to heal.

Sexual abuse in any form among children has negative effects on those abused. The effects are evident in 'emotional, physical and behavioural ways,'<sup>198</sup> leaving the child in a devastated state for a long period of time in his or her life. It leaves the victims with the feelings of mistrust on everyone, making them vulnerable to poor judgement on many life engagements. As they realise their inability to make sound decisions on real life issues, they become irritable, hostile and volatile in character, leaving them with a deep yearning for love and meaning in life. Furthermore, as they physically mature they also become molesters of their weak peers. Whilst children see leaving their homes and getting to the streets as a solution to their problems of sexual abuse in

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<sup>198</sup> 'Sexual Abuse Effects'. Accessed at <http://www.child-abuse-effects.com/sexual-abuse-effects.html>, on 08.12.2007, p. 1

the family, some may soon realise that street life is worse than their homes. Therefore, the home, although it may be an unpleasant place for the child to stay, the streets pose a more complex and life threatening scenario, rendering it unsafe for any human habitation.

In light of the above, the sexually molested children develop anxiety, fear, shame, a sense of inadequacy, the need to control situations and others, a perception of self as a victim, identification with the aggressor.<sup>199</sup> These personalities reveal the deep insecurity that will constantly haunt these children for the rest of their lives. Insecurity puts the child at risk for further abuse and exploitation. Thus, it might be an event to take away the child from the street, but taking the street from the child may become a life long process. Drawing from the above discussion, Makombe has correctly described street children as 'highly exploited'.<sup>200</sup>

#### **b. Sexual activities/ Prostitution**

Table 10 shows that a percentage frequency of 23.40% was filled by those who involve themselves in sexual activities without any compulsion. This is the major difference between this section and the previous one. From the FGD with street children, it was revealed that girls find themselves in difficult challenges which force them to engage in prostitution so as to survive. Thus they sell themselves as a survival strategy.<sup>201</sup> During data collection, the researcher met four girls and one boy who had

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<sup>199</sup> 'Sexual Abuse Effects'. Accessed at <http://www.child-abuse-effects.com/sexual-abuse-effects.html>, on 08.12.2007, p. 1; See also Spalek, B., *Crime Victims: Theory, Policy and Practice*. (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 68-91

<sup>200</sup> Makombe, K., 'Desperate and on the Street'. *The Guardian*, Lagos, 1992, p. 1

<sup>201</sup> Ram, E., 'Preventing and Treating HIV and STDs', in Kilbourn, P., *Street Children: A Guide to Effective Ministry*, pp. 106-107; See also Evans, R., 'Poverty, HIV, and barriers to education: street children experiences in Tanzania', in Sweetman, C., *Gender, Development, and poverty*. (Oxford: Oxfam, 2002), pp. 58-61. She discusses children's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS on the streets in

STI. Since there is no restraint and discipline in the streets, children frequently engage themselves in sexual activities with multiple partners, becoming vulnerable to HIV infections, teenage pregnancies, unsafe abortions<sup>202</sup> and even death. For many children, 'there is no space or time for childhood'<sup>203</sup> since they involve themselves in sexual activities even before adolescence. Thus, besides viewing sex as survival strategy to get money, they also see it as a recreational activity, most likely as way to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance.

Girls become more vulnerable to death through the dangers and problems of pregnancies and abortions. Apart from the physical effects of abortion such as 'catastrophic bleeding, pelvic infection, immature labour and an increase in breast cancer',<sup>204</sup> Clarke argues that women also 'often suffer long-term mental torment which literally changes the course of their lives.'<sup>205</sup> Instead of lightening their lives' problems, abortion ushers them, unknowingly, into perpetual suffering. Below are some pictures showing street children's sexual activities on the street and some of the consequences of their actions.

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Tanzania, and the difficult situations in which girls find themselves in, forcing them to solicit money through sex.

<sup>202</sup> Whilst abortion is illegal in Zimbabwe, many people still practise it and some offer unprofessional services to street children, taking advantage of their ignorance and desperation. The unsafe practices are done by *n'angas* (traditional healers, witch doctors). Matambanadzo, T., Matinenga, M. and Sengwayo, M. (all State Registered Nurses from Zimbabwe, now practising in the UK) conceded during interview with the researcher, that abortion remains a backdoor practice among many Zimbabweans who may find themselves with unexpected pregnancy. However, an interesting point to note is that in the African belief, if one kills a person, he or she becomes liable to spiritual vengeance (*Ngozi* - avenging spirit) from the murdered person. Considering that it is considered as murder on the basis of life's sanctity, one wonders whether the life of street girls is therefore aggravated by the spirits of the unborn babies they kill. This may be an area that needs more research.

<sup>203</sup> Makombe, K., p. 1

<sup>204</sup> Clarke, P., *A Heart of Compassion*. (Milton Keynes: Authentic, 2006), pp. 128-131. Clarke narrates some of his practical experiences, during his work as a medical doctor, with women who had aborted. They confided that after aborting, their lives have never been any better.

<sup>205</sup> Clarke, p. 128



**Picture 8.**

**Hole on durawall.** This hole and the drawing were seen at the back of Alpha Cottages durawall in Masvingo around one of the boys' bases. The hole on the durawall was created by the boys so as to communicate with the girls who are staying at this institution. They revealed that the girls sneak out of the Home to meet the boys in the bush for sexual activities.





**Picture 9**

*Condoms around their Alpha Cottage Base. These condoms were found behind the Alpha Cottage in Masvingo. It is most likely they had been used by the boys who stay around this base. If this is the case, how often do they use the protection and are the condoms easily accessible for those who are poor such as street children?*

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active<sup>206</sup> and this has placed their future jeopardy. The high frequency of drug abuse, sexual abuse and unforced sexual activities among street children forces one to make an uncomfortable and yet realistic conclusion that street children in Zimbabwe are far more likely to die of HIV/AIDS than as victims of natural causes of death such as old age. Arguably most of them will not reach the age forty. No one restrains them from indulging into this despicable practice which 'breaks all the taboos about how 'normal' women should behave'.<sup>207</sup>

Most of the street children go through adolescence period when they are already on the streets. This is the time when they are generally very energetic, adventurous and character formation that will affect their adulthood life. The early exposure of these children to sex may lead to the increase in homosexual practices when partners of the opposite sex are beyond their reach due to lack of money to pay them.<sup>208</sup> If they decide to go back home, there is a high possibility that they may also influence those children who never went to the streets, into sexual activities. Since most street children are not aware of their HIV status, they are a great danger to many other people and their future wives or husbands if they decide to go back home and start a normal family.

### **c. Drug and Substance Abuse**

Data analysis also revealed that street children are frequently abusing drugs. The most commonly used in Zimbabwe are; glue, alcohol, mbanje (cannabis, weed), cigarettes.

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<sup>206</sup> Anarfi, J. K., Vulnerability to sexually transmitted disease: Street Children in Accra. *Health Transition Review*, Supplement to Volume 7, 1997, pp. 281-306

<sup>207</sup> Green, E., 'Risky Identities: 'Young Women, Street Prostitution and 'Doing Motherhood', in Mitchell, W., Bunton, R. and Green, E., *Young People, Risk and Leisure: Constructing Identities in Everyday Life*. (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 69

<sup>208</sup> Chirwa and Wakatama, p. 55

The street children never mentioned any hard drugs such as heroine or any of the injectable ones. Glue sniffing is habitually carried out among boys, almost on daily basis, whereas other substances are consumed occasionally on the basis of children's income and availability of those substances. Gaskell<sup>209</sup> and Tantam<sup>210</sup> argue that those who use one drug may want to use another type of drug stronger than the one usually used. They term it 'gateway effect.'

According to a research by Munkuli, on substance or drug abuse among street children, the level of abuse 'was found to be quite high.'<sup>211</sup> The various reasons for substance or drug abuse among street children, as revealed through the interviews and FGDs, were: relief from the pressures of the street, to gain courage when begging and other street adventures, peer pressure, to sleep easily, to be able to endure pain, violence, and hunger, cold and pleasure.<sup>212</sup> Below are pictures of some of the substances found at the girls' base in Bulawayo.

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<sup>209</sup> Gaskell, *Drugs Dilemmas and Choices*. (London: Gaskell, 2000), pp. 65-66

<sup>210</sup> Tantam, D., Appley, L. and Duncan, A., (eds.), *Psychiatry for Developing World*. (American Psychiatric Publishers, 1997), p. 172

<sup>211</sup> Munkuli, F., *Substance or Drug Abuse among Street Children: An Exploration survey of Street Children in the Greater Harare*, A Dissertation submitted to the University of Zimbabwe in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Honours degree in Social Work. School of Social Works, Harare, Zimbabwe, October 1994, p. 53

<sup>212</sup> See also, Gaskell, *Drugs Dilemmas and Choices*. (London: Gaskell, 2000), pp. 65-100; 147-184 See also Hecht, *At Home in the Streets; Street Children of Northeast Brazil*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 29. Through an interview with one of the street children in Brazil, he highlights the reasons why street children sniff glue. The reasons are the same with the ones given by the children in Zimbabwe.



**Picture 13**

*Spirits.* Some of the alcohol bottles that were seen at the girls' base in Bulawayo. The alcohol type is very strong and its consumers are advised to mix it with something before taking it.

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Many health and risk factors are associated with substance abuse among street children. These risk factors can be grouped into two types namely, behavioural and physical. Behavioural risk factors include, violence, stealing, begging, quarrelling,

telling lies, impaired judgement, being sexually abused to get the substances or drugs to consume. Thus what might have started as way to 'get high or identity mark' among a group, becomes an addiction and an attempt to escape from serious deep rooted emotional problems such as anxiety over their future, or pain over broken relationships with family members and friends. The street youths are ignorant of the fact that 'mood-altering drugs only provide a false sense of escape and pleasure.'<sup>213</sup> Furthermore, due to ignorance, the girls who become pregnant may continue taking alcohol, exposing their innocent unborn child to greater risk of birth defects known as *the fetal alcohol syndrome*.<sup>214</sup>

The main problem with the types of substances consumed by street children is that most of the common types are legal substances, which are readily available for sale in the market and are cheap. Street children easily have access to buy tobacco and glue. Mbanje (*bonza –one of street code names for cannabis*) (marijuana) is also available in the market through drug dealers.<sup>215</sup> Street children who use drugs are very difficult to work with or help, and at times they tend to be violent. Analysis of the reasons given by both children and service providers, on why children use drugs, leads one to safely conclude that they use them as a coping strategy in the streets.

To some children, what might have started as fun becomes an addiction and thus finding it difficult to stop. The potent fumes of these cheap and easily available inhalants hit a part of the child's brain that suppresses feelings of hunger, cold, and loneliness. Solvent-based narcotics offer them an escape from reality. However, they

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<sup>213</sup> Greydanus, D., (ed.), *Caring for Your Adolescent, ages 12 to 18*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 96-106

<sup>214</sup> Ibid, p. 99

<sup>215</sup> The researcher's work with street children in Zimbabwe helped him to know some of the children's ways of acquiring harmful and illegal drugs.

are ignorant of the fact that they must exchange their 'temporary highs for physical and psychological problems such as hallucinations, pulmonary edema (fluid accumulation and swelling in the lungs), kidney failure, irreversible brain damage and, in some cases, sudden death.'<sup>216</sup>

From the above valuable insights, it is clear that substance and drug misuse therefore makes growing up a haphazard and painful process for all the teenagers who find themselves hooked to them.<sup>217</sup> Their craving for psychoactive substances, for whatever reasons, is 'definitely the symptom of a social dysfunction that goes well beyond the drugs themselves.'<sup>218</sup> This may be indicative of a greedy society with individualistic tendencies with adults who find their market among this special populace. However, whatever the underlying causes are, the society needs to accept that drug and substance abuse is a problem among street children, and therefore must be fully taken into account when preparing drug-control programmes and policies that govern their use among young people in Zimbabwe.<sup>219</sup>

#### **d. Dirty and poisoned food from the bins**

Data collected reveals that street children eat food from the bins when they fail to get money to buy it. With a percentage frequency of 26% (Table 10), it shows that this practice of *kudhigira* (picking up food from the bin), is very common among street children. Through the FGDs and researcher's work experience with street children, it

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<sup>216</sup> Street Children. CIDA. Accessed at <http://www.acdi-cida.ca> on 30.01.2008. See also Greydanus, pp. 99-106. He explains the effects of drug usage among people and especially the young, giving the medical health problems that are caused by taking such drugs as alcohol, marijuana (cannabis, mbanje, weed), smoking tobacco, glue-sniffing, and cocaine.

<sup>217</sup> Greydanus, p. 103

<sup>218</sup> *Street Children, Drugs and HIV/AIDS: The Response of Preventive Education*. UNESCO document. p. 5. Accessed at <http://www.aidsalliance.org> on 13.02.2008.

<sup>219</sup> *Street Children, Drugs and HIV/AIDS: The Response of Preventive Education*. UNESCO document. p. 5. Accessed at <http://www.aidsalliance.org> on 13.02.2008.

came to light that they allocate each other to a bin. This can be by numbering the bins. Violent fights can erupt if one *digs* into someone's bin without his permission. Young boys' bins are *dug* by bigger boys if the bins have good food (*olo*). At the moment food shortages in the country have increased difficulties of street children in getting food. Food outlets have nothing to sell, resulting in empty bins.

Whilst persistent hunger decreases their resistance to disease,<sup>220</sup> food from the bins is a health hazard to them. Many become vulnerable to problems such as, heart pain, chest pain, abdominal and renal colic, blood in the urine, diarrhoea, dental problems and fever. Nutritional status remains a key factor of children's health, physical and emotional well being, and in their cognitive development.<sup>221</sup> Therefore poor dietary conditions experienced by street children affect their development in every area of their lives, placing them at exceptional risk to a wide range of health outcomes and malnutrition. Coupled with a poor health delivery system in the country,<sup>222</sup> the street children in Zimbabwe become one of the most vulnerable groups of people in the society.

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<sup>220</sup>*Ending Hunger: An idea whose time has come.* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1985), p. 6

<sup>221</sup>Watanabe, K., Flores, R., Fujiwara, J. and Thi Huong Tran, L., 'Early Childhood Development Interventions and Cognitive Development of Young Children in Rural Vietnam', in *The Journal of Nutrition*, 135:1918-1925, August 2005.

<sup>222</sup>Chikanda, A., 'Skilled health professionals migration and its impact on health delivery in Zimbabwe', A paper presented at a conference on 'Migration and Health', hosted by Cape Town University in 2004. See also, 'Zimbabwe: The Present Context', Health Action in Crises. WHO, June 2007. Accessed at [http://www.who.int/hac/crises/zwe/background//Zimbabwe\\_Juno7](http://www.who.int/hac/crises/zwe/background//Zimbabwe_Juno7), on 30.01.2008





**Picture 15.**

*Empty bins.* These empty bins were found in Masvingo behind one of the food outlets. Their emptiness epitomises the food shortages that have racked the whole nation due to political impasse between the government of Zimbabwe and the western world. Therefore, street children have nowhere to dig from.

#### **e. Robbery and stealing**

Analysis of the responses revealed that robbery or stealing is one of the most common risk behaviours or problems which street children experience during their stay on the streets, with a percentage frequency of 24.7% (Table 10). Besides being robbed of their money by bigger boys, street children are also involved in stealing. They engage themselves in such activities because of hunger, fear of being beaten by bigger boys who would have sent them or they do it as a pass time occupation. Thus it is one of their coping mechanisms. In many cases they snatch small objects such as jewellery, mobile phones, food, handbags and money. The community finds it hard to accept these children after they had been harassed by them, and thereby creating animosity between them. They are stigmatised as vagrants and *vanhu vasingabatsirike* (people who are very difficult to help).<sup>223</sup> When this happens, the children feel rejected,

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<sup>223</sup> This was expressed by one Streetsahead street worker who could not contain her mixed feelings of love for these children and despair on the best way to come up with long lasting solution for this special populace in the country.

helpless and hopeless, plunging them into deep emotional distress of knowing that the community does not accept them. This leaves them with very few options to choose from and makes their future 'too terrible to contemplate.'<sup>224</sup>

### **3.6 COPING STRATEGIES OF STREET CHILDREN**

From the moment a child decides to live on the streets, he or she realises the need for security and company. Analysis of data collected revealed that street children develop complex and dynamic survival strategies during their stay on the streets. 'Despite the odds stacked so heavily against them, their ability to survive in the streets is a testament to their resilient spirit.'<sup>225</sup> While the public correctly sees these children as "victims" of situations clearly beyond their control, their behaviours and choices may then be seen as a complex inter-play of multiple survival strategies in which they stand as "informed" actors.<sup>226</sup> However, as discussed above, some of the strategies are detrimental to their health and a threat to their lives. This short section will look at some of the coping mechanisms which have not been discussed in the preceding sections.

Those interviewed, both service providers and street children, revealed that the following activities are common among street children as means for survival; vending, begging, baggage carriers, car guarding, and car washing. These activities can be considered as safe for the children to embark on, in the sense that they allow flexibility and have very minimal hazards.<sup>227</sup> Although these activities are considered

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<sup>224</sup>Holland, P., *What is a Child? Popular Images of Childhood*. (London: Virago Press Ltd, 1992).

<sup>225</sup> Hecht, p. 67

<sup>226</sup> Street Children and HIV/AIDS. Based on a paper prepared by Dr. Joseph Chandy, Regional HIV and Reproductive Health Adviser, Save the Children UK, in a personal capacity. Presented by Alice Schmidt, Asst. HIV/AIDS Coordinator for Asia Pacific, UNESCO Bangkok.

<sup>227</sup> Chirwa and Wakatama, p. 55

safe, children still face problems with the municipal police because they do not have vending or operation licences to carry out their work. Besides their problems, children are abused by the public who take advantage of their desperation. For example, the commuter operators hire guards to look after their buses during the night. In turn, during the cold and rainy seasons, the guards allow children to sleep on the bus for a fee. Furthermore, the guards exploit the children again by leaving them on the bus during the night, only coming back early in the morning to move them out before the drivers collect the buses for the day's business. Thus the guards' work of taking care of the vehicles is done by the children who spend the night on the buses.<sup>228</sup>

The girls with small babies 'rent' them out for a fee, to their friends who use them for begging in the streets. They use them for begging because people quickly feel pity for them and therefore give them money or food. The use of such unorthodox way to survive reveals the negative effect of street environment and abuses they have experienced at home and on the streets. Below is a street survival case study of one of the boys in Chipinge Town.

#### ***Case study 4***

*Titus Malele, 13, has been on the streets of Chipinge since he was 7 years after running away from home because of poverty. He has his elder brother, 17 years old, who is also on the streets in Chipinge. His brother sometimes sends some money and food back home and rents a makeshift house in Chipinge Township. They only meet at work on the streets and sleep at different places. Titus sleeps in a garage but at times in a makeshift house. He does not attend school. He says he enjoys street life but only*

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<sup>228</sup> Chirwa and Wakatama, pp. 45- 57. Their article gives a good description of the work street children get involved in during their stay on the streets.

*hates it when it is cold. He survives by begging money and washes plates and sweeping at some food restaurants where in return he is given food or money so that he buys food. He also pushes luggage carts and he says the work pays more money but it is very painful to do. At times he sells some poison that is used to kill rats. These days he also goes to Chiadzwa for diamond mining which has become an instant money spinning business in the eastern region of the country. He says his biggest 'catch' was 11 carat and still had some US dollars with him, at the time of the interview, after selling the diamond. He revealed that he only goes home once per year but also, like his brother, sometimes sends money to his parents who live in Mundanda Village, about 40km away from Chipinge.*

### **3.7 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the research findings revealed that the street children phenomenon in Zimbabwe is caused by the negative multi-inter-related complex social, economic and political issues that have crippled the nation. Once on the streets, the children are exposed to a 'problem-ridden world'<sup>229</sup> with many circumstances that place their lives in danger of exploitation and abuse by a variety of people from the society. Thus, as suggested by O'Kane, they need 'a high degree of resilience'<sup>230</sup> to be able to survive in the streets. One of their survival strategies include becoming a gang member for this helps them to feel safe, develop a 'sense of power, self-esteem and a sense of belonging'<sup>231</sup> as observed by Feinstein and Kuumba. Analysis of their situation seems to suggest that a multi-sectoral approach from the local and international communities

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<sup>229</sup> Hecht, p. 188

<sup>230</sup> O'Kane, C., "Street and Working Children's Participation in Programming for their Rights: Conflicts Arising from Diverse Perspectives and Directions for Convergence." *Children, Youth and Environments* 13(1), Spring 2003. p. 4. Accessed at <http://cye.colorado.edu>. on 27.04.2008

<sup>231</sup> Feinstein, J., and Kuumba, N. I, *Working with Gangs and Young people: A Toolkit for Resolving Group Conflict*. (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2006), p. 19

is needed immediately so as to save some of the children from the claws of death through preventable diseases such as HIV/AIDS. The next chapter is going to analyse the relevance of the responses that are being implemented by Scripture Union of Zimbabwe.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE SURVEY OF THE RESPONSES OF SUZ AND SA TO STREET CHILDREN IN ZIMBABWE**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Whilst in the preceding chapter, life of street children on the streets was discussed; this chapter aims to present an analysis of the nature of services offered by SUZ targeting street children. A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (S.W.O.T) analysis model will be used for this purpose. Since SU does not have not street children projects in Harare, Streetsahead (SA) programmes will be explored because of its operational location in the country. Most of the street children are also found in Harare, and so by considering SA, it gives this research a more comprehensive picture of the street children problem in the country since it is one of the oldest street children servicing organisation in Zimbabwe. Thus, it discusses their intervention methodologies, models, employed activities, as well as their problems and needs.

The chapter also highlights the relations between various government departments and SUZ, with regard to dealing with the problem of street children, and reveals ways of channelling effective assistance. However, before exploring the services offered to street children, brief background information of SUZ and SA is presented, focussing on vision, mission, target group and objectives. This is helpful to understand and appreciate the philosophies and core values that under gird their operations.

## 4.2 SCRIPTURE UNION IN ZIMBABWE

### i. Introduction

Scripture Union (SU) is an international, inter-denominational, Evangelical movement. It was founded in 1867 and works in partnership with individuals and churches in over 130 countries across the world.<sup>232</sup> The movement's stated aim is to use the Bible to inspire children, young people and adults to know God, and its work is carried out through local people in ways which are seen as appropriate to each country, culture and situation in which a movement is based. This can include running camps, and missions, for example, holiday beach mission, working in schools and with student groups or producing resources for Bible reading, family counselling, HIV/AIDS education, urban children and youth ministry and ministry to people with disabilities. It exists as an autonomous organisation in each country, linked together by Scripture Union International. Its support base mainly comprises of volunteers<sup>233</sup> with a small number of full-time. While the staff and volunteer helpers are Christians, SU works with people from all backgrounds of life regardless of race, creed or gender. It employs a holistic approach in its operations, and works with churches, other Non- Governmental Organisations (N.G.Os), Governmental organisations like the Ministries of Education, Health and Youth and Development.

SU came to Zimbabwe in 1945.<sup>234</sup> Structurally, it has a National Council with representatives from each region to oversee the development of the organisation. It elects the National Director and also appoints in each region a committee which runs

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<sup>232</sup>For Scripture Union Brief history. Accessed at <http://www.su-international.org> on 15.04.2009

<sup>233</sup>See the website for volunteering in Scripture Union. Accessed at <http://www.su-international.org> on 15.04.2009

<sup>234</sup>Visit website: <http://uk.mg41.mail.yahoo.com/dc/launch?gx=0&.rand=3b9ppv05f1v1j>. Accessed on 15.04.2009

the activities on a day-to-day basis. This regional committee has the responsibility of giving direction to the organisation in its particular region.<sup>235</sup>

## **ii. Vision**

SUZ envisages a nation where all will come to know, believe and mature in Christ.<sup>236</sup>

A useful insight is maintained by Roebuck who maintains that vision gives the team 'a long term aim and meaning to their day-to-day work.'<sup>237</sup> Without it, people perish.

## **iii. Mission**

SUZ is committed to working with children, young people, families and churches.<sup>238</sup>

It exists to make God's good news known to children, young people and families, and to encourage people of all ages to meet God daily through the Bible and prayer.<sup>239</sup>

## **iv. Aims**

Scripture Union aims to present children, young people and families with the gospel of Jesus Christ and help them apply Christian principles and ethos to all areas of their lives.<sup>240</sup> Working with the churches, Scripture Union aims:

- to make God's Good News known to children, young people and families
- to encourage people of all ages to meet God daily through the Bible and prayer so that they may come to personal faith in our Lord Jesus Christ
- to help people grow in Christian maturity and become both committed church

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<sup>235</sup> Musendo, D., Technical Support proposal for SUZ Masvingo.

<sup>236</sup> Minutes of the Strategic Management Retreat, 7-9 June, 2001, Gweru, Zimbabwe.

<sup>237</sup> Roebuck, C., *Effective Leadership. The Essential Guide to Thinking and Working Smarter*. (London: Marshall Publishing, 1999), p. 52

<sup>238</sup> Minutes of the strategic meeting held in Masvingo,

<sup>239</sup> See the website, <http://www.scriptureunion.org.uk/About/MissionStatement/482.id>. Accessed on 15.04.2009

<sup>240</sup> Makoni, L., Letter to writer with SUZ aims and working principles, received on 27 April 2006. See also <http://www.su-international.org> for Aims of SU.



members and servants of a world in need.<sup>241</sup>

As part of their working principles is the following statement from their international desk:

We acknowledge that the gospel (Christian message) has inescapable social dimensions and therefore it involves us in service to others and a concern for social justice. In view of this we have a special responsibility for children and young people who are poor, deprived or exploited.<sup>242</sup>

This shows how Scripture Union Zimbabwe thrives to remain dynamic and socially and culturally relevant in its ministry. For this work to be successful, SUZ has maintained a strong network of partners who have identified with its purpose for existence.

#### **v. Partnerships of SUZ**

Partnerships are an important strategy which SUZ has been enjoying at varying degrees since its establishment in the country. For SUZ, there are two levels of partnerships. Firstly, there are those who act as funding partners and secondly, there are similar organisations which they have mutual sharing of information and best practices.<sup>243</sup> For example, SAT funds Children Affected By AIDS (CABA) with educational assistance programmes of the projects, and capacity building of the organisation, giving emphasis on monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, SUZ does not

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<sup>241</sup> For aims of SU visit, [http://www.suni.co.uk/aims\\_beliefs\\_amp\\_principles.php](http://www.suni.co.uk/aims_beliefs_amp_principles.php). Accessed on 15.04.2009

<sup>242</sup> Working Principles Document-Scripture Union International. Accessed at <http://www.suinternational.org/index.php3?page=71> on 26 April 2006

<sup>243</sup> CAFS, Situation Analysis of NGO Governance and Leadership in Eastern Southern, Central and Western Africa, 29 Accessed at <http://www.cafs.org/index.php?module=ContentExpress&func=display&ceid=61&bid=29&btile=&meid=26> on 8 May 2006

view its partners as competitors but collaborators who are assisting in enabling their vision and mission towards a feasible reality. Whilst appreciating the significance of partnerships, Sibanda<sup>244</sup> observed that they can be tricky in that the donors may dictate the type of activities which should be funded or done by the beneficiaries. However, besides this minor set back, these partnerships are still valuable because they are overall symbiotic in nature and practice.

In their street youth work, SUZ has established strategic non-funding partnerships with ZRP, FST, Ministry of Education Sport and Culture, and other important government departments such as Social Welfare, because effective advocacy for young people's rights is not a lone job. This kind of relationship increases their effectiveness in combating the street children problem and HIV epidemic. As reported in their news letter, SUZ has joined hands with other organisations such as Child Evangelism Fellowship and World Vision,<sup>245</sup> which also work with young people. The escalating nature of street children problem, coupled with the HIV epidemic, poverty, and negative political problems, the difficulty in mounting effective response and the need for widespread mobilisation of resources to address the situation means that collaboration and cooperation are essential since no one group has sufficient resources to address all these complex problems.

Below are some of the useful interventions suggested by CAFS<sup>246</sup> that could be adopted by SUZ so as to strengthen its partnerships.

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<sup>244</sup> Sibanda, SUZ Midlands activities report document to the writer

<sup>245</sup> *SU NOW, Volume 1, Issue 1*, April 2006.

<sup>246</sup> CAFS, p. 32

- i. Fostering partnerships with other organisations working with youth and collaborate by sharing their experiences, best practices and areas of expertise.
- ii. Participate in the development of an operational manual for partners in consultation with them.
- iii. Institutionalisation of strategic planning and strategic reviews that include board members, employees, key stakeholders and beneficiaries.
- iv. Development of evaluation systems which will include self-evaluation by Board members, employees, key stakeholders and beneficiaries.

The above brief analysis of SUZ partnerships, its continued funding, technical and morale support from both levels of operation, reveals the notable successes and relevance of the organisation's programmes in the country. The following sections present the street children work that SUZ has been doing in the country, and also the vision and mission of SA.

### **4.3 SUZ street children programmes**

#### **i. Introduction**

Scripture Union Zimbabwe like many other NGOs is also currently involved in the humanitarian response to the street children problem in Zimbabwe. Its recent interest in street children's issues has led it to develop an area of expertise in working with this special population.<sup>247</sup> What makes them special is the fact that they are homeless poor, under-privileged, emotionally, physically and sexually abused, neglected, despised, and down-trodden by almost everyone in the community and of low literacy

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<sup>247</sup> For a brief definition of special population, visit

[www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/ddoe/aboutdoe/workgroups](http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/ddoe/aboutdoe/workgroups) Accessed on 16.04.2009

level.<sup>248</sup> The way SUZ is responding to this problem reflects its core beliefs and values on children as future inheritance of any nation. Thus, Bill, referring to American situation, but still relevant to any community in the world, says ‘Unless there is a revolution in the basic education of our children, the nation will crumble from within. Our demise will not come from an economic collapse, but from moral bankruptcy.’<sup>249</sup>

SUZ began working with street children in 1995 and out of this involvement; Thuthuka (Rise Up) Street Children Programme was established in Bulawayo, the second largest city in Zimbabwe. In 2000, through its partnership with Family AIDS Caring Trust, Simukai (Rise Up) in Mutare, the fourth largest city in Zimbabwe, was founded.<sup>250</sup> Two years later, another project called Chiedza (Light) was set up in Masvingo. The rapid development of such programming in this area is a pointer of a growing need in the society. It also shows the ambitious vision SUZ has to address one of the most complex phenomena in the world.<sup>251</sup> The intervention is designed to meet the children’s needs through relationship building with the aim of reuniting them with their families.<sup>252</sup> Of significance to SUZ is that genuine and healthy relationships are better achieved and sustained in Christ. This is critical in forgiveness, since each part will be both accepting a wayward child or irresponsible parent and loving them unconditionally.

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<sup>248</sup>The researcher’s involvement with street children work privileged him to realise that some of the children did not go further with their education due to poverty.

<sup>249</sup> Bill, p. 63

<sup>250</sup> Simukai Fact Sheet

<sup>251</sup> Researchers have agreed that the problem of street children is a complex phenomenon which requires diligence in tackling it because of its potential to politically and economically destabilise societies. For further reading on this, see also;

<sup>252</sup> Family in this case is not only the nuclear but also includes members of the extended family. This means even distant relatives who are willing to help by staying with the child. The breakdown of the family unit has been seen as one of the major contributing factors of this phenomenon.

## **ii. Mission**

The programme seeks to restore the social, psychological and spiritual well being of street children through relationship building, care, support and education with the involvement of families, the community and networking with various organisations.<sup>253</sup>

## **iii. Programme goals**

Through the prevention of HIV infection in both children and their families, and mitigating the impact of AIDS, the programme aims to meet the basic needs of street children, reunite them with their families and see them reach their potential as independent individuals.<sup>254</sup>

## **iv. SUZ target Group**

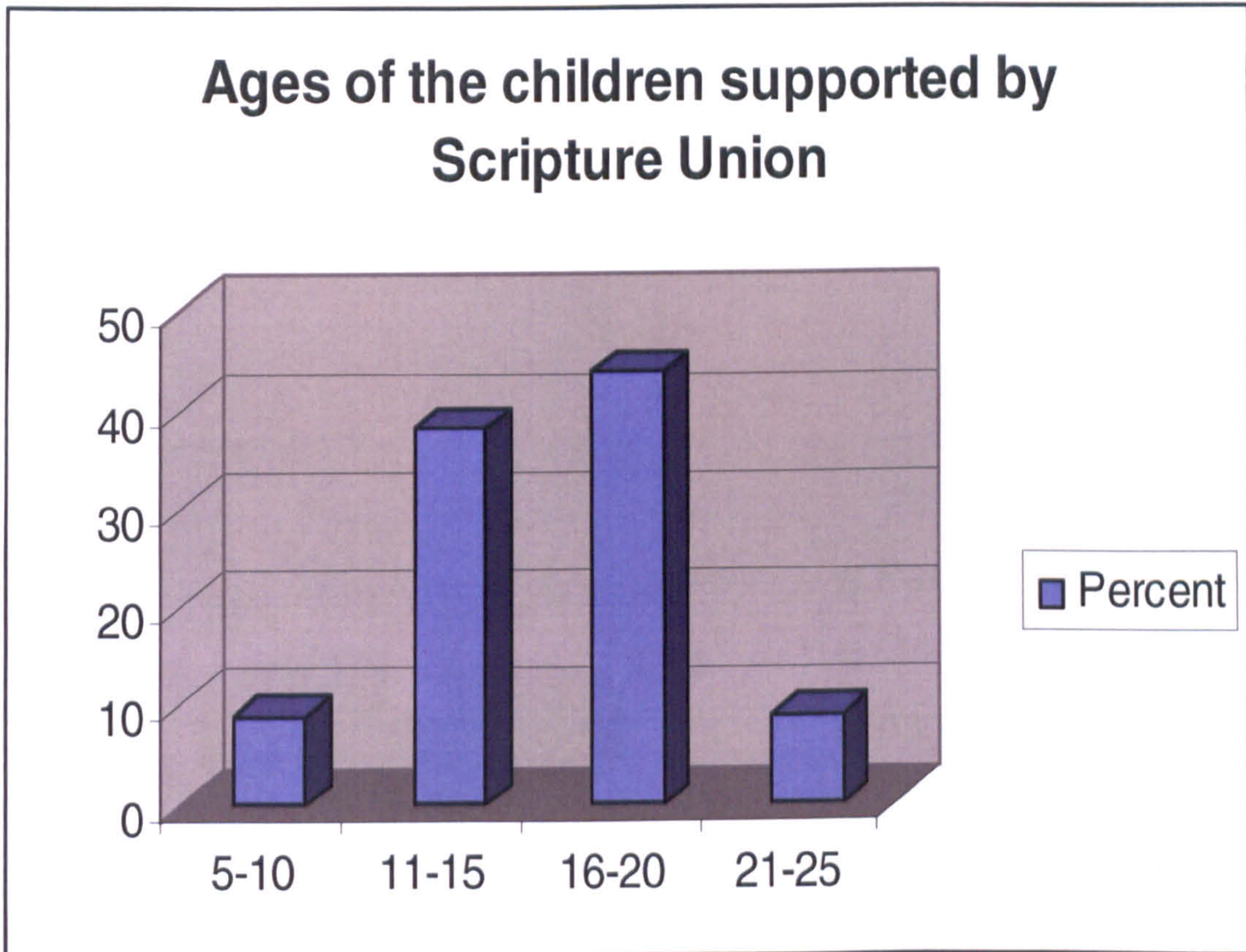
Ideally, these projects target children from 0-18 year, but according to Mavise's<sup>255</sup> research of 2005, most of the beneficiaries are in the age range 11-20 years. The percentages shown below reveal that some children have already passed the age range of 18 but are still relying on the assistance given by SUZ. This is because some of the children started receiving assistance when they were still within the beneficiaries' age range, but unfortunately failed to become self reliant, or are pursuing a course. The figures also reveal that most children resort to street life during their teenage period.

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<sup>253</sup> Simukai March activities report, 2005.

<sup>254</sup> Half Year report June 2005-December 2005 received by the write from Dr L, Makoni.

<sup>255</sup> Mavise, G., *An Evaluation of The S.U. Street Children Programs in Mutare, Masvingo and Bulawayo*, 22 July, 2005.



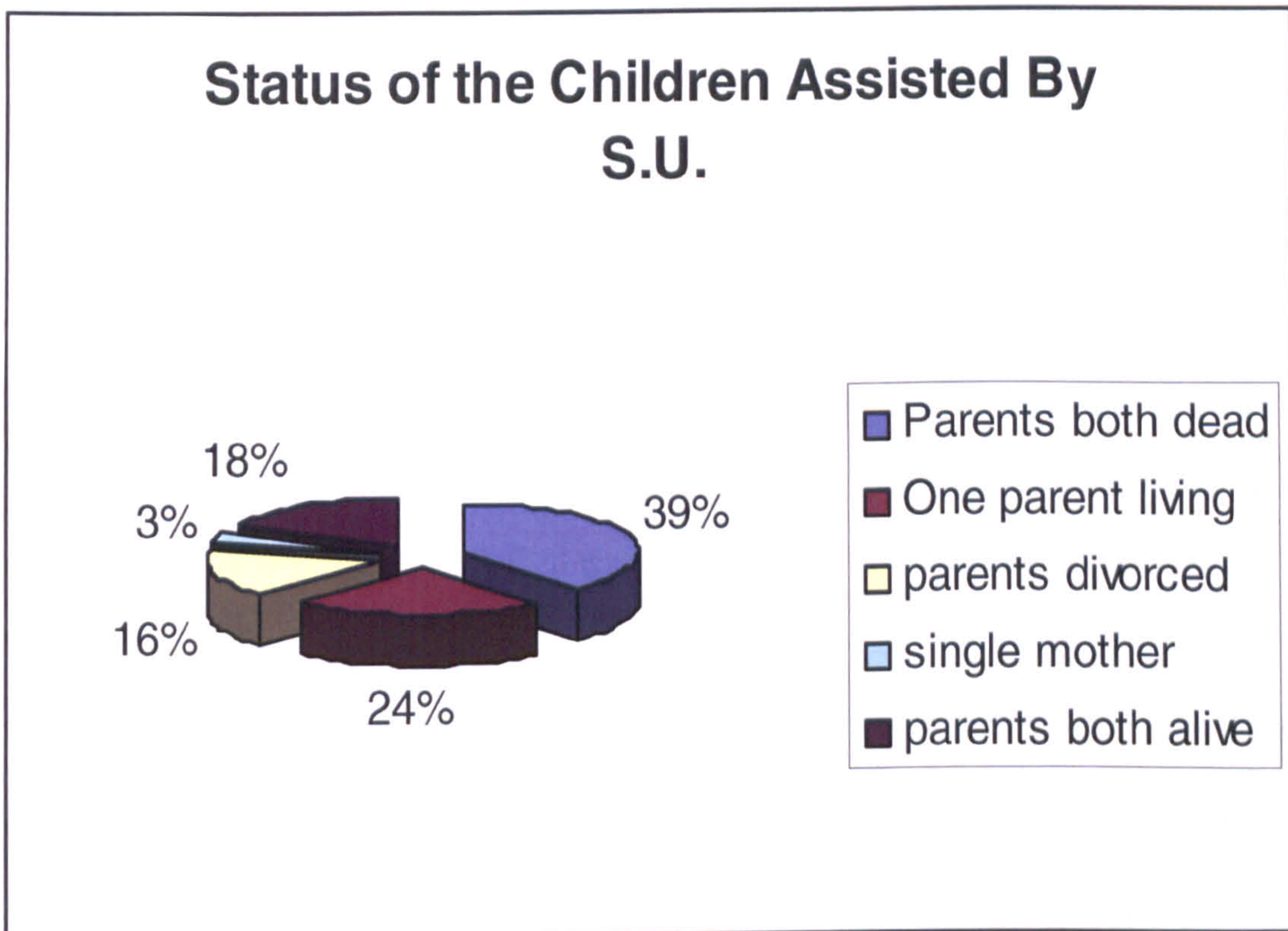
**Figure 3.**<sup>256</sup>

According to the percentages showing the status of the children (Figure 4), it is worrying that those with both parents alive are also on the streets. This could have been caused by parents' poor parenting skills coupled with poor coping skills of the children who are faced with a multiple of changes in their world. Poor parenting skills may be caused by poverty, early parenthood, single- parenting, family breakdown or blindly replicating the unhelpful parenting practices meted out to them in their childhood. Children therefore lose their confidence due to neglect<sup>257</sup> and lack of

<sup>256</sup> Mavise, G., *An Evaluation of The S.U. Street Children Programs in Mutare, Masvingo and Bulawayo*, 22 July, 2005.

<sup>257</sup> 'The Impact of Child Neglect on Supervised Visitation', Chapter 4; Neglect has been defined in Florida's Statutes, 39.01, as occurring when ...a child is deprived of, or is allowed to be deprived of, necessary food, clothing, shelter, or medical treatment or a child is permitted to live in an environment when such deprivation or environment causes the child's physical, mental, or emotional health to be

emotional attachment to their significant others.



**Figure 4**<sup>258</sup>

Whilst most of the children helped are boys, a few girls also opt for street life. Their resorting to street life may be a result of storm and stress, including peer pressure<sup>259</sup> which teenagers experience during this period. The data collected also shows how the programme staff has managed to keep in contact with children who have passed

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significantly impaired or to be in danger of being significantly impaired. The foregoing circumstances shall not be considered neglect if caused primarily by financial inability unless actual services for relief have been offered to and rejected by such person. A parent or legal custodian legitimately practicing religious beliefs in accordance with a recognized church or religious organization who thereby does not provide specific medical treatment for a child shall not, for that reason alone, be considered a negligent parent or legal custodian; however, such an exception does not preclude a court from ordering the following services to be provided, when the health of the child so requires. <http://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu> Accessed on 19.07.2007.

<sup>258</sup> Mavise, G., *An Evaluation of The S.U. Street Children Programs in Mutare, Masvingo and Bulawayo*, 22 July, 2005.

<sup>259</sup> Smith, P. K., Cowie, H., Blades, M., *Understanding Children's Development*, (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed), (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1998), pp. 254-255

through the centres. Through this continuous contact, children feel loved and accepted, and they begin to open up and share their problems with their key workers. Long periods of contact also show the importance of having dependability and stewardship when one is working with street children.

## **4.4 STREETS AHEAD**

### **i. Introduction**

SA is a registered non-Christian Welfare Organisation which was established in 1991 by Professor Michael Bourdillon, to assist vulnerable children who live and work on the streets of Harare. It did not attempt to provide shelter or “gather up” children from the street, but assisted them with their court cases or bailed them out of prison, and at the same time, tried to provide some skills training. It ran a drop-in centre, where children could come for a meal, counselling, and sport such as of football.<sup>260</sup>

Currently, it is arguably the main organisation in Harare that conducts outreach work for children on the streets on a regular basis, with a Drop-In -Centre in the city and a foster care home in Tafara, a high density suburb in the eastern side of Harare. The organisation aims to provide a comprehensive service that meets the practical as well as the psychological needs of children on the streets.

### **ii. Vision**

SA sees a world in which all children, including children living and working on the streets of Harare are treated as citizens worthy of dignity and respect, with their needs met and rights upheld.

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<sup>260</sup>Kazembe, O. L., Harare, Street Children in Zimbabwe, Pan-African Refresher Programme on Journalism in Africa: Achievements, Challenges and Scopes. Enhancing the impact of communication and information for sustainable development, 19 to 26 June 2005, Accra, Ghana. Accessed at <http://www.ucip.ch/rp/gh/zi.htm>, on 16.04.2009.



### **iii. Mission**

The mission of SA is to uphold the rights of children living and working on the streets of Harare giving them emotional, social and practical support, meeting their needs and providing encouragement and assistance to those who wish to leave the streets, working in partnership with all relevant stakeholders and others who share their vision.

### **iv. Aims and objectives**

SA's aims and objectives as stated in their constitution are:

- To help destitute children in the form of material assistance as well as legal advice, counselling, rehabilitation and education.
- To research causes that bring children to the streets and reduces the incidence through public awareness and education and knowledge and help available through SA and other agencies.
- To promote income generating projects to the children and or their families supported by grants or loans.

SA is made up of a ten member Board, an eight-member Management Committee and paid staff. Currently SA is running three distinct projects and a number of related activities. The projects are;

- The Drop-In-Centre
- Education and Foster Home
- Outreach and Reunification, including the Transit Centre that is still in the initiation stages.

## **4.5 SUZ AND SA STREET CHILDREN PROGRAMMES**

### **Introduction**

In light of the above, what follows is an assessment of some of the activities which are carried out by the two organisations. Their activities are combined because the research established that these two organisations employ the same methodology in their work, and they have the same model of operation with some differences in areas of emphasis. For example, SUZ as a Christian Faith Based Organisation does not distribute condoms to street children because, in their view, that signals promotion of sex before marriage, which it strongly campaigns against.

In matters concerning sex, SUZ advocates for Abstinence until marriage. However, it is still to be confirmed whether SUZ is achieving tangible success resulting from this viewpoint. Whilst providing condoms and safe sex education to street children prevents HIV and death, it also prevents avoidable early teenage pregnancies. Also one can be justified to ask whether their conversations with street children promote sexual abstinence and whether these conversations produce a greater degree of sexual abstinence in practice. Thus, it will be of interest to see evidence to substantiate how SUZ is actually translating this commendable standpoint in order to definitely change the sexual behaviour of a society who for the most part, is not living in accordance with this Christian belief. One can strongly argue that SUZ is therefore living with a creative tension whereby it is torn between idealistic Christian beliefs and the reality of working in this sexually exploitative minefield.

On the other hand Streetsahead argues that, whilst it is desirable for children to abstain from sex before marriage, researches have established that street children are

very sexually active. Therefore, for them, it is reasonable to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS among street children by issuing out condoms on top of teaching them safe sex and reproductive health. However, besides this difference and spiritual emphasis on salvation, they run similar activities such as street outreach visits, family tracing and reunification, life skills programmes at Drop-in-Centres, education assistance, vocational training and advocacy. What follows is the discussion of each activity in detail.

### **i. Street outreaches**

It is through their visits on the streets that they make contacts with old and new street children, establishing trust based relationships, which are significant for their work.

Thus street workers seek to engage themselves with street children, in an effort to win their trust, through learning their language on the streets, playing games with them and visiting them at their bases any time of the day.<sup>261</sup> During street visits attempts are made to identify problems peculiar to each child and then try to offer immediate help.<sup>262</sup> These visits are done frequently during the day and night, including some weekends. The objectives of the outreach visits are to:

- reach out to the children in their street environment
- provide help within a street environment
- develop and build trust between outreach workers and street children
- reach out to new arrivals and introduce them to the Drop-In-Centre

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<sup>261</sup> *Working with Street Children, Module 2: Responsibilities of Street Educators: A Training Package on Substance Use, Sexual Reproductive Health including HIV/AIDS and STDs.* WHO: Geneva: Department of Mental Health and Substance Dependence, pp. 19-22

<sup>262</sup> During some street visits, both day and night, the researcher met four children, one boy and three girls, who confessed that they had STD. This is valuable information which may not have been known if the visits were not done. They were encouraged to go to the drop in centre for referral help. At times, it is when street workers reach out to the children that they get to know about them and the needs they are supposed to deal with, either for individuals or a group.

- help clients who are fearful of the idea of visiting the Drop-In-Centre

Therefore outreach and early intervention remain the core activity of street work and the organisations' strongest attribute in reaching out to the children on the streets.

Reverend Patrick Shanahan gives more insight to street children work in his valuable comment:

Street work is very vital to providing accurate intervention for these highly excluded young people. We work with and for street youth. That means both street and youth are major players in our organisations and programmes. We know that the street despite its difficulties, dangers and apparent undesirability, is the defining factor in the lives of these young people. It is where they work, eat, socialize, form sexual relationships and sleep. It is their home and their community. It must be validated as such before we can hope to communicate in any meaningful way with these young people.<sup>263</sup>

To be able to monitor the street situations closely, the organisations keep street visit records<sup>264</sup> showing the areas visited, number of children met, their sex, approximate ages, where possible their names and their state, that is whether they were drunk, dirty or anything observable. After meeting and without any coercion, introducing them to the Drop-In-Centre, those children who visit the centre get involved in many activities that are facilitated by the workers.<sup>265</sup> This first visit to the drop in centre shows their crucial initial step in trusting those who would have invited them.

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<sup>263</sup>Shanahan, P., in McEvoy, D., 'The Search for New African Streetwork Trainers', *WALK THE WALK*. Report on Training Sessions held in Lusaka and Ndola, Zambia, October and November, 2002. 7. Accessed at <http://www.streetchildafrica.org.uk> on 24.11.2007.

<sup>264</sup> See Thuthuka Street visit form in Appendix 5

<sup>265</sup> See Thuthuka Daily Programme form in Appendix 5

## ii. Drop-In-Centres

Children come to the centres 'to unwind and refocus away from the pressures of surviving on the streets.'<sup>266</sup> Soon after their first arrival at the centre, staff record the profile<sup>267</sup> of the child so as to do family tracing and reunification.<sup>268</sup> At the centres, they also have opportunities to relax and rediscover themselves, learn new things, acquire new skills for their livelihood, access counselling<sup>269</sup> and teachings on different issues including HIV/AIDS and attending to other health issues,<sup>270</sup> dangers of drugs and substance abuse. The children also enjoy recreational activities such as watching TV and educational films, sport,<sup>271</sup> swimming, drama, dancing and creative art.

Besides the above mentioned activities that take place at the centres, children also have an opportunity to bath, wash their clothes and enjoy a hot meal once a day. Depending on availability and seriousness of their clothes state, the children are also given clothes and shoes to replace the torn ones. Such gesture of care and love helps the youth to build more trust in the youth workers and thereby prompting them to share some of their deepest concerns and needs, opening new alternatives on how to deal with their problems of homelessness at individual levels. This approach gives staff workers the opportunity to treat each child's case as unique.

The staff also visits them in prison cells<sup>272</sup> and representing them in court cases. Thus,

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<sup>266</sup> SA Annual Report, January-December 2006

<sup>267</sup> See an example of an initial contact form (Profile Form) which is used by Thuthuka in Appendix 5.

<sup>268</sup> Family tracing and reunification are key duties of the street worker.

<sup>269</sup> See Thuthuka Counselling form and Behaviour Management Record in Appendix 5

<sup>270</sup> See Thuthuka Dosage/Medical Form in Appendix 5

<sup>271</sup> Sport creates a positive competitive spirit which is crucial for dealing with real life challenges.

Whilst it prepares boys for manhood, competition also prepares children and teens for the competition of life. See Quart, A., *Hothouse Kids: How the pressure to succeed is threatening childhood*. (London: Arrow Books, 2006), p. 160

<sup>272</sup> See Thuthuka Prison visit form in Appendix 5

drawing from Karabanow, it can be argued that meeting some of their basic rights without much questioning, also shows the flexibility and willingness of the organisations to respond to this 'hard-to-reach populations through the provision of food, shelter and clothing',<sup>273</sup> as stated by the Convention of the children's rights.<sup>274</sup> Thus the drop-in-centres or contact centres serve a significant role in street work as they are meeting places for staff and street children. Through the activities done at these places, street children are also empowered to contribute towards strategic planning and implementation of ideas for the betterment of their lives.<sup>275</sup>

### **iii. Family Tracing and Reunification**

As street children go to the drop-in centres to bath, rest and eat, staff make conscious effort to trace their family backgrounds with the aim of possible reunification between the street child and his or her family. This is one of the most difficult and crucial activities of the projects as they aim to get as much information from the children as possible so that well informed decisions are made concerning their future. Hecht contends that, by integrating them into family, children are offered 'a future by rescuing them from street life.'<sup>276</sup> This is correct because the street is not the best option for any child to experience positive character development. Along the same vein, Gilesen argues that family reunification is considered a precondition for successfully reintegrating children back into the society and that child protection

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<sup>273</sup>Karabanow, J., 'Making Organisations Work: Exploring Characteristics of Anti-oppressive Organizational Structures in Street Youth Shelters', *Journal of Social Work*, Vol.4, No.1, 2004, p. 51

<sup>274</sup> Article 27:3. Convention on the Rights of the Child: U.N. General Assembly, Document A/RES/44/25 (25 December 1989). Accessed at <http://www.wunrn.com> on 15.02.2008. This article states that, 'States Parties, in accordance with national conditions and within their means, shall take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing.'

<sup>275</sup>Karabanow, J., 'Making Organisations Work: Exploring Characteristics of Anti-oppressive Organizational Structures in Street Youth Shelters', *Journal of Social Work*, Vol.4, No.1, 2004, p. 50

<sup>276</sup> Hecht, T., *At Home In The Street. Children of Northeast Brazil*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 160

agencies have been convinced that children's best prospects for sustainable care lie with their families (UNICEF, 2005a: 36). According to Dodge and Raundalen, returning home to families and communities seems to be the main prescription issued in rehabilitation programmes, as there is a belief that re-attachment to families will assist in the rehabilitation and reintegration of a child.<sup>277</sup>

In light of the above insights, it is therefore crucial, as argued by Feeny, to recognise the three important aspects in street children work namely;

- recognition of the family as the most sustainable partner with regard to the children's welfare;
- an acknowledgement that the original causes of family separation need addressing and resolving;
- a belief that this can be achieved through procedural and participatory counselling of the child and/or the family members concerned.<sup>278</sup>

This valuable insight by Feeny shows the irreplaceable significant part played by the intact family in the development of every child. Thus both the child and the family<sup>279</sup> are crucial elements for reintegration work and policy making bodies.<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> Gislesen, K., *A Childhood Lost? The Challenges of Successful Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of Child Soldiers: The Case of West Africa*. NUPI, 712 Paper, 2006. Accessed at [www.nupi.no](http://www.nupi.no) on 18.03 2008, p. 33

<sup>278</sup> Feeny, F., 'In Best or Vested interests? An Exploration of the Concept and Practice of Family Reunification for Street Children.' *The Consortium for Street Children*, January 2005. p. 5. Accessed at <http://www.streetchildren.org.uk> on 15.02.2008.

<sup>279</sup> The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Article 16:3 echoes the importance of the family by stating that, 'The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and state'. It goes further in its 1989 Preamble to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, to reiterate this idea about the importance of the family, by stating that the family is the 'natural environment' for the 'full and harmonious development' of children's personalities. This stance strongly suggests that the family unit and environment will never have a suitable substitute that will function perfectly well for the healthy development of the children.

<sup>280</sup> Feeny, p. 6

After gathering some considerable information about any child, the project staff begins to prepare the child, through counselling, for reintegration into the family. Confirming this observation and experience, Danielsen and Seeberg highlight the significance of family tracing, but point out that, 'successful family tracing does not automatically lead to family reunification.'<sup>281</sup> This means that after successful family tracing there is still need to seek consent of both the child and the family or caregivers if they would like to be reunited. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 'all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.'<sup>282</sup> Thus, even though the family may agree to live with the child again, the child's feelings and considerations take precedence over every other decision made concerning him or her.

In such cases family tracing and reunification present a very challenging and yet important task for the organisations, because their vision is to see streets cleared of street children and help them to stay in family environments and pursue meaningful lives. According to SA, there are instances when police escort<sup>283</sup> and community leadership is requested so that the parents and care givers realise the importance of a

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<sup>281</sup> Danielsen, K, and Seeberg, M.L., '*Tracing UMAs' Families: A Comparative study of some European countries and practices and experiences in tracing the parents or caregivers of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers.*' Norwegian Social Research, NOVA Rapport, 19/06 Accessed at <http://www.nova.no/asset>, on 18.03.2008, p. 20

<sup>282</sup> UNCRC, 1991, Article 3

<sup>283</sup> SA January to December Annual Report, 2006. p.6. The researcher also had experience with street children who could not be accepted back into the family by their parents because of their delinquent behaviour before they left home.



family environment for the growth and development of the children.<sup>284</sup>

However, experience shows that some children return to the streets immediately after being reunited with their families because they find home life too restrictive. This shows the complex nature of street children work both to the street workers and the families of these children. During one focus group discussions for girls it was indicated that sexually active girls find it difficult to be in a home setting where they cannot meet freely with boys.<sup>285</sup> This shows that those who decide to stay at home may continue to be sexually active with some community men who in turn spread the deadly disease of HIV/AIDS.

Family reunification may become a challenge to the street workers when they are confronted with a second generation of street families.<sup>286</sup> These become 'families without walls'. The threat of the second generation of street families is becoming a reality which Zimbabwe policy makers should be prepared to deal with. Therefore, as argued by Williamson, those who are involved in family tracing and reunification 'must assess carefully their own capacities and limitations in relation to the challenges of tracing, reunification, and reintegration and develop guidelines for their work that help ensure that they apply their tools, skills, and capacities appropriately.'<sup>287</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> Mandigo, P., SA staff who is responsible for street outreach work. She was explaining how SA conducts its reunification programme. The procedure is almost the same with that of SUZ. It may only differ in minute details such as praying for the family during their meeting with the staff. However, this is not an unwritten law for SUZ staff to pray for the welfare of the families.

<sup>285</sup> SA, p. 6

<sup>286</sup> Feeny, p. 12

<sup>287</sup> Williamson, J., Donahue, J. and Cripe, L., 'A Participatory Review of the Reunification, Reintegration, and Youth Development Program of the International Rescue Committee in Rwanda.' July 2001, p. 13. Accessed at <http://pdf.dec.org> on 9.03.2008.

### **a. Reunification Kit**

When children decide to go back home, they are given a 'reunification kit'<sup>288</sup> by the sending organisation. This kit acts as a gesture of commitment and care to the family and child's welfare as he resumes his life with his family. Thus they act 'symbolically as a gift associated with the child that helps them to be accepted and to feel just a little less of a burden to the family.'<sup>289</sup> However, since the food is shared among all the family members, it lasts only a few days. Besides food stuff, maize seed and fertilizer, the kit may also include school equipment such as fees, shoes, uniforms, pens, and bags.<sup>290</sup> SUZ does not have a standard reunification kit, thus it dispenses its kits depending on what is available at the moment. Therefore the kit may indicate whether the project has a strong or weak financial backing from the donor community. However, besides these challenges faced concerning reunification, records below show the successes the organisations have achieved.

**Table 11**

**Total numbers of children reunited with their families between 2002 and 2006**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>No of children reunited</b>
Thuthuka	655
Simukai	761
Chiedza	115
Streets Ahead	267
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1798</b>

<sup>288</sup> See Chiedza Assistance Acknowledgement Form in Appendix 5

<sup>289</sup> Feeny, p. 51

<sup>290</sup> This was observed when the research team joined Simukai staff who were repatriating and conducting follow-up visits to some of its children in Marange area in Manicaland. This exercise took the whole day, signifying the importance the programme in terms of relationship building and trust between children, family and staff.

## **b. Follow-up visits and Monitoring**

SUZ sees the act of reunification not as an end of its involvement with the child, but rather as a stage that ushers project staff into another new phase of operation that requires further support and monitoring.<sup>291</sup> Feeny argues that many problems may only emerge or become apparent after reunification, and it is essential that the organisation remains involved honouring its commitment and offering the necessary support. These visits are done both to the families<sup>292</sup> and schools where the children are attending. This helps the organisation to have a better report of the child's progress both academically and socially.

Commenting on the work of Chiedza in Masvingo during a follow-up visit in Bikita area, a widower of three children said, 'Chiedza kwandiri inoita kunge Jesu auyazve pasi pano achifamba nemakumbo.' (*Chiedza, to me, is like Jesus who has come back again, walking on his feet, helping those in need.*) He was appreciating the help he is receiving from Chiedza and this shows the impact of SU programmes. All projects keep record of their visits,<sup>293</sup> assistance given<sup>294</sup> and all the children they are helping in schools.<sup>295</sup>

In view of this, Feeny gives a valuable insight on the benefits of follow-up visits and monitoring the progress of reunified children to both the child and family and the organisation as:

- It enables the workers to assess the success of the reunification and this will be necessary for inclusion in the end of project reporting to donors;

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<sup>291</sup> Feeny, p. 53

<sup>292</sup> See Family visit form in Appendix 5

<sup>293</sup> See School visit form in Appendix 5

<sup>294</sup> See Assistance form in Appendix 5

<sup>295</sup> See School list in Appendix 5

- It acts to prevent some problems, since both the family and the child expect that their situation will be followed up;
- It offers reassurance to the child that someone cares about them outside the family;
- It offers protection to the child when bad things happen as they have someone they know to approach for support who will be on their side;
- It offers feedback to the reunification programmes on which elements need strengthening or improving<sup>296</sup>

However, caution needs to be taken not to become too involved with the children at the expense of their reintegration process with their families. In light of the preceding discussion, it can be strongly argued that family tracing and reunification are overarching practices in street children work because of the tremendous positive emotional and psychological healing effects they bring upon children and families. They are central in restoring to children 'a childhood they allegedly lacked in the street.'<sup>297</sup>

#### **iv. Life skills programmes**

Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) arguably asserts that by the year 2010 there will be more adolescents (ages 10-19) alive in the world than ever before.<sup>298</sup>

Most of the street children fall under this group. This means these children can become either a blessing or a burden to their own countries depending on the capacity of governments, communities and families to develop the human potential of this

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<sup>296</sup> Feeny, p. 53

<sup>297</sup> Hecht, p. 160

<sup>298</sup> 'Life Skills Approach to Child and Adolescent Healthy Human Development', (Pan American Health Organisation),

young generation. Thus it becomes expedient for planners to strategically think of how to effectively equip this group of young people with skills that are crucial for life, and constantly impress upon them 'both the social dimensions of their predicament and their individual rights as citizens.'<sup>299</sup>

WHO has identified life skills 'as abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enables individuals to deal with the demands and challenges of everyday life.'<sup>300</sup> This is supported by human development and adolescent behaviour theories which find these specific skills to be essential components of healthy development.<sup>301</sup> In relation to child development, PAHO has identified three integrated basic categories of life skills namely;

- Social or interpersonal skills, which include communication, negotiation or refusal skills, assertiveness, cooperation and empathy.
- Cognitive skills, which include problem solving, understanding consequences, decision making, critical thinking and self-evaluation.
- Emotional coping skills, which include managing stress, managing feelings, self-management, and self monitoring.<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>299</sup> Hecht, p. 169

<sup>300</sup> 'Working With Street Children. MODULE 6. Responding to the Needs and Problems of Street Children. A Training Package on Substance Use, Sexual and Reproductive Health including HIV/AIDS and STDs' in WHO, *Counselling skills training in adolescent sexuality and reproductive health: A facilitators guide*. (Geneva: World Health Organisation, WHO/ADH/93.3, 1993). Accessed at [http://whqhbdoc.who.int/hq/2000/WHO\\_MSD\\_MDP\\_00.14\\_Module6.pdf](http://whqhbdoc.who.int/hq/2000/WHO_MSD_MDP_00.14_Module6.pdf), on 5 July 2006

<sup>301</sup> As do earlier prevention programs, "Life Skills" programs in operation today also are based on the social learning theory. This theory promotes opportunities for processing life experiences, structuring experiences, and actively gaining experiences. The Life Skills approach is built around creating opportunities for youth to acquire skills that enable them to avoid manipulation by outside influences. Accessed at, <http://www.paho.org> on 19.07.2007. For further discussion on Social Learning Theory, see Bandura, A., in his book, *Social Learning Theory*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1977), quoted by Hayes, N., in her book, *Foundations of Psychology: An Introductory Text*, (Surrey: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd, 1994), p. 250

<sup>302</sup> 'Life Skills Approach to Child and Adolescent Healthy Human Development', (Pan American

In the light of the above, if these life skills programmes are well managed, it is believed that they produce positive results such as delay or prevention of substance abuse, prevention of high risk sexual behaviours, teach anger management, improve academic performance, and promote positive social adjustment.<sup>303</sup> Furthermore, through life skills, young people will 'boost their self-confidence, self-esteem, self control and autonomy.'<sup>304</sup>

#### **v. Reduction of child abuse and HIV infection.**

Sub-Saharan Africa remains the most affected region in the global AIDS epidemic.<sup>305</sup> More than two thirds (68%) of all people HIV-positive live in this region where more than three quarters (76%) of all AIDS deaths in 2007 occurred.<sup>306</sup> Greater understanding of the impact of HIV/AIDS on children is important in the design and evaluation of programmes to support children living in difficult circumstances. Street children also become extremely exposed to STDs and HIV/AIDS when they resort to the streets.<sup>307</sup> Therefore, it becomes crucial for youth workers to understand the circumstances in which children affected by HIV/AIDS are vulnerable to HIV infection so that targeted interventions can be established. This is because failure to prevent HIV infection in this large group has significant negative implications for future generations. Social, economic and psychological impacts of HIV/AIDS on

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Health Organisation), Accessed at, <http://www.paho.org> on 19.07.2007.

<sup>303</sup> 'Life Skills Approach to Child and Adolescent Healthy Human Development', (Pan American Health Organisation) Accessed at, <http://www.paho.org> on 19.07.2007.

<sup>304</sup> 'Life Skills', <http://www.paho.org> Accessed on 19.07.2007

<sup>305</sup> UN 2008 Report on the global AIDS epidemic. Accessed at [http://www.unaids.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/HIVData/GlobalReport/2008/2008\\_Global\\_report.asp](http://www.unaids.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/HIVData/GlobalReport/2008/2008_Global_report.asp), on 17.04.2009,

<sup>306</sup> Ibid

<sup>307</sup> Foster, G. and Williamson, J., 'A review of current literature of the impact of HIV/AIDS on children in sub-Saharan Africa'. *AIDS* 2000, 14 (suppl. 3):S275-S284. Accessed at <http://www.hsrc.ac.za> on 08.04.2008

orphans and street children increase their vulnerability to HIV infection through early onset of sexual activity, commercial sex and sexual abuse. The reasons for becoming sexually active included economic need, peer pressure, discovery, lack of parental supervision and rape by strangers.<sup>308</sup> SUZ is running programmes with street children with an aim to inform them of the dangers of premarital sex and unprotected sex.

So far the lowest HIV prevalence rates are found among the youth (15-19 year age group) with an average of 3.5%. However, although this age group appears to be the least affected, the UNAIDS survey<sup>309</sup> has shown that in many countries in Africa, unmarried young people are sexually active before the age of 15 years.<sup>310</sup> The fact that HIV takes about 5-10 years to progress into AIDS and most of the AIDS cases in Africa are among ages 20-34 years, it therefore means that this age group (15-19) runs a higher risk of contracting HIV. It is against this background that if HIV infections are to be prevented, much of the efforts must be made to assist this least affected but energetic age group to reduce the contraction of this virus.

Diagram 3 below reveals that 39% of the children helped by SUZ projects experience physical abuse, whilst 37% experience neglect. However, the low percentage of sexual abuse, 1%, is not a true reflection of what is happening on the ground.

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<sup>308</sup> Foster and Williamson, pp. 275-284

<sup>309</sup> Scripture Union Africa, Funding Project Proposal. Accessed at <http://www.su-africa.org/Aboutus/F-proposalF.htm> on 26 April 2006

<sup>310</sup> Ibid

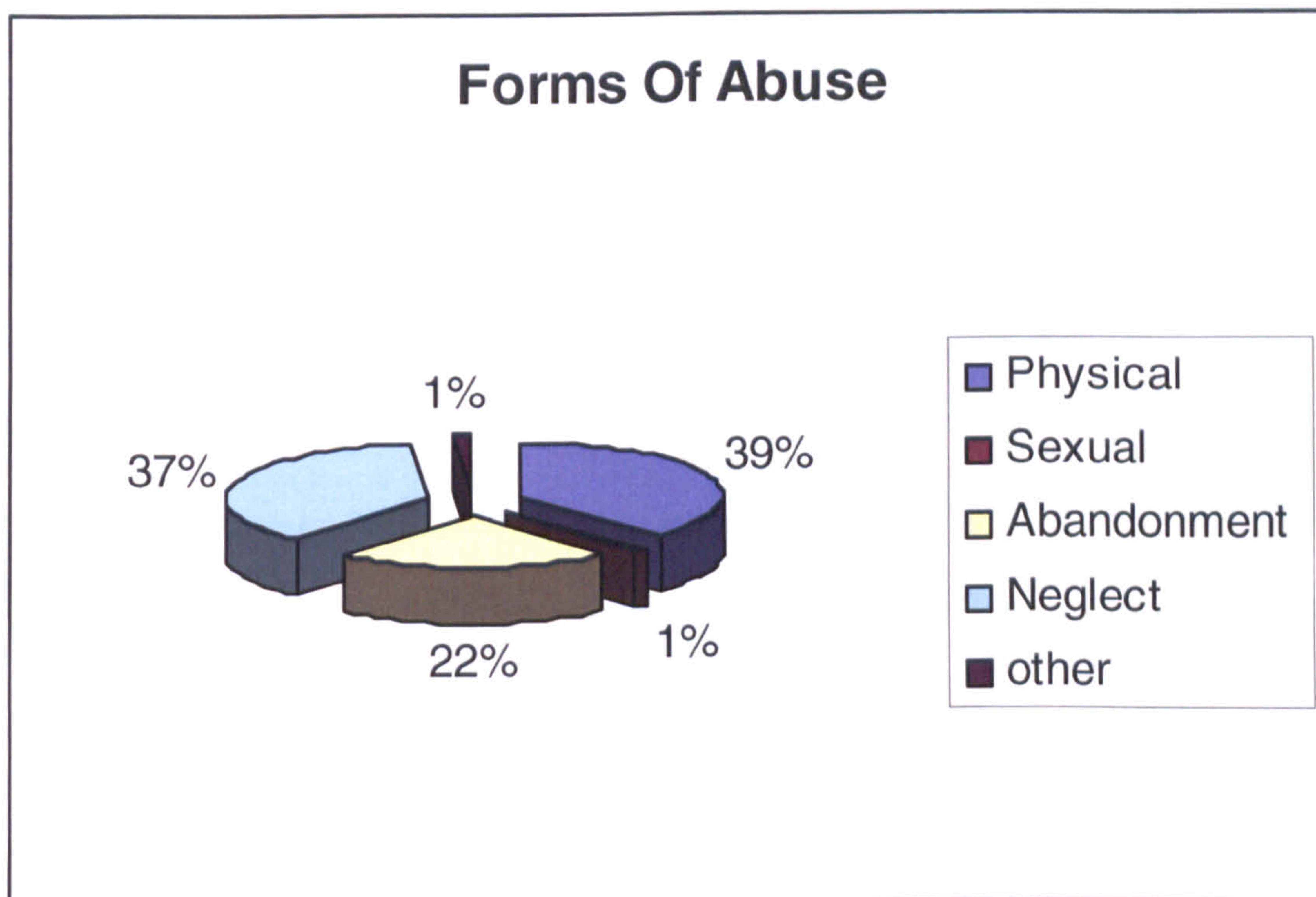


Diagram 3<sup>311</sup>

The advent of HIV has caused some African people to develop a myth that one can be cured if he has sex with a young girl who is still a virgin.<sup>312</sup> Due to this myth, a considerable number of innocent girls have been raped and infected with HIV by the elders who are seeking a cure from the disease. Most of the victims fear to report their cases because of the African tradition which treats sexual matters highly confidential and as taboo.<sup>313</sup> This shows how the African culture cultivates vulnerability of its own by protecting perpetrators of child abuse. In this case, the girl is receiving abusive treatment from the people who are supposed to be her protectors. Her trust in people

<sup>311</sup> Mavise, G., *An Evaluation of The S.U. Street Children Programs in Mutare, Masvingo and Bulawayo*, 22 July, 2005.

<sup>312</sup> AIDS AND AFRICA, *Meditel*, 1993, <http://www.virusmyth.net/aids/data/jsafrica.htm>. Accessed on 17. 06.2006

<sup>313</sup> The writer was involved in street children work in Zimbabwe and he has experienced that many sexual abuse cases perpetrated by family members were kept a secret until the child goes to hospital due to STI or any other sexually related diseases.



and especially men is eroded and this eventually affects her relationships and marriage.

Whilst Wickham and West are commenting on the Western culture, that sexual violation of children remains an inescapable fact,<sup>314</sup> the same is true to the Zimbabwean context where cases of rape have been on the increase.<sup>315</sup> This was confirmed by the then Minister of Youth Development and Employment Creation, Retired Brigadier Ambrose Mutinhiri, who said the government 'will harshly punish child abusers, particularly sexual abuse, to rid the society of the evil practice that has become prevalent in the country'.<sup>316</sup>

Victims of sexual abuse suffer 'short and long term effects on psychological functioning.'<sup>317</sup> This is because sexual abuse traumatises the child and leaves him or her with long lasting psychological scars. Browne and Finkelhor usefully identify these problems as 'trauma, stigmatisation, betrayal and powerlessness.'<sup>318</sup> Wickham and West view the effects of child abuse as closely related to the nature of the assault, the child's developmental stage and level of resilience, and quality of family support.<sup>319</sup> Hancock and Powell go on further to point out that some abused children

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<sup>314</sup> Wickham and West, p. 6

<sup>315</sup> ZIMBABWE: Child abused every hour, new data reveals, *IRIN*, 20 November, 2006. Accessed at <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk> on 17.04.2009. See also UNICEF 'shocked and outraged' at latest case of child rape in Zimbabwe, UN News Centre, 2 August, 2006. Accessed at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?>, on 17.04.2009.

Earl-Taylor, M., 'HIV/AIDS, the stats, the virgin cure and infant rape', *Science in Africa*. Africa's First On-Line Science Magazine, April 2002. Accessed at <http://www.scienceinafrica.co.za/2002/april/virgin.htm>, on 17.04.2009

<sup>316</sup> Zimbabwe: 'Government to Punish Child Abusers', *The Herald*, (Harare), June 16, 2006, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200606160707.html>, Accessed on 17.06 2006

<sup>317</sup> Wickham, R. E., and West, J., *Therapeutic Work with Sexually Abused Children*, (London: SAGE Publications, 2002), pp. 11-12

<sup>318</sup> Browne, A., and Finkelhor, D., 'The impact of child sexual abuse: A review of the research', *Psychological Bulletin*, 99, pp. 66-77 in Wickham and West, pp. 5-6

<sup>319</sup> Wickham and West, p. 6

will become themselves abusers in their lives.<sup>320</sup> However, when children are at home, the risk of contracting HIV is considerably reduced, since there is minimum peer 'cluster'<sup>321</sup> to indulge into sexual activities. Petersen and McBride observe and suggest that this kind of child- parent relationship<sup>322</sup> will have a positive influence on the child's development resulting into healthy attitude toward sex.

All these views are important when one considers counselling the abused children, and Rogers rightly suggests that the victim needs an empathic and trustworthy counsellor.<sup>323</sup> The centrality of empathy and trust in the therapeutic relationship is crucial if the child is going to experience positive change and growth in life.<sup>324</sup> What Rogers suggests is the key to any meaningful relationships which people can experience. People desire to see someone who identifies with their own feelings and who shows sincerity in his or her dealings. When those who are helped see this, they put their trust in them.

## **vi. Education assistance and Vocational training**

SUZ recognises that children are 'social actors in their own right, whose views and perceptions need to be understood',<sup>325</sup> and thus often creates opportunities for them to engage in discussions that involve their future.

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<sup>320</sup> Hancock, J., and Powell, K. E., *Good Sex: A Whole-person approach to teenage sexuality and God.* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), p. 18

<sup>321</sup> Oetting, E.R., and Beauvois, F., 'Common elements in youth drug abuse: peer clusters and other psychological actors', in Petersen and McBride, 25, suggest the term peer 'cluster' because they see the term 'peer pressure' as denoting a somewhat negative, passive, victim like picture, yet in reality, friendships and peer relationships are interactive.

<sup>322</sup> Petersen, and McBride, p. 25

<sup>323</sup> Ibid, pp. 11-12

<sup>324</sup> Wickham, R, E., and West, J., pp. 11-12

<sup>325</sup> O'Kane, C., "Street and Working Children's Participation in Programming for their Rights: Conflicts Arising from Diverse Perspectives and Directions for Convergence." *Children, Youth and Environments* 13(1), Spring 2003. 2 Accessed at <http://cye.colorado.edu>. on 27.04.2008

With the above view in mind, SUZ's commitment to children's development is revealed through its willingness to send them to school after leaving the streets. Those who volunteer to go to school and move out of the streets are either offered education assistance or vocational training assistance.<sup>326</sup> As argued by Richter,<sup>327</sup> children without school, lose both their individual potential and social capital, leaving them 'vulnerable to unemployment, menial working conditions and poverty.' According to the 2005 evaluation report, 80-90% of those interviewed are satisfied with the educational assistance they are receiving from SUZ.<sup>328</sup> Some of the school heads interviewed in Masvingo applauded the payment of school fees and rated SUZ as 'the best donor in the disbursement of children's fees'.<sup>329</sup>

The fact that 49% schools visits shows the commitment of the organisation to the needs and welfare of the children. However, it has also been noted that continuous visits may result in stigmatisation of those helped by the organisation. Stigma is defined by Goffman as 'an attribute that is deeply discrediting within a particular social interaction.'<sup>330</sup> This means that the children may feel reduced in their own minds and in the minds of the other students because of their poverty and their past deviant behaviour. Thus stigmatisation and poverty adversely affect the children's performance at school.<sup>331</sup> In the light of this, Thomas offers useful suggestions on how to help children overcome the effects of stigma:

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<sup>326</sup> Mavise

<sup>327</sup> Richter, L., THE IMPACT OF HIV/AIDS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN. Accessed at <http://www.iss.co.za> on 8.05.2008

<sup>328</sup> Mavise

<sup>329</sup> Mavise

<sup>330</sup> Goffman, E., *Stigma: notes on the management of spoiled identity*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), 3 in Thomas, N., *Social Work with Young People in Care, Looking After Children in Theory and Practice*, (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 40

<sup>331</sup> McCulloch, A, and Joshi, H., *Child Development and Family Resources: an exploration of evidence from the second generation of the 1958 British birth cohort*, Institute for Social and Economic Research Paper 99-15, 1999 in Howard, p. 138

- i. by challenging public ignorance
- ii. by ensuring that services are provided in ways that reduce stigma rather than add to it
- iii. and by helping affected children to learn ways to defend themselves against discrimination and prejudice.<sup>332</sup>

To increase contact with the students, staff take opportunities to hold weekend and holiday camps.

The youth who express interest in doing some training are sent to vocational colleges where they are trained to do some practical subjects such as woodwork, agriculture, motor mechanics, dress making and business management and entrepreneurship.

Thuthuka has a rehabilitation centre which also focuses, although at a lower scale due to lack of financial resources, on training former street children in the courses mentioned above.<sup>333</sup> This prepares them to become independent, thus building their shattered confidence, dignity and self-worth. However, a few have been employed after finishing their courses at the centres. Of all the children interviewed in 2005 concerning their training, 83% of those trained said it was very useful and the remaining 17% said the training was useful. Of the three former street children who were sponsored to do A-Level in 2004-2005, two of them passed, and are now working in Botswana and South Africa.<sup>334</sup> The other one is doing a professional course in business. Thus SUZ, through this programme is helping former street children realise their potential to complete in the economic world.

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<sup>332</sup> Thomas, p. 40

<sup>333</sup> A visit by the research team to the centre allowed the team to see some of the projects that are being done by the children as part of their training.

<sup>334</sup> Maponde, B, revealed this in a telephone interview with the writer, on the progress the organisation is making.

Vocational centres are normally outside the city and this is echoed by Hecht,

‘You can’t do anything for street kids in the street. You have to get them out of the city.’<sup>335</sup> This, to an extent, is right in that it limits children’s temptation to go back to the streets. Those who go back see institution’s input into their lives in terms of material instead of spiritual.<sup>336</sup> This means the benefactors and the recipients have different views of the institution’s functions. Thus the street children may see these institutions as part of ‘their clients’ who offer services to them when they are tired of the hectic street life. This creates an insufficient solution which maybe referred to as ‘revolving door’ phenomenon.<sup>337</sup>

## **vii. Advocacy**

Advocacy is a significant component of SUZ’s work because it focuses on long term solutions and creates more enabling environment for the implementation of its plan of action.<sup>338</sup> Kilbourn sees its significance in prevention programmes that focus on the protection of children and their families.<sup>339</sup> This has helped the organisation to win favour from the government and many other youth servicing organisations in the country. However, its legitimacy needs to be checked so that it remains fighting for the children’s rights whom they purport to stand for. Furthermore, SUZ has an unwritten advocacy philosophy which is aptly put across by High as the belief:

- that every child is a precious gift from God and his or her nurture and total development must be society’s concern;
- in the innate dignity and worth of a child and his or her capacity for change

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<sup>335</sup> Hecht, p. 160

<sup>336</sup> Hecht, pp. 180, 187

<sup>337</sup> Hecht, p. 176. He refers ‘to what Snow and Anderson have called revolving door phenomenon when speaking of homeless people and shelters in Austin, Texas. These institutions may offer their beneficiaries a respite from the street without extricating them from it.’

<sup>338</sup> CAF, p. 29

<sup>339</sup> Kilbourn, *Street Children. A Guide to Effective Ministry.* p. 174

and development;

- that each child has a right to belong to a family, which has the primary responsibility to provide for the total physical, social, material and spiritual development of the child;
- that the society has the obligation to assist and strengthen the family. In the absence of the family, there is need for shelter and residential training to help the child become aware of his or her personal worth and develop his or her full potential;
- that some children in the country have to work because poverty forces them to go to the streets to work for themselves and their families. Thus they must be provided with access to opportunities for decent work environments.<sup>340</sup>

These ideas are going to be explored further in chapter seven when discussing possible areas of development.

The advocacy activities include public awareness meetings with targeted audiences such as parents, church leaders, community leaders and children in or out of school. Francis and Kay view those who are engaged in this ministry of reaching out to the 'casualties of our fragmented society',<sup>341</sup> as people who are inevitably going to challenge the causes and uphold the needs of those who have 'no political power, cannot vote and their opinions carry little weight.'<sup>342</sup> They become the voice of the voiceless. As argued by Hecht, they 'have privileged a concern for vulnerable children over a serious engagement with the oppressive socioeconomic conditions

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<sup>340</sup> Balbero, C. M., 'Philippines: A Refuge Amid Exploitation,' in *Together*, (October-December 1991), pp. 12-13

<sup>341</sup> Francis and Kay, p. 41

<sup>342</sup> Kilbourn, p. 222

under which domiciled and homeless Third World children live.’<sup>343</sup> This shows how much the defenders of children ‘value and respect every God-given life, however fragile and weak, and especially protect those who have no way of protecting themselves.’<sup>344</sup>

O’Kane argues that when children’s voices are listened to, it ‘provides a starting point for project planning which is child-centered and context-specific.’<sup>345</sup> He argues further by asserting that when supported by adults in the democratic process and ‘given real access to decision making power children can become a force for social change.’<sup>346</sup> Therefore, according to Francis, the ministry of the advocates becomes a prophetic voice to ‘those who hold power and make decisions which affect the lives of young people.’<sup>347</sup> Furthermore, Dempster, agreeing with Manoel de Mello, commenting on Christians’ social involvement states that, ‘The gospel cannot be proclaimed fully without denouncing injustices committed by the powerful.’<sup>348</sup> This is because without denouncing the social injustices, even the ones who claim to be Christians will be viewed by those oppressed as condoning evil.

This becomes a challenge for SUZ staff considering the past reactions of those in authority when they were challenged by some clergy on their deviant behaviours.

Some useful ways that have been adopted by the organisations and also advocated by High<sup>349</sup> included raising public awareness through such means as posters, educative methods, rallies, theatre groups and marches and provoking debate and discussion

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<sup>343</sup> Hecht, p. 189

<sup>344</sup> Clarke, P., *A Heart of Compassion*. (Milton Keynes: Authentic, 2006), p. 144

<sup>345</sup> O’Kane, pp. 13-14

<sup>346</sup> Ibid, pp. 13-14

<sup>347</sup> Francis and Kay, p. 41

<sup>348</sup> Dempster, *Pneuma*, Fall 1987, p. 129

<sup>349</sup> High, D., in Kilbourn, *Street Children. A Guide to Effective Ministry*, p. 225

through the media (newspapers, newsletters, printed clothes such as t-shirts, banners and bags) about children's problems and issues.

#### 4.6 Staff and Volunteers

This work is presented by Scripture Union staff or volunteers and a team of peer educators named torch-bearers. The presenters employ a variety of methods used to make the seminars exciting, stimulating and fun for the street children. They include role plays, dramas, testimonies, song, poetry, discussion groups, videos and debates. These participatory methods are believed to be the most effective ways of delivering preventive education that could foster positive behaviour change amongst the peers.<sup>350</sup>

Just as people with AIDS are involved in prevention activities, street children are also involved in peer education and advocacy. Paterson argues that their involvement is crucial and effective 'because they can speak from experience.'<sup>351</sup> Street children develop low self esteem and create no social parameters to follow because they believe that the future is not for them. This often exposes them to very high risk behaviour, such as substance abuse and premature sexual relationships.

However, whilst peer education and counselling are important when dealing with young people, care should be taken to ensure that the youth being counselled or educated are provided with the correct information.<sup>352</sup> The support system of the aunties and uncles who used to teach sexual matters to young people no longer exist due to the busyness of life which has caused family disintegration. Many of these young people now grow up with little or no information on sexual issues.

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<sup>350</sup>McFeely, S. and Plant, B., *Working with Young People: 'Real Life Stuff'*. (Wiltshire: APS Publishing, 2004), p. 45

<sup>351</sup> Paterson, G., 'HIV/AIDS a window on development', in Reed, C., *Development Matters: Christian Perspectives on Globalisation*. (London: Church House Publishing, 2001), p. 47

<sup>352</sup>WHO(1993)



SU believes that the only way to encourage a long term behaviour change in young people's lives is to provide the support structure around that young person to encourage them to choose and maintain a behaviour pattern. That support structure is made up of the people who live in the community with the young person and who can interact with them on a regular basis.

## **4.7 ANALYSIS OF SUZ STREET YOUTH PROGRAMMES**

### **i. Introduction**

Many models can be used to analyse the performance of organisations. These analysis models provide 'information that is helpful in matching the organisation's resources and capabilities to the competitive environment in which it operates.'<sup>353</sup> Thus 'it is instrumental to strategic formulation and selection.'<sup>354</sup> For the purposes of this discussion, S.W.O.T analysis model will be used to analyse the street youth programmes of SUZ.

### **ii. SWOT analysis**

Coyle<sup>355</sup> and Danca<sup>356</sup> have described SWOT analysis as a basic, straightforward model that provides direction and serves as a basis for the development of actions and strategic plans of any organisation. This is accomplished by assessing an organisation's strengths (what an organisation is really good at)<sup>357</sup> and weaknesses

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<sup>353</sup> 'SWOT Analysis', *Strategic Management*. Accessed at <http://www.quickmba.com/strategy/swot/> on 28.04.2006, p. 1

<sup>354</sup> Ibid, p.1

<sup>355</sup> Coyle, G., *Practical Strategy, Structured Tools and Techniques*. (Harlow: Prentice Hall, 2004), p. 88

<sup>356</sup> Danca, C., 'SWOT Analysis', Accessed at <http://www.stfrancis.edu/ba/ghkickul/stuwebs/btopics/works/swot.htm> on 28. 04. 2006, p. 1

<sup>357</sup> ten Have, S., ten Have, W., and Stevens, F., with van der Elst, M, and Pol-Coyne, F., *Key Management Models, The management tools and practices that will improve your business*. (London: Prentice Hall, 2003), p. 185

(what an organisation cannot do) in addition to opportunities (potential favourable conditions for an organisation) and threats (potential unfavourable conditions for an organisation). It has been correctly observed by Dickson that it is the most prevalent and widely used analysis model by organisations.<sup>358</sup> Furthermore, ten Have and ten Have maintain that SWOT analysis takes the information from the environmental scanning and separates it into internal issues (strengths and weaknesses) and external issues (opportunities and threats).<sup>359</sup> In view of this, the following section shall look at some of the general SUZ strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats before analysing its street youth projects in more detail.

### **iii. Strengths**

Strengths and weaknesses exist internally within an organisation, or in key relationships between the firm and its clients. Thus strength at this moment becomes a capability. For SUZ, these relationships encompass its stakeholders including children who are their main target. At their strategic planning meeting,<sup>360</sup> the leadership came up with some of SUZ strengths as:

- i. having a strong biblical foundation
- ii. good reputation and recognition by the community and stake holders who have given the organisation access to schools and colleges
- iii. wide clientele base of the government, schools, parents, teachers, churches.
- iv. accepted programmes as relevant to the local communities
- v. clear vision, mission and values
- vi. dedicated staff

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<sup>358</sup> Dickson, T., (ed), *Financial Times, Mastering Strategy, The Complete MBA Companion in Strategy*. (Hampshire: Pearson Education Limited, 2000), p. 75

<sup>359</sup> ten Have, and ten Have, Stevens, F., with van der Elst, M, and Pol-Coyne, F., p. 186

<sup>360</sup> Minutes of the strategic meeting held in Kyle National Parks, in Masvingo on the 27<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> September 2004.

#### **iv. Weaknesses.**

Danca<sup>361</sup> maintains that weaknesses should be considered from an internal and external view point. It is important that the organisation's weaknesses be as truthful as possible so that they may be dealt with as quickly as possible. Questions which SUZ needs to respond to may include:

- a. What can SUZ improve on?
- b. What is SUZ doing poorly?
- c. What should SUZ avoid?

By using SWOT, SUZ is helped to determine where resources are available or lacking so that strengths and weaknesses can be identified.<sup>362</sup> From this, the organisation then develops strategies that match their strengths and opportunities and thereby create new capabilities. Whilst doing that, ten Haven and ten Haven maintain that the organisation can also develop strategies that will enable them to overcome their weaknesses and finding ways to minimize the negative effects of these weaknesses.<sup>363</sup>

On the other hand, weaknesses must be looked at so that they may be converted into strengths. Thus, SWOT can be extremely beneficial to Scripture Union if it objectively analyses its street children activities. By so doing, it helps them to minimise their threats and optimise their opportunities. At the same strategic meeting<sup>364</sup> the leadership identified SUZ weaknesses as:

- i. inadequate resources to fulfil its mandate
- ii. poor human resource management and development
- iii. lack of accountability in its projects

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<sup>361</sup> Danca, p. 2

<sup>362</sup> Danca, p. 2

<sup>363</sup> ten Have and ten Have, Stevens, F., van der Elst, M, and Pol-Coyne, F., p. 187

<sup>364</sup> Minutes of the strategic meeting held in Kyle National Parks, in Masvingo on the 27<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> September 2004.

iv. staff try to do everything

## v. Opportunities

Manktelow<sup>365</sup> argues that opportunities relate to external environment. Danca<sup>366</sup> and ten Haven and ten Haven<sup>367</sup> agree with this view and go further to say that these changes in the environment may be competitive, economic, political, technological, or socio-cultural. This is important to SUZ, because the organisation must see itself as part of a bigger picture of the society. Thus, failing to recognise the input of other well-meaning contributors will affect their efforts to impact the society. The strategic meeting identified the following as some of its opportunities:

- i. large number of unknown sponsors
- ii. leadership development potential
- iii. potential to establish youth centres and drop in centres
- iv. peace building, where the organisation brings the Word of God to the communities.

## vi. Threats

Buckeridge has observed that children are growing up in a world where responsibility for learning is increasingly placed in their own hands.<sup>368</sup> The change is very much influenced by the socio-cultural changes that have become inevitable to Zimbabwe as a developing country. Therefore, an organisation's ability to foresee changes in these areas can prove beneficial while failure to react to these changes can be

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<sup>365</sup> Manktelow, J., 'SWOT Analysis- Discover New Opportunities, Manage and Eliminate Threats.' Accessed at [http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC\\_05.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_05.htm), on 28.04.2006

<sup>366</sup> Danca, p. 2

<sup>367</sup> ten Have, and ten Have, Stevens, F., van der Elst, M, and Pol-Coyne, F., p. 188

<sup>368</sup> Buckeridge, J., '*SUNDAY SCHOOL IN THE 21ST CENTURY*', Christianity Magazine, June 2004 issue, <http://www.christianitymagazine.co.uk/engine.cfm?i=92&id=49&arch=1>. Accessed on internet on 27. 05.2006.

devastating.<sup>369</sup> In the Zimbabwean context, westernisation has greatly affected everyone and the youth have been caught by the wind of development. Unfortunately the developed world has been epitomised as the source of everything that is good. Further more, HIV has also challenged and changed people's thinking, attitudes, and behaviour. Below are some of the threats which the SUZ leadership identified at its strategic planning meeting:<sup>370</sup>

- i. negative political, social and economic climatic conditions
- ii. coming in of many other players working in youth ministries
- iii. total dependence on donor funding
- iv. withdrawal of donor funding due to political situation in the country
- v. Shallow bible knowledge

#### **4.7.2 Limitations of SWOT analysis**

Whilst SWOT analysis is clientele focused, helping organisations to take the greatest possible advantage of opportunities available to them,<sup>371</sup> Coyle has identified three limitations of this model.<sup>372</sup> Firstly, the lists of each items may become too many and unmanageable, causing 'management to dither when it comes to choosing between various strategic alternatives, frequently resulting in unnecessary or undesirable delays.'<sup>373</sup> Secondly, SWOT can cause confusion and disagreement on defining some opportunities and weaknesses. Due to this confusion, the writer shall ignore the threats and only concentrate on the three areas recognising that a given item can appear more than once in a SWOT table.<sup>374</sup> Thirdly, he says that it does not give

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<sup>369</sup> Danca, p. 2

<sup>370</sup> Strategic planning meeting minutes of Kyle National Park

<sup>371</sup> Manktelow, p.3

<sup>372</sup> Coyle, pp. 88-89

<sup>373</sup> ten Have and ten Have, Stevens, F., van der Elst, M, and Pol-Coyne, F., p. 188

<sup>374</sup> Coyle, p. 89

solutions to problems raised during the exercise. This confirms ten Have and ten Have's view that the elements (SWOT) 'appear deceptively simple'.<sup>375</sup> However, whilst Coyle has suggested the TOWS model which tries to deduce actions and strategies from the SWOTs,<sup>376</sup> the scope of this paper limits the discussion to SWOT analysis.

#### 4.7.3 Strengths of street children programmes

- i. SUZ is adopting a holistic approach in its ministry. In integrated programmes the youth come to know each other across barriers of social status, providing them with a safe place to socialise.<sup>377</sup> Wesley advocated the holistic approach because it seeks 'to address the whole life spectrum of human beings.'<sup>378</sup> It is through such kind of social programmes, as Dempster rightly asserts, that God is revealed to be at the centre of all these aspects of our lives.<sup>379</sup>
- ii. The people who are helped become more receptive to the gospel than those who have not received the same help with theirs. Muchaneta has pointed out that the F.A.C.T programme in Zimbabwe has experienced some conversion of those who are helped.<sup>380</sup>
- iii. The programmes are accepted by the communities as relevant because they focus on development. Sider has described development as that activity which seeks 'to help individuals, families, and communities obtain appropriate tools,

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<sup>375</sup> Ibid, p. 188

<sup>376</sup> Coyle, p. 89

<sup>377</sup> <http://www.polis.iup.edu/RUC/Newsletters/Religion/Vol.4no.3.htm>

<sup>378</sup> Maddox, R., "Visit the Poor: Wesley's Precedent for Wholistic Mission", *Transformation*, January, 2001, p. 37

<sup>379</sup> Dempster, M. W., "Pentecostal Social Concern and the Biblical Mandate of Social Justice", *Pneuma*, Fall, 1987, p. 130

<sup>380</sup> Chester, T., (ed), *Justice, Mercy and Humility, Integral mission and the poor*. (Carlise, Paternoster Press, 2002), p. 71

skills and knowledge so they can care for themselves.’<sup>381</sup> Ideally income generating projects and vocational training bring people to a stage of independence or self-sufficiency. It also restores people’s respect, dignity and confidence in their ability to cope even when work is not easily available.<sup>382</sup> Therefore when people are given the opportunity to work and get their needs, they also achieve fulfilment as human beings, and in a sense, as Stott suggests, ‘become more human beings’.<sup>383</sup>

- iv. Competent staff that can provide education assistance to former street children and street children.
- v. Provision of psychosocial support to young people, street children included, enables them to:
  - Develop control over their lives and be assertive. It helps them to communicate their needs and to resist social pressures.<sup>384</sup>
  - Change the course of their lives after bad decisions
  - Experience the reality of second chances in life
  - Explore the importance of faith in life<sup>385</sup>
  - Negotiate and get others to agree with what they want<sup>386</sup>
- vi. Through life skills abstinence from sex before marriage and faithfulness within marriage are promoted as the best ways to escape the emotional, physical and spiritual consequences of the misuse and abuse of sex. Scripture Union does not promote the use of condoms outside marriage that is why it values abstinence and faithfulness to one partner. This is in line with the

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<sup>381</sup> Sider, p. 138

<sup>382</sup> WHO(1993)

<sup>383</sup> Stott, J., *New Issues Facing Christians Today*. (London: Marshall Pickering, 1999), p. 188

<sup>384</sup> WHO(1993)

<sup>385</sup> SUZ approach to HIV/AIDS power point presentation sent to the writer by Jenami, R., the SUZ regional director in the Western region.

<sup>386</sup> WHO(1993)

government policy which emphasises the importance of abstinence and preparation for a life time commitment to mutually faithful partnerships. The consequences of this decision will be briefly discussed in the next chapter of this thesis.

#### 4.7.4 Weaknesses of street children programmes

- i. The danger with this approach, if it is to be linked with people's acceptance of Christ, is that, SUZ will tend to do these acts of mercy so as to make the recipients repent. This may not be genuine salvation but a conditional one based on the availability and accessibility of the desired commodities.<sup>387</sup> This is a real danger in third world countries which are engulfed with poverty, desperation, bleak future and bad governance. Thus there is possibly the potential for well meaning Christians to exploit the needy individual, almost to foist their ideals and belief system upon somebody who is socially vulnerable.

On the other hand, showing people God's love should not carry with it a heavy condition on those helping, that street children and their families must be subsequently in a relationship with God themselves, 1Cor.3:6-7. However, although the fears are genuine, trying to separate the two creates a fragmented approach in many of SUZ's evangelistic programmes.<sup>388</sup> It is difficult to separate evangelism from social activities, because when these activities are done and seen

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<sup>387</sup> Dempster, M. W., "Social Concern in the Context of Jesus' Kingdom, Mission and Ministry", *Transformation* (1999) 16:2, p. 44. See also Hecht, T., *At Home in the Street: Street Children of Northeast Brazil*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 179

who points out that some alcoholics in the US 'sometimes even feign conversion to Christianity to please their benefactors'.

<sup>388</sup> Dempster, p. 44



as integral part of God's saving work,<sup>389</sup> those being helped will come to the Lord.

In this light, therefore, genuine Christian social activities offer irresistible conditions for repentance.

- ii. Insufficient financial resources and staff to carry out the work. In 2003, SUZ had a staff capacity of 70 people, and a large pool of volunteers<sup>390</sup> coming from school teachers. This affects the smooth running of many activities, especially where transport and expertise is essential in the demanding work of life skills.
- iii. Creates a dependence syndrome on those who are helped.<sup>391</sup> It is not possible to categorize foreign assistance as "good" or "bad" in a sweeping generalization, but "aid" can be questioned on the basis of discouraging creative economic thinking on the recipients. Furthermore, aid should not be tied to any possible continued support of the recipients.<sup>392</sup>
- iv. The programme is trying to do a lot of things instead of focusing on rehabilitation, leaving other better equipped organisations to deal with poverty alleviation. With its limited resources, it means there is fragmentation of meagre finances over a broad spectrum of activities. To this end, Warren offers a useful suggestion that God does not expect people to do every thing in life,<sup>393</sup> but to concentrate on the fulfilment of their vision. Therefore SUZ must be very clear of what it wants to achieve through its street youth programmes.

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<sup>389</sup> Maddox, p. 42

<sup>390</sup> Scripture Union Eastern Region Technical Support Project, p. 24

<sup>391</sup> Harries, J., 'Material Provision' or Preaching the Gospel: Reconsidering 'Holistic' (Integral) Mission', *Evangelical Review of Theology*, Vol 32 No 3, July 2008, pp. 257-270

<sup>392</sup> Sleeman, J. E., *Economic Crisis: A Christian Perspective*. (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1976), p. 107

<sup>393</sup> Warren, R., *The Purpose Driven Life*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), pp. 234-235

#### 4.7.5 Opportunities street children programmes

- i. Staff have the opportunity to establish and develop healthy relationships between them and the children's families. This builds an element of trust in the children who would have returned home from the streets.<sup>394</sup>
- ii. SUZ has an opportunity to share the good news with their clientele which is normally oppressed, deprived and despised by the community. McGee views the deprivation and oppression as 'maybe the means in God's hands of saving many precious souls.'<sup>395</sup> However, the danger of this view is that it may strengthen rich people's oppressive mentality over the poor in the name of trying to save all. Thus failing to recognise that poverty is equally bad and people need to experience the gift of abundant life. Muchaneta has pointed out that the F.A.C.T programme in Zimbabwe has experienced some conversion of those who are helped.<sup>396</sup> This same conviction found its way in the hearts of the church fathers like John Wesley, Charles Finney, Toyohiko Kagawa and many others who did not separate their lives into distinct sacred and secular spheres.<sup>397</sup> Instead, they saw their social justice advocacy and religious devotion in a comprehensive way.<sup>398</sup> Hughes goes further to support their conviction by rightly stating that social concern activities must not be seen as a problem but a clear biblical demand. To him the 'issue is not whether Christians should be involved but how.'<sup>399</sup>

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<sup>394</sup> Simukai annual report, 2005

<sup>395</sup> McGee, G., "Saving Souls or Saving Lives?", *Paraclete*, 28:4 (Fall 1994), p. 14

<sup>396</sup> Chester, T., (ed), *Justice, Mercy and Humility, Integral mission and the poor*. (Carlise, Paternoster Press, 2002), p. 71

<sup>397</sup> Catalyst: "Contemporary Evangelical Perspectives. Personal Faith and Social Action: Partners or Adversaries", Accessed at <http://www.catalystresources.org/org/issues/263strong.html> on 20.07.2005

<sup>398</sup> Ibid, p. 5

<sup>399</sup> Hughes, D., "Why the Reformed Suspicion of Evangelical Social Action", *Evangel*, Spring 2001, p. 27

- iii. The negative social, political and economic condition has created opportunities for the programme to expand its activities so as to reach out more young people who have dropped out of school for different reasons. Its involvement in non-religious activities such as community assistance projects, in which non-religious people may find interest,<sup>400</sup> may become an opportunity to show Christianity as 'down-to-earth demonstration of the reality of faith in Christ and life in the Spirit.'<sup>401</sup> The negative impact of HIV has also created opportunities for SUZ to strategically partner with other organisations in order to engage in social action more effectively.<sup>402</sup> Just as Jesus touched the afflicted of his day, he calls all believers to reach out with compassion to those infected and affected by AIDS.<sup>403</sup>
- iv. Through conducive social environment to do advocacy, a number of sexual abuse cases have been reported by the victims. The victims or their relatives have been showing positive attitude by reporting the cases to the programme staff, police, social welfare department or hospital. Of the total number of abuse cases, 20% was reported to SUZ, 30% to police and 50% to members of their families.<sup>404</sup> This shows that awareness campaigns are yielding some significant results.

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<sup>400</sup> Barna, G., *Evangelism that Works*. (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1995), p. 64

<sup>401</sup> Samuel, V., and Sugden, C., (eds), *Missions as Transformation: A theology of the whole gospel*, Accessed at [http://www.regnumbooks.com/reviews/mission\\_as\\_transformation\\_review.html](http://www.regnumbooks.com/reviews/mission_as_transformation_review.html) on 03 July, 2005

<sup>402</sup> IFES, "Christians in Southern Africa and Social Action", 3. Accessed at [http://www.ifesworld.org/news/SR\\_Article.asp?ArticleNo=228](http://www.ifesworld.org/news/SR_Article.asp?ArticleNo=228), on 20 July 2005

<sup>403</sup> von Buseck, C, & Carpenter, C., "The International AIDS Conference: The Church Responds", p. 1. Accessed at <http://www.cbn.com/spirituallife/ChurchAndMinistry/Evangelism/020717a.asp> on 20 July 2005

<sup>404</sup> Mavise

## **4.8 CONCLUSION**

To conclude this section, it is clear that SUZ's operating environment has drastically changed with more children living and working on the streets due to the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, unstable weather patterns leading to food insecurity and other socio-economic conditions. Despite these negative environments, SUZ alongside other stakeholders are making unabated tangible headways in their response to the plight of street children. The programmes have received significant support from both local and international partners. Their effectiveness is also revealed by the number of street children who have been helped over the years. Among its programmes, it was established that Reunification and follow up visits play significant role in rehabilitating street children.

In compliance with its international working principles, SUZ has decided to face the challenge of working with this special population. So far its involvement with street children has yielded some significant results which are evidenced by the willingness of many national and international organisations to partner with SUZ against this problem. However, man-made and natural disasters in the country have adversely retarded progress of its endeavours to restore dignity and confidence in this underprivileged young generation. The following chapter focuses on some of the challenges and lessons learnt by SUZ in its work with street children.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CHALLENGES MET AND LESSONS LEARNT BY SUZ AND SA IN THEIR INVOLVEMENT WITH STREET CHILDREN

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the challenges<sup>405</sup> and lessons<sup>406</sup> that have been learnt by SUZ in its work with street children. Whilst these challenges and lessons learnt may seem to be closely related, they have been dealt with separately in this chapter so as to make a clear cut distinction between the two issues, making it helpful for those who might want to engage themselves in any meaningful street children ministry. The challenges, as it shall be revealed, have been exacerbated by the present political anarchy in the country. Zimbabwe has experienced economic sanctions imposed by the western governments because of its poor human rights record<sup>407</sup> and mismanagement of resources. Furthermore, besides poverty, family disintegration due to HIV/AIDS epidemic<sup>408</sup> poses the greatest challenge, as this directly contributes to the major

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<sup>405</sup> de Oliveira, W., *Working with Children on the Streets of Brazil*. (Haworth Press: London, 2001), pp.23-24. This was co-published simultaneously as *Child & youth services*, volume 21, numbers 1/2 2000; Geloo, Z., 'CHALLENGES 2004-2005: For Zambia's Street Kids, the Outlook is Bleak', Accessed at [http://ipsnews.net/note\\_award.asp?idnews=26814](http://ipsnews.net/note_award.asp?idnews=26814) on 23.04.2009.

<sup>406</sup> de Benitez, S. T., 'What Works in Street Children Programming: The JUCONI Model.' *What Works Series*. International Youth Foundation, 2001. Accessed at <http://www.iyfn.org/uploads>, on 23.04.2009.

<sup>407</sup> Tibaijuka, A. K., 'Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe to assess the Scope and Impact of Operation Murambatsvina,' by the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe, July 2005. See also 'Mugabe party denies plotting to kill rival'. *Newser*, May 20, 2008. Accessed at <http://www.newser.com> on 20.05.2008. At the moment Zimbabwe is also experiencing political unrest caused by the parliamentary, senatorial and presidential electoral defeat of the ruling party ZANU PF. The opposition claims that its members are being beaten and killed by ZANU PF supporters for voting for the opposition MDC.

<sup>408</sup> Hadgu Bariagaber, H., Demographic and socio-economic consequences of HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. *Pula: Botswana Journal of African Studies* Vol. 15 No 2 (2001); See also, Foster, G., *Safety Nets for children affected by HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa*, Accessed at <http://www.hsra.ac.za>, on 28.03.2007; Thomas, E., HIV/AIDS: The Implications for Local Governance, Housing, and the Delivery of Services', in Tomlinson, R., Beauregard, R., Bremmer, L. and Mangu, X, *Emerging Johannesburg: Perspectives on the Postapartheid City*. (Johannesburg: Routledge, 2003), pp. 185-194; Angelo, V., HIV/AIDS, POPULATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. Accessed at <http://www.zimrelief.info> on 20.05.2008; Germann, S., 'CALL TO ACTION: WHAT DO WE DO?' Accessed at <http://www.iss.co.za> on 20.05.2008; Gonzalez, M. A., A 4-D Model for Emergency Relief:

causes of street children in the country. Political and economic situation, family disintegration, girls' issues, family tracing and reunification, over dependency syndrome and street families, among others will be discussed as challenges to the street children workers. Amidst these challenges, SUZ has also drawn some significant lessons from its work with street children. Since this engagement is multi-disciplinary, it is not possible to discuss all the challenges and lessons learnt. However, some lessons such as the effect of urban poverty and homelessness, street children's potential, significance of family, vulnerability of street children, importance of partnerships and the spiritual aspect of their work will be discussed.

## **5.2 CHALLENGES FACED BY SUZ**

### **i. Political and Economic situation**

SUZ has been operating under very difficult political and economic situation in the country. The political situation in Zimbabwe has caused some foreign donors to either decrease aid for the country or halt it altogether. The government has been increasingly hostile towards foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to the extent they threatened to pass laws that would prohibit organizations from working in the arena of human rights, and would give the government the power to interfere with the running of NGOs.<sup>409</sup> Makoni indicated that at times SUZ may have the money, but fuel is not available to carry out the scheduled activities.<sup>410</sup> It is evident from current news and developments going on in the country that some countries such as Britain and Australia are prepared to disburse more aid to Zimbabwe provided the political

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Toward Understanding the Systemic Implications of HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa & the Challenges of Aid Delivery. Accessed at <http://www.fletcher.tufts.edu> on 20.05.2008.

<sup>409</sup>NGO Watch, 'NGOs tiptoe through Africa's political minefields' (2005, 11th October). Accessed at <http://www.ngowatch.org> on 14th April 2008.

<sup>410</sup> Makoni, SUZ national director, pointed this out during his address to the United Methodist Church house group meeting in Crewe, UK, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April 2008 between 6:00pm and 8:30pm.

climate changes in favour of peace and good governance.<sup>411</sup> However, as the present situation stands, peace and good governance remain elusive to the whole nation of Zimbabwe.

## **ii. Family disintegration due to HIV/AIDS**

The family, which is a primary unit of socialization,<sup>412</sup> has been facing rapid changes 'along a continuum of development marked by urbanization, education, exposure to media, and the increased economic complexity.'<sup>413</sup> Commenting on the effect of such development, Mhloyi admits that this has caused children and young people to 'confront conflict and confusion in varying magnitudes.'<sup>414</sup> Therefore, due to these socio-political and economic changes, dating from the colonial period beginning in 1890 through independence in 1980, Zimbabwe is currently characterized by five distinct types of families namely;

- the rural traditional family with extended members residing in the same locality
- the rural family whose residence is determined by the type of farming, without extended members in the same locality
- the rural family where the father works in an urban area and the mother is de facto head of the household

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<sup>411</sup> 'Smith says Australia ready to provide aid'. *The New Zealand Herald*. Thursday 3 April 2008, 11:34am.

<sup>412</sup> Herbert, M., and Harper-Dorton, K. V., *Working with Children, Adolescents, and their Families*, (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed). (Leicester: BPS Blackwell, 2002), p. 19. See also the following on the issue of the importance of the family in children's upbringing: (Foster, G., 'Understanding Community Responses to the Situation of Children Affected by AIDS: Lessons for External Agencies.' Draft paper prepared for the UNRISD project HIV/AIDS and Development March 2002, p. 5. Accessed at <http://www.unrisd.org> on 26.04.2008; Collins, G., *Family Talk*. (California: Vision House Publishers, 1978), 13-21; Wyse, *Childhood Studies: An Introduction*, pp. 39-43; Heaven, P. L., *Contemporary Adolescence: A Social Psychological Approach*. (Melbourne: Macmillan Education Australia Pty Ltd, 1994), pp. 50-72

<sup>413</sup> Mhloyi, M. M., 'Identity, Formation: Problems and Prospects, the Case of Zimbabwe', *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, Vol. 29, 1998.

<sup>414</sup> Mhloyi

- the two-parent, low-income family located in urban areas with obvious geographical demarcations and more cohesive communities
- the middle-/high-income family located in urban communities.<sup>415</sup>

It is interesting to note that HIV/AIDS has affected these families at very disproportionate levels,<sup>416</sup> especially the poor and the middle class, because they do not have access to the anti-retroviral drugs or they do not have the money to buy them, resulting in deaths of either or both parents. This has left children with either one parent or they become 'double orphans',<sup>417</sup> leading to child-headed family scenarios, casting heavy burden on parents and children who have to take care of the family with meagre resources. Mutangadura highlights that the 'high HIV prevalence means that many children who lose one parent eventually lose the other.'<sup>418</sup> It is therefore safe to conclude that 'child-headed households' will face the social and economic dislocation suffered by all families in the face of death and subsequent loss of income, but in addition these children will be open to abuse, exploitation, neglect, malnutrition, the lack of adult love and affection, socialisation, guidance, education and support.<sup>419</sup>

Thus, with the unstable and weak family structures, Halsey argues that the children become 'more prone to deviance and crime, and finally to repeat the cycle of unstable

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<sup>415</sup> Mhloyi

<sup>416</sup> Most of the staff interviewed cited that the children mainly come from broken families due to HIV related deaths.

<sup>417</sup> Nyamukapa, C. A., Foster, G. and Gregson, S., 'Orphans' household circumstances and access to education in a maturing HIV epidemic in eastern Zimbabwe.' *African Journal of Social Work* Vol.18(2) 2003: pp. 7-32

<sup>418</sup> Mutangadura, G.B., 'Household welfare impacts of mortality of adult females in Zimbabwe: Implications for policy and program development,' pp. 6-10. Paper Presented at The AIDS and Economics Symposium, Organised by the IAEN Network Held in Durban 7-8th July 2000. Accessed at <http://www.sahims.net> on 25.04.2008.

<sup>419</sup> Mutangadura, p. 6-10



parenting from which they themselves have suffered.’<sup>420</sup> As a result of minimum or total lack of support for the orphans from the elderly and other family members, some children decided to resort to street life. Consequently repatriating them to their poor and disintegrated families remains a daunting challenge to the SUZ staff workers.

Magumise, commenting on the state of families that they work with in Masvingo, pointed out that whilst it is their core business to reunite children with their families, they face situations where ‘there is really nothing to stay for at home.’<sup>421</sup> At times there are no parents or if they are there, they may be ill with HIV/AIDS and no one will be working. These unbearable circumstances force children to go back to the street again, trapping themselves in the vicious cycle of both poverty and uncertainty. This is an indication of weakened safety nets, whereby the extended family fails to cope with the growing number of children to look after and the dwindling food supplies.<sup>422</sup>

### **iii. Girl-child cases**

It was clear from the staff’s contributions that girls were exposed to more danger on the streets than boys. Though done about ten years ago, Dube’s<sup>423</sup> research on street girls is still helpful. She observed the loose sexual life styles and survival skills of girls whilst they are on the streets. Although the girls now know more about

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<sup>420</sup> Halsey, A. H., ‘Foreword’, in Dennis, N., and Erdos, G., *Families Without Fatherhood*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). (London: IEA Health and Welfare Unit, 1993), p. xii

<sup>421</sup> Magumise, M. is currently the Chiedza Street Youth Project Manager in Masvingo.

<sup>422</sup> Foster, G., ‘Understanding Community Responses to the Situation of Children Affected by AIDS: Lessons for External Agencies.’ Draft paper prepared for the UNRISD project HIV/AIDS and Development March 2002. Accessed at <http://www.unrisd.org> on 26.04.2008. Foster gives a brief but useful explanation on the concept of safety nets in the African context, emphasising the responsibility which has been gladly accepted by members of the extended family to care for the orphans. pp. 4-6.

<sup>423</sup> Dube, L., ‘AIDS-risk Patterns and Knowledge of the Disease Among Street Children in Harare, Zimbabwe.’ *Journal of Social Development in Africa*, 12. 2. 1997, pp. 61-73

HIV/AIDS, their survival skills have not changed as they are still exploited by older people, both men and women. This is because while on the streets no one gives them the opportunity to discuss their biological changes and ways of negotiating and resisting unwanted sex. Herbert has argued that these girls have to 'manage a dramatic heightening of sexual awareness and sexual arousal,'<sup>424</sup> on their own, which play a crucial role in their involvement and identity. Life in the street does not allow them 'the space, safety and time to explore their changing world'<sup>425</sup> whilst living in a safe environment.

Besides exposing themselves to HIV infections, the girls run the risk of getting pregnant. By falling pregnant and giving birth, the teenage mothers are placing themselves 'at a decided disadvantage economically and educationally,'<sup>426</sup> plunging themselves into a more gloomy hopeless future, with poverty as their perpetual companion. This poses the greatest challenge to street workers who find it very difficult to have a positive influence on the sexual behaviour of street children.

SA confirmed that children sell or throw away condoms they get from the centre. Whilst this may show the children's limited knowledge of the gruesome life threatening dangers they put themselves in by not using condoms during their sexual activities, it is also an indication of hearts filled with hopelessness. Some girls confessed that their boyfriends would not allow them to use either the male or female condoms. This also shows their limited 'bargaining options and power' on such

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<sup>424</sup> Herbert, M., *Developmental Problems of Childhood and Adolescence*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), p. 200.

<sup>425</sup> McFeely, S. and Plant, B., *Working with Young People: 'Real Life Stuff'*. (Wiltshire: APS Publishing, 2004), p. 79

<sup>426</sup> Heaven, p. 163

crucial life issues.<sup>427</sup> The other reason could be that they also want to spread the virus because they feel rejected and taken advantage of by the powerful in the society. Thus their attitude and action in relation to sexual activities might stem from deep emotions of rejection and their sense of powerlessness,<sup>428</sup> which leaves them with only 'one weapon for vengeance', their bodies.

SUZ is further challenged by their 'no condom' policy for the unmarried. For them, condoms are meant to be used by the married, for birth control and 'death control'<sup>429</sup> due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. However, they refer the children to organisations that distribute condoms after talking with them about safe sex and explaining their position as an organisation. Taibvisirwa and Ncube<sup>430</sup> of OASIS Zimbabwe concurred that it is very difficult to deal with teenage girls who have decided to live on the streets. Despite the challenges faced by those who work with girls on the streets, Nordstrom calls the workers to bear in mind this instrumental fact: girls are political actors and moral architects of their worlds. They fight and fight back, and many construct peaceful solutions for a better world.'<sup>431</sup> She goes further by elaborating that the more girls' own stories are listened to, 'solutions begin to replace silence.'<sup>432</sup>

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<sup>427</sup> Evans, R., 'Poverty, HIV, and barriers to education: street children experiences in Tanzania', in Sweetman, C., *Gender, Development, and poverty*. (Oxford: Oxfam, 2002), p. 58

<sup>428</sup> Wickham, R. E., and West, J., *Therapeutic Work with Sexually Abused Children*. (London: SAGE Publications, 2002), p. 95. See also Drauker, C. B., and Martsolf, D. S., (eds), *Counselling Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse*, (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed). (London: SAGE Publications, 2006), pp. 4-6; Batmanghelidjh, C., *Shattered Lives: Children Who Live with Courage and Dignity*. (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2006), pp. 35-58. They also discuss the short and long term effects of sexual abuse which include general psychological distress, depression, anxiety, phobias, panic disorders, low self-esteem, just to mention a few.

<sup>429</sup> Stafford, T., *Sexual Chaos*. (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1993), p. 13

<sup>430</sup> Ncube and Maibvisira are staff workers OASIS, an international organisation that mainly focuses on teenage girls on the street. They have already established a centre for girls in one of Harare's high density suburbs of Kambuzuma.

<sup>431</sup> Nordstrom, C., 'Girls and Warzones: Troubling Questions.' *Life & Peace Institute*. 2004 Edition. Accessed at <http://www.essex.ac.uk>, on 10.05.2008, p. 1

<sup>432</sup> Nordstrom, C., 'Girls and Warzones: Troubling Questions.' *Life & Peace Institute*. 2004 Edition. Accessed at <http://www.essex.ac.uk>, on 10.05.2008, p. 1

Thus, by listening to them and implementing some of their ideas, girls are empowered to own their decisions and course of action concerning their lives.

In view of the above, what makes SUZ remain committed to the work is their perspective of this engagement as a vocation to help the young people, in which they, unlike many people, 'use different lenses'<sup>433</sup>, to look at the same problem. The case study below of teenage pregnancy only shows the symptoms of some multi-faceted complex challenges which are faced by street youth workers.

### ***Case study 5***

*Maria is girl aged 17 and stays in the street with her friend Thoko who is 15 years old. Both were pregnant and looked very sick and worn out. Thoko said her boyfriend had cheated her by saying that she was his only 'wife' only to realise that he already had three other 'wives' who were staying at his parents' rural home in Chipinge. The boyfriend was 18 years old. On discovering that she was the fourth 'wife', she decided to come back to the streets where she then met Maria. From Thoko's physical appearance, one can strongly suspect that she is HIV positive. However, just after the fieldwork research, it was reported that she gave birth to a healthy baby boy and one of her relatives offered to stay with her in Masvingo. Maria's boyfriend stays with her on the streets and he is very sick and insane.*

### **iv Addressing wrong issues**

As discussed in the preceding chapters, street children work demands a multi-disciplinary approach<sup>434</sup> which calls for expertise.<sup>435</sup> Some of the staff have found

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<sup>433</sup> Onyimo, P. She said this passionately during an interview when she was stressing the fact that street children are still children with feelings, and also need to be loved just like anybody else.

<sup>434</sup> Ennew, J and Swart-Kruger, J., "Introduction: Homes, Places and Spaces in the Construction of

themselves addressing wrong issues basing their decisions on the wrong information given by the children. Chitsiku<sup>436</sup> pointed out the challenge of dealing with the symptoms and not the causes, which they always face. For example, if abuse is still rampant at home, the child finds it very difficult to continue staying there.

### **Case study 6**

*Taurai is a boy aged 15 and he has been on and off the streets of Mutare for some time. Simukai project staff have accompanied him to his home many times, but he would come back to the streets in a few days. On one occasion, the staff went with police to his father who revealed that he did not want to stay with him because whenever he left him at home, he would destroy property in the house for no apparent reason. He did not know how to deal with his son and he said he would rather have him stay in the streets than in his house. It was resolved that Taurai be taken to Chipinge to stay with his grandmother. Simukai never heard of Taurai again. It is not known whether he settled well or changed towns.*

In the above case, it was discovered that Taurai's father remarried after his first wife had died. Taurai's apparent delinquent behaviour may have been a reaction to his father's course of action. Furthermore, his behaviour may have been caused by anger and lack of constant parental supervision crucial at his stage of growth development. Therefore, SUZ has the challenge of balancing the extent to which they can be involved in people's private lives in their endeavour to help the child.

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Street Children and Street Youth." *Children, Youth and Environments*. Volume 13.1, Spring 2003.

<sup>435</sup> The need for expertise in SUZ was highlighted by Malaba, T., who is a board member for Thuthuka.

<sup>436</sup> Chitsiku is the Programme Manager of SA.

## **v. Family tracing and reunification process**

When staff make contacts with street children, their main aim is to get them out of the street and reunite them with their families. This is accomplished through working closely with the child and the family that would have been identified by the child as his or her origin. The process of family tracing is challenging in that the children may lie about their families because of their unwillingness to go home or they may not have gained confidence in the street workers to the extent of revealing such important personal information to strangers. This takes time to establish the correct child's place of origin, eventually making the child to stay on the street for a longer period of time.

Resources do not always permit that the project staff makes journeys to children's homes to meet the family members so as to hear their version of the causes that might have resulted in the child resorting to the streets. This is especially made difficult if the child comes from remote rural areas. Sometimes, after doing some research, the child may agree to be accompanied home, only to find out that the family no longer stays where he left them staying.<sup>437</sup> This was caused by the notorious farm invasions that took place in Zimbabwe<sup>438</sup> where many families were displaced from their work places because the farms had been invaded by the war veterans. Operation Garikai<sup>439</sup> failed benefit many people since only a handful of houses were built to cater for over seven hundred thousand displaced families that had been displaced by the

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<sup>437</sup> This was experienced by Simukai staff who had accompanied a boy back to his family. The child was surprised to see that the houses he had left about two years were no longer there. The boy was later placed in an institution whilst further investigations were carried out to establish the whereabouts of his family. However, due to his age and the time span since he left home, the possibility of forgetting the actual location of his homestead could not be ruled out.

<sup>438</sup> Sachikonye, L. M., 'The Situation of Commercial Farm Workers after Land Reform in Zimbabwe'. A report prepared for the Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe. Edited by CIIR London. May 2003. Accessed at <http://www.internal-displacement.org> on 20.05.2008.

<sup>439</sup> Martin Rupiya, M., ZIMBABWE: GOVERNANCE THROUGH MILITARY OPERATIONS. *African Security Review* Vol 14 No 3, 2005. Accessed at <http://www.iss.co.za> on 20.05.2008.

government.<sup>440</sup>

The other challenge they also face during reunification process is that children fail to stay at home or they run away from the project staff accompanying them when they are near their homes.<sup>441</sup> Those who do not stay at home after reunification do so because both parents and the child find it difficult to accommodate each other into their lives due to many years of separation. Another challenge related to family tracing and reunification is when street workers encounter mentally handicapped children who will be staying on the street. It is difficult to make any meaningful conversation with them, making it hard to know where they actually come from.<sup>442</sup> Faced with these difficult challenges, SUZ has to equip its staff to be able to empower the families from which these children come, with street child parenting skills.

#### **vi. Over-dependency syndrome**

When SUZ makes contact with street children and their families, it tries to establish ways of supporting the family to cope with 'an extra mouth'. One way of supporting the families is to send their children to school, both the one who was on the street and the potential street children. Thus, this strategy is both intervention and prevention.

However the approach is prone to abuse by parents who want to take advantage of the project and systematically send their children to the street so that their school fees may be paid by the organisation. At times the parents are given some money to start

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<sup>440</sup> Tibaijuka, A, K., A UN 'Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe to assess the Scope and Impact of Operation Murambatsvina by the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe'. Accessed at <http://news.bbc.co.uk>, on 12.12.2007.

<sup>441</sup> During the researcher's work experience with street children in Mutare, one boy ran away from him in Honde Valley when he was taking the boy home with another member of staff. Such are the dynamics of street work in that the children can be very unpredictable. It was later revealed by his parents that he had also run away from remand prison at Ruda Police Camp in Honde Valley.

<sup>442</sup> Simukai had one case of a mentally handicapped street child. Fortunately his parents were also looking for him, and that helped the management to deal with the case in a few days.

up income generating projects. The challenge faced by SUZ is that even after helping the parents with some start-up money for their projects, many of them misuse the money and return requesting for some more. Whilst their cases maybe genuine due to abject poverty experienced in Zimbabwe, the families become financial burden to the organisation. The case study below helps to appreciate this point.

### ***Case study 7***

*George and Moses were both on the street when they first met Simukai staff workers. Simukai decided to send them to school whilst they were still staying in Sakubva Township with their mother who had another small baby. Their father had abandoned them, and nobody knew where he went. George and Moses' mother would literally always come to Simukai for almost everything she needed in her home. Later, the organisation offered to accompany her to her rural area, of which she agreed. When she was in the rural areas, she would still come to Simukai to ask for basic food commodities to use with her children. If she is not given anything, she would shout at the project officer responsible with her children. Simukai was almost like a parent to her.*

From the way she was behaving, it revealed that donor funded organisations are incorrectly perceived as very rich and able to give support to the daily running of individual families.

### **vii. Failure to apprehend street children abusers**

The main challenge that street workers and police face is to apprehend the perpetrators of sexual abuse on these children. Several reasons maybe that;

- Children are threatened if they report the abuse.



- Children are willing to be abused because they are paid some money.
- Children forget those who might have abused them.
- Children see it as normal and therefore do not see any reason for reporting any incidences.
- Some of the perpetrators bribe the police, making it very difficult to implement the course of justice for the affected children.
- Mothers of the abused children forbid children to report because the abuser is a father or step father of the child. If arrested, there will not be any bread winner in the family.<sup>443</sup>
- The child develops positive feelings towards his or her abuser and shows hostility against any rescuers. This paradoxical phenomenon is called the 'Stockholm syndrome'.<sup>444</sup>

### *Case study 8*

*Tonderai is a boy aged 8. He came to Simukai from the street crying and bleeding. He could not sit properly because of the pain he was experiencing. He told the street workers that a man had sodomised him. Immediately the case was reported to the Victim Friendly Unit and a police officer was provided to deal with the case. For a week Simukai staff frequented Sakubva market place where Tonderai said the man stayed. Unfortunately he could not identify any suspect and the case was abandoned. Later, Tonderai was placed at Robert Mugabe Children's Home at St Augustine's*

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<sup>443</sup> Doyle, C., *Working with Abused Children* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn). (Hampshire: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1997), pp. 14-21. Doyle offers a very insightful discussion on child abuse and singles out issues such as fear, mistrust, doubt, shame, guilt and despair as devastating negative emotional conditions to any child.

<sup>444</sup> Doyle, C., *Working with Abused Children*, pp. 8-14

Tonderai's case is just an indicator of the horrendous homosexual and sexual abuses that happen on the streets. In most cases children do not know their right to report whenever they are abused or have seen someone being abused. They are filled with unprecedented fear of being harmed or killed by the abusers making police and human rights organisations' work to apprehend abusers difficult.

### **viii. Street families**

Street families have been a big challenge to street children work. Due to very high sexual activities among street children, girls may become pregnant and give birth whilst on the street. Besides being born in poverty, children of street youth are also prone to psychosocial and cognitive deficits such as acting out behaviour, low self-esteem, learning problems and hostility.<sup>446</sup> The children who grow up in such negative environments are likely to develop mental health problems because they are not exposed to several formative influences such as:

- early bonding experiences critical for good, caring human relationships
- modelling, boundary setting and development of value systems necessary for moral development
- support, caring and discipline needed for emotional stability.<sup>447</sup>

The case study of Matilda below serves as a good example of the street family.

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<sup>445</sup> The researcher personally handled the case when he was the manager at Simukai in 2003.

<sup>446</sup> Heaven, P. L., *Contemporary Adolescence: A Social Psychological Approach*. (Melbourne: Macmillan Education Australia Pty Ltd, 1994), p. 161-163

<sup>447</sup> Richter, L., *The Impact of HIV/AIDS on the Development of Children*. Accessed at <http://www.iss.co.za>. on 20.05.2008.

### *Case study 9*

*Matilda, aged between 25 and 30 years, has been on the streets in Mutare for a long time. She has two children, aged between 5 and 8 years, and one of them was born when she was already frequenting the streets on a daily basis. She would come and go to Simukai with her children for feeding and bathing. She has been in contact with Simukai since 2001 and up to now she has never shown any willingness to leave the streets for the sake of her children. Although she returns home nearly everyday, unfortunately her children have never known any other life except that of the street.*

Children of the blind pose a great challenge to street work in that they are introduced to street life at a very tender age.<sup>448</sup> Those born on the street do not know any wall of protection around them. Thus to them the only sense of protection comes from their parents, mainly the weak, angry, hopeless and desperate mothers, and themselves. At this age, they are unconsciously trained to survive the streets through begging, stealing and fighting.<sup>449</sup> The challenge is that even if SUZ wants to remove these young children from the street, they do not have anywhere to go. In considering their situation, though the need for reunification is not an issue, concern and the necessity to intervene arises from the fact that a large proportion of their day is spent in an unwholesome environment which has been classified as unsafe place for anyone to live in.<sup>450</sup>

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<sup>448</sup> Nsama, C., He is the Family Worker for Simukai based in Chipinge, a satellite branch of Simukai. He pointed out that one of the children's duties while on the streets is to accompany their mothers to the toilet.

<sup>449</sup> West, A., 'At the Margins: Street Children in Asia and the Pacific.' *Poverty and Social Development Papers*, No. 8/October 2003. Accessed at <http://www.streetchildren.org.uk> on 20.05. 2008.

<sup>450</sup> Lalor, K., Taylor, M., Veale, A., Hussein Ali, A., and Bushra, E., 'Victimisation Amongst Street Children in Sudan and Ethiopia: A Preliminary Analysis.' Accessed at <http://www.unicri.it> on 20.05.2008.

In concluding this challenges section, the discussion reveals that street children work is faced with multi dimensional challenges which cannot be easily solved because of the need for different expertise in each field. Issues such as political and economic, the devastation of HIV/AIDS pandemic and its effects on children and ever increasing child abuse cases, are some of the external circumstances that are beyond the practitioners' control. It is also apparent that SUZ does not have the capacity to adequately address these challenges without strong partnership with other child servicing organisations in the country in which they should seek to share experiences and formulate best practices in this field. Furthermore, the situations in which street children workers and their clients find themselves in do not have easy solutions, and thus each is treated as unique. However, even those circumstances that seem straight forward, such as reunification process, turn to be quite involving in terms of the background work that has to be done before the actual process begins.

### **5.3 LESSONS LEARNT**

#### **i. The role played by urban poverty and homelessness**

Slums and squatter type of settlements in areas such as Sakubva in Mutare, Mucheke in Masvingo, Makokoba in Bulawayo and Mbare and Epworth in Harare, characterised by high reproductive rates, poor shelter, lack of basic services, and few economic opportunities, force a greater number of children to opt for street life.

Whilst the idea of Income Generating Projects (I.G.Ps) is referred to as one of the best practices that will help to economically empower street children's families, its successful implementation still remains a distant cry to many families. This is because of the fact that the families are so poor and they re-channel 'start up' or seed money to

buy their immediate family needs.<sup>451</sup> Despite this noble effort, not much has been achieved through the IGPs.<sup>452</sup> The other reason that makes it difficult to realise the intended result could be the incapacity of SUZ staff to manage the programme due to little or no training.

The successful implementation of IGPs has two-fold long lasting positive results.

Firstly, the families will be able to address the issue of hunger which has been the main factor pushing the children to the streets. Secondly, the families will be empowered to move from the shanty crowded areas to more decent accommodation.

However, addressing these critical issues only reduces the possibility of children going to the streets because there are other factors that need to be tackled as discussed in the previous chapters. Furthermore, the government will be required to provide accommodation for these families, a challenge it has been failing to adequately address since independence in 1980.<sup>453</sup>

## **ii. Street children have the potential to excel in life**

It is evident from the work done by SUZ that children have the potential to do well if they are given the opportunity to prove themselves. Most of the children who are sent to school by SUZ are behaving like other students, despite their desperate circumstances. Some have been made prefects in their schools because of their good behaviour. Simukai boasts of three former street boys who finished A-Level in 2005 and passed. One of them is now working in South Africa and the other two are in Botswana. They are both working and living independent lives after an opportunity

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<sup>451</sup> Parents constantly come back to the organisation to ask for seed money after using the initial business money to buy immediate family basics.

<sup>452</sup> From the personal experience of the researcher, the IGPs have never been very successful because of overwhelming political, social and economic problems which Zimbabwe has been suffering from.

<sup>453</sup> Housing problem in Zimbabwe

was created for them to show their potential. Also one girl who was sent to school by Simukai did well in her A-Levels in 2006, and came out with 6 points for the three subjects she wrote. She is now doing Fashion Design at Mutare Poly Technical College.

One of Thuthuka's children is now pursuing a Business Studies Degree at NUST (National University of Science and Technology), one of the best universities in Zimbabwe. Below is Tendai's success story, which serves as an encouragement to many street children workers, that these children are capable of doing positive things in their lives.

### ***Case study 10***

*Tendai is now 20 years old and staying at Thuthuka Rehabilitation Centre. He is the eldest in his family. Their father died and his mother could not afford to send all the children to school, so Tendai decided to go to the streets to look for money to help his mother. Initially he would go back home after spending the day on the streets. As he made new friends from the street, he reduced the days he went back home to check on his family. Surprisingly, he said he continued attending school from the streets of Bulawayo and managed to write five GCSE subjects at O-Level and passed three. He realised that it was possible for him to pass, considering that he had done well while he was not staying at home. He was then found by Thuthuka staff on the streets and he agreed to go and stay at the rehabilitation centre whilst he was supplementing his O-Level subjects. He wrote three more and passed all of them and then went on to do A-Level which he finished in 2006 and passed with 8 points from three subjects, and got a place at NUST.*

At Thuthuka Rehabilitation Centre, the researcher was shown some of the metal and woodwork products done by the children who do not attend formal education. Below is a picture of their products showing former street children's work and potential.

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Please refer to the original text to see this material.

### **iii. Necessity of thorough research before reunification**

As discussed in the preceding chapters, one of the most challenging areas of street children work is to establish their places of origin and then prepare for their family reunification. Whilst children usually lie about their home areas, it has been learnt that with a reasonable time of genuine relationship building based on trust, children begin to open up and reveal more information about their backgrounds. Knowledge of the children's family backgrounds is crucial because that invaluable information helps the

staff to evaluate the viability of reuniting the child with his or her family members. Magumise revealed that some families live in extreme poverty, making it even very hard for the children to stay at home. He confessed that even if he were the child, he would not have the courage to continue staying in such devastating and hopeless conditions. There is also no entertainment, and yet it is one of the main occupations which help children to develop their social skills as they grow.<sup>454</sup> However, the presence of other children who have not resorted to the streets within the same family may bear testimony to the fact that it is still possible to be at home, giving a glimpse of hope for the staff who then painstakingly, and uncertain of the child's future, leaves him or her with the family. It becomes a faith adventure with risk elements.

There are other situations whereby some homes are not safe for children to stay as the adults may turn out to be their abusers and not responsible supporters or care givers. Research has shown that most of the children are abused by the people well known to them.<sup>455</sup> This may pose a challenge to SUZ staff trying to reunite children with their families. The family, by nature must be the environment which those born in it should find genuine nurturing safety. The following case study shows the sexual abuse that takes place in the homes which makes family tracing a significant component in the reunification process.

### ***Case study 11***

*Nyarai is a girl of 13 years and she stays with her parents in Odzi area near Mutare. She came to Simukai to report the abuse she had suffered from her father's religious*

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<sup>454</sup>See for benefits of play for children. Accessed at <http://www.whitehutchinson.com/children/articles/benefits.shtml>, on 22.04.2009.

<sup>455</sup> As children reveal their reasons of going to the streets, it became apparent their abusers were known to them because they mentioned their stepparents and relatives.



*beliefs.<sup>456</sup> She revealed that her father had given her to one of his friends in church for marriage, but Nyarai was not happy with her father's marriage arrangements because she felt she was not yet ready for marriage and also she did not love the old man who was almost the same age with her father. Her mother came to the centre pleading with the staff to release Nyarai so that she may go home with her, but it was felt that her father may still continue with his plans to give her into marriage. The issue was reported to the police and Nyarai was placed at Robert Mugabe Children's Home at St Augustine's Mission, Penhalonga until the case was satisfactorily solved in the best interest of the child.*

#### **iv. Healthy partnerships between SUZ and other organisations**

As a multi-disciplinary service, street children work cannot be successfully done without the involvement of many other child servicing organisations. SUZ is aware of its limitations in this work, and therefore has managed to forge working partnerships with government departments, other NGOs and churches. This view is also supported by Brinkerhoff who contends that, 'the nature and scale of socioeconomic development problems are impossible to address in isolation. Their complexity and intransigence requires multiple actors and resources.'<sup>457</sup> Therefore organisations do not form partnerships so as to enhance their individual agendas, whether qualitatively or quantitatively, but in order to 'produce synergistic rewards where the outcomes of the partnerships as a whole are greater than the some of what individual partners

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<sup>456</sup> The Johanne Marange Church has the tradition of giving their daughter's into marriage to their friends or rich businessmen who will then support them. They say the Holy Spirit would have told them about this kind of arranged marriage. The girl is not given an opportunity to express her views, showing part of this church's oppressive male chauvinistic ideals perpetrated in the name of God.

<sup>457</sup> Brinkerhoff, J. M., *Partnership for International Development: Rhetoric Or Results?* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), p. 1

contribute.<sup>458</sup>

Below are some of the benefits that can be realised through well managed partnerships as suggested by Yamamoto:<sup>459</sup>

- Capital mobilization either in the form of cash or gifts-in-kind.
- Unique contributions such as research and development expertise, distribution services, outreach, and marketing support can be made by corporations, so as to help solve social problems. Since SUZ is becoming 'business-like'<sup>460</sup> in trying to raise funds, partnership with some corporations is a powerful instrument for them to develop a self-sustaining pattern of activities.
- Partnering with some corporations bring to the partnership a sense of accountability and a hard-nosed, result-oriented attitude that is often lacking in many NGOs.
- The development of a close working relationship with the local authorities. To have government's support, be it active or tacit, is important for effective corporate-NGO partnership, because governments have the ultimate capability to create an enabling environment for non-profit organizations.

#### **v. The vulnerability of street children**

Many overlapping issues regarding basic healthcare and treatment, such as jeopardized access to information, treatment and counselling support make street

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<sup>458</sup> Brinkerhoff, p. 1

<sup>459</sup> Yamamoto, T., 'Corporate-NGO Partnership: Learning from Case Studies', in Yamamoto, T., and Ashizawa, K, G., (Eds.), *Corporate-NGO Partnership in Asia-Pacific*, 1999. Accessed at <http://www.jcie.org.jp> on 12.05.2008

<sup>460</sup> This was revealed by Makoni who is the current national director in Zimbabwe, when he was addressing some potential partners, at a house group meeting in Crewe, UK. He talked of renovating Chokwa Retreat Centre in Nyanga area to become a fundraising project for the organisation. This is forward thinking which will, if it is successful, enable SUZ to move towards financial stability and sustainable development in its programming.

children more vulnerable to sexual abuse, stigmatisation, poor nutrition and other health related issues. Such dangerous circumstances 'place them at physical and psychosocial risk,'<sup>461</sup> and to a large extent, becoming the most exposed group of all the poor in the society. Some of them have been showing signs of surrender to life which is characterised by their 'dare-devil' adventures of engaging into sexual activities without using condoms.

The number of girls, who are falling pregnant, and the number of children treated for STIs, is a clear testimony suggesting that street children continue to engage in high risk sexual behaviour.<sup>462</sup> Children are often lured into exploitation through offers of food, money, privileges and protection, which in turn exposes them to sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancies.<sup>463</sup>

In the exploitations carried out on children, Nordstrom argues that 'girls suffer the worst because they are the most vulnerable, the least powerful and the easiest to silence.'<sup>464</sup> Young people who grow up in violent situations have a great tendency to be violent.<sup>465</sup> However, no matter how the risks may be reduced, the children still remain vulnerable to these life threatening dangers as long as they spend their nights alone on the streets.

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<sup>461</sup> Panter-Brick, C., 'STREET CHILDREN, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND PUBLIC HEALTH: A Critique and Future Directions.' *Annual Review Anthropology*, 2002, 31, pp. 147-171

<sup>462</sup> During the research period, four pregnant teenage girls were met, two street children revealed that they had STI and one had full blown HIV/AIDS symptoms. See also, Marima, R., Jordan, J., and Cormie I, 'Conversations with Street children in Harare, Zimbabwe'. Department of Psychology, University of Zimbabwe. *Zambezia*, 1995, XXII (i); Anarfi, J. K., Vulnerability to sexually transmitted disease: Street Children in Accra. *Health Transition Review*, Supplement to Volume 7, 1997, pp. 281-306

<sup>463</sup> SA Annual Report, January-December 2008, p. 9

<sup>464</sup> Nordstrom, C., 'Girls and Warzones: Troubling Questions.' *Life & Peace Institute*. 2004 Edition. Accessed at <http://www.essex.ac.uk>, on 10.05.2008

<sup>465</sup> Batmanghelidjh, *Shattered Lives*, pp. 91-109

## **vi. The centrality of street visits in street children work**

Frequent street visits are an essential component of street children work. This is because:

- Most initial contacts with the children are made in the streets where they are invited to the contact centre. However in some cases, street children come to the contact centres with their friends.
- At times meaningful relationships have developed when staff reach out to the children at their work, play or sleeping places. When they are visited at anytime and any place by someone they know, they begin to reveal and share some of their real concerns about life.
- They help staff to know where the children play, work and sleep, and the possible dangers they may experience in such places, and thus helping them to think of new strategies on how best they can be useful to these children.
- It helps staff to have a more accurate figure of the street children in their area.

Due to the importance placed on street visits, the organisation insists that the visits be frequent, even during week end times. These visits have to be carried out in a random but strategic way.

## **vii. Significance of relationships between staff and children**

Relationships, just like in other realm of life, play a very significant role in street children work, and Trotter suggests that through this 'interaction between the worker and the client lies the potential for change.'<sup>466</sup> However, the street worker needs to be

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<sup>466</sup> Trotter, C., *Helping Abused Children and their Families*. (London: SAGE Publications, 2004.),

clear of the level at which he or she is interacting with the street child. Wyse suggests two levels of relationships which are described as vertical or horizontal.<sup>467</sup> Vertical relationships put the youth worker at a higher position than the children he or she is befriending, whereas horizontal relationships level the ground between the service provider and the client. Thus, the street youth workers need to maintain a balance between these two levels because they are both significant in building and establishing trust with street children.

Furthermore, Newcombe<sup>468</sup> sees the value of friendships among teenagers as seeking loyalty, security, and support in a free environment. In such environments with street workers, children develop a sense of their own identity, where they are allowed without any prejudice, to express their feelings. Pursuing this view further, one would safely argue that valuable and positive relationships with street children and other young people therefore consist of such elements as empathy, active listening, authenticity, confidentiality, openness, self-disclosure and a sense of humour.<sup>469</sup> Therefore if children do not feel safe, it is understood if they are 'unable to trust those who are meant to be protecting and caring for them.'<sup>470</sup>

It was learnt that establishing genuine friendships with young people on the streets helps street workers to work together, in consultation with these children who show some willingness, to contribute towards their goals in life. More time spent with street children in their play or work places and participating in their activities helps to build

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p. 136

<sup>467</sup> Wyse, *Childhood Studies*, 26. See also the following literature on friendship. Heaven, P. L., *Contemporary Adolescence: A Social Psychological Approach*. (Melbourne: Macmillan Education Australia Pty Ltd, 1994), pp. 74-78

<sup>468</sup> Newcombe, *Child Development*, 454.

<sup>469</sup> Trotter, *Helping Abused Children and Families*, pp. 136-163

<sup>470</sup> Doyle, p. 15

trust between staff and them. Crowne terms it 'investing deeply in real friendships.'<sup>471</sup>

This is correct as the work is emotionally involving and demands genuine commitment.

Following this argument through, Wernham<sup>472</sup> highlights that relationship building is the natural outcome of a child rights-based and child-centred approach to reform.

Significantly, by aiming to establish good rapport with street children, this approach, therefore places children at the centre of all other activities that are done in trying to help them. It thus acknowledges that the child is the central focus for the whole network of psychosocial, economic and political relationships, showing an understanding and respect of the child's individuality.

These relationships, as described by Sauve are needed to enable the workers to help 'the hardest-to-serve youth in transforming their lives.'<sup>473</sup> This means that relationships may need to be evaluated and transformed in order to support children with safety nets, rather than having them fall through the nets.<sup>474</sup> Staff needs to work with the understanding that the lack of healthy adult relationships might have been one of the key factors that brought them on the street. Therefore, successful restoration of that attitude of trust through relationship building 'strengthens the children's own ability to participate in the relationship-building and transformation.'<sup>475</sup> Thus relationships, as suggested by Ingram and Harris, help young

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<sup>471</sup> Crowne, R., 'A Vision for Friendship', *Youthwork*, April 2008, p. 29; See also Kilbourn, *Street Children*, pp. 194-195

<sup>472</sup> Wernham, M., 'An Outside chance: Street Children and Juvenile Justice- an International Perspective.' *Consortium for Street Children*. Accessed at [www.streetchildren.org.uk](http://www.streetchildren.org.uk) on 13.05.2008

<sup>473</sup> Sauvé, S. "Changing Paradigms for Working with Street Youth: The Experience of Street Kids International." *Children, Youth and Environments*. Volume 13. 1, Spring 2003.

<sup>474</sup> Wernham, 'An Outside chance....'

<sup>475</sup> Ibid

people learn and develop such skills as caring and being cared for, disagreeing and remaining friends, negotiating and compromise and building relationships that are open, honest and based on trust.<sup>476</sup>

### **viii. Street children work is stressful**

Street children workers have also learnt that street children work, by nature, is very stressful. Eriksson's apt evaluation of this work, 'the hearts of street educators are also caught in that balance of hope and pain, strength and freedom,'<sup>477</sup> summarises well the emotional journey of those who are concerned with street children's future.

The workers that were interviewed revealed the following aspects of their work as the major contributors to their high stress levels:

- The delinquent nature of the children they are dealing with
- The girl child who still decides to continue living on the streets despite the abuses perpetrated against her
- The complexity and magnitude of the problem as it involves a lot of other players
- The HIV/AIDS pandemic which has infected and affected both parents and children giving rise to the new child-headed families phenomenon
- The work is emotionally involving

Due to their nature of engagement, street children workers need therefore to be aware of the impact of stress and burnout on both their personal and work lives. Eriksson gives a helpful suggestion of coping with stress as to anticipate it and prepare for it as

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<sup>476</sup> Ingram, G. and Harris, J., 'Defining good youth work', in Harrison, R., and Wise, C., (eds), *Working with Young People*. (London: SAGE Publications, 2005), p. 15.

<sup>477</sup> Eriksson, C. B., 'Caring for street educators', in Kilbourn, *Street Children: A Guide to Effective Ministry*, pp. 199-208

much as possible.<sup>478</sup> He goes further to list some of the stressors as, cultural factors, workload, unrealistic expectations, relationships, attachment and emotional involvement and external forces. These stressors can be reduced or prevented by engaging oneself in personal reflection, creation of a social support network, setting reasonable or realistic workloads, anticipation for difficulties, recreation and to see this work as an investment for life.<sup>479</sup>

#### **ix. The spiritual aspect of street children work**

From the interviews that were done with staff, it emerged that some considered spiritual influence as one of the issues that might cause children to resort to street life.<sup>480</sup> They reached that debatable conclusion after realising that some of the children had all they needed in terms of care from their families, but still chose to run away to the streets. Whilst on the streets, SUZ has also exhausted all its approaches in trying to help the child to go home, but without success. They concluded that '*vana ava vane mamhepo chete*' (these children have got some evil spirits on them).<sup>481</sup> This kind of remark is usually spoken by somebody who would have done all that is expected to help, but fails to get the anticipated outcome.

In the African sense, there is a belief that someone, in most cases a relative of the child's family, might have cast some bad spell on the child so that he or she may not succeed in life. In regard to this view, the workers seek spiritual solutions to these complex cases. This is one of the challenges they face as it becomes difficult to

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<sup>478</sup> Eriksson, C. B., 'Caring for street educators', in Kilbourn, *Street Children: A Guide to Effective Ministry*, pp. 201

<sup>479</sup> Ibid, p. 201

<sup>480</sup> Magumise, Mundondo and Onyimo revealed that their spiritual convictions during the interviews.

<sup>481</sup> Onyimo of Streetsahead could not stop but utter such a spiritual statement during an interview. The behaviour of most street children who refuse to cooperate leaves the staff at a loss of ideas of how best they can help them.



conclude whether their prayers changed the children's situations, or it was their normal efforts and expertise. Furthermore, it was unfortunate that no one gave a testimony of a child whose situation changed as a direct result of their prayers.

Pullinger,<sup>482</sup> Wilkerson,<sup>483</sup> de Carvalho<sup>484</sup> Wilson,<sup>485</sup> and Rankin<sup>486</sup> concur with the view of the power of prayer and give accounts in their books of how they successfully applied spiritual solutions to the problems of drug addiction faced by street youths. They believed that after praying and witnessing Christ to drug addicts, their lives changed. According to their experiences, when the addicts repented, they were baptised with the Holy Spirit and felt new power to resist the urge to take drugs.<sup>487</sup> However, their testimonies show that it was not easy for some children because it would take several months for them to be free from their addiction. Even when they have been freed, they still faced strong temptations to take drugs again especially if they find themselves in smoking environments. The researcher's experience in street children work enabled him to witness some behaviour change by street children, which was very difficult to explain, except to link it with spiritual influence. Therefore, the assertion of spiritual influence is real in street children work.

Agreeing with the emphasis that intense spiritual warfare goes on for the lives of street children, Kilbourn<sup>488</sup> offers helpful practical suggestions to promote spiritual

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<sup>482</sup> Pullinger, *Chasing the Dragon*. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2001), pp. 148-169

<sup>483</sup> Wilkerson, D., *The Cross and the Switchblade*. (New York: Jove Books, 1986)

<sup>484</sup> de Carvalho, S., *The Street Children of Brazil*, (Hodder & Stoughton: London, 1996), pp. 119-145  
See also her other book, *A Survival Guide for Frontline Living, Working out God's calling-whenever he's placed you*. (Hodder & Stoughton: London, 1999), p. 108

<sup>485</sup> Wilson, B., *Whose Child is this?*

<sup>486</sup> Rankin, A., *Treasures of Hope*. (Carlisle: Authentic Media, 2003). The book focuses on how the lives of young women are being changed from drug addiction through prayer at Hope House, a Youth Ministry of Teen Challenge.

<sup>487</sup> Pullinger, *Chasing the Dragon*, p. 143

<sup>488</sup> Kilbourn, *Street Children*, pp. 188-193

nurture in street children namely; prayer, role modelling and camping programmes. She cites Project Jabez in the Philippines and Children of Light in Venezuela as examples that reflect an integration strategy with a holistic approach in their ministry for street children. The researcher also directly witnessed such approach practised by Crianca Feliz (Happy Child), in Brazil.<sup>489</sup>

In this regard, SUZ, as a Christian organisation, is faced with the challenge of recruiting staff that are prayerful, innovative, adventurous and able to maintain the balance between cases that require more spiritual interventions and those cases that need to be dealt with 'in the natural.' The other possibility could be that SUZ staff finds it difficult to help the street children because they are inadequately equipped, to deal with complex issues of such a high magnitude. Therefore the need to do constant in-service training to keep them abreast with the current developments in their field becomes not only apparent but also a necessity.

#### **x. Significance of stable and intact families**

As one seeks to find out the reasons why children resort to the streets, the family's situation becomes a clear major player in the number of children who are on the streets. Connolly with many other researchers ascribe to the 'disintegration of the family under the pressure of poverty'<sup>490</sup> as one of the main causes of street children phenomenon. However, whilst this is a correct assertion, the causes of family disintegration go beyond poverty to include issues such as death due to HIV/AIDS,

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<sup>489</sup> The researcher had an opportunity to visit Crianca Feliz (Happy Child International) in Brazil, a street children servicing organisation based in Belo Horizonte. The visit took place from July 9 to August 9, 2009.

<sup>490</sup> Connolly, M., 'Adrift in the City: A Comparative Study of Street Children in Bogotá, Colombia and Guatemala City', in Boxill, N. A., (Ed), *Homeless Children: The Watchers and the Waiters*, (London: The Haworth Press, 1990), p. 133

divorce, remarriage resulting in children being sexually, physically and emotionally abused by their step parents. Along the same vein, McEvedy describes the effect of family disintegration upon children, by whatever cause, as leaving 'a legacy of regret, sadness and yearning for something that cannot be.'<sup>491</sup>

Therefore, stability and intactness of the family needs to be guarded so as to reduce the problem of street children problem. Also, more importantly is Wright's argument that the family is to be viewed as 'the basic vehicle through which God will change lives.'<sup>492</sup> This view recognises the key influence parents have over their children lives.<sup>493</sup> Furthermore it shows the value placed on strong relationships that should exist between the organisation and families from where these children come.

Concluding this section, it can be asserted that the lessons learnt by SUZ are significant for information sharing and implementation of best practices in street children work. Furthermore, the lessons help street children workers to reduce risk and increase efficiency and effectiveness in their engagements with their clientele.

## 5.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, challenges experienced and lessons learnt by SUZ in its programming were discussed. The writer endeavoured to make it clear that street children work is

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<sup>491</sup> McEvedy, F., *The Step Parent's Parachute*. (London: Time Warner Books, 2005), p. 65. McEvedy offers very exciting, down to earth practical suggestions on how to live through the relationships with children and their new partners, to parents who unfortunately find themselves in step parenting position. See also Deal, R. L., *The Smart Step-Family*. (Minnesota: Bethany House 2002.), pp. 101-192; Scott-Evans, P., *Preparing to Parent Teenagers*. (Carlisle: Alpha, 1999.), pp. 98-105; 'Something To Celebrate: Valuing Families in Church and Society.' The report of a Working Party of the Board for Social Responsibility. (London: CHURCH HOUSE PUBLISHING, 1995.), pp. 39, 44-46; Swindoll, C. R., *The Strong Family: Growing Wise in Family Life*. (Portland: Multnomah Press, 1991), pp. 135-152

<sup>492</sup> Wright, D., 'Parental Guidance' in *Youthwork*, November 2007, p. 20

<sup>493</sup> Wright, 'Parental Guidance', p. 18

full of unpredictable twists and turns due to the nature of children that are being helped. As a multidisciplinary approach is implemented, most of the workers at times feel helpless to make any significant changes in the lives of the children. This is because some of the children, due to their long stay in the streets, have developed very difficult characters to deal with, making them beyond reach for some of the staff who are ill equipped to handle such challenging behaviour and circumstances. Some of the difficult cases have been attributed to spiritual influence and hence needing spiritual solutions. These challenges and lessons learnt will help the organisation to reflect on the areas it needs to explore further and put more emphasis on, so as to remain competitive in this field. SUZ has kept on working with street children because of its convictions to make the gospel relevant to all people despite their status. The next chapter is going to present the biblical basis of their work with street children, making it clear that integral mission was the foundation of Jesus' gospel.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CHRISTIAN BASIS FOR STREET CHILDREN WORK

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is an attempt to present a Christian basis for street children work. It will view this special population as part of the poor, the suffering, the marginalised, the vulnerable, some as orphans and greatly threatened and affected by HIV/AIDS epidemic. What makes them even more special is the fact that, whilst basically all children occupy a special place in God's heart, <sup>494</sup>(Mk. 10:13-16; Mt.19:13-15; Lk. 18:15-17) they are constantly living in life threatening situations and God is revealed as the defender of such people. Therefore, Preston's argument that whilst 'God's graciousness is bestowed impartially on all, he has a special concern for the disadvantaged',<sup>495</sup> is noteworthy.

Along the same vein, Ruiz-Duremdes views God as biased towards 'those who suffer exploitation.'<sup>496</sup> These two views are right if one considers street children as part of the stigmatised population that is powerless to insist on being heard or listened to by members of the society. However, to maintain a healthy balance of services offered to them, and minimise the risk of conflict, their vulnerability should not be overemphasised at the expense of other special needs children. Thus, despite their vulnerability, this chapter presents them as part of God's plan to show his power,

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<sup>494</sup> Gidney, D., *Children in the Heart of God. A biblical perspective for church and home.* (Eastbourne: Kingsway Communications Ltd, 2003), pp. 30-40. He explores the significance of children in God's eyes and their invaluable contribution towards the divine purposes and accomplishments in salvation history.

<sup>495</sup> Preston, R. H., *Church and Society in the Twentieth Century: The Economic and Political Task.* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1983), p. 125

<sup>496</sup> Ruiz-Duremdes, S. R. J., 'Mission imperatives: interpreting the great commission in Asia today', *Transformation*, 15. 3 July/September 1998, p. 4

mercy and sovereignty in the world. Finally, a Christian basis for street children work, focusing on family value, love and value for children, their care and protection, empowerment, training and discipline will be presented. This is with the intention of advocating a more holistic approach that will be discussed in the next chapter, suggesting a way forward in Zimbabwe's street work.

## 6.2 God and the Poor in the Old Testament

The OT is not silent on the issue of the poor. It considers them as the needy people who should be taken care of by the members of the community, hence clear guidelines given to the Israelites on how to treat them. The guidelines also include blessings and curses for those who obey or disobey the instructions on how to treat the poor in their society (Deut. 28:1-2; 15).

The inclusion of Hebrew words *misken* which refers to the one who is dependent, or socially low (Eccl. 4:13; 9:15), and *miskenut* referring to poverty (Deut. 8:9), show the concern Hebrew writers had for the poor, through their use of different wording, but meaning the same thing.<sup>497</sup> In their attempt to theologically define the poor, Shelp and Sunderland write 'the poor is a theological metaphor representing that collection of persons in biblical society who were vulnerable to exploitation or were afforded less than an equal place because of their condition or situation in life. They were without the necessary human or material resources to protect their welfare or to secure their place in society.'<sup>498</sup> The significance of this assertion is that it gives insight into

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<sup>497</sup> Sultan, P., 'Poor/poverty', in Corrie, J., (Ed), *Dictionary of Mission Theology, Evangelical Foundations*. (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2007), pp. 294-298. See also Hesselgrave, D., 'The Poor: A Case of Mistaken Identity?' *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 2, April, 2003, pp. 153-156.

<sup>498</sup> Shelp, E. E., and Sunderland, R. H., *Aids and the Church; The Second Decade*. (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1992), p.101. See also other reflections on the definition of poverty from the biblical point

the lives of the socially deprived people who have become the victims of both natural and man-inflicted disasters perpetuated by people's selfish and oppressive ideologies which are still apparent in society today.

### 6.2.1 God's Defence for the Poor

God defended the widows, orphans, fatherless and the needy that were being sold for a pair of sandals (Amos 2:6). This reveals what Mott<sup>499</sup> has described as 'God's hostility to oppression.' He is correct because, underlying this apparent hostile nature of God is his hatred of sin which appears in many various forms of poverty such as orphan-hood, defencelessness, sickness (Deut. 10:18; Isa. 1:17). Furthermore, the Old Testament reveals that God seriously takes up the cause of the poor as evidenced by many Jewish biblical passages in the Law<sup>500</sup>, the Prophets<sup>501</sup> and the Writings.<sup>502</sup>

Therefore, neglecting such an important social responsibility culminates in indifference and God warns that the perpetrators will not go unpunished, because they are oppressing and crushing the needy. Although this was in the Old Testament context, it can be argued that the same principles apply even today because God still demands that the marginalised be fairly treated by their communities. In the context of this discussion, street children are the needy who are exposed to unfair treatment due to stigmatisation. This thesis contends that their presence on the streets is a sign of a

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of view; Cruz, S., 'What is poverty after all', *Evangel*, 19:1, Spring 2001, pp. 21-23

<sup>499</sup> Mott, S., 'The Contribution of the Bible to Economic Thought', *Transformation*, 4. 3 and 4 June-September/December 1987, p.25

<sup>500</sup> The Law, in this case the first five books of the bible, reveals the concern that God has for the poor or the marginalised. The following are some of the passages that show God's heart for these people. Ex. 23:11; 22:22-24; Deut.15:7-11; 24:12-15.

<sup>501</sup> The prophets were champions of justice and clearly denounced all the corrupt tendencies against the poor, fatherless and the widows of their day. See the following passages: Isa. 1:23; 3:14-15; Jer. 20:13; 22:16; Ezek. 18:12-13; Amos 2:6-7; 5:11-12; 8:4-6; Pr. 22:22-23.

<sup>502</sup> The Writings also reveal God's care and concern for the poor, oppressed, marginalised and despised. See the following: 1 Sam. 2:8; Job 24:3-4, 14; 36:6; Ps. 10:14, 17; 35:10; 40:17; 41:1; 70:5; 72:12; 82:3-4; 109:16, 22; Pr. 17:5; 19:17; 21:13; 28:27; 29:14; 30:14.

morally and spiritually impoverished society.

### 6.2.2 God's Care for the Poor

According to the Old Testament, God appeals to Israel's past history so as to help them consider the poor in their midst favourably. He reminds them of their oppression by the Egyptians until he heard their cry and delivered them from their slave masters. To them, he is therefore a God who does not only care for them but watches over his word to perform it on behalf of his people. He says to them, 'Remember that you were slaves in Egypt....' (Deut. 16: 12). According to this view, Shelp argues that the deliverance experienced by the Israelites 'became the prototype and standard by which Israel's response to oppression and injustice was to be measured.'<sup>503</sup> He is correct because the Israelites had experienced slavery and therefore knew what it meant to live under oppression, and also to experience God's blessing of freedom.

Thus, God's constant reminder, through the prophets, of their difficult past in Egypt is meant to evoke people's fond memories so that they easily identify with those who are suffering in their society. As the prophets identified with the deprived, they became the champions of the voiceless and the oppressed in their communities. They were encouraged to see the poor as people who occupy a special place in God's heart, making them 'subjects of divine concern and therefore worthy of just and merciful treatment'<sup>504</sup> from those privileged with power and authority.

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<sup>503</sup>Shelp and Sunderland, p. 103

<sup>504</sup>Shelp, and Sunderland, p. 103. See Belshaw, D., 'Socio-economic theology and ethical choices in contemporary development policy: an outline of biblical approaches to social justice and poverty alleviation', *Transformation*, 14.1, January/March 1997, pp. 6-7. He gives a brief account of how the poor were supposed to be treated in Old Testament times. See also Houston, W., 'The King's Preferential Option for the Poor: Rhetoric, Ideology and Ethics in Psalm 72', *Biblical Interpretation, A Journal of Contemporary Approaches*, Vol. VII, No 4, October 1999, pp. 341-364. He gives an in depth analysis of Psalm 72, bringing the idea that state authority becomes legitimate when its power is



### 6.2.3 Street Children as the marginalised

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the biblical poor include the widows, orphans, the fatherless, sojourners, strangers, the impoverished, afflicted by HIV/AIDS and poverty, enslaved, oppressed, sick, thirsty, hungry, naked, sinners, prostitutes, tax collectors and the publicans. As a matter of principle, since street children easily fall into many of these categories, it can be suggested that

Lamentations 2: 11-12, 19; 4: 4-5, 8 gives a befitting description of part of their life on the streets. The activity of begging food which they do on the streets 'has not escaped the eyes of the Lord of Hosts.'<sup>505</sup> Consequently, they are devalued, ignored and oppressed by those who assume power and wish to protect their empty status quo at the expense of the underprivileged.

In recent years, part of the Brazilian business population killed street children because they are a menace in the society. This ruthlessness to children can be compared to cannibalism that was done by parents to their children in biblical times (Deut. 28:53-57; Lam. 2:20; Ezek. 5: 10; 23: 36-39).<sup>506</sup> Thus street children's poverty is not only confined to hunger, but to the very foundation of their life and existence. Their lives are at risk and so are the lives of those who wish to protect them. Therefore, those who wish to work with the poor and children at risk so as to alleviate their plight might face resistance from the authorities who feel their sense of security and order is being threatened. However, Eastman<sup>507</sup> maintains that such work to defend the defenceless and to take care of them is a central concern of the work of the kingdom

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exercised on behalf of the weakest members of its society. In this way, it reveals the divine caring nature of Yahweh.

<sup>505</sup> Armerding, p. 26. See also Schillebeeckx, E., *God Among Us: The Gospel Proclaimed*. (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1983), p. 175

<sup>506</sup> Armerding, p. 26

<sup>507</sup> Eastman, M., 'The Child and the Kingdom-an outline of some theological issues', *Transformation*, Vol 14 No 2, April/June 1997, p. 25

and not only 'a concern of a few enthusiasts.'

Concluding this section, the bible has revealed several counterclaims to the above notions:

- The poor are loved by God and deserve compassion
- God hears the poor people's cries of distress and is their hope for deliverance
- God's people, in loyalty and obedience to God, are to recognise the needs of the poor and meet them.<sup>508</sup>

Therefore this research, together with others, can reveal that street children experience a wide range of poverties including lack of safety, family, love, shelter, nourishment, role models, education, hope, esteem and childhood. Thus, their poverty, according to Mveng,<sup>509</sup> goes beyond material lack to encompass the spiritual, moral and sociological. However, it is the material lack that is conspicuous since it results in extreme poverty to the extent that some street children, particularly in Third World countries, end up living in conditions inferior to those of animals.<sup>510</sup> From this point of view, it can be argued that some of the street children experience what Mveng has termed 'anthropological poverty'.<sup>511</sup>

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<sup>508</sup> Shelp, and Sunderland, p. 112

<sup>509</sup> Mveng, E., 'Impoverishment and Liberation: A Theological Approach for Africa and the Third World', in Gibellin, R., (Ed), *Paths of African Theology*. (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1994), pp. 155-157

<sup>510</sup> Mveng, p. 156

<sup>511</sup> Mveng, p.156. He describes it as: 'When persons are deprived not only of goods and possessions of a material, spiritual, moral, intellectual, cultural, or sociological, but of everything that makes up the foundation of their being-in-the world and the specificity of their "ipseity" as individual, society, and history-when persons are bereft of their dignity, their freedom, their thought, their history, their basic creativity, deprived of all their rights, their hopes and ambitions, they sink into a kind of poverty which no longer concerns only exterior or interior goods or possessions but strikes at the very being, essence, and dignity of the human person.'

### 6.3 Jesus and the Poor

Sider's argument that Jesus had 'special concern for the poor, the marginalised, weak, and socially ostracized'<sup>512</sup> reflects the same concern that God has for the poor as revealed by the Old Testament writers. It reveals God's central character.<sup>513</sup> Sider's significant observation does not negate the love God has for both the poor and the rich. In this context, the emphasis is placed on those who need special care due to their undesirable conditions. If God hated the rich people, it is counter productive to the other principles of material blessing in both Testaments. During his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus stated that he had not 'come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them' (Matt. 5:17).

#### 6.3.1 Jesus' Defence of the Poor

As presented above, the Law and the Prophets revealed God as the defender and ally of the oppressed, needy, poor and suffering. Jesus also stated his mission as to preach the good news to the poor, to proclaim freedom for the prisoners, and to release the oppressed (Luke 4: 18-19). In another sense, what Jesus proclaimed at this inauguration becomes his programme of ministry.<sup>514</sup>

The Greek word used for the poor in this passage is *ptochois*<sup>515</sup> and Beals suggests

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<sup>512</sup> Sider, R. J., *One-Sided Christianity? Uniting the Church to Heal a Lost and Broken World*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), pp. 64, 140

<sup>513</sup> Sider, *One-Sided Christianity*, p. 142

<sup>514</sup> Liu, P., 'Jesus' Proclamation and its Fulfilment', in Nicholls, B.J. & Wood, B.R., (Eds), *Sharing the Good News With the Poor*. (Paternoster: Baker, 1996), pp. 44-51

<sup>515</sup> Prior, M., *Jesus the Liberator, Nazareth Liberation Theology (Luke 4. 16-30)*. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press Ltd, 1995), pp. 163-182. He gives an insightful discussion on the meanings of this word and related terms of poverty in Hebrew and Greek, bringing clarity to the reader. See also Hesselgrave, D., 'The Poor: A Case of Mistaken Identity?' *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 2, April, 2003, pp. 156-161; Kerr, J. C., 'Could Poverty Be a Blessing?' *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 2, pp. 212-215. He suggests an interesting view of looking at poverty particularly focusing on Zambian community and drawing lessons from their way of doing things which he has admired but still sympathises with their impoverishment.

that it is 'a New Testament term that speaks of a person who is bowed down, one who occupies an inferior position in society, and outcast.'<sup>516</sup> Sultan agreeing with Beals goes further to suggest another Greek word, *penes*, which is linked with *ponos*, and it means burden or trouble, referring 'to someone of limited means who has to do manual work for a living.'<sup>517</sup> These words describe the street children well because they reflect the conditions that affect them during their stay on the streets.

Jesus calls the poor 'blessed'. Matthew refers to them as the 'poor in spirit' (Mt. 5:10) whilst Luke just refers to them as 'poor' (Lk. 6:20). By the 'poor in spirit,'<sup>518</sup> Hagner argues that Matthew did not 'spiritualize' Luke's form, but agrees with him and goes further to suggest that Matthew also focuses on 'their psychological condition or frame of mind.'<sup>519</sup> According to Talbert<sup>520</sup> and Hagner,<sup>521</sup> this means that 'the poor are almost always poor in spirit; the poor in spirit are almost always the poor.' Whilst this suggestion is plausible, it can be contended that the poor materially are not almost always poor in spirit and the poor in spirit are not almost always the poor materially. This could mean those who feel spiritually inadequate will continue to depend on God for their sustainability both spiritually and materially. Therefore, Keener's<sup>522</sup> suggestion is more encompassing as it 'refers not merely to the materially poor and oppressed, but to those who have taken that condition to their very heart, by not allowing themselves to be deceived by the attraction of wealth.' It can thus be

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<sup>516</sup> Beals, A., *Beyond Hunger*. (Eastbourne: Kingsway Publications Ltd, 1987), p. 144

<sup>517</sup> Sultan, p. 295

<sup>518</sup> Surprisingly, the phrase 'poor in spirit' is found only here and nowhere else in the NT. See Bruner, F. D., *Matthew: A Commentary. Matthew 1-12: Volume 1: The Christbook*. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), p. 158

<sup>519</sup> Hagner, D. A., *Word Biblical Commentary, Matthew 1-13*, (Dallas: Word Books Publisher, 1993), pp. 91-92

<sup>520</sup> Talbert, C. H., *Reading Luke. A New Commentary for Preachers*. (London: SPCK, 1990), p. 71

<sup>521</sup> Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary*, p. 91

<sup>522</sup> Keener, C. S., *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), p. 169

suggested that both writers are referring to the economically challenged people who, due to their condition, find solace in God as their only meaningful hope and long term viable solution.<sup>523</sup>

Prior<sup>524</sup> and Tuckett<sup>525</sup> conclude that the 'poor' in Luke are those who are lacking in the essentials for subsistence. Although their useful insight, in this context, is not directly related to street children's condition, but as a transferable principle, the conclusion applied to the Zimbabwe situation is reasonable, as it helps to portray a true reflection of an African street child whose life is impeded by all kinds of poverty. This person must beg for survival and, street children in Zimbabwe perfectly fall into this category. This kind of material poverty 'involves loss of dignity, status and security.'<sup>526</sup> However, whilst agreeing with Prior and Tuckett, Pobee<sup>527</sup> argues that the word poor 'acquires a religious meaning and status.' He is right because the poor person in Israel was aware of his poverty and therefore relied on God for provision.

Although street children are materially poor, their condition does not guarantee any blessedness which is referred to in Matthew's gospel (5:3), unless they approach God with a heart that yearns to please him (Jas. 4:10). On the other hand, since street

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<sup>523</sup> Davies, M., *Matthew*. (Sheffield: JSOT PRESS, 1993), p. 49. For further discussion on the issue, see also the following literature: Lloyd-Jones, M. D., *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5)*. (London: InterVarsity Press, 1959), pp. 42-52; Patella, M. F., *The Gospel According to Luke*. (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2005), pp. 44-46; Geldenhuys, N., *The New International Commentary on the New Testament. The Gospel of Luke*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1951), pp. 210; Marshall, I. H., *The International Greek Testament Commentary. The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, (Grand Rapids: The Paternoster Press, 1978), p. 249; Hicks, P., *The Message of Evil and Suffering: Light into Darkness*, (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2006), p. 57

<sup>524</sup> Prior, M., *Jesus The Liberator, Nazareth Liberation Theology (Luke 4. 16-30)*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press Ltd, 1995.

<sup>525</sup> Tuckett, C. M., *Luke: New Testament Guides*. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), pp. 94-96

<sup>526</sup> Prior, *Jesus The Liberator*, p. 172

<sup>527</sup> Pobee, J. S., *Who are the Poor? The Beatitudes as a call to Community*. (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1987), pp. 16-20

children are materially poor, Son argues they also have the advantage of being poor in the spirit, because they are aware of their 'inability to escape the miseries they suffer and look for some supernatural power to liberate them.'<sup>528</sup> Whilst this may be a correct assessment of the poor, questions should be raised as to whether children on the street are psychologically and emotionally mature enough to be aware of their dire spiritual poverty which Pink<sup>529</sup> alludes to as 'a consciousness of my emptiness.'

Their horrendous life on the street erodes their thin value systems which may have been established during their stay at home or on the streets. Experience with street children shows that it is not correct to conclude that the poor are always humble as evidenced by some of the street children who show uninformed arrogance and pride which might have been caused by their tattered backgrounds. This means at times some of them do not appreciate advice or counsel from anyone on issues pertaining to life. However, it is still safe to conclude that the New Testament, just like the Old Testament, has evidence showing the concern that God has for the marginalised outcasts and the poor which include street children.

### **6.3.2 Jesus' care for the marginalised**

In his ministry, Jesus is depicted as breaking the barriers erected by religious lawmakers between the social outcasts and the 'socially pure'. He challenged the status quo by befriending and eating with sinners (Lk. 5:29-32), leaving his contemporary religious leaders uncomfortably positioned, which later on influenced their decision to crucify him (Lk. 19:47-48). These leaders called him a friend of

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<sup>528</sup> Son, B., 'Evangelism and the Poor', in Nicholls, B, J., and Wood, B, R., (Eds.), *Sharing the Good News with the Poor*. (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996), p. 72-73; See also Northcott, M., 'Poverty in the city', in Northcott, M., (Ed), *Urban Theology: A Reader*. (London: Cassell, 1998), p.104

<sup>529</sup> Pink, A. W., *An Exposition of The Sermon on the Mount*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House), p. 16-18

sinners (Mk. 2:15-16; Lk. 19:7), but the gospel writers called him the deliverer of the outcasts (Mk. 2:17; Lk.4:18).

For Rodriguez,<sup>530</sup> 'God's special love for the poor and for the social groups condemned to obscurity by official history is the theological theme which Luke brings to our attention.' The outcasts in Jesus' day included children, women, sinners, tax collectors, the poor, the publicans, prostitutes and the sick. It is to them that Jesus directed his ministry showing him as one who has 'a preferential option for the poor.'<sup>531</sup> Here Rodriguez identified the emphasis Jesus placed upon intervention and advocacy. His compassion for the poor compels him to elevate their present status, a process which would transcend material equality within their society, offering them access to the ultimate blessing of every provision necessary for a fulfilled life.

McCann<sup>532</sup> argues that this notion tends to 'unchurch' the rich. By this he means segregating the rich because of their social status, and thus ending up with the same situation whereby the society has a despised rich class. He is correct because throughout the Bible, it is not the rich who were ill-treated but the marginalised, and thus the need to defend them became significant. However, everybody is invited to the kingdom of God and to this effect John 3:16 states that '*whosoever* believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'

Considering the above, the parable of the Great Banquet (Luke 14: 15-24) gives an apt picture of the inclusiveness of the good news. In the parable, the master orders his servant to 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor,

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<sup>530</sup> Rodriguez, D. L., 'The liberating mission of Jesus: A reading of the gospel of Luke in a missiological key', *Transformation*, Vol 14 No 3, July/September, 1997, pp. 30, 23-30

<sup>531</sup> Nicolson, R., *God in AIDS?* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1996), p. 82

<sup>532</sup> McCann, D. P., *Christian Realism and Liberation Theology: Practical Theologies in Creative Conflict*. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1981), p. 214

the crippled, the blind and the lame. Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full' (Luke 14: 21, 23). The master chose to eat with those who were considered 'undesirable and even inappropriate guests at a meal.'<sup>533</sup> With an African perception, street children and all the other social outcasts, immediately come to mind as those who would have been 'forced' to attend the party with the master.

By preaching an inclusive gospel rather than an exclusive one,<sup>534</sup> and positively identifying himself with the outcasts in his society, Jesus made himself an enemy of the religious zealots of his day, who thought of God as only concerned with the pure at heart. Thus, as suggested by Warrington,<sup>535</sup> 'God, in the person of Jesus, had come to touch hurt humanity and infuse his wholeness into lives that had been broken and scarred.' He is correct in the sense that those who had felt far away from God and rejected by the society, would develop a sense of belonging and accepted by God who they believed had marginalised them. This approach applied by Jesus confirms Shelp's suggestion that, 'risks were assumed in order to communicate God's inclusive message'.<sup>536</sup>

The invitation for salvation in its fullness is extended to all people regardless of their 'cultic, national, racial, moral, or social prejudices'.<sup>537</sup> God's limitless love was

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<sup>533</sup> Warrington, K., *Discovering Jesus in the New Testament*. (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers Marketing, LLC, 2009), p. 18

<sup>534</sup> Shelp, and Sunderland, p. 106

<sup>535</sup> Warrington, K., *Healing & Suffering*. (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2005), pp. 17-20. See also his other works on suffering and Jesus' mission; Warrington, *The Message of the Holy Spirit*. (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2009), pp. 70-82; Warrington, *Jesus The Healer, Paradigm or Unique Phenomenon*. (Cumbria: Paternoster Press, 2000), pp. 3-6

<sup>536</sup> Shelp, and Sunderland, p. 110. See also Bailey, K. E., *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008), p. 320

<sup>537</sup> Shelp, and Sunderland, p. 109



demonstrated by showing acceptance of all the despised, the poor and the outcasts.

These groups of people are 'oppressed by social structures and their self image and lifestyle are determined by the definitions, priorities and interests of the powerful people within the society.'<sup>538</sup>

God's love for the marginalised is again clearly revealed by Jesus' words in Matthew 25: 31-46 on the final judgement which states 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' Although Matthew does not use the word poor to refer to the people in this passage, it is implied and Sider considers it as the 'clearest statement about Jesus' identification with the poor.'<sup>539</sup> This view is right in that Jesus considered himself as one of those in need of help from the society. His words to Paul on the road to Damascus also echo the same sentiments of his identification with the suffering when he said, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' (Ac. 9:4). According to Wenham,<sup>540</sup> it is 'Jesus' classic statement of Christian social responsibility' because the gospel passage seems to indicate that one of the measuring rods to be used on judgement day is how people exercised their inherent diaconal nature<sup>541</sup> (Pr. 31: 20; Mt. 19:21; Ac. 6:1; 10:4; Js. 1:26). Along the

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<sup>538</sup> Shelp, and Sunderland, p. 111

<sup>539</sup> Sider, R. J., *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1997), pp. 50, 41-66. See also Sider, R. J., 'What is the gospel?' *Transformation*, Vol 16 No 1, January/March 1999, p. 32

<sup>540</sup> Wenham, D., *The Parables of Jesus*. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1989), p. 91

<sup>541</sup> Milsom, P. and Shaw, I., 'Social Welfare and the Local Church', in Shaw, I. (Ed), *Social Issues and the Local Church*. (Mid Glamorgan: Evangelical Press of Wales, 1988), p. 146. See also the following literature for further discussion on Christians' social responsibility and its inter-relatedness to evangelism. Sider, R., *Good News and Good Works*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), p. 172; Booker, M. and Ireland, M., *Evangelism: Which Way Now*. (London: Church House Publishing, 2004); Clarke, J., *Evangelism That Really Works*. (London: SPCK, 1995); Boff, L., and Boff, C., *Introducing Liberation Theology*. (London: Burns and Oates. 1987); Chester, T., *Awakening to a World of Need. The Recovery of Evangelical Social Concern*. (Leicester: IVP, 1993); Chester, T., (ed.), *Justice, Mercy and Humility, Integral mission and the poor*. (Carlisle, Paternoster Press, 2002); Nicholls, B.J. & Wood, B.R., *Sharing the Good News With the Poor*. (Paternoster/Baker, 1996); West, G., 'The Bible and the Poor. A New Way of Doing Theology. in Rowland, C., (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion To Liberation Theology*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Sheppard, D., *Bias to the Poor*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1983); Sheppard, D., *Built as a City*. (London: Hodder and

same vein, Mother Teresa said, 'Jesus comes to us as the sick and the homeless; he comes to us in the distressing disguise of the poor.'<sup>542</sup> By helping them, God is comforting them through us.<sup>543</sup>

#### 6.4 Children in the Bible

Throughout the Bible, it is clear that besides using older people, God also chose to use children and Gidney has stated that 'He sometimes delights to do so.'<sup>544</sup> He is correct because if one surveys the relationship that existed between God and children as portrayed in the Bible, it is apparent that he also considered them as his servants irrespective of their age and gender. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that this delight in using children as his servants is congruent to his sovereignty whereby he uses creation to accomplish his eternal purposes.

Smale<sup>545</sup> argues that children were dearest to God in Jewish tradition. This view

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Stoughton, Sider, R., *Good News and Good Works*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999); Stott, J., *New Issues Facing Christians Today*. (London: Marshall Pickering, 1999); Stott, J., *Evangelism and Social Responsibility*. (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1982); Aeschliman, G., "God's Heart for the Poor", *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 93, 1996, pp. 31-41; Cerillo, A., & Dempster, M.W., "Carl, F. H. Henry's Early Apologetic for an Evangelical Social Ethics, 1942-1956", *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 34/3(September 1991), pp. 365-379; Dempster, M.W., "Pentecostal Social Concern and the Biblical Mandate of Social Justice", *Pneuma*, Fall 1987, pp. 129-153; Dempster, M.W., "Christian Social Concern in Pentecostal Perspective: Reformulating Pentecostal Eschatology", *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 2 (1993), pp. 51-64; Dempster, M.W., "Social Concern in the Context of Jesus' Kingdom, Mission and Ministry", *Transformation* (1999) 16:2, pp. 43-53; Hughes, D., "Why the Reformed Suspicion of Evangelical Social Action", *Evangel*, Spring 2001, pp. 24-28; Maddox, R., "Visit the Poor: Wesley's Precedent for Holistic Mission", *Transformation*, January 2001, pp. 37-50; McGee, G., "Saving Souls or Saving Lives?", *Paraclete*, 28:4 (Fall 1994), pp. 11-23; Padilla, C.R., "Evangelism and Social Responsibility: From Wheaton '66 to Wheaton '83", *Transformation*, July/Sept 1985, Vol 2 No 3, pp. 27-32; Sider, R., "What is the Gospel", *Transformation* (1999) 16:1, pp. 31-34; Troutman, C.H., "Evangelism and Social Action in Biblical Perspective", *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, Winter 1973, pp. 100-110; World Vision, "Insight, Issue 36, 2005, pp. 6-7;14-15; World Vision, "the alternative gift catalogue", spring/summer 2005, pp. 2-3; Gnanakan, K., *Kingdom Concerns* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1989), 209-212; Mäkelä, M., *Mission According to John R. W. Stott: A Study with Special Reference to the Ecumenicals and Evangelicals*. (Abo: Abo Academi University Press, 1999), pp. 203-224

<sup>542</sup> Mother Teresa, 'The Poor in Our Midst', *New Covenant Magazine*, January 1977, pp. 15-17

<sup>543</sup> Nicolson, p. 87

<sup>544</sup> Gidney, p. 32

<sup>545</sup> Smale, I., *A History of Children, Volume One*. (London: Silver Fish Publishing, 1998), p. 122

considers how God has been expressing his hostility towards those who abused children, and especially the fatherless. In this section, it is going to be suggested that children are not mere spectators or passive actors but can be used by God to change the course of history of any society, regardless of their conditions.<sup>546</sup> This is confirmed by Jesus' favourable treatment of children which was contrary to many who lived in the Greco-Roman empires. At its worst, it associated them with stupidity: *pueritia amentia*.<sup>547</sup> This is because the Greco-Roman culture had a mixed regard for children who they only saw as necessary for 'continuation of family line and national identity.'<sup>548</sup> This low regard is revealed by how boys were often numbered instead of being given names and were easily disposed as shown by the article below:

Offspring was not reared of the will of the father, but was taken and carried by him to a place called Lesche, where the elders of the tribes officially examined the infant. If it was well-built and sturdy, they ordered the father to rear it, and assigned it one of the nine thousand lots of land; but if it was ill-born and deformed, they sent it to the so-called Apothetae, a chasm-like place at the foot of Mount Taygetus, in the conviction that the life of that which nature had not well-equipped at the very beginning for health and strength, was of no

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<sup>546</sup> Roberts, D., *God's Plan for Children*. (Eastbourne: Kingsway Communications, 2003), p. 25

<sup>547</sup> Bakke, *When Children Became People*, p. 17

<sup>548</sup> Dallow, G., *Touching the Future*, p. 37; See also the following literature on keeping the family line. Lane, E., *Special Children? A Theology of Childhood*. (London: Grace Publications Trust, 1996), pp. 9-41; See also the following literature that discuss the same issue of children's special place in God's heart. Gidney, D., *Children in the Heart of God. A biblical perspective for church and home*. (Eastbourne: Kingsway Communications Ltd, 2003), pp. 19- 40; Buckland, R., *Children and the Gospel*. (West Gosford: Scripture Union Resources for Ministry Unit, 2001), pp. 45-49; May, S., Posterski, B., Stonehouse, C., and Cannell, L., *Children Matter. Celebrating Their Place in the Church, Family, and Community*. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), pp. 26-46; Armerding, C. E., 'The Child at Risk: A Biblical View', *Transformation*, Vol 14 No 2, April/June 1997, pp. 25-27, 30-31; Carroll, J. T., 'Children in the Bible', *Interpretation, A Journal of Bible and Theology*, Vol 55 No 2, April 2001, pp. 121-134; Dallow, G., *Touching the Future*. (Oxford: The Bible Reading Fellowship, 2002), pp. 17-43; Stamps, D. L., 'Children in Late Antiquity', in Evans, C. A., and Porter, S. E., (Eds), *Dictionary of New Testament Background*. (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2000), pp. 199-200

advantage either to itself or to the state.<sup>549</sup>

This article may not be an inclusive and conclusive comment, but it is however helpful in that it sheds light on some of the horrendous acts against children that took place during the ancient Greco-Roman times.

Armerding<sup>550</sup> argues that those whom God used were at risk of death at one point in their lives even from childhood. Street children, as part of those at risk could be the solutions to some of the problems which societies experience. Thus, something good can also come from 'Nazareth', the street (Jn. 1:46). It can be suggested that 'babies, children, and young people, are chosen by God to be partners in His mission.'<sup>551</sup>

In the Bible, children have often done very important tasks. The story of the birth of Moses (Ex. 2:1-10) brings into light the wit, courage and faith of Miriam, Moses' sister (Ex. 15:20; Num. 26:59) who risked her life by taking care of him when he was left in a basket floating on river Nile. Gispén calls Miriam's action 'exactly the right thing to do'<sup>552</sup> while Durham aptly describes it as 'quick and bold'<sup>553</sup> because, through the inspiration from God, she had the courage and faith to negotiate the safety of her brother. Naaman, the leper, was healed of his disease after being referred to Elisha, by an Israelite slave girl in his home (2 Kgs. 5:1-14).

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<sup>549</sup> Dallow, G., *Touching the Future*. (Oxford: The Bible Reading Fellowship, 2002), p. 37  
See also Stamps, D. L., 'Children in Late Antiquity', in Evans, C. A., and Porter, S. E., (Eds), *Dictionary of New Testament Background*. (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2000), pp. 197-198; Veyne, P., 'From Mother's Womb to Last Will and Testament', in Veyne, P. (ed), *A History of Private Life From Pagan Rome to Byzantium*, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 9-14

<sup>550</sup> Armerding, pp. 25-27, 30-31

<sup>551</sup> White, K. J., 'Insights into Child Theology through the Life and Work of Pandita Ramabai', *Transformation*, Vol 24 No 2, April 2007, p. 97

<sup>552</sup> Gispén, W. H., *Exodus*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), p. 41

<sup>553</sup> Durham, J. I., *Exodus*. (Waco, Texas: Word Books, Publisher, 1987), p. 16. See also Childs, B., *Exodus*. (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1974), pp. 18-19

The Joseph story in Genesis 37 reveals how God used young Joseph to communicate his future purposes. At that youthful age he had dreams which pointed to his destiny,<sup>554</sup> and the narrative indicates the presence of God in Joseph's life when he was in Egypt, elevating him to the status of Israelite patriarchs although he was still a youth (Gen. 38: 2-5)<sup>555</sup> He realises that 'God has been at work'<sup>556</sup> in his life, and thus coming to Egypt was part of God's plan to preserve their lives and those outside the covenant relationship<sup>557</sup> showing that God's grace can extend beyond the obvious circles. From being a child at risk because of his dreams, he became 'the bearer of the promise and the salvation of his father's family,'<sup>558</sup> showing the preparedness of God to use people from any age and continue to show his favour upon them until his purposes are fulfilled.

Young Samuel shared God's revelation with Eli (1 Sam. 3). As a boy he received a rare and divine revelation from God concerning the terrible judgement on Eli's house. Whilst Samuel's age is unknown when God first spoke to him, it can be strongly argued that he was still a very young child since weaning took place around the age of three or four years (2 Macc. 7:27).<sup>559</sup> His first message was of judgement and doom

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<sup>554</sup> Baldwin, J. G., *The Message of Genesis 12-50. From Abraham to Joseph*. (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1986), p. 159

<sup>555</sup> Westermann, C., *Genesis*, p. 272. For further reading on the Joseph story, see also Westermann, C., *Genesis 37-50*. (London: SPCK, 1987), p. 52; Aalders, G. Ch. *Genesis Volume II*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), pp. 178-189, 197-250; Mobley, R.W.L., *Genesis 12-50*. (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), pp. 33-36; McKeown, J., *Genesis*. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), pp. 163-165, 168, 178-179; Wenham, G., *Genesis 16-50*. (Dallas, Texas: Word Books Publisher, 1994), pp. 350-360, 373-37, 428

<sup>556</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 37-50*, p. 145

<sup>557</sup> Wenham, G., *Genesis 16-50*, p. 428

<sup>558</sup> Armerding, p. 27

<sup>559</sup> Gordon, 77. See also Klein, R. W., *Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 10, 1 Samuel*. (Waco, Texas: Word Books, Publisher, 1983), p. 10

upon Eli and Gordon rightly describes the oracle as 'unexpected as it was unpalatable.'<sup>560</sup>

In John's opening remarks of his gospel, he reveals Jesus as the word made flesh, (Jn.1:14). Thus Jesus went through the natural process of birth and growth, signifying the importance of childhood and youth development. Thatcher offers a profound theological suggestion about Jesus' relationship to children by maintaining that he did not identify with them because he said he did, but it is because he also was once a child.<sup>561</sup> Morris supports this idea and argues that the description of Jesus in Luke 2:16, 40 and 43 as 'baby', *brephos*, 'little boy', *paidion*, and 'boy' *pais*, shows a record of his physical, mental and spiritual development.<sup>562</sup> This means as a child he also 'experienced helplessness, loving care, obedience to parents, and the process of growing in divine favour' (Lk.2:52).<sup>563</sup> As he became the climax of God's salvation plan for all nations, he became a child at risk of death from Herod. In Luke's gospel, the infancy narratives of Jesus show that God as much as he used children in the Old Testament, he would also use Jesus as a young child.

The fact that Jesus came into this world as a child reveals the heart of God for children and his preparedness to use them as agents of his good news. Whilst 'the

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<sup>560</sup>Gordon, R. P., *1&2 Samuel*. (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1986), p. 88

<sup>561</sup>Thatcher, A., 'Theology and Children: Towards a Theology of Childhood', *Transformation*, Vol 23 No 4, October 2006, pp. 194-198

<sup>562</sup> Morris, L., *Luke*, (Revised Edition). (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 101. See also Talbert, C. H., *Reading Luke; A New Commentary for Preachers*. (London: SPCK, Holy Trinity Church, 1990), pp. 36-38

<sup>563</sup> May, p. 38

incarnation powerfully affirms the significance of childhood,<sup>564</sup> and the significant 'salvific role'<sup>565</sup> children can play in God's plan, it also reveals God most completely<sup>566</sup> (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:15, 19). Therefore, in God's sight, children's 'worth cannot be exaggerated.'<sup>567</sup> However, although it can be argued that these were rare occasions when God used children, it is still safe 'child theology' to conclude that just like adults they have a special place in God's salvation plan to advance and accomplish his purposes.<sup>568</sup> Therefore children are not 'mere spectators in the drama of salvation history'<sup>569</sup> but active agents worthy to be used by God at any stage in their lives.

## 6.5 A Christian basis for street children work

Having established from the above discussion that the Bible reveals God as the defender of the poor and street children being an undisputed part of this group, the following sections propose a Christian basis for street children work which can be adopted by SUZ. These suggestions are not exhaustive but serve as provocations for further theological and developmental research on future engagements in street children work. The suggestions find their roots in the broadly educational and principles of support located in the Bible. Although this does not undermine the rich African value system, it is the submission of this thesis that Biblical theology has a

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<sup>564</sup> May, p. 38. See also Bridger, F., *Children Finding Faith*. (Bletchley: Scripture Union, 2000), p. 221

<sup>565</sup> Patella, M. F., *The Gospel According to Luke*. (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2005), p. 19

<sup>566</sup> Sider, *Rich Christians*, p. 47

<sup>567</sup> Strange, *Children in the Early Church*. (Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster, 1996), pp. 57-58

<sup>568</sup> Price, A., *Children in Renewal*. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1996), pp. 1-11. Throughout the chapter, he strongly argues for the involvement of children in God's plan for the world. See also Roberts, *God's Plan for Children*, pp. 23-24

<sup>569</sup> Roberts, D., *God's Plan for Children*. p. 23. See also Hale, S., 'A theological model of youth ministry' in Hale, S., and Bazzana, S., (Eds), *Towards a Theology of Youth Ministry*. Papers presented at the first Australian conference on youth ministry, Ridley College, Melbourne, 1998. (Sydney South: Aquila Press, 1999), pp. 36-46; Bunge, M. J., *A More Vibrant Theology of Children*. Accessed at <http://www3.baylor.edu/christianethics/childrenarticleBunge.pdf> on 13.08.2008.

vital role to play in diagnosing and addressing the multidimensional issues which threaten human dignity in contemporary culture and society with regard to children.<sup>570</sup>

The African culture values marriage, family life and children. Mwiti<sup>571</sup> has correctly evaluated the African value system in relation to children by stating that;

African indigenous cultural values recognised the child's worth, ensuring that they lived, were loved and protected, assured of survival, and allowed them to be children. Some value systems need to be evaluated and cast aside if they do not enhance the well being of children.

Therefore there is need for a consistent biblically based value system teaching especially in matters of parenting and protection of children from every form of abuse.

#### **i. Family values**

In street children work, the family environment plays a crucial role in curbing the phenomenon of street children. Biblical material (Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:6-8; Josh. 24:15; Eph. 6:1-4) reflects the family 'as God's creational context for human lives.'<sup>572</sup> This reveals that family value is strongly related to the welfare of children, and, according to Schaffer,<sup>573</sup> it is the 'basic unit within which the child is introduced to social living.' It is also, according to Kwashi, 'the most important single factor in moulding or shaping a human being.'<sup>574</sup> Whilst it can be correctly argued that God's blessings

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<sup>570</sup> Soulen, R. K., and Woodhead, L., 'Contextualizing Human Dignity', in Soulen, R. K., and Woodhead, L., (Eds), *God and Human Dignity*. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), p.1

<sup>571</sup> Mwiti, G. K., *Child Abuse: Detection, Prevention and Counselling*, (Rev Edn), (Nairobi: Evangelical Publishing House, 2006), pp. 24-25

<sup>572</sup> Wright, C. J. H., 'Family, Covenant and Kingdom of God: Biblical Traditions', in Singh, D. E. and Farr, B. C., (Eds), *Christianity and Cultures: Shaping Christian Thinking in Context*, (Carlisle: Regnum Books International, 2008), pp. 199-210

<sup>573</sup> Schaffer, H. R., *Social Development*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Inc, 1996), pp. 204

<sup>574</sup> Kwashi, G. L., 'Cultural/Religious Factors in our Understanding of Family', in Singh, D. E. and Farr, B. C., (Eds), *Christianity and Cultures: Shaping Christian Thinking in Context*, (Carlisle:



flow to anyone under any circumstances, it is through the family channel that He initially intended to release his blessings for every child who is brought up in this creation order (Gen. 1:28; Gen. 12:2-3; 49:1-28). However, due to humanity's fallen nature, the family's primary function has been distorted by evil, resulting in many dysfunctional family units, ending with the inevitable street children problem.

The preamble to the Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises,

That the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community .....[and] that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.<sup>575</sup>

The above quote shows the significance placed upon family stability by the United Nations. Thus the absence or inability of homes to create a nurturing environment for its individual members robs children of parental role models, resulting in media or peer modelled children<sup>576</sup> who are often crippled and inhibited from attaining their original God given potential. It is through the family institution that both adults and children are provided with the opportunity to experience the highest form of love, acceptance, nurturing, development and empowerment.<sup>577</sup>

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Regnum Books International, 2008), p. 233

<sup>575</sup>Blanc, C. S., (Ed). *Urban Children in Distress*. UNICEF. 1994, pp. 323-330

<sup>576</sup> "Adolescence, Youth Ministry and World Mission", *Transformation*, Vol 11 No 2, April/June 1994, p. 17. This is a summary of a report from an international consultation focussing on the need to develop youth ministry as a missiological activity.

<sup>577</sup> Much literature that gives emphasis on the value of marriage and family unit has been published. Its breakdown whether legitimate or not, has great negative repercussions on those closely related to it, especially children, both nuclear and extended. The following references are part of the intensive and

Besides creating members of a stable and resilient character, the healthy family environment also builds strong safety nets to fall back on, for both children and adults, in case something tragic happens in their lives. Thus, the family, according to Davies, should remain the source of primary socialisation for children and young men and women so that they may 'attain sexual and civic maturity.'<sup>578</sup> Furthermore, and agreeing with this assertion about family significance, Berger contends that it is here, and not at the planning boards of governments that the syntheses productive of any meaningful changes occur.<sup>579</sup>

It is not only meaningful changes that are influenced through the family, but even the negative ones. Therefore, the family unit needs to be protected from any internal and external challenges that threaten its sanctity. Unfortunately, according to Agnelli, this family unit has been affected by the breakdown of extended families and community structures which used to offer healthy safety nets necessary to affirm members' self-

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extensive research work done on the significance of the family as a symbol of social stability and traditional moral virtue; Agnelli, pp.42-56; Domonian, J., *Marital Breakdown*, (Middlesex: Penguin Books and Darton, Longman & Todd, 1968), pp. 129-139; Howarth, G., (MP), *The Cost of Family Breakdown: A report by Family Matters, produced for the Lords and Commons Family and Child Protection Group*, (Bedford: Family Matters, 2000); Drane, J and O., *Happy Families? Building Healthy Families*, (London: Marshall Pickering, 1995), pp. 14-18; Larson, B., *Larson's Book of Family Matters*, (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Incl, 1986), pp. 156-162; Erera, P. I., *Family Diversity: Continuity and Changes in the Contemporary Family*, (London: Sage Publications, 2002), pp. 1-16; Johnston, O. R., *Who Needs The Family? A survey and a Christian assessment*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979), pp. 18-19; Grunlan, S. A., *Marriage and the Family: A Christian Perspective*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), pp. 25-26; Clapp, R., *Families at the Crossroads, Beyond Traditional and Modern options*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), pp. 9-26; Scott-Evans, P., *Preparing to Parent Teenagers*, (Carlisle: Alpha, 1999), pp. 98-105; Steel, L., and Kidd, W., *The Family*, (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), p. 1; Allan, G., (ed), *The Sociology of the Family; A Reader*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1999), pp. 2-3; Wyse, D., *Childhood Studies: An Introduction*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), pp. 33-37; Hetherington, M. E., 'Coping with Family transitions: winners, losers and survivors', in Woodhead, M., Light, P., and Carr, R., (eds), *Growing up in a Changing Society*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 115-136;

<sup>578</sup>Davies, J., 'The Family - R.I.P.? Religion, Marriage, the Market and the State in Western Societies', in Davies, J., (ed), Berger, B., and Carlson, A., *The Family: Is it just another lifestyle choice?* (London: The IEA Health and Welfare Unit, 1993), p. 1

<sup>579</sup>Beger, B., 'The Bourgeois Family and Modern Society', in Davies, p. 24

esteem and control over their lives.<sup>580</sup> For example, the Zimbabwe family has experienced such devastation through HIV/AIDS epidemic which has killed millions of both adults and children.

Commenting on children's work, Stone argues that, 'it is impossible to study children in isolation from those who killed them off or fed them, neglected them or nurtured them, beat them or fondled them, namely their parents.'<sup>581</sup> This is correct if one looks at the causes of street children from the view of husband and wife relationships that are 'fractured by internal struggles'<sup>582</sup> caused by a multiplicity of issues. Since parents are the 'significant others'<sup>583</sup> to their children, the breakdown of nuclear family therefore, has long term negative emotional, psychological and social impact on the children's development and character.<sup>584</sup>

While the view that family stability has experienced insurmountable challenges is correct, Swindoll<sup>585</sup> contends that being an endangered species does not mean that the family is doomed. The family, as argued by Berger, must therefore remain 'the one

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<sup>580</sup> Agnelli, p. 49

<sup>581</sup> Stone, L., 'Children and the family', in Barnes, P., Oates, J., Chapman, J., Lee, V., and Czerniewska, (eds), *Personality, Development and Learning, A Reader*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton and Open University, 1984), p. 17

<sup>582</sup> Swindoll, C., *The Strong Family: Growing Wise in Family Life*, (Portland: Multnomah, 1991), p. 13

<sup>583</sup> Parents are, in most cases, the 'significant others' to their children. This means that they have been accepted by their children as role models. The concept falls under social learning theory which was developed by Bandura, A., in his book, *Social Learning Theory*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1977), quoted by Hayes, N., in her book, *Foundations of Psychology: An Introductory Text*, (Surrey: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd, 1994), p. 250. Social-learning theory emphasised the importance of limitation in the acquisition of novel forms of behaviour, and of identification with role models in learning general styles. Together these learning processes formed the foundations of individual personality. Thus the family is supposed to create a positive conducive socialisation environment for its members. The absence of a positive father-figure ushers the family into disarray since there is no one the children can identify with.

<sup>584</sup> For further reading on effects of divorce on children see also; Conway, H., *Domestic Violence and the Church*, (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1998), pp. 31-33. She argues that it is a myth that children can be effectively protected from the violence which goes on in their own home. Although they may not be physically abused, they will still be affected by just being in the same environment with the violence.

<sup>585</sup> Swindoll, C., *The Strong Family: Growing Wise in Family Life*, (Portland: Multnomah, 1991), p. 13

and only haven in a heartless world'<sup>586</sup> which must be protected by both parents and governments in order to constantly create environments conducive for child nurturing. By suggesting such protection over the family, Berger is offering a helpful insight into the significance and value of the family as a core unit to the survival of any community. However, this highlights the immediate reactive work, but also indicates the need for SUZ's ongoing proactive work to uphold, promote, support and nurture strong, vital family structures.

## ii. Child training and discipline

The responsibility of training and educating children primarily lay on parents<sup>587</sup> (Deut. 6:4-9) who would have received the same instructions from their own parents. It became their duty to 'impress' the godly principles upon their children in a variety of manners and places.<sup>588</sup> According to the Jewish view, this act of obedience by parents, shades light on the appropriateness of the family as a prime place for teaching of faith, history, laws and traditions of family values. This same view is still upheld by Christians, as they thrive to raise their children in the way closest to the Old Testament advice with variations that are contextually relevant to their cultures. The OT guidance is followed because there is not much advice on how to nurture children in the NT, leaving it to Christians to relate the few NT passages to OT material. Both the OT and NT show the importance of families in disciplining and training of

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<sup>586</sup> Berger, B., 'The Bourgeois Family and Modern Society', in Davies, p. 19

<sup>587</sup> Sisemore, *Of Such is the Kingdom*, pp. 90-91. See also Smale, p. 135; Bourg, F. C., 'The Family Home as the Place of Religious Formation', in Jeanrond, W. G. and Cahill, L. S., *Religious Education of Boys and Girls, Concilium*, 2002/4, (London: SCM Press, 2002), pp. 9-14; Epstein, I. (ed), *Seder Mo'ed, Shabbath 12a-12b, The Babylonian Talmud volume 1*, (London: The Soncino Press, 1938), p. 47. The Talmud expresses that fathers had the parental obligation to teach their children.

<sup>588</sup> Sisemore, p. 91

children because it is 'the ideal setting for the growth and development of children from babyhood to maturity.'<sup>589</sup>

Maintaining the same view, DeVries advocates full parental responsibility over children's overall development. He says that 'parents are almost always the single most significant determining factor in the development of their children.' Such family setting where parental involvement in children's lives is great provides one of the most effective lifelong nurturing structures to carry young people to maturity.<sup>590</sup>

Thus the non-formal and yet important education of children about life issues remains the sole mandate of the parents. Such nurturing seems to be an approach that had adopted the famous words of Proverbs 22:6 which say; 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.'

Nurturing of children in this case would take the form of training, discipline, teaching and instruction, and the whole book of Proverbs provides helpful detailed positive and negative instructions on how to live in society. They are positive in the sense that they encourage the child to do the right things in terms of his way of thinking, how to relate to people, how to regard those in authority, how to handle money and how to have a good family life. It is negative in the sense that some of the instructions come in the form of prohibitions (Pr. 22:22-23:17, 20-22, 31), warnings (1-9) and punishment (Pr.13:24; 22:15; 23:13; 29:15. Furthermore as children are raised, they

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<sup>589</sup> Lane, E., *Special Children? A Theology of Childhood*. (London Grace Publications Trust, 1996), pp. 113-114.

<sup>590</sup> DeVries, M., *Family-Based Youth Ministry*. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), p. 67

are also taught important aspects of Godly living such as facts of scripture, obedience to parents and respect for God.<sup>591</sup>

Considering that Zimbabwe's street children spend most of their time away from home, it is apparent they are deprived of the important parental guidance which is crucial for their psychological, emotional, religious and moral development. They are hostile to adults who want to advise them, and thus rendering both the biblical and the African *ubuntu*<sup>592</sup> concepts invalid in their world where they run after false and empty freedom. *Ubuntu* is a philosophy of life pertaining to personhood, and is a worldview closely linked with African peoples in rural settings. It is the African's philosophy of life concerning the principle of moulding "good" and genuine persons in society. Perceptions of "good" or genuine may vary from community to community, but the influencers of personal development towards being good are external factors (the cultures of their communities and their environment) and internal factors (their traditional religions and God).

While cultural norms and values are fundamental to the concept of person as a good person, the two interdependent dimensions to *ubuntu* (personhood), external factors and internal factors are important. The external factors are people centred and are culturally bound. The internal factors are linked to issues of intentions of the individual person. Therefore, obedience to parents and respect for God as

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<sup>591</sup> Lane, E., *Special Children? A Theology of Childhood*. (London Grace Publications Trust, 1996), pp. 120-126

<sup>592</sup> *Unhu/Hunhu/Ubuntu*, words from the Nguni language family, all portray Africans' traditional philosophical values and their worldview. See Binsbergen, W. V., *Ubuntu and the Globalisation of Southern African Thought and Society* (2002). Accessed at [www.shikanda.net/general/ubuntu.htm](http://www.shikanda.net/general/ubuntu.htm) on 16/06/08; Kimmerle, H., Review of "African Philosophy through Ubuntu" *African Philosophy* 13.2 (August, 2000), p. 191; Oyewumi, O., *The Invention of Women* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 36-40; Nguni languages include Zulu, Xhosa, Swati (South Africa- *ubuntu*), Shona (Zimbabwe- *unhu/hunhu*), and Setswana (Botswana- *botho*).

commanded in the Bible, are also African core values which will not be new if presented to street children.

However, the facts of scripture need to be carefully woven into the rehabilitation process since some of the children come from families that are involved in ancestral worship. As Christians work with street children, basing their approach on biblical view points, they will offer their clientele long-lasting values which enable them to face real life challenges as they struggle to survive. Also since some of the children would have spent a long time on the streets without any parental guidance, training and discipline become essential in their rehabilitation process as they undergo a mind set reconstruction. Regarding this view, one can contend that as they begin to enjoy and appreciate the training and discipline received from street children workers, they become empowered to face and overcome some real life challenges. Thus training and discipline can be used by workers as tools that are related to learning and thinking skills, which will be discussed in the following sections. These skills, if practiced regularly with young people, will eventually produce empowered individuals.

### **iii. Empowerment**

In this thesis 'empowerment' means investing authority and equipping people with the skills, confidence and hope they need to enable them to bring positive change into their lives.<sup>593</sup> This is a general empowerment principle which can be applied to work with street children. Drawing from biblical literature, it is clear that from the beginning, God empowered man just after creating him. In Genesis 1: 26-30, God

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<sup>593</sup> O'Connor, S., 'Hope and a Future; Empowering street children and their communities to rebuild their lives: An introduction to holistic, non-residential care for street children, their families and communities, based on the approach of Child Restoration Outreach Uganda.' Viva Network, 2003. Accessed at <http://www.viva.org> on 04.11.2008.

gave man the mandate to procreate, to take care and have dominion over the earth. Furthermore, Jesus chose twelve apostles whom he trained and showed them how to live a victorious life on earth. He also released the seventy two disciples to go and exercise ministry whilst he was still with them (Lk: 10:1-23). After his death and resurrection, he released and left the Holy Spirit to direct, teach, guide, and empower them and promised his presence till the end of the age (Matt: 28: 20). He also promised power from high when the Spirit comes upon them (Ac: 1: 8). When that happened at Pentecost in Jerusalem, he confirmed his word by signs and wonders through them. Throughout the book of Acts, Luke shows the indispensable part the Holy Spirit played, and continues to play in the lives of all those who believe in God.

Equipping street children with skills in all spheres of life enables them to tackle some of life's challenges with confidence, subsequently giving them a sense of self worth and confidence. However, this does not make them their own masters, creating a false and myopic view of life, but under SUZ guidance, they will be trained to depend totally on the incorruptible word of God.

In its effort to empower street children, SUZ may adopt a simple working conceptual framework which comprises of distinct, but inter-related skills that are essential to success in learning, life and work. These skills are vital for developing and empowering children to become creative thinkers, reflective learners, independent enquirers, team workers, self managers and effective participators.<sup>594</sup>

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<sup>594</sup> 'A Framework of Personal Learning and Thinking Skills.' Accessed at <http://curriculum.qca.org.uk> on 27.10.2008. This site offers very helpful conceptual educational material which can be easily adapted to the Zimbabwe education system.



### **a. Creative thinkers**

This approach encourages street children to think creatively by generating and exploring ideas, making original connections. For example, with the help of SUZ, children may form a musical choir or band. Whilst other factors such as team work principles will be vital, in this case, they are encouraged to work with others to find valuable imaginative solutions and outcomes of their music production. Thus, as they engage themselves in such activity, street children are stimulated or challenged to generate ideas and explore possibilities of capturing their audience for good music sales, ask questions to extend their thinking, connect their own and others' ideas and experiences in inventive ways, question their own and others' assumptions, try out alternatives or new solutions and follow their ideas through and adapt new ideas as circumstances change.

### **b. Reflective learners**

As they explore possibilities and try to implement their ideas, street children evaluate their strengths and limitations, setting themselves realistic goals with criteria for success. For example, they may engage themselves in carpentry project such as making kitchen cabinets. This process allows them to monitor their own performance and progress, inviting feedback from others and making changes to further their learning skills. During these activities, street children get into circumstances that allow them the opportunity to assess themselves and others, identifying opportunities and achievements, set goals with success criteria for their development and work, review progress acting on the outcomes, invite feedback and deal positively with praise, setbacks and criticism, evaluate experiences and learning to inform future progress and communicate their learning in relevant ways for different audiences.

### **c. Independent enquirers**

During their growth, children are inquisitive about many issues of life and they generally ask questions, although at times some of these questions are never verbalised. They have investigative and adventurous mindset. With the help of SUZ, street children may be asked to think of projects they want to display at the NGO annual national exhibition gala that takes place in Harare. As they process and evaluate information in their investigations of the exciting project to embark on, planning what to do and how to go about it, they develop into independent enquirers who take informed and well-reasoned decisions, recognising that others have different beliefs and attitudes towards different issues in life.

Therefore, if street children are given this opportunity, considering their age, independent attitude and other circumstances, the possibility for them to enjoy such activities is high. Allowing such initiatives in their lives give them decision making skills that will enable them to plan and carry out research, appreciating the consequences of decisions, explore issues, events or problems from different perspectives, analyse and evaluate information, judging its relevance and value, consider the influence of circumstances, beliefs and feelings on decisions and events, support conclusions, using reasoned arguments and evidence.

### **d. Team workers**

Street children, just like any other young people of their age, work confidently with others, adapting to different contexts and taking responsibility for their own part. Although people normally view them as disorganised and problem ridden, street children, in many instances, have shown that they can effectively work in groups as

teams and are able to organise themselves in order to achieve their goals. For example during this research, SA was attempting to build a football team which was earmarked to participate in the World Cup Football Tournament for the homeless in Holland 2008.

In their endeavours to remain connected to one other, they will be able to learn to co-operate with others and to work towards common goals, reach agreements, managing discussions to achieve results, adapt behaviour to suit their different roles and situations, show fairness and consideration to others, take responsibility, showing confidence in themselves and their contribution and provide constructive support and feedback to others.

#### **e. Self-managers**

The fact that street children leave their homes where there is a sense of security and some assurance of getting food everyday, and go to live in the streets with measurable success, is arguably a testament of their ability to manage themselves. However, whilst this testimony may be true, some have caused themselves to suffer irreparable damage through sickness and HIV/AIDS due to lack of guidance and discipline.

Those who have managed to organise themselves in the streets show their sense of personal responsibility, initiative, creativity and enterprise with a commitment to learning and self-improvement. For example, those who are willing and able are given the opportunity to go back to formal education where their potential is stretched for their benefit. In such environment, these adventurous young people actively embrace change, responding positively to new priorities, coping with challenges and looking for opportunities that give them hope for a better future.

Therefore any programmes that seek to help street children need to take cognisance of the energy and creativity that young people possess and take advantage of it for their benefit. Thus working with street children in this area of self management helps them to seek out challenges or new responsibilities and show flexibility when priorities change, work towards goals, showing initiative, commitment and perseverance, organise time and resources, prioritising their actions, be able to anticipate, take and manage risks, deal with competing pressures, including personal and work-related demands and respond positively to change, seeking advice and support when needed

#### **f. Effective participators**

As they grow up, young people can become actively engaged with issues that affect them and their communities. They can be invited to take part in forums that discuss young people's issues and to offer suggestions on how to deal with them. An example of discussion topics can be 'Children's Rights'. This development encourages them to critically think of ways they can contribute towards the well being of those around them and themselves, which becomes evident from their full participation in the life of their community by taking responsible action to bring improvements for others as well as themselves. Such opportunities help them to discuss issues of concern, seeking resolution where needed and act on it, present a persuasive case for action, propose practical ways forward, breaking these down into manageable steps, identify improvements that would benefit others as well as themselves, influence others, negotiating and balancing diverse views to reach workable solutions and act as advocates for views and beliefs that may differ from their own, thus encouraging tolerance in life.

#### **iv. Protection**

The biblical basis outlined from the Old Testament to the teaching of the New Testament suggests, in effect, that God envisions a world in which mutual rights and expectations are clearly defined and understood. The bible extends the responsibility for protecting and safeguarding children not just to a parent's own offspring but also to the stranger and orphan (Deut. 24:17), and it leaves no option of silence in the face of injustice. Thus it calls each Christian to act justly and to speak for the widowed, the orphaned, the foreigner, and the oppressed (Deut. 10:18, 24:19, 27:19; Ps. 82:3; Is. 1:17; Jer.22:3).

The apostle Paul sanctioned the authority of those in power only on the premise that such authority is rooted in the greater jurisdiction of God. World Vision<sup>595</sup> offers four clear and useful biblical suggestions for Christians who engage themselves in children's work. Below is a summary of World Vision Bible based guidelines that form the basis for child protection in their Christian work.

1. God confers on people their worth. The human race, including every child, is created in the image of God and given a mandate to participate in the stewardship of God's unfolding creation (Gen. 1:26–28). People do not have rights simply because they exist, but because God chose to give them value and, therefore, rights (Rom.5:8–11). Thus creating room for people to be what God intended them to be is the Christian basis for respecting human rights.

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<sup>595</sup> World Vision: *Protecting Children: A Biblical Perspective on Child Rights*. Accessed at <https://www.worldvision.org> on 22.01.2009; *Working with Street Children. Involving the Community, Module 9. A Training Package on Substance Use, Sexual and Reproductive Health including HIV/AIDS and STDs*. Accessed at <http://www.unodc.org> on 24.01.2009. The document covers issues concerning child protection with direct reference to street children work.

2. Jesus' call for people to love their neighbours as themselves (Lk. 10:27; Jn. 15:12; 1 Jn. 3:17, 23) reflects profound respect for others as equal in worth before God, even though they do not share the same Christian faith. Thus it is the visible demonstration of love, in the real world, that Scripture says will bring people to faith in Jesus Christ.

3. Throughout the Bible, the focus is on doing justice for those without power in society: the orphan, the widow, the stranger, and the poor. Protection for the rights of vulnerable groups was not just a matter of charity, it was an obligation under the legal system described in the Old Testament, (Ps. 11:7; 33:3; 35:10; 106:3; Pr. 29:7; Isa. 1:17, 5:7; Hos. 12:6; Amos 5:15, 24; Mic. 3:1–9; Zech. 7:9–10), and Jesus also made it clear that he came to fulfil the Old Testament vision, not replace it (Mt. 5:17). This focus is therefore not because vulnerable people are morally superior, but it is because a society that respects their rights is likely to respect the rights of all.

4. Everyone needs equal treatment despite his or her social status. Therefore, failure by people with authority and power to protect the vulnerable rouses God's anger and he has promised to defend them against those who want to use their power to harm them (Am. 2:6-7, 12).

This biblical framework distinguishes between nurturing, loving parents and those who reject the stewardship role entrusted to them by God. In such cases, those who work with street children at risk have a duty to protect them from all forms of abuse which is perpetrated by their parents or carers because children are also human beings and should not be considered as second class citizens in any society. Therefore, the concept of rights provides a useful tool for trying to gain protection for abused and

neglected children, particularly through legal instruments defining standards of behaviour. However, whilst children are being offered protection, it is also the responsibility of the state to address the needs of parents so as to build their capacities in child rearing.<sup>596</sup>

#### **v. Love**

In all Christian activities, love is the undisputed most significant basic foundation for any meaningful programming. Shedd argues it 'is probably the most attractive feature of any program for street children.'<sup>597</sup> Thus, it is not a probability but a fact that street children need much love as this is one of the poverties which they experience at higher levels during their time on the streets. Taking it further, it can be contended that if children who are in stable families still need to feel and experience love from their families, then street children need more of it since they are alienated from the environment that should offer that love. These children are not aware of their infinite affinity for love revealed by their constant search for 'family' and 'gangs' to belong to during their stay on the streets.

From what the children experience whilst on the streets, it is evident they are deprived of this precious gift. At most, if they sense it from their inmates, it will be conditional and superficial. The need for relationship and trust building becomes essential in order to win their trust. Whilst it initially seems impossible to reach out to street children with love, if genuinely and constantly shown to them, it is the language they will eventually understand and embrace. Therefore, this principle of love can be practically worked out by, for example, providing clothes, accommodation,

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<sup>596</sup> Sidebotham, P., 'Child Protection' in *Triple Helix*. Spring 2004, p. 11

<sup>597</sup> Shedd, p. 135

medication, counselling, education assistance and many other practical actions which benefit the children.

## **6.6 CONCLUSION**

In light of the above discussion, it is clear from the Bible passages explored that children have always been at the heart of God. He pledges his protection for them against all abuse and mistreatment from those with authority over them. They are viewed as a blessing from God. The bible also gives guidance on how to raise them so that they fully know, obey and enjoy a healthy relationship with God. Although there is not much said about children in the New Testament, it can still be safely argued that Jesus' preferential love for them is an indication of their significance in God's kingdom. He showed that children can be major contributors in his salvific plan. He has used and can still use some of the infants and children to declare his praises and to pass judgement over the proud, revealing their simple but discerning faith in him (Ps. 8:2; Matt. 21: 14-16). In these passages, 'the divine law'<sup>598</sup> of 1Cor. 1:27 is revealed, 'God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.'

Therefore with this biblical view of children in mind, three salient points can be asserted about street children's place in the heart of God. These are;

- Street children occupy a special place in the heart of God because, like any other children, they fall under the category of being children.
- By being poor, defenceless, orphan, needy and vulnerable, street children qualify to be people who God will offer preferential treatment.
- Since street children have two strong conditions that make them qualify to be

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<sup>598</sup>Hertzberg, H. W., *1&2 Samuel*, p. 138



special in God's sight, one can safely suggest that this makes them even more vulnerable and therefore more special before God in comparison with other children.

Thus, as attention is given to street children work in a theological perspective, this thesis suggests that the work has to be done in ways that acknowledge and release the Spirit's transformative role at both individual and community levels.<sup>599</sup> Taking a cue from Genesis 1:2, and the lives of street children, it can be asserted that the street makes children feel 'formless', 'empty' and 'dark', rendering them true candidates for the Spirit's creative power to bring order, light and fruitfulness into their lives. In this way, the gospel of Christ becomes 'not only the power of God for salvation, but also the power of God for socio-economic and political liberation.'<sup>600</sup> Therefore Ruiz-Duremdes,<sup>601</sup> concluded well by suggesting that God is committed to integral redemption in which all people, including street children, are free 'politically (from slavery to freedom: Deut. 6:21-23), economically (from landlessness to prosperity: Deut. 28:8-11), physically (from hunger to abundance: Ps. 78:24-29), psychologically (from fear to peace: Ps. 106: 10-12) and spiritually (from sinfulness to forgiveness of sin: Lk. 5: 19-20).' This biblical basis brings John 10:10 into another plausible perspective, as one looks at potential areas of development in street children work.

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<sup>599</sup> Wallace, p. 134

<sup>600</sup> Jayakumar, S., 'Transforming the Indian Culture of Poverty and Oppression', *Transformation*, Vol 22 No 2, April 2005, p. 75

<sup>601</sup> Ruiz-Duremdes, S. R. J., 'Mission imperatives: interpreting the great commission in Asia today', *Transformation*, Vol 15 No 3 July/September 1998, p. 4

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **POTENTIAL AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT**

#### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

Under-girding the suggestions and proposals in this chapter is the conviction that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the ultimate solution with eternal values for any problems which humanity faces (Jn. 10:10). In relation to this conviction, the thesis acknowledges work done by street children servicing organisations in Zimbabwe such as Streets Ahead, Just Children, Oasis, Emthunzini WeThemba and Scripture Union. Programmes run by these organisations have the mandate and privilege to influence young people's lives in a positive way through a multi-disciplinary approach which demands elements of risk, faith and prayer including listening to children's opinions. These ideas provide a good starting point for project planning which is child-centred and context-specific. Thus, young people's participation is viewed as a democratizing process, which enables the status of children and their voices to increase.<sup>602</sup>

It is SUZ's current work that this thesis builds upon and makes some developmental suggestions which, it is hoped, will meet the children's needs and transform their lives. Firstly, it will be suggested that any programmes aimed at improving the welfare of children need to recognise and work within the framework of the Convention of the Rights of Children. Secondly, a philosophy for working with street children will be presented with the view of making it and children's rights, and the Christian view discussed in the previous chapter, a basis for the way forward in

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<sup>602</sup> O'Kane, C., "Street and Working Children's Participation in Programming for their Rights: Conflicts Arising from Diverse Perspectives and Directions for Convergence." *Children, Youth and Environments* 13(1), Spring 2003, p. 1-17.

Zimbabwe. Thirdly, the five areas of potential development will be discussed focusing on the family setting model accommodation, skills training, employment creation, discipleship training and HIV/AIDS prevention among street children.

## **7.2 CRC as a basis for street children work.**

Probably no environment contributes more to potential violations of the CRC than a childhood and youth spent outside the institutional framework of family and school in the usually hostile environment of the streets. The majority of articles in the CRC apply to street children because of their extreme poverty and particular vulnerability to the following: violence (Art. 19), disease (Art. 24), discrimination (Art. 2), sexual abuse and exploitation (Art. 34, 32), substance abuse (Art. 33), emotional deprivation (Art. 19, 31), exploitative and harmful child labour (Art. 32), denial of rights within the juvenile justice system (Art. 37, 40), arbitrary execution (Art. 6), torture (Art. 37), lack of access to education (Art. 28, 29) and healthcare (Art. 24) and lack of identity documents (Art. 7). The CRC sets out a framework for protection that emphasizes the family and community as having the main responsibility for caring for children (Art. 5, 18). It is also needed between child servicing organisations and the state to ensure the sustainability of programmes and to address underlying socio-economic and discriminatory policies that perpetuate the street children phenomenon.<sup>603</sup>

The four core principles of the Rights of Children (RC) are non-discrimination; devotion to the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and respect for the views of the child. These core principles apparently are evidence showing that every right spelt out in the Convention is inherent to the human dignity

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<sup>603</sup> CSC, *Street Children and the CRC*. Accessed at <http://www.stretchchildren.org.uk> on 27.10.2008

and harmonious development of every child. They are also relevant to street children because many youths living or working on the streets find themselves in conflict with the law, sometimes simply by being homeless or as underage workers in the informal economy.<sup>604</sup> West<sup>605</sup> argues that the variety of circumstances in which street children find themselves and the problems they face, suggest that if interventions are to be effective, they need to be guided by a set of principles leading to a framework for better practice. This shows the importance of the Every Child Matters philosophy which aims to give all children the support they need to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well being.<sup>606</sup>

Whilst the CRC provides a ready framework for any intervention in the lives of children, as a Christian organisation, SUZ needs to synergize the two approaches namely, faith-based and child rights-based.<sup>607</sup> Where the rights are perceived to be at tangent with faith based approaches, they are to be condemned. For example, the fear those rights instil a degree of liberty which children are not necessarily mature enough to handle, with issues relating to sexuality such as access to pornography and right to sexual experimentation (Article. 13). It is also feared that the rights create the vision of an autonomous child with the same human rights as an adult, and if taken to

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<sup>604</sup> de Benitez, S. T., 'Street Children's Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child: A study of acceptance and observance in Mexico and Ecuador.' Centre for Research on Child Wellbeing Working Paper #00-01, February 2000. See also the following on child protection issues; Lindon, J., *Child Protection and Early Years Work*. (Abingdon: Hodder and Stoughton, 1998), pp. 34-52;

<sup>605</sup> West, A., 'At the Margins: Street Children in the Pacific', *Poverty and Social Development Papers*, No. 8/ October 2003. Accessed at [www.adb.org/Street\\_Children\\_Asia\\_Pacific](http://www.adb.org/Street_Children_Asia_Pacific) on 23.10.2008

<sup>606</sup> See Every Child Matters website at <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters>. Accessed on 24.10.2009.

<sup>607</sup> Stephenson, P., 'Describe the 'Rights' of the Child and the Christian response to it.' Accessed at <http://www.180degreesalliance.org> on 11.11.2008. This paper gives some historical background and contemporary developments to children's rights and outlines three perspectives that inform these institutions, and its final section on religious groups focuses predominantly on Christian viewpoints in relation to CRC.

extremes, children can report their parents to the government if they feel they are not properly treated at home (Article. 12).

### **7.3 Children's participation**

Enshrined in the CRC is a key aspect of children's participation in matters that affect them, which involves the right to information in order to make decisions about their own best interests (Art. 12 and 13). Street children make major and minor decisions which may have significant implications on their survival on the street every day. Implementing their rights to information, knowledge and understanding about such risks as unwanted or unprotected sex, HIV/AIDS, and substance and drugs usage, will assist them in making safer decisions. Therefore, ignoring children's views or not involving them in decision making is one reason why many children who are returned to their families immediately return to the streets. The Zimbabwe Junior president in her address to junior parliament in 2007 expressed their willingness to cooperate with the government by making a bold statement that, 'any program made for us without us is not for us'.<sup>608</sup>

Although many countries support the idea of child participation, it is feared that organisations do not have the capacity to fully implement it due to different cultural ideologies. For example, traditionally in Zimbabwe children are sometimes regarded as unimportant to make any major household and national decisions. Fanelli, Musarandega, and Chawanda,<sup>609</sup> also make a noteworthy observation when they argue

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<sup>608</sup> 'Child Participation wither to Zimbabwe'. Child Protection Society Zimbabwe. Accessed at <http://childprotecton.co.zw> on 27.11.2008.

<sup>609</sup>Fanelli, C., Musarandega, R. and Chawanda L. "Child Participation in Zimbabwe's National Action Plan for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children: Progress, Challenges, and Possibilities." *Children, Youth and Environments* 17 no. 3, 2007, pp. 122-145. This article gives a very comprehensive child participation discussion in Zimbabwe. See also the following articles on children participation; Fanelli,

that Zimbabwean tradition even has a term for adults who are not serious or productive—“*machana*” meaning “childishness.” This term ‘implies that children’s behaviour is never serious or productive, and suggests disregard for children’s significant contributions.’ Although these are genuine fears, they can be addressed through support and training of adults involved in children’s work so that they are equipped to involve children in initiatives that directly affect them.

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C., Mushunje, M., and CRS/Zimbabwe., ‘Child Participation in Education Initiatives by CRS/Zimbabwe’, *How-To-Guide Series*, pp.43-58. Accessed at <http://www.crin.org> on 27.11.2008; Riggio, E., ‘Child friendly cities: good governance in the best interests of the child’. *Environment & Urbanization*, Vol 14 No 2, October 2002, pp. 46-58; Shaw, M and Tschiwula, L. ‘YOUTH AND JUSTICE: Developing citizenship among urban youth in conflict with the law’ A paper commissioned by the Safer Cities Programme of UN-HABITAT. *Environment & Urbanization*, Vol 14 No 2, October 2002, pp. 59-70; Racelis, M., and Aguirre, A, D, M., ‘Child rights for urban poor children in child friendly the community’. *Environment & Urbanization*, Vol 14 No 2, October 2002, pp. 97-105; Mann, G., “Wakimbizi, Wakimbizi”: Congolese refugee boys’ and girls’ perspectives on life in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania’. *Environment & Urbanization*, Vol 14 No 2, October 2002, pp. 115-122; Francis, M., and Lorenzo, R., ‘Seven Realms of Children’s Participation: a critical review’. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 22, 2002, pp. 1-15; Kruger, J. S., with Chawla, L., and “We know something someone doesn’t know”: children speak out on local conditions in Johannesburg’. *Environment & Urbanization*, Vol 14 No 2, October 2002, pp. 85-96; Guerra, E. ‘Citizenship knows no age: children’s participation in the governance and municipal budget of Barra Mansa, Brazil’. *Environment & Urbanization*, Vol 14 No 2, October 2002, p. 71-84; Asociación Arte y Cultura (ASOARTE); Asociación Mision Mixta (AMM); Fundación Grupo Experimental de Alternativas Culturales (GEAC); and Asociación de Mujeres Activas por un Futuro Mejor (MAFUM), ‘Exploring youth and community relations in Cali, Colombia’. *Environment & Urbanization*, Vol 14 No 2, October 2002, pp. 149-156; Fuentes, P., and Niimi, R., ‘Motivating municipal action for children: the Municipal Seal of Approval in Ceará, Brazil’. *Environment & Urbanization*, Vol 14 No 2, October 2002, pp. 123-135; Ennew, J., ‘Working with street children: Exploring Ways for ADB Assistance.’ Regional and Sustainable Development Department. Asian Development Bank’s Poverty Reduction and Social Development Division (RSPR) in collaboration with ADB’s Office of External Relations (OER) in October 2003, p. 10; Austin, S., Child Labour and Child Participation: A Girl Child Perspective. World Vision International. *CWA Newsletter*, Vol. 16 No. 2, May-Aug. 2000; Feinstein, C., Karkara, R., and Laws, S., ‘A Workshop Report on ‘CHILD PARTICIPATION IN THE UN STUDY ON VIOLENCE against Children’ *International Save the Children Alliance, 2004*. Accessed at [www.streetchildren.org.uk](http://www.streetchildren.org.uk) on 10.11.2008. ‘Listen and Change: A Guide to Children and Young People’s Participation Rights.’ Accessed at <http://www.participationworks.org.uk> on 18.11.2008; Driskell, D., Bannerje, K., and Chawla, L., ‘Rhetoric, reality and resilience: overcoming obstacles to young people’s participation in development.’ *Environment & Urbanization*, Vol 13 No 1, April 2001, pp. 1-13; Corsi, M., ‘The child friendly cities initiative in Italy.’ *Environment & Urbanization*, Vol 14 No 2, October 2002, pp. 169-180; Chawla, L., “Insight, creativity and thoughts on the environment”: integrating children and youth into human settlement development.’ *Environment & Urbanization*, Vol 14 No 2, October 2002, pp. 1-12; Nieuwenhuys, O., ‘Spaces for the children of the urban poor: experiences with participatory action research (PAR).’ *Environment and Urbanization*, Vol. 9 No. 1, April 1997, pp. 1-17; van Beers, H., ‘A Plea for a Child-Centred Approach in Research with Street Children.’ *Childhood*, Vol. 3, 1996, pp. 195-201; ‘Child participation in Junior Farmer Field Schools (vocational education)’. Accessed at <http://www.infobridge.org> on 27.11.2008; ‘Developing Residential Child Care Project: Participation and consultation in Residential Child Care in England.’ Accessed at <http://www.crin.org> on 27.11.2008; ‘Participation of children and young people in decisions made about their care: A literature review.’ *Guardian for Children and Young People*, September 2008. Accessed at <http://www.gcyp.sa.gov.au> on 27.11.2008.

Besides being given opportunities to participate in programmes that have issues pertaining to their lives, the CRC's other cardinal principle lies in protecting children wherever they are going to be, at home or on the streets. Therefore, this understanding makes child protection a fundamental issue which in many ways should constitute the main reason for seeking interventions in the lives of street children.

#### **7. 4 Children's cognitive and moral development**

Since education is significant for developing every child's potential, it is crucial for those involved in teaching children to take cognisance of their developmental stages in all areas of life such as intellectual, moral, physical, spiritual and social.<sup>610</sup> This helps the practitioners with appropriate strategies to use for each age range. The work becomes particularly important and challenging when teaching children who have been 'abused, demeaned, neglected, and made to feel worthless.'<sup>611</sup> Such a negative background greatly affects the children's concentration and stability because, as Bradford puts it, their lives have been 'dislocated and problematic,'<sup>612</sup> and therefore need more attention when dealing with their issues. Whilst it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss child development in detail, this section briefly highlights cognitive and moral stages in children which will be helpful to those who seek to adopt the conceptual framework of personal learning and thinking skills as discussed in chapter six above.

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<sup>610</sup> Brierley, D., *Joined Up: An Introduction to Youthwork and Ministry*. (Carlisle: Spring Harvest Publishing and Authentic Lifestyle, 2003), p. 85

<sup>611</sup> Bradford, J., *Caring for the Whole Child: A Holistic Approach to Spirituality*. (London: The Children's Society, 1995), p. 68

<sup>612</sup> Bradford, *Caring for the Whole Child*, p. 68

Piaget<sup>613</sup> and Kohlberg's<sup>614</sup> work on child cognitive and moral development is helpful for those who attend to children because the two scholars indicate the process of change which takes place in children as their cognitive and moral awareness develop. Unlike Piaget who fixes age to cognitive development stages, Kohlberg's moral development model focuses on six stages which are grouped in three sets of two, but does not tie these stages to particular ages with rigidity.<sup>615</sup> He recognised people's uniqueness and accepted that they reach these stages at different ages.<sup>616</sup> Whilst both scholars have insightful contributions, Kohlberg's moral development model is more appealing because it takes cognisance of the natural overlapping developmental stages in every human being. This assessment is correct in the sense that it contextualises

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<sup>613</sup>Piaget, J., 'The stages of the intellectual development of the child', in Barnes, P., Oates, J., Chapman, J., Lee, V., and Czerniewska, P., (Eds). *Personality, Development and Learning*: (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1984), pp. 31-38. Piaget became most famous for his claim that children passed through a series of stages of thinking that were qualitatively different from each other. This has to do with the way children take in and use information (cognitive development), and this has had enormous impact on the people's understanding of children's mental development and for those whose work involves children. For the purposes of this thesis target group, the children fall under the stage of concrete operations (7-12years) and formal operations (12years and over). For further reading on this subject and child development in general see the following literature: Davenport, G. C., *An Introduction to Child Development* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). (London: Collins Educational, 1994), pp. 126-144; Sutherland, P., *Cognitive Development Today: Piaget and his Critics*. (London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd, 1992), pp. 7-28; Flavell, J. H., *The Developmental Psychology of Jean Piaget*. (London: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1963), pp. 85-236; Ding, S., and Littleton, K., *Children's Personal and Social Development*. (Milton Keynes: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), pp. 156-164; Leather, N., 'Cognitive Development' in Wyse, D., (Ed), *Childhood Studies: An Introduction*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), pp. 56-60; Lovell, K., *Educational Psychology and Children*. (London: University of London Press Ltd, 1967), pp. 230-263; Meadows, S., *Understanding Child Development*. (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 33-45; Coleman, J. C., and Hendry, L., *The Nature of Adolescence*, (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 28-37; Smith, P, K., Cowie, H., and Blades, M., *Understanding Children's Development*. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), pp.352-360; Campbell, R. and Olson D., 'Children's Thinking', in Grieve, R. and Hughes, M., (Ed) *Understanding Children*. (Oxford: Blackwell Ltd, 1990), pp. 189-209. Campbell and Olson give an in depth evaluation of Piaget's cognitive theory.

<sup>614</sup> Kohlberg's theory of moral development suggested that the level of moral reasoning was dependent on having achieved a level of cognitive development, and also of social perspective or role-taking. Thus if some one is at the formal operations, he or she would be limited to conventional morality. See also the following for further reading: Smith, P, K., Cowie, H., and Blades, M., *Understanding Children's Development*, pp. 219-226; Coleman, J. C., and Hendry, L., *The Nature of Adolescence*, pp. 37-44; Meadows, S., *Understanding Child Development*, pp. 159-171; Davenport, G. C., *An Introduction to Child Development*, pp. 145-162; Schaffer, H, R., *Social Development*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Inc, 1996), pp. 290-310; Carpendale, J., and Lewis, C., *How Children Develop Social Understanding*. (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), pp. 220-225

<sup>615</sup>Davenport, G. C., *An Introduction to Child Development* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). (London: Collins Educational, 1994), pp. 145-162. See also, Bridger, F., *Children Finding Faith*. (Bletchley: Scripture Union, 2000), p. 221

<sup>616</sup> Davenport, *An Introduction to Child Development*, p. 158



accountability and gives emphasis to mitigating factors of any action or behaviour by either a child or an adult. It is therefore right to contend that the child's cognitive development stages are correspondent to his or her moral stages of development. This is crucial to those who work with children as they will be able to assess and make judgements about the appropriateness of each child's behaviour.<sup>617</sup>

## 7.5 Possible Areas of Development

Having highlighted some of the principles that form the basis of work with street children, it is incumbent on SUZ that some areas of potential development be considered for the work they are doing. These areas build upon the current tremendous engagements that are done by SUZ, where children's lives are transformed as confirmed by the interviewees during the research.<sup>618</sup> Furthermore, the suggestions being made are conceptual rather than operational. This means that spelling out in detail how the ideas are going to be implemented is beyond the scope of this paper.

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<sup>617</sup> Woodhead, M., Rhodes, S., and Oates, J., in Ding and Littleton, *Children's Personal and Social Development*, p. 60. These scholars also give very useful insights on children with disturbed and disturbing behaviour. The insights are helpful for those who work with street children. See pages 53-92.

<sup>618</sup> The researcher's direct work with street children gave him the opportunity to experience the magnitude of the work that SUZ is doing to transform children's lives. The following people who are not staff but stakeholders and partners of SUZ, also affirmed SUZ's noble work during the research interviews: Rev Christmass, Manicaland Overseer for Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (Z.A.O.G.A), member of Board of Trustees for Simukai; Madziyire, E., Mutare City Council Acting Chamber Secretary, 22.08.2007, 12:00 noon; Masunga, M., District AIDS Coordinator, National AIDS Council, Masvingo Province, 07.09.2007, 8:30am; Mapanzure, S., Acting Head, Dikwindi Primary School, Masvingo, 05.09.2007, 10:45am; Makiwa, T., Alpha Cottages Administrator, Masvingo, 06.09.2007, 3:45pm; Mundondo, J., F.A.C.T Director, Mutare, 14.02.2008; Nhamo, Provincial Social Welfare Officer, Bulawayo, 30.08.2007, 8:00am; Gandari, E. M., 2<sup>nd</sup> Deputy Head Teacher, Northlea High School, Bulawayo, 29.08.2007, 2:00pm; Ndadzungira, C., Acting District Social Welfare Officer, Mutare and Muyambo, P., Social Welfare Officer, Mutare, 21.08.2007, 9:00am; Nyawo, G. S., Dangare Primary School Head Teacher, 25.09.2007, 3:30pm; Pastor Bismark, Abundant Life Church, Bulawayo, 31.08.2007; Takawira, H., Assistant Inspector, V.F.U, Mutare Central, Jakwara, B., Constable, Public Relations, Mutare and Mapuvire, E., Constable, V.F.U, 23.08.2007, 10:00am. See also Masunga, M., *'Integration of Former Street Children into the formal school system. The experience of the Presbyterian Children's Club in Harare.'* A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Bachelor of General degree in Social work, April 2001.

Thus, given the wide range of disciplinary approaches to issues associated with street children, and principles of good practice, a number of areas can be identified within two broad categories of prevention and intervention. The programmes will be designed to provide a continuum of services to assist the troubled children who are obviously in need of intensive and comprehensive help for themselves and their families. Therefore the goal for these programmes should always be to provide the appropriate level of intervention needed to return the child to a family environment, be it biological, adoptive or foster family setting. This helps children to move on from situations of risk, abuse, exploitation and hopelessness to independence and hope for a future.

In its child empowerment endeavours, SUZ needs to seriously consider the families where the children come from because family involvement is a crucial element in solving the problems of street children.<sup>619</sup> This holistic ministry does not only mean providing for all the functional needs of the individual, but requires that SUZ seeks to possess all the potential solutions available for the children it intends to rescue. Thus for the potential street children, it involves trying to prevent them from getting to the streets and, secondly rescuing the child after getting on the street.<sup>620</sup> This task calls for leadership with an insatiable appetite for staff capacity building, which necessitates innovative ideas that endeavour to restore the children whose childhoods, self esteem, innocence and hopes have been stolen from them. The implementation of such programmes therefore extends from short to long term 'with growing levels of

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<sup>619</sup> Schwinger, M., 'Empowering families as an alternative to foster care for street children in Brazil', *Development in Practice*, Volume 17, Number 6, November 2007.

<sup>620</sup> Myhill, P., 'Abandoned-Orphaned: Paul Myhill's Personal Reflections, notes and Photography from the field.' Accessed at <http://www.abandoned-orphaned.typepad.com> on 12.11.2008.

complexity and inclusion, whose bottom line is the sustainable development of the community.’<sup>621</sup>

#### **i. Accommodation in family setting**

SUZ’s rehabilitation centre, Thuthuka, in Bulawayo focuses on providing dormitory type accommodation to street children who are not yet ready to go back home or have nowhere to go. Whilst this is a commendable effort, considering the abuse and negative psychological and emotional effects on the child’s development that institutionalisation creates on children, it is not the best intervention strategy. At times, children are exposed to abuse by those who stay with them and by those who are supposed to taken care of them.<sup>622</sup> The staff to children ratio is very low considering their inadequate training coupled with the complex nature of the children under their care. Streetsahead’s foster home in Tafara has one social mother who lives with fifteen former street children in a two bed-roomed house. This leaves the staff exhausted, causing them to become impatient, irritable and emotionally unstable to deal with the complex behaviours of these former street children. The work can be very traumatic especially when one is dealing with teenagers.<sup>623</sup>

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<sup>621</sup> Felices los Niños Foundation Institutional Project, 2007. Accessed at <http://www.feliceslosninos.org> on 14.11.2008.

<sup>622</sup> ‘Forgotten Australians: A report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children.’ Parliament of Australia. Commonwealth of Australia, 2004. Accessed at [www.alph.gov.au](http://www.alph.gov.au) on 10.11.2008. See also literature that refers to abuse in institutional homes; Bibars, I., Street children in Egypt: from the home to the street to inappropriate corrective institutions. *Environment and Urbanization*, Vol. 10, No. 1, April 1998, pp. 201-216; Research on Institutional Care of Vulnerable Children. Accessed at <http://www180degreesalliance.org> on 11.11.2008; Bibars, I., ‘Street children in Egypt: from the home to the street to inappropriate corrective institutions.’ *Environment and Urbanization*, Vol. 10 No. 1, April 1998, pp. 8-16

<sup>623</sup> Wells, R., *Making Friends with Your Stepchildren*. (London: Sheldon Press, 2001), p. 74. See also the following literature that can be very helpful when dealing with traumatised or wounded children; ‘Special Section: Resources to Help You Walk with the Wounded’, *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 125, September/October, 2001, pp. 68-69; Kreml P. B., ‘Called to Care’, *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 125, September/October, 2001, pp. 38- 42; Prensner, D., ‘Journey to Compassion’, *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 125, September/October, 2001, pp. 44-50; Baty, D. S., ‘No Hopeless Cases’, *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 125, September/October, 2001, pp. 52-58; On The Home Front: ‘How can I cultivate

Given that institutionalisation is not the best option for rehabilitating street children, SUZ should therefore adopt and implement an additional functional family setting model approach.<sup>624</sup> This strategy is successfully employed by the Hagar Project, a Foster Home Program in Cambodia<sup>625</sup> and Mexico Child Link Trust in its work with special needs children since 1992.<sup>626</sup> The approach recognises that children need their lives to 'conform as closely as possible to a normal home atmosphere.'<sup>627</sup> This approach therefore, does not intend to usurp or undermine the crucial role played by the family, but it takes into cognisance the fact that all the other avenues to reunite the child with his family would have failed, or that at the moment, the action taken is in the best interests of the child.

Furthermore, whilst the approach recognises the importance of both structural and functional family significance, functional definitions of the family take precedence in this thesis because of the complex nature of the street children problem. This family functional approach focuses more on 'what people do together, and especially on what they do to support each other.'<sup>628</sup> As discussed in previous chapters, and also supported by Kahan<sup>629</sup>, street children experience severe difficulties during their stay on the streets ranging from psychological to physical problems, leaving them with

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<sup>624</sup> Consortium for Street Children, 'A Civil Society Forum for East and South East Asia on Promoting and Protecting the Rights of Street Children', 12-14 March 2003 - Bangkok,, Thailand, pp. 4-23. This report sites China as advocating for family style approach in accommodating street children from the street. Accessed at <http://www.streetchildren.org.uk> on 11.11.2008.

<sup>625</sup> Peres, V. F., 'From Crisis to Peace. Growth through Good Practice. Caring for Children and Foster Parents in Cambodia'. Hagar Project – Foster Home Program, Case Study. A report on good practice presented during A Civil Society Forum for East and South East Asia on Promoting and Protecting the Rights of Street Children', 12-14 March 2003, Bangkok, Thailand. Accessed at <http://www.streetchildren.org.uk/southeastasia> on 11.06.2009

<sup>626</sup> For further information on this project, visit <http://www.mexico-child-link.org/Mexico-child-link-Annual-report-2007-2008.pdf>. Accessed on 25.05.2009. See also Frishta Children's Village who have the same family setting concept for street children, <http://www.frishta.org.uk/>. Accessed on 25.05.2009.

<sup>627</sup> Steer, R., *George Muller: Delighted in God*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1975), p.179

<sup>628</sup> Cheal, D., *Sociology of Family Life*. (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 6-17. He gives an in depth discussion on family dynamics.

<sup>629</sup> Kahan, B., *Growing up in Groups*. (London: National Institute for Social Work, 1999), pp. 20-21

shattered lives. The concept of family through African lenses is broad. It encompasses the nuclear and the extended family with strong relational bonds. This can extend up to many relatives who are connected to the family and they all feel the obligation to look after their kindred in times of difficulties. The extended family has remained the traditional safety net in Africa and those responsible used to be their aunts and uncles. In this regard, the proposal to have family setting model accommodation for street children is not going to be viewed as a foreign approach by the local people, but an extension of the family with the mind to help those in need.

The strategy is to build family size houses at Thuthuka Training Centre, and allocate children to them, who are not yet prepared to go back to their homes, but ready to leave the street life. The centre's location which is outside the city centre in a farming area, is important because it reduces the children's temptation to go back to the street without denying them the best opportunities for developing their lives. The farming area strategy is also implemented by Crianca Feliz (Happy Child International) in Brazil, where former street children are offered accommodation, education and skills training in different disciplines.<sup>630</sup> The proposal is such that these couples should live at the farm acting as surrogate parents to the children under their care. This is necessary because children need to experience positive role models of both sexes during their growth as this helps them to develop a balanced view of life. Alternatively a widow or single mothers who have grown up children may be engaged to help the children.

Throughout the child's stay at the centre, continuous efforts are made to reunite the

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<sup>630</sup> The researcher had an opportunity to go to Brazil, Belo Horizonte, where he worked as a volunteer with Crianca Feliz (Happy Child), for a month in 2009.

child with his or her family or relatives, because this is considered to be the ideal place for child development. Whilst giving 'parenting continuity' at the centre, it also allows the children to live in an environment that is as close as possible to family setting, helping them to realise the importance of the family unit. Due to the complex nature of street children as special needs children with challenging behaviour,<sup>631</sup> each home should have a small number of children, enabling the project staff to give individualised attention and have more quality time with each one of them.

In an effort to minimise sexual activities, which may be engaged in through coercion or consent, among the children, boys and girls will not be allowed to share the same house regardless of their ages. Whilst this position may be viewed as defeating the family setting model approach being proposed, it is to the best interest of the children with regard to their safety. However, if siblings who are on the street choose to move off from the street may be accommodated in a siblings' house. The children are responsible for all the daily operations of their home with the help of staff who oversee them. During this research, four pregnant teenagers were seen on the streets. Thus SUZ needs to make special arrangements for girls such as these by introducing a pregnancy crisis and post abortion programmes offering specialist care and counselling. The programme should provide accommodation for pregnant teenage girls and their babies.<sup>632</sup> This family setting home should be to help these girls overcome their feelings of inferiority and shame by re-building their self-esteem. This requires staff trained in pregnancy crisis and post abortion counselling.<sup>633</sup>

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<sup>631</sup>Pimlott, J. and N., *Responding to Challenging Behaviour*. (Cambridge: Grove Books Limited, 2005), pp. 3-28. The following literature is useful for those who work with special needs children. Macbeth, F. and Fine, N. *Playing with Fire: Creative Conflict Resolution for Young Adults*. (Gabriola Island: New Society Publishers, 1995).

<sup>632</sup> Crianca Feliz in Brazil started implementing this strategy in August 2009.

<sup>633</sup> Comm, M., 'In the Aftermath of Abortion', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 131, Sept/Oct 2002.

As children take part in the family life at the centre, and interact with others at different levels, they learn important lessons in life such as trust, love, obedience, discipline, tolerance, cooperation, teamwork and acceptance.<sup>634</sup> Through participating in their daily home and centre activities, children will develop confidence, self worth, independence and positive self image. Besides being called to such a high vocation of dealing with children's complex life issues, project staff members need to be well trained in a number of areas such as understanding child development, separation, loss and attachment, recognising abuse and what help facilities are available, safe care, understanding behaviour, conflict management, managing aggressive behaviour, understanding differences<sup>635</sup> and child protection.

This approach is slightly different from foster caring in the sense that the children are not integrated into an already existing family. Considering the society's view on street children, and the stigma they carry, it will be understandably difficult in Zimbabwe to find people who are willing to take former street children into their homes, especially when the couple still has young children. Although this family setting approach is expensive<sup>636</sup> to maintain as compared to the present programme of institution, its

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pp. 62-68

<sup>634</sup> Harding, N., *Raising The Standard: The Definitive guide for children's workers*. (Suffolk: Kevin Mayhew Ltd, 1998), pp. 88-91

<sup>635</sup> Pease, M., *SUBSTITUTE FAMILIES: Challenge to Care; A Training Programme for Foster Carers*. Accessed at <http://www.180degreesalliance.org> on 11.11.2008. See also the following wit helpful ways of parenting and problem solving. Faber, A. and Mazlish, E., *Siblings Without Rivalry*. (London: Piccadilly Press, 1987), pp. 126-177; Smalley, E and G., 'How will we approach Conflict?' in *Family Matters, Discipleship Journal*, November/December 2008, Issue 168, pp. 56-62

<sup>636</sup> Moran, R, and Castro, C., 'Street-children and the Inter-American Development Bank: Lessons from Brazil.' Accessed at <http://www.iadb.org> on 14.11.2008. See also 'Listen and Change: A Guide to Children and Young People's Participation Rights.' Accessed at <http://www.participationworks.org.uk> on 18.11.2008. This article gives a valuable contribution on the importance of child participation as it empowers them to be responsible citizens who pursue positive community change; Cleaver, F., 'Paradoxes of Participation: Questioning Participatory Approaches to Development', in Edwards, M. and Fowler, A., *The Earth Scan Reader on NGO Management*. (London: Earthscan Publications Ltd,

advantages far outweigh the disadvantages. Besides empowering the children to face their future with hope, the approach also gives the staff a sense of vocational fulfilment by engaging themselves in children's lives.

## **ii. Skills training**

SUZ's skills training programme equips children with knowledge and practical experience on how to do carpentry, metal work and brick moulding. Whilst this is commendable, it needs to expand its horizons and come up with projects or strategies that enable children to become independent and self sustained when they leave Thuthuka. For example, an NGO called ERDA Tech Foundation, in Manila has been offering vocational skills training for street children since 1997, with considerable success in giving disadvantaged street children and out of school youth better opportunities to obtain adequate employment.<sup>637</sup> This approach was also recommended by Fuyane<sup>638</sup> with regard to solving street children problems in Zimbabwe.

In view of this, the courses offered by SUZ must be competitive on the market as this will help children to have hope of finding employment after training, and therefore minimising the number of those who drop out. Whilst Zimbabwe's current state is depressing, with no easy or quick solution to the country's problems, the organisation can seize this opportunity to strategically position itself by equipping street children

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2002), pp. 226-237

<sup>637</sup>See

[http://portal.unesco.org/Technical\\_and\\_Vocational\\_Skills\\_Training\\_Programme\\_for\\_Street\\_Children\\_Jakarta.doc](http://portal.unesco.org/Technical_and_Vocational_Skills_Training_Programme_for_Street_Children_Jakarta.doc), Accessed on 25.05.2009. See also Education for Development, Vocational Training and Employment for Street Children. Accessed at <http://www.streetchildren.org.uk/reports> on 25.05.2009

<sup>638</sup> Fuyane, S. N., 'A Developmental Approach to Addressing the Street Children Phenomenon: The Case of Emthunzini weThemba Street Children's Home.' A dissertation submitted to the University of Zimbabwe in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Master of Social Work Degree, August 1996.



with different skills which they will be able to use after the country has been stabilised from its social, political and economic quagmires. This means that many skills will be marketable as there will be considerable business during the rebuilding of the economy.

SUZ can include in their skills training courses such as motor mechanics, design and technology, music production, film production, art, industrial leather sewing, industrial cloth sewing, agriculture, food technology, panel beating and spray painting, motor vehicle driving (compulsory) and hair dressing

Alongside these courses they will be required to do the following compulsory subjects English, Maths, Business entrepreneurship, IT (Computers), Discipleship and Citizenship.

After a five year intensive trial period, it is hoped that this experience will serve as an accredited educational model to benefit street children in Zimbabwe and other African nations. Sen argues that such development can be positively 'influenced by economic opportunities, social powers, enabling conditions of good health, basic education and the encouragement and cultivation of initiatives.'<sup>639</sup> To this end, the programme will also focus on developing educational guides, providing teacher training, and conducting advocacy initiatives with both national and international education authorities.

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<sup>639</sup> Sen, A., *Development as Freedom*. (Oxford: University Press, 1999), pp. 4-5

Sparkes and Glennerster<sup>640</sup> maintain the view that education still plays a very significant role in people's employability, and thus it is crucial to give opportunity to those children who decide to leave the streets and go to stay at Thuthuka, thereby reducing their chances of continuous social exclusion. Although some of the children will not be able to attend formal education, skills training equips them with practical experience necessary for them to make a meaningful living in this competitive society.

While exploring the best options for children's projects, SUZ needs to recognise that 'meaningful participation requires that children and young people have access to information appropriate to their understanding and circumstances. It requires decision-makers that are open and honest, can communicate respect and who respond quickly to the child or young person's proposals, requests, questions or demands.'<sup>641</sup>

The United Nations CRC also recognises the potential of children to impact their societies and that they have rights to freedom of expression and information. They become partners in their own development, allowing them to acquire a sense of personal identity and to develop personal and social skills relevant for their survival. Empowerment therefore becomes both an end and a means. This means that young people can be empowered to foster change that helps them create conditions which will ultimately bring the change they desire to experience in their lives.

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<sup>640</sup> Sparkes, J. and Glennerster, H., 'Preventing Social Exclusion: Education's Contribution' in Hills, J., Le Grand, J. and Piachaud, D., *Understanding Social Exclusion*. (Oxford: University Press, 2002), pp. 178-180

<sup>641</sup> 'Listen and Change: A Guide to Children and Young People's Participation Rights.' Accessed at <http://www.participationworks.org.uk> on 18.11.2008. This article gives valuable contribution on the importance of child participation as it empowers children to make informed decisions in life.

However, young people are not expected to do the job on their own without assistance from their leaders. Commonwealth Youth Ministers and Heads of Government have endorsed the view that:

- young people are empowered when they acknowledge that they have or can create choices in life, are aware of the implications of those choices, make an informed decision freely, take action based on that decision and accept responsibility for the consequences of those actions;
- empowering young people means creating and supporting the enabling conditions under which young people can act on their own behalf, and on their own terms, rather than at the direction of others.<sup>642</sup>

By listening to children's views, adults become more competent to make decisions that affect children. Although it is important to include children even at the initial planning stages, it however remains crucial for adults to take children's ages and stages of development into consideration during decision making times. By so doing, they are further motivated to pursue their choices with enthusiasm, taking responsibility their actions and becoming proactive members of their communities, and thereby reducing the risks of dropping out and running away from the training centre.<sup>643</sup>

### **iii. Employment Creation for Street Children (EC4SC)**

SUZ has been providing street children with education and skills training

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<sup>642</sup>Report of 'The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment 2007-2015.' Accessed at <http://www.thecommonwealth.org> on 18.11.2008.

<sup>643</sup>'VOCATIONAL TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT FOR STREET CHILDREN: An analysis of vocational training and employment options in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.' Conducted by Education for Development. June 2003. Accessed at <http://www.streetchildren.org.uk> on 16.11.2008.

concentrating on searching for employment for children after completion of their trade courses. However, this strategy of sending children to skills training colleges and then trying to look for their employment has not been very successful, leaving the children and their families in perpetual poverty. Byworth<sup>644</sup> and Okaalet,<sup>645</sup> view poverty as causing, chronic inability to meet basic needs, erosion of human dignity, loss of identity and vocation, restrictions on human rights, minimal access to information for decision-making, limited development of employment related skills, means of production and capacities and limited access to social support networks<sup>646</sup>

According to this view, whilst poverty can be a result of uncontrollable natural disasters, it is not insurmountable because it is often, as observed by Wheaton '83 Statement, a result of 'social, economic, political and religious systems marked by injustice, exploitation and oppression.'<sup>647</sup> With street children in mind, unfortunately,

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<sup>644</sup>Byworth, J., 'World Vision's Approach to Transformational Development: Frame, policy and indicators', *Transformation*, 20. 2, April 2003, pp. 108-109. See also the following literature for further discussion on helping the poor in relation to community development and their salvation; Grimble, R., 'Rural Poverty and Environmental Management', *Transformation* 19. 2, April 2003, pp. 120-132; Nighton, B., 'Globalisation: Implications of violence, the global economy, and the role of the state for Africa and Christian mission', *Transformation*, 18. 4, October 2001, p. 212; Ma, W., 'When the Poor are Fired Up: The Role of Pneumatology in Pentecostal-charismatic Mission', *Transformation*, 24. 1 January 2007, pp. 28-33; Erasmus, J. C., 'Religion and social transformation: A case study from South Africa', *Transformation*, 22. 3, July 2005, pp. 142-147; Mott, S., 'The Contribution of the Bible to Economic Thought', *Transformation*, 4. 3 and 4 June-September/December 1987, p. 30; Mason, J. D., 'Biblical Teaching and Assisting the Poor', *Transformation*, 4. 2, April/June 1987, pp. 1-14; Sleeman, J. E., *Economic Crisis: A Christian Perspective*. (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1976), pp. 54-62, 107-108; Milsom, P. and Shaw, I., 'Social Welfare and the Local Church', in Shaw, I. (Ed), *Social Issues and the Local Church*. (Mid Glamorgan: Evangelical Press of Wales, 1988), pp. 135-147; Sheppard, D., *Bias to the Poor*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1983), pp. 9-18, 200-225; Alcock, P., *Understanding Poverty*. (Hampshire: PALGRAVE, 2006), pp. 3-33; Aeschliman, G., 'God's Heart for the Poor', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 93, May/June 1996, pp. 31-34; 'A Calling to Care', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 93, May/June 1996, p. 36; Lang, S. J., 'A Legacy of Love', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 93, May/June 1996, pp. 38-41; 'Kadlecek, J., 'Gifts from the Poor', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 93, May/June 1996, pp. 43-46; Lupton, B. with Brinkhoff, P., 'I'D like to Help BUT...', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 93, May/June 1996, pp. 49-54; Rabey, S., 'More than Money: Practical ways you can help the Poor', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 63, 1991, pp. 42-46

<sup>645</sup> Okaalet, P., 'Reducing Poverty through Combating HIV/AIDS', *Transformation*, 17. 4, October/December 2000, pp. 142-143

<sup>646</sup> Byworth, p. 108

<sup>647</sup> Wheaton '83 Statement, 'Social Transformation: The Church in Response to Human Need', *Transformation*, Vol 1 No 1, January/March 1984, p. 25

they are defenceless to all these evils of their societies. Thus, though 'a multi-faceted phenomenon',<sup>648</sup> it is a condition which can be eradicated through concerted effort from those committed to development work through employment creation.

Instead of giving 'start-up money' to street children and their families, SUZ can further develop this very crucial programme by creating employment through establishing ministry affiliated companies. This means that SUZ does not have to give money to children who would have completed their skills training to start their own businesses, but open businesses which will be run and managed by the organisation. For example, after learning and passing the driving test, funds permitting, SUZ can buy mini-buses which will be used for a passenger commuting business. Thus the children become the organisation's employees. After some time of operation and evaluating the lucrativeness of the business, children will be incorporated into the particular business as shareholders and then lastly they will be released to own the business and run it on their own, while SUZ keeps the other businesses for training and fundraising purposes.

Thus this approach has three phases. Firstly, SUZ completely runs the business. Secondly, children run the project as shareholders but they are monitored; and thirdly they are given full mandate to own the business. This strategy allows children to mature and gain experience before they are fully released to manage their own projects, thus minimising the chances of business collapse, plunging them back into a life vicious circle of poverty.

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<sup>648</sup> Russell, H., *Poverty Close to Home: A Christian Understanding*. (London: Mowbray, 1995), pp. 39-51

However, some businesses should remain under SUZ management due to their nature, but most of the employees should be former street children. Such kind of approach involves careful strategic planning because the profits are not easily realised, leaving the implementers in creative tension. That is they want to alleviate poverty as quickly as possible whilst at the same time there will not be any immediate solutions to their clients' problems. In view of this tension, SUZ needs to employ and engage people with entrepreneurship orientation who should be responsible for market research on the demands of lucrative businesses. These businesses will be crucial for SUZ's economic independence that is rare to many NGOs which continuously depend on foreign economic handouts.

Although the businesses will be run by SUZ, its recruitment policy remains biased towards employing street children and their families. SUZ can learn some beneficial strategies from Jairos Jiri Association<sup>649</sup> which deals with disabled people in Zimbabwe. The organisation runs businesses throughout the country and once had a popular musical band led by visually impaired Paul Matavire.

Since this approach is both prevention and an intervention strategy, it has several advantages namely:

- It provides employment for street children and their families
- It empowers street children and their families
- It turns SUZ into a self sustaining charity organisation through its ministry

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<sup>649</sup>'Jairos Jiri Association.' Accessed at <http://www.profile.org.zw> on 19.11.2008. Jairos Jiri Association runs vocational training programmes that also end up with Income Generating Projects, such as music industry. Their Luveve Factory in Bulawayo and Zimunya Workshop in Mutare produce high quality furniture and orthopaedic appliances while providing training and employment to 52 disabled people. See also 'Project No: 29: EMPLOYMENT CREATION THROUGH TRADE TRAINING FOR THE STREET CHILDREN AND YOUTH (ECTSCY) PROJECT.' Accessed at <http://www.caritasbd.org> on 19.11.2008.

affiliated companies, thereby cutting the dependency syndrome which sometimes paralyses many organisations. This gives it the opportunity to finance other charities and become a centre of excellence and beacon of best practices in this field in the region.

- It ensures sustainability of projects<sup>650</sup>
- It prevents other street children siblings from getting to the streets since there will be money available for them to cater for their needs
- It will provide services and employment for the community

With the view of entrepreneurship in mind, SUZ needs to think beyond aid and start working towards total independence from the dependency syndrome, as it continues to serve the nation of Zimbabwe.<sup>651</sup>

## **vi Discipleship training**

Establishing and maintaining contacts with street children from their habitat is the best starting point for any meaningful strategic interventions. Whilst immediate removal from the street is the instinctive option that quickly comes into one's mind, in some instances it is not always in the best interests of the child. SUZ and other street children servicing organisations in Zimbabwe have been trying to protect children from harmful activities such as teenage sex or being involved in sex work, drug abuse and exploitation by the public. It is also to be commended for its effective discipleship work in schools, reuniting street children with their families, providing them with food while on the streets, education assistance to former street children, life skills

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<sup>650</sup> Fowler, A., 'Options, Strategies and Trade-offs in Resource Mobilisation', in Edwards, M. and Fowler, A., *The Earth scan Reader on NGO Management*. (London: Earthscan Publications Ltd, 2002), pp. 366-367. It is important to note that sustainability of any organisation extends beyond money to involve the interplay between resources, impact and organisational regeneration.

<sup>651</sup> Fowler, A., 'NGO Futures – Beyond Aid: NGDO Values and the Fourth Position', in Edwards, M. and Fowler, A., *The Earth scan Reader on NGO Management*. (London: Earthscan Publications Ltd, 2002), pp. 13-23

training and advocating for the rights of children. However it falls short of a radical and comprehensive approach to street children discipleship programme.

As a Christian organisation whose part of the vision is to present Jesus Christ to the young people of Zimbabwe, SUZ together with street children can embark on an ambitious venture of drafting a street youth bible study programme with those children who are not yet ready to come to the centres or leave the streets for any reason. If they are involved, as argued by Emery-Wright, 'they are no longer sidelined as observers and consumers of something that might not feel authentic to them.'<sup>652</sup>

Thus children should be considered as subjects of their own development.<sup>653</sup>

Furthermore, it can also draft a certificated discipleship curriculum for those who come to stay at the training centre.<sup>654</sup> After completing the programme, the

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<sup>652</sup> Emery-Wright, S., *Empowering Young People in Church*. (Cambridge: Grove Books Limited, 2008), p. 26

<sup>653</sup> Volpi, E., *Street Children: Promising Practices and Approaches*. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank .Working Paper, 2002, p. 25. Accessed at [www.streetchildren.org.uk](http://www.streetchildren.org.uk).

<sup>654</sup> The following literature is very helpful for those involved in drafting discipleship programmes; Kelly, K., 'One To One: What Barnabas taught Me about Discipling', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 122, March/April 2001, p. 20; Warren, R., 'Getting into God's Word: The Bible Background Study', , *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 122, March/April 2001, pp.18-19; Stewart, T. M., DeMeo, J. L., Bastos, C. and Whiting, K. H., 'DJ Plus', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 123, May/June 2001, pp. 91-96; Howe, M., 'On the Home Front: How can I Minister to a Pregnant Teenager?' *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 123, May/June 2001, p.100; 'Special Edition: Comforted to Be a Comfort', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 125, September/October 2001, pp. 66-67; 'Special Section: Being with Your Friends' *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 128, March/April 2002, pp. 62-63; Wevodau, F., 'From Generation to Generation', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 129, May/June 2002, p. 33-39; 'The God Who Calms Our Fears', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 130, July/August 2002, p. 62; McMenamin, C., 'Contagious Love: How we can pass along a passion for God to those we disciple?' *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 132, Nov/Dec 2002, p.18; Olson, J., 'Removing the Training Wheels: How to help those you're discipling begin ministering to others', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 133, Jan/Feb 2002, pp. 18-19; Esherick, J., 'How I Do One-to-One', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 134, Mar/Apr 2003, pp. 69-73; Newman, R., 'Who, Me? An Influencer?' *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 135, May/June 2003, pp. 36-41; 'Discovering Your Influence', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 135, May/June 2003, pp. 42-43; 'Influential Characters', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 135, May/June 2003, pp. 44-47; Kent, K. W. 'Quiet Time for the Structure Impaired', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 135, Nov/Dec 2003, pp. 94-98; Presland, S., 'The Art of Asking Questions: Good questions can help disciples find God-inspired answers.' *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 135, Jan/Feb 2004, pp. 18-19; Gheen, A. C., 'Rediscovering Scripture Memory', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 156, Nov/Dec 2006, pp. 73-77; Keener, C. S., 'Does the Bible Really Say That?' *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 155, Sept/Oct 2006, pp. 32-36; 'Bible Study: The Spirit-Filled Wallet', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 154, Jul /Aug 2006, pp. 55-57; Southall, A. L., 'How to Prepare your Testimony', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 155, Jul/Aug 2006, pp. 63-65; Ortberg, J., 'Small Groups: From Typical to



organisation can look for bible college places for them so that they acquire higher qualifications which they should be able to use in life. Bible study topics that focus on issues such as health, sex, drug abuse, adolescence, growth and development or any other concerns will also be discussed with children during these street meetings. The aim will be to bring the love of God into the world of street children.

Instead of inviting them to their centres, the street outreach workers will adopt the fisherman concept of going where the fish are. They will go out to the streets or their bases and have food and conduct bible study with them on agreed days and times.

This is a feasible strategy as was observed during the research. The research team

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Transforming', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 154, Jul/Aug 2006, pp. 69-75; Coty, D. M., '6 Ways to Encourage Others', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 147, May/June 2005, pp. 27-31; 'Special section: 6 Qualities that transform relationships', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 148, Jul/Aug 2005, pp. 33-59; 'Advice for Disciplers', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 107, Sept/Oct 1998, pp. 73-74; Brase, L., 'Who, Me? Make Disciples?' *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 30, 1985, pp. 18-20; Fleming, R., 'Disciplemaking – A Life on Life Approach', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 30, 1985, pp. 21-23; MacDonald, G., 'Disciple Abuse', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 30, 1985, pp. 24-28; Moede, P., 'Go For The Gusto!' *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 30, 1985, pp. 29-31; Oertli, R., 'Life Together', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 30, 1985, pp. 32-34; Cosgrove F., 'The Disciple is a Servant', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 30, 1985, pp. 35-38; Fisher, D., 'Jewish Lessons for Discipling Children', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 30, 1985, pp. 39-41; DJ Plus section in all the Discipleship Journals have very helpful ways of keeping one's small Bible study group alive and this can be easily adopted by street children workers. van Zuylen, D. C., 'Discipling Like Jesus', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 110, Mar/Apr 1999, pp. 76-80; Mittelberg, M., 'Discover your Evangelism Style', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 95, Sep/Oct 1996, pp. 32-36; Smith, B., 'Dealing with Difficult People', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 85, Jan/Feb 1995, pp. 83-86; Thigpen, P., 'Making Peace with your Parents', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 90, Nov/Dec 1995, pp. 87-93; Eisenman, T., 'Temptation: Fighting to Win', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 72, Nov/Dec 1992, pp. 36-39; Grenz, S. J., 'Don't take the Bait', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 72, Nov/Dec 1992, pp. 41-43; Moore, J. H., 'Why Won't it Just Go Away?' *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 72, Nov/Dec 1992, p. 44-46; Stokes, P. J., 'The Long Road Home', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 72, Nov/Dec 1992, pp. 55-57; Joiner, L. R., *God's Great Invention: 18 Studies on Liking Who God Made You to Be*. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995), pp. 9-80; Joiner, L. R., *Jesus Loves Me: 18 Studies on How Jesus Is Our Friend*. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995), pp. 8-80. This series presents simple and excellent bible study guide material that can be effectively used by street workers; Cray, G., *Postmodern Culture and Discipleship*. (Cambridge: Grove Books Limited, 1998), pp. 3-24; Grassel: R., *Help! I'm a Small Church Youth Worker*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), pp. 89-96; Campolo, T., *You can Make a Difference*. (Milton Keynes: Word Publishing, 1984), pp. 107-138; Eims, L., *What Every Christian Should Know About Growing: Basic Steps to Discipleship*. (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1976), pp. 89-101; 117-127; Watson, D., *Discipleship*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981), pp. 66-94; Jessup, D., Musick, H. and Kirgiss, C., *GUYS: 10 Fearless, Faith-Focused Sessions on Issues That Matter to Guys*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003); Griffiths, M., *Don't Tell Cute Stories- Change Lives: The Can-do guide for children's workers*. (London: Monarch Books, 2003), pp. 123-158; Azubuik, K. S. U., *Moving on with Jesus: Spiritual direction for thirsty Christians*. (Knutsford: Faith Builders Publishing Ltd, 1986), pp. 93-102; Lawrence, R., (ed). *Youth Ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Encyclopedia of Practical Ideas*. (Loveland: Group Publishing, Inc. 2006), pp. 99- 119

spent some time talking with street children at their bases, and this can be an indicator that, with a well planned agenda and full involvement of the children, staff can achieve this exciting faith adventure. Besides reaching out to those who do not want to go to the centres, changing venues and times is also a good practice for group dynamics with those who attend at the centres.<sup>655</sup> It is noteworthy that the implementers must not just view the programmes as an end in themselves but a means to impart spiritual growth to young people. Thus discipleship must be viewed as a lifetime process which involves growth and transformation. Jernigan has correctly described it as 'a process, not a series of events, not a sequence of achievements to check off a list.'<sup>656</sup>

Firstly, this strategy widens SUZ's chances of reaching out to more children who may not be interested in coming to the centres. Secondly, visiting children at their bases and having lunch or supper with them occasionally, would build relationships of trust between outreach staff and the children. This in turn helps children to be freer with staff and feel comfortable to express their fears and desires, thereby breaking the communication barrier. Thirdly, besides enjoying healthy relationships of trust with staff, children also have the opportunity to begin a meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ.

Such constant activity helps children to think about their lives in a spiritual perspective. It is the submission of this thesis that when such a relationship exists, the person's perspective on life changes and he or she opts to leave the streets for better and safe accommodation. Like Jackie Pullinger's ministry with drug addicts in the

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<sup>655</sup> Briggs, J. R., 'Vary Your Venue: DJ Plus: Ideas for more effective Ministry', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 133, Jan/Feb 2002, p. 75

<sup>656</sup> Jernigan, J., 'Not According to Plan', *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 67, 1992, pp. 36-39. See also the following helpful literature on discipleship as a process; Saxton H. H., 'How can I cultivate kindness in my teenager?' *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 127, Jan/Feb 2002, p. 80

streets of Hong Kong,<sup>657</sup> both the outreach staff and the children will have the privilege to witness God's transforming power in their lives.

#### **v Male circumcision for HIV/AIDS prevention**

Studies suggest that male circumcision can partially protect men from acquiring HIV.<sup>658</sup> Results from the Orange Farm Intervention Trial, South Africa showing at least a 60% reduction in HIV acquisition among circumcised men aged 18 to 24 years, prompted the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) to issue a position.<sup>659</sup> It recommended the development of a work plan on male circumcision and HIV prevention. Medical research maintains that circumcision offers additional protection from HIV because it reduces the possibility of tear and injury to the penis during sex and removes cells that are vulnerable to HIV infection. A circumcised penis also dries more quickly after sex, and thereby reducing the life-span of any HIV present.<sup>660</sup>

Regarding the findings of this research that street children are sexually active, SUZ can consider educating children on benefits of circumcision in relation to HIV prevention. However, it should not offer circumcision services because this can be perceived as promoting teenage sex by both street children and the community. It is

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<sup>657</sup> Pullinger, J., *Chasing the Dragon*

<sup>658</sup> Gray, R. H., Kigozi, G and Serwadda, D., 'Male circumcision for HIV prevention in men in Rakai, Uganda: a randomised trial'. *Science Direct, The Lancet, Volume 369, Issue 9562, 24 February 2007-2 March 2007*, pp. 657-666

<sup>659</sup> Report on Kenya Stakeholder Consultation on Male Circumcision in the Context of HIV Prevention, September 2006. Accessed at

[http://www.who.int/hiv/pub/malecircumcision/meetingreport\\_06sep06.pdf](http://www.who.int/hiv/pub/malecircumcision/meetingreport_06sep06.pdf), on 25.05.2009. See also Wilson, D. and de Beyer, J., 'HIV/AIDS M&E-Getting Results: Male Circumcision: Evidence and Implications. Accessed at <http://siteresources.worldbank.org>, on 25.05.2009.

<sup>660</sup> Male Circumcision and HIV prevention in Eastern and Southern Africa. Accessed at <http://data.unaids.org/pub/Manual>, on 25.05.2009.

like providing them with condoms, a practice which SUZ disapproves of in its operations.

## **7.6 CONCLUSION**

From the preceding discussion, it is clear that whilst SUZ and other street servicing organisations are doing commendable work to alleviate the suffering of street children, there are still some areas of potential development. Equipped with the child development theories, SUZ can use the concept to help street children who come into contact with them. It is crucial for SUZ to engage these children through participation in all activities which concern them. By so doing, they are empowering them and showing trust and building confidence in them. However, it is also important to ensure that SUZ follows through its decisions with children as this will encourage them to participate more in other following programmes and thereby achieve their purposes. Although the rights-based approach is significant in this work, it is SUZ's prudence to align itself with the faith based view where these two are perceived to be at tangent.

The family setting model accommodation sets the basis for the children who stay at Thuthuka Rehabilitation Centre in the sense that staff will endeavour to make them as comfortable as possible so that they perform well in their school work or vocational skills training. A well planned skills training programme builds the children's capacity to become competitive on the labour market. Establishing ministry affiliated companies and becoming a competitor on the labour market, SUZ would have broken new ground in this work in Zimbabwe. More importantly, this should provide immediate work for street children who would have been trained at the centre and

their families, thereby breaking the cycle of poverty in the community.

Thus, with the restoration of Zimbabwe, SUZ is going to be faced with the challenge of how to employ its entrepreneurship skills so as to provide employment for its graduates and families. Further developing these ideas together with already existing activities provokes and offers SUZ the opportunity to break new ground and gives this thesis its unique contribution in the field. Underlying all their engagements and decisions will be the profound conviction of knowing that they have an intimate relationship with God who uses people to bring about transformation in communities. This calls for faith, risk and prayer as indispensable elements of this ministry.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

The main objective of this research has been to investigate the problem of street children in Zimbabwe and how SUZ, as a Christian organisation, is responding to this difficult phenomenon. However, SA was also included so as to have a wider spectrum and balanced view of the problem. Therefore, the aim of the chapter is to synthesise the main issues raised in the whole thesis and make some conclusions based on the findings of this research.

In this regard, it is significant to acknowledge that, although this work has its own peculiar contribution, and in particular the Christian basis for doing street children work focusing on SUZ, it is not the first one to be produced in relation to street children work in Zimbabwe. Whilst the thesis is taking SUZ as its case study, it is building upon some other academic work which did not include the scope of Christian basis for this crucial social engagement. Although some people give unbiblical good reasons for life's solutions, and thus disagreeing with this proposal, it is the submission of this thesis that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the ultimate solution for any problems which humanity faces.

Chapter one gave an overview of the research methodology that was employed and the significance of each method to the whole thesis. Interviews with children were done with the conviction that, street children, as part of the key informants, have acquired a culture that is unique to them, such as their street jargon which gives them special identity, and they deserve special recognition when considering issues that

directly or indirectly affect them. They are also a unique category of children that needs care because of their ability to look after themselves and at times their families.

Since the thesis is on Christian response, this research therefore, shows that it takes human experience seriously, because it is here that the gospel is grounded, embodied, interpreted and lived out. The variety of methodologies used and the interdisciplinary perspectives adopted show that the situation of street children is complex and multifaceted, and thus social issues such as orphan-hood, poverty, unemployment, abuse, HIV/AIDS, sickness and healing call for an in depth research, discussion and analysis. This is what this thesis attempted to do, making it stand out as a significant contribution, not only in views regarding Christian approach, but also becomes relevant to those who are engaged in street children work whether as faith based or secular oriented. Its other major and unique contribution to street children work in Zimbabwe is employment creation through ministry (SUZ) affiliated companies. This has not yet been fully explored by the existing organisations in Zimbabwe and elsewhere in the world.

Although the term 'street children' appears to be straight forward in terms of its definition, the thesis revealed that it has been hotly debated among scholars, especially considering the many uncertainties surrounding the term. UNICEF has come up with a generally accepted definition that caters for most of the characteristics of street children. However, the term 'street children' is derogatory and carries with it overt stigmatisation connotations, referring to a complex phenomenon which stirs emotions of either love or hate and focuses on the problem. By calling them street children, the community has subconsciously allocated the street to them as their

permanent dwelling place, and the children tend to live in accordance with the expectations of street living moulded in their seamless creative imaginations.

It is also apparent that the problem of street children is experienced by all nations with varying degrees depending on the country's stage of development. Their population is difficult to estimate due to the transient lifestyle they lead and the debates surrounding the precise definition of the term. Furthermore, their protection and education are often neglected by governments, either due to inadequate legislation or obstacles related to the implementation of that legislation. This special population is one of the most overlooked and vulnerable groups of children,<sup>661</sup> and this is an indicator that street children phenomenon remains as one of the international humanitarian problems symptom.

The data collected on the problem of street children in Zimbabwe revealed that this phenomenon is caused by the negative multi-inter-related complex social, economic and political issues that have crippled the nation. However the most common causes of street children in Zimbabwe are not very different from those documented by other scholars from other countries. Once on the streets, the children are exposed to a problem-ridden world with many circumstances that place their lives more in danger of exploitation and abuse by a variety of people from the society. Although there could be other plausible views about street children's dangerous exposures in terms of physical health, this thesis argues that HIV/AIDS is the most potent one, and it also affects their whole emotional capacities.

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<sup>661</sup> 'Street Children', Right to Education Project: Accessed at <http://www.right-to-education.org>, on 27.05.2009.



Le Roux and Smith<sup>662</sup> state that 'Street children tend to see themselves as nice people who behave badly: the ones everybody loves to hate.' Le Roux further asserts that their presence in society contributes 'to the affirmation of theological notions of sin, corruption, and other evils.'<sup>663</sup> Therefore, in depth analysis of their situation seems to suggest that a multi-disciplinary approach from the local and international communities is needed immediately so as to save some of the children from the claws of death through preventable diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

Scripture Union Zimbabwe's recent interest in street children's issues has led it to develop an area of expertise in working with this special population. This has been achieved by effective partnership with other street children servicing organisations such as SA, Just Children and government Social Services Department. The way SUZ is responding to this problem reflects its biblical based core beliefs and values on children as future inheritance of any nation. The establishment of three successful street youth projects by SUZ within a short period of eight years is attributed to its strategic partnership ideology. Of significance to SUZ is that genuine and healthy relationships are better achieved and sustained in Christ. Thus, considering its activities, what therefore distinguishes SUZ from other organisations is its realistic holistic Christian response to this social problem.

The challenges faced by SUZ have been exacerbated by the present gloomy situation in the country. Amidst these challenges, SUZ has also drawn some very significant lessons from its work with street children. It is noteworthy that success in helping

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<sup>662</sup> le Roux, J. and Smith, C, S, 'Causes and characteristics of the street child phenomenon: a global perspective.' *Adolescence*, Fall, 1998. Accessed at <http://findarticles.com> on 28.05.2009.

<sup>663</sup> le Roux, J., 'The worldwide phenomenon of street children: conceptual analysis.' *Adolescence*, Winter, 1996. Accessed at <http://findarticles.com> on 28.05.2009.

street-involved children and youth to attain safer, more sustainable livelihoods depends on a range of interdependent factors such as the importance of taking into account human aspects, from both the demand side, participating children and youth, and the supply side, institutions and programme staff. Presented with these challenges, SUZ has kept on working with street children because of its convictions that if young people are empowered, they have the potential to influence their present and future generations to live full independent lives.

This thesis attempted to give a Christian basis for the street children work, viewing this special population as part of the poor, the suffering, the marginalised, the vulnerable, orphans and threatened and affected by HIV/AIDS epidemic. Though poverty and oppression are often forgotten by the public, it is clear from the Bible that they are always on God's mind. Furthermore, from the biblical passages, it is also clear that God values the poor and the oppressed. Therefore, if God's character of valuing the poor and giving them self worth, is presented as a model for Christians, then it is reasonable to argue that street children are part of the population that needs such special treatment. God's heart for the poor (Ps. 10:14; 14:12; Is. 25:4; 41:17; Jam. 2:5), resonates into his command for people to serve them (Deut. 15:7; 26:12; Lev. 19:19ff; Pr. 31:8; Is. 58: 66ff; Jer. 22:3; Lk. 3:11; 12:33) and he has promised a blessing to all those who put this command into practice (Deut. 15:10; Pr. 22:9; Is. 58:10; Lk. 14:12-14; Mt. 19:20ff). Similarly, those who do not do anything to help them will be punished (Is. 10: 1-3; Jer. 5:28; Ezek. 16:49ff; 22:29, 31; Lk. 16:19-25; Jam. 5:1-6) and those who serve the poor are also reminded to have the right attitude (Lev. 19:15; Pr. 29:7; Mt. 6:2-4; Ac. 2:44; 4:32-35; 2 Cor. 9:4ff; Gal. 2:9ff; 1 Jn. 3:17) and take into cognisance that God does not only identify with the poor but he

also puts himself in their place (Pr. 14:31; 19:17; 2 Cor. 8:9).

Whilst God's heart and teaching concerning treatment of the poor is clear in the Bible, it is however apparent that there are no scripture passages that refer to street children as the poor. Therefore, the basis for this work was formulated from principles that can be universally applied to any work involving the poor and children, whether street children or not. As part of God's plan, street children can be major contributors in his redemption plan. He has used and can still use some of the infants and children from the *favelas* (shanty places) and very poor backgrounds to declare his praises and to pass judgement over the proud, revealing their simple but discerning faith in him.

Thus as attention is given to street children work in a theological perspective, this thesis suggests that the work has to be done in ways that acknowledge and release the Spirit's transformative role at both individual and community levels. It is also noteworthy to assert from the biblical passages that God is committed to integral redemption in which all people, including street children, are free politically, economically, physically, psychologically and spiritually.

From this work, it is clear that whilst SUZ and the other street servicing organisations are doing a very commendable work in their response to street children phenomenon, a seamless approach to this work helps to appreciate the need to explore some potential areas of development in the field. As they implement new developmental ideas SUZ needs to acknowledge the importance of following through its decisions with children as this will encourage them to participate more in other programmes and thereby achieving their purposes. Allowing them to participate in decision making

processes and showing them SUZ's willingness to include their ideas in projects implementation empowers children with a sense of ownership of their work.

The 'family life' setting model at which will be set up at Thuthuka Rehabilitation Centre, will offer children an opportunity to experience a family life again. Again, undergoing skills training programmes build their capacity to become competitive on the labour market when they leave to find their own place for independent living. By establishing ministry affiliated companies and becoming a meaningful competitor on the labour market, SUZ would have broken new ground in this work in Zimbabwe. More importantly, with time, this will provide immediate work for street children and also their families, thereby breaking the cycle of poverty in the community. Underlying all the children's engagements and decisions, will be the profound conviction of knowing that they have an intimate relationship with God.

Having investigated and experienced the horrendous and death threatening conditions of street children in Zimbabwe, and how SUZ is responding, it has become imperative to all players in this field to approach the problem with an open and creative mindset. Any comprehensive approach therefore needs to engage multidisciplinary fronts which aim to release children from the most damaging situations and to rehabilitate them by offering essential services such as accommodation, health check up, formal and informal education, vocational skills training and employment. The other urgent action that can be engaged involves children who cannot be immediately taken out of the street for any reason, by reducing their risk during their life on the street.

However, whilst the intervention methods are significant, it is contended in this thesis that the most important strategy of all is prevention, which endeavours to stop new generations of children from drifting to the streets from their homes. Thus, the families must become the primary target for any prevention methods. As revealed during this investigative research, the problem of street children is so huge and diverse that multiple strategies are needed. However, it is inconceivable that the welfare of children can be advanced in an environment consumed by constant poverty, increasing death rates of all ages due to HIV infection, high unemployment rate, political turmoil, mass human rights violations and child abuse. Therefore, for Zimbabwe to achieve a safe environment where children are given opportunities to develop to their full potential, the country needs to embark on enforcement of the law and creating environments conducive for sustainable development.

## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1**

#### **Street Children Questionnaire/Interview Questions**

##### **Menu A: STREET CHILDREN.**

###### **1. Demographic information.**

These questions provide information on the background of street children:

- a. Gender of the participants -----
- b. How old are you? .....
- c. Where were you born? .....
- d. Do you go to school? .....
- e. Where do you live? .....
- f. With whom do you live? .....
- g. Where are your parents? .....
- h. Where did your parents come from? .....

###### **2. Stresses.**

These questions focus on the issues that have caused stress on street children. The stress could be major or minor. The stresses have been divided into five major categories namely:

- a. Major life events
- b. Everyday stresses.
- c. Enduring life strains.
- d. Life transitions.
- e. Developmental changes of adolescence.

**a. Major life events**

**Key Question:**

Has anything happened to you in your life that has been very difficult?

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.....

Why did you come to the streets?

.....

**b. Everyday stresses**

**Key question:**

What don't you like about living on the streets? What don't you like about living with your family?

.....  
.....  
.....

**c. Enduring life strains.**

**Key question:**

What are the most important problems that you have in your life at the moment, other than finding food, shelter and clothing?

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.....

**d. Life transitions.**

**Key questions:**

Have you had to move often? Do you need to move around a lot when living on the streets? Why? Does your family move around a lot? Why?

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.....  
.....

**e. Developmental changes of adolescence.**

**Key Question:**

What things are good and what things are difficult about growing up and being an adolescent?

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.....

**3. Attachments.**

**Key Question:**

Who or what is most important to you?

.....  
.....  
.....

**4. Skills, competencies and coping strategies.**

**Key questions:**

How have you managed to survive the difficulties in your life?

.....  
.....



**5. Resources.**

**Key question:**

Where do you get your help and information from? (Health, drugs, etc) Who do you speak to and listen to?

.....  
.....  
.....

**6. General health issues.**

**Key question:**

What problems have you had with your health?

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.....

**7. Risk behaviours.**

**Key Question:**

Do you think street children take risks with their lives or safety? If so, what type of risks?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Appendix 2**

**Menu B: Service Provider Interview Questions**

**1. Demographic information.**

- a. How many street children are in this city? .....
- b. What is the sex ratio of street children? .....
- c. What is the age range and average age? .....
- d. Where do they come from? .....
- e. Where do their parents come from? .....
- f. What is the literacy and educational levels like? .....
- g. Where do street children live, sleep, spend most of the day? .....
- h. Where are their parents? .....
- i. Do they come from institutions? .....
- j. What is their religion? .....
- k. Do they work? What type of work? Are they able to sustain themselves with that money? How do they use it?

**2. Stress.**

**a. Major life events.**

What kind of tragedies have street children been exposed to?

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.....  
.....

**b. Everyday stresses.**

How do street children cope during their stay on the streets?

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.....

**c. Enduring life strains.**

What are the social, cultural, health, political, and economic problems of the local community?

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.....  
.....

**d. Life transitions.**

What kind of changes do street children experience? How do they adjust to these changes?

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.....

**e. Developmental changes of adolescence.**

What problems of adolescence do these street children experience?

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.....

**3. Normalization of substance use.**

Do street children use any substance?

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.....  
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.....

**4. Attachments- Family set up.**

What kind of families do street children have or come from?

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.....

**5. Skills.**

**Competencies and coping strategies**

What coping skills/mechanisms do street children use to survive on the streets?

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.....

**6. Resources.**

Where do street children get their information from?

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.....

**7. Risk behaviours.**

What kind of risk behaviours do street children indulge in? Which of these behaviours pose the greatest risk to the children and to the community?

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.....

**8. Motivation/ Involvement (SU/Church/Denominations and City Councils)**

What factors pushed you to begin work with street children in this country/city?

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**Appendix 3**

**Stakeholders interview questions.**

**Motivation/Involvement**

**1. Is your organisation involved with street children in this city? If yes, how?**

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.....  
.....

**2. What motivated you to begin work with street children?**

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.....  
.....

**3. How do you see the involvement of the community with regard to street children work? Can it be more involved, and how?**

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.....  
.....

**4. What do you see as the most effective approach to deal with this problem in this city?**

.....  
.....  
.....

**5. With regard to Simukai, is there something which you feel they are doing well (e.g.) or could be improved in their approach to this work?**

.....  
.....

## Appendix 4

### Statistics tables

#### A STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS IN ZIMBABWE

#### Number of children interviewed

##### Street Children

Mutare	6
Bulawayo	7
Masvingo	24
Harare	31
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>69</b>

##### Former street children

Mutare	44
Bulawayo	25
Masvingo	2
Harare	33
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104</b>

**Grand Total of children interviewed is 173**

**Number of service providers interviewed**

Mutare	7
Bulawayo	9
Masvingo	8
Harare	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b>

**Number of stakeholders interviewed**

Mutare	8
Bulawayo	4
Masvingo	6
Harare	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24</b>

**Number of case studies of success stories**

Mutare	3
Bulawayo	2
Masvingo	1
Harare	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>



**Number of pregnant girls met and interviewed**

Mutare	0
Bulawayo	0
Masvingo	4
Harare	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>

**Number of street children in the cities visited according to these organisations' estimates.**

Mutare	10-15
Bulawayo	30-50
Masvingo	50-60
Harare	2500-3000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2590-3125</b>

**Appendix 5**

**Monitoring Forms**

**THUTHUKA PROJECT**

**STREET VISIT FORM**

DATE OF VISIT..... TIME START..... TIME END.....

Number of children seen: Boys..... Girls.....

Location of children.....

.....

.....

.....

**New Children**

1.....

2. ....

3. ....

4. ....

5. ....

Medical Treatment: .....

.....

Witnessing Opportunities .....

.....

Comments.....

.....

**SCHOOL VISIT FORM**

<u><i>Date</i></u>	<u><i>Name of child</i></u>	<u><i>School visited</i></u>	<u><i>Comments</i></u>

**MEDICAL REFFERALS**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of child</u>	<u>Clinic/ Hospital referred to</u>	<u>Comments</u>

**DOSAGE - MEDICATION**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Name of Drug</i>	<i>Time Given</i>	<i>Name of Child</i>	<i>Signature of officer</i>	<i>Comments</i>

**FAMILY VISIT REPORT FORM**

Date ..... Time.....

Family Name.....

Address.....

Age.....

Sex.....

Topics of Discussion.....

.....

Urgent needs.....

.....

Observations.....

.....

Recommendations.....

.....

.....

**PRISON VISIT**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of Child</u>	<u>Crime</u>	<u>Comments</u>

**PROFILE FORM**

Name .....

D.O.B .....

Address .....

Birth Certificate .....

Parents .....

Background .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



**Schools List for the Year 2007**

<u>Name of child</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Grade/ form</u>	<u>Term 1</u>	<u>Paid</u>	<u>Term 2</u>	<u>Paid</u>	<u>Term 3</u>	<u>Paid</u>

**BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT RECORD**

Name.....

Date.....

Incident/ Behaviour.....

.....

.....

.....

Consequence/ Disciplinary action .....

.....

.....

Agreement with the child.....

.....

Signatures ..... (Child)

..... (Officer)

**One Session Counselling Sheet**

Name.....Age.....Sex.....

Presenting Problem.....

.....

.....

Why did client leave home/ school at what level did he/ she stop school?

.....

.....

Next of Kin.....

Address.....

Phone Number.....

What are the client's plans about his/ her life?

.....

.....

Agreed action to be taken .....

.....

**Counselling Assessment Form**

**General Information**

Date of Assessment.....

Name..... Sex..... Age.....

D.O.B..... Next of Kin.....

Physical Address.....

School.....

Grade/ Form.....

Case Referred by.....

**Background Information**

Informant.....

Family History.....

.....

**Observations**

Behaviour .....

Motor skills .....

Mood/ affect .....

Play .....

Conclusion/ Recommendation.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



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