

**A STUDY OF THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S
FUND (UNICEF) IN TACKLING THE PROBLEM OF STREET
CHILDREN IN GHANA**

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**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA -
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DECLARATION

I, Emmanuel Kofi Boateng Dankwa, hereby declare that except for the references to other people's work, which have been duly acknowledged, this thesis is the result of my own research work carried out and submitted to the Legon Center for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD), University of Ghana, under the supervision of Dr. Peace A. Medie.



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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to Rev. Dr. Kwabena Akuamoah Boateng, my mother Matilda, my supportive siblings, and my beloved niece Kirsty-Ann Ohenewaa Van-Dyck. I also dedicate this study to all children in street situations who work hard to survive. I really admire their tenacity.



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ABSTRACT

The problem of street children in our societies is very alarming. The ratification of international conventions such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and other formulated domestic laws clearly illustrate Ghana's attempts to tackle the issue of street children. UNICEF, since 1953, has been the permanent organ of the United Nations, charged with responsibility for children all around the world. This study looks at the role of UNICEF in collaborating with the government of Ghana and other stakeholders to tackle the challenge of street children in Ghana. The objectives of the study are to find out UNICEF's role in addressing the problem of street children in Ghana, to find out how Ghana has fared in implementing policies as measured by UNICEF, how street children have benefitted and finally, why Ghana continually records increasing numbers of street children despite being the first country in the world to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The study employs a qualitative research approach through semi-structured interviews to answer the research questions. The dissertation further discusses the activities of street children NGOs and the Department of Social Welfare in addressing child protection issues. Some key findings of the study were; UNICEF, in the past, had tried to address the "Kayayei" phenomenon which was then emerging as a new entrant to the street children phenomenon. The perplexing outcome of their intervention informed UNICEF's subsequent approach of adopting a systems-strengthening model (strengthening child protection systems on the whole), instead of the previous issues-based model (addressing individual child protection issues). Also, the issue of street children has been overlooked by the government of Ghana for so many years which explains why the problem has currently become uncontrollable. To add, Ghana has some of the best governing laws and policies, but implementation has always been the challenge. Key recommendations arrived at include; strengthening the extended family structure, improving the socio-economic standards of families, and setting up special schools for children who are already in street situations in order to train them with skillsets required in key sectors of the Ghanaian economy such as agriculture, technical, and vocational skills, so as to harness their potential and improve their contributions to society.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACES:	Academy for Competence and Entrepreneurial Spirit
AGREDS:	Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services
AMA:	Accra Metropolitan Assembly
CAS:	Catholic Action for Street Children
CBMS:	Community Based Child Protection Mechanisms
CCFC:	Coalition for Child-Friendly Cities
CENCOSAD:	Center for Community Studies, Action and Development
CHS:	Commission for Human Security
CMS:	Case Management System
CRC:	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSOs:	Civil Service Organizations
CSPPD:	Center for Social Protection Policy Development
DFID:	Department for International Development (DFID)
DSW:	Department of Social Welfare
ECOWAS:	Economic Community of West African States
EI:	Executive Instrument
FBOs:	Faith-Based Organizations

GNCC:	Ghana National Commission on Children
GoG:	Government of Ghana
GSFP:	Ghana School Feeding Programme
HIV/AIDS:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ILO:	International Labour Organization
INGOs:	International Non-Governmental Organizations
IPEC:	International Programme to Eliminate Child Labour
LADMA:	La Dadekotopon Municipal Assembly
LEAP:	Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty
MDGs:	Millennium Development Goals
MMDAs:	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
MOGCSP:	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
NGOs:	Non-Governmental Organizations
NHIS:	National Health Insurance Scheme
PPAG:	Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana
RSH:	Royal Seed Home
S.Aid:	Street Girls Aid
SCEF:	Street Children Empowerment Foundation

SDGs:	Sustainable Development Goals
SOPs:	Standard Operating Procedures
UN:	United Nations
UNCRC:	United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child
UNDP:	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA:	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID:	United States Agency for International Development

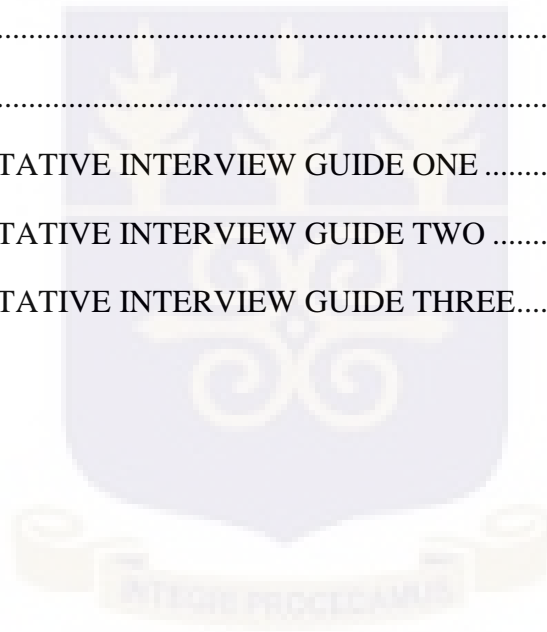


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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Research Problem

The term “street children” was first used by Henry Mayhew in 1851 when writing “London Labour and the London Poor”, although it came to general uses only after the United Nations Year of the Child in 1979.¹ Before, street children were referred to as homeless, abandoned, or runaways. Most definitions of street children concentrate on two characteristics; presence on the street and, contact with the family. The most commonly used definition comes from UNICEF.

According to Plummer et al, “children who spend their days largely unsupervised in public spaces or urban centers are commonly referred to as ‘street children’”.² The United Nations defines street children as “boys and girls for whom ‘the street’ (including unoccupied dwellings, wasteland, etc.) has become their home and/or source of livelihood, and who are inadequately protected or supervised by responsible adults”.³ The disturbing sight of children engaging in a variety of both legal and illegal activities on the streets has recently attracted worldwide attention. In many urbanized areas of Latin America, Africa, and Asia, their existence is ubiquitous and growing. In actual fact, UNICEF has estimated that there are tens of millions of street children across the globe.⁴

In the eighties and nineties, there was a great worldwide concern on the rights and welfare of children.⁵ This growing concern resulted in the acceptance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989) by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20th November, 1989, which has since been ratified by 194 countries, making it the most widely ratified international rights treaty in history.⁶ Closely following the adoption of the CRC was

“the adoption of the Organization of African Unity’s Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Addis Ababa in 1990”.⁷

In line with this general concern for the rights and welfare of children in especially difficult circumstances is the alarming international problem of the rising numbers of street children in urban centers, mostly within the developing world.⁸ This has translated into the increasing number of governmental and non-governmental organizations throughout the world whose main activity is to help alleviate the plight of street children.⁹

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or Agenda 2030, also known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. The SDGs encourage a spirit of partnership between Governments, private sector, research, academia and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) – with the support of the UN. This partnership ensures that the right choices are made now to improve life, in a sustainable way, for future generations.

The social intervention policies and programs administered by developing countries are mostly in compliance with generally accepted international principles, conventions, and goals. Ghana signed the CRC on 29th January, 1990, and became the first country in the world to ratify the treaty on 5th February, 1990. Ghana’s Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection partners with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), to ensure the social development and rights of the child by formulating and implementing child development and social protection policies. The Children’s Act of 1998 (Act 560) under Ghana’s domestic laws also mandates the government to ensure the rights of the child. All these legal documents adopted by Ghana clearly shows the nation’s

agenda towards the promotion of the physical, mental and social well-being of the Ghanaian child.

Currently in Ghana, the campaign dubbed “Operation get off the street now, for a better life”, spearheaded by the sector Minister, Hon. Otiko Afisah Djaba, is intended to address the challenges of street children and roll out preventive measures to curb the societal menace. According to the Minister, Ghana has developed many laws and policies which have not been successfully implemented. The Minister has emphasized that fighting the problem of street children in Ghana will reflect both international and national obligations such as the achievement of goal 1, 2, and 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹⁰

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Street children make a growing phenomenon in the world today. The definition of a street child varies. Scanlon et al, in their statement identify that, “research distinguishes two groups: home-based, i.e. children who usually return home at night (also referred to as children on the streets) and street-based (also known as children of the streets) who remain on the street and have no family support”.¹¹ UNICEF, on the other hand, has identified and defined three types of street children, Street-Living, Street-Working, and Street-Family. Street living children are children who may have lost their families through war, accident or illness, or have been abandoned. Street working children are children who spend most of their time working in the streets and markets of cities, selling or begging, fending for themselves but returning home on a regular basis. Children from street families are children who live on the streets with their families on a daily basis. They have no homes to turn to; so from dawn to dusk, they are on the street and at the mercy of harsh weather conditions and insects especially mosquitoes.¹²

The increasing number of street children is not only worrying but also shows the failures of governments. According to a Los Angeles Times report in 2012, the leadership of Cambodia, in preparation for the visit of ex-US President Barack Obama, cleared their streets off street kids by hiding them from sight in an attempt to prevent any negative comment from the world leader.¹³ Also in Manila, Philippines, street children as young as five were being caged in brutal detention centers, ahead of Pope Francis' visit to the Philippines in January 2015.¹⁴ According to UN sources, "there are up to 150 million street children in the world today. Chased from home by violence, drug and alcohol abuse, the death of a parent, family breakdown, war, natural disaster or simply socio-economic collapse, many destitute children are forced to eke out a living on the streets, scavenging, begging, hawking in the slums and polluted cities of the developing world".¹⁵

A study conducted by the Department of Social Welfare of Ghana in 2011 indicated that there were 33,000 children living on the streets of Ghana's urban centers. A recent report in 2017 indicates that the numbers of children have almost doubled to 61, 492 children only on the streets of Accra. According to a statement by the Gender Minister at a stakeholder's conference on January 22, 2018, three hundred and forty-five (345) areas of concentration for street children have been identified only in Accra. Current UNICEF reports indicate that there are over 100,000 street children across the country.

According to Nunzio, "street children have often been portrayed by a significant proportion of academic literature as passive victims of dysfunctional families and social failure, lost souls to whom joyfulness and playfulness of being a child have been denied".¹⁶ Despite the implementation of various policies and initiatives such as the LEAP and Ghana School Feeding programmes by international, non-governmental and governmental organizations to assist poor

families over the past decades or more, the problem of children and adolescents who inhabit the streets of major urban centers has not been curbed, much less eradicated. According to the UNDP, Ghana is acknowledged as the first country in Sub-Saharan Africa to meet the MDG 1 target of halving extreme poverty as at 2015.¹⁷ Yet the increasing number of street children creates some doubts about the statistics and is an unambiguous violation of the CRC, the Children's Act of 1998 (Act 560), and in the long run can render the success of the SDGs in Ghana by 2030 unattainable.

In the study of International Conflict and Resolution, one concept which seeks to explain why civil wars occur in West Africa is the concept of the Lumpenproletariat. In Marxism, the concept of the lumpenproletariat refers to the masses in rags, outsiders on the edge of society, drifters and criminals, of little or no use politically.¹⁸ The lumpenproletariat represents the least of all social classes who are neither fully employed nor sell their labor power as a commodity, as a result of ever-heightening capitalist transformation or retrenchment.¹⁹ They are classified as casualties of the world capitalist system and constitute a potentially 'dangerous class'.

Furthermore, issues of child trafficking, child labour, and rape, resulting in unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDs, can be attributed to reasons such as the unfortunate circumstances of street dwellers especially children, thus deepening the issue of poverty.²⁰ In a message issued by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to commemorate the international day for the eradication of poverty in October 2002, he stated that "extreme poverty anywhere is a threat to human security everywhere".²¹

This study seeks to understand the reasons behind the failure of the implementation of government interventions despite the implementation of programs that comply with international Conventions and Protocols. For every nation to be prosperous and maximize development, there

is the need for the synchronization of human, natural and capital resources which are the tangibles. Certainly, the most important of them is the human resource. This development of many children on the streets would have the propensity of enormously retarding economic growth and hampering national development. However, this can be averted if the problem of street children is properly addressed.

The phenomenon is not particular to Ghana alone. In Senegal, UNICEF estimates over 50,000 children sleeping on the streets in the capital, Dakar, and over 100,000 can be found in other cities in the country.²²

This dissertation examines the role of UNICEF in the fight against the problem of street children in Ghana, its effectiveness, and what has accounted for the failures in the implementation of policies aimed at addressing the problem, by the government of Ghana.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What has been UNICEF's role in addressing the problem of street children in Ghana?
2. How has Ghana fared in implementing its street-child eradication policies as measured by UNICEF?
3. How have street children in Ghana benefitted from the implemented policies?
4. What else can be done by the concerned stakeholders in order to arrive at a workable solution in curbing the problem of street children in Ghana?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1. To critically study the effectiveness of the role of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in tackling the menace of street children.

2. To assess Ghana's progress in the fight against the menace of street children in the view of UNICEF
3. To assess the benefits of the strategies implemented by the government of Ghana in supporting children on the streets.
4. To propose other measures of intervention that has not been identified by stakeholders that may work better than previously rolled-out measures in achieving the SDGs.

1.5 Rationale of the Study

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has, since the post-World War II era, been working on a lot of important programs to address the long-term needs of women and children in developing countries across the globe.²³ Ghana has since benefitted from her relationship with the UN by attracting a lot of donor support in the implementation of her domestic policies. Notable among UNICEF's program areas is the Child Protection Program which is working to mitigate the social risks that directly affect poor and vulnerable children everywhere.²⁴

It is the hope of the researcher that this study will contribute to knowledge, policy, practice, and also importantly serve as a basis for future research.

1.6 Thesis Statement

The Government of Ghana's early ratification of the CRC, and the activities of key stakeholders who deal with child protection related issues have not produced the expected results on addressing the challenge of street children in Ghana.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on how key stakeholders have cooperated to fight against the challenge of street children in Africa, particularly Ghana over the past few years. The stakeholders involved

in this research include the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), which is the UN’s agency responsible for the protection and defense of Child rights universally, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, which is also the domestic government agency that works in the interest of all Ghanaian children. These stakeholders, despite some efforts, seem to have made no headway in addressing the challenge owing to the increasing numbers witnessed in the streets. The final category of stakeholders include non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who work with children in street situations. This work, therefore, will study the role of UNICEF with regards to their activities and interventions relating to street children, between 2011 and 2017 in order to identify the gaps and challenges they face in their quest to address the problem.

If the statistics in 2011 gave the figure as 33,000 and in 2017 had escalated to 61,492, then the question to be asked here is: “What was being done by the Ministry and its partners between those years, which did not reduce the numbers but only ended up in doubling the figures”?

1.8 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Theories are generalized statements serving as lenses for research problems and also have the ability to provide explanations in an area of research. Compliance Theory will be relevant in this study because Ghana, in ratifying the CRC, is subject to work with all directives from the United Nations on issues of Child Rights Protection. In international relations, compliance is understood as a situation in which state behavior is in conformity with an international legal rule prescribing that behavior. As such, compliance is related to, but different from questions of implementation or effectiveness.²⁵ Compliance theory provides a vehicle for the examination of the relationship between those who hold power and those who are subject to that power in various settings.²⁶

Realists do not deny that nations often act in a manner that is consistent with international law.²⁷ They, however, argue that the existence of international law has no effect on national behavior and that instances of “compliance” are merely cases in which the nation’s policy happens to be consistent with international law.²⁸ A model of compliance in which international law matters, therefore, must explain how national behavior is changed by the existence of the law.²⁹

Compliance theory makes standard assumptions about government behavior. It is assumed that states are rational and act in their own self-interest, and that they are aware of the impact of international law on behavior.³⁰ Although it is assumed that states act in a self-interested fashion, no assumption is made regarding the way in which states identify their self-interest. The traditional way of modeling national interest is to assume that the government pursues the public interest.³¹ Just as compliance with promises at the domestic level requires the existence of damages, a model of compliance with international law requires a mechanism through which nations are sanctioned for violations thereof. Those who argue that international law has little or no impact on national behavior, therefore, are actually making the claim that the existing penalties for a violation of international law are insufficient to change the equilibrium of the game.³²

In order to consider international agreements as law at all, it is crucial that a critical mass of rule addressees comply with its obligation.³³ According to Henkin, “almost all nations observe almost all principles of international law and almost all of their obligations almost all of the time”.³⁴ Any analysis of compliance with international law relates to codified rules and regulations and, to a lesser extent, to social norms that prescribe a specific conduct. In international law however, states prefer to have rules framed positively in treaties for the sake of

security in order to prevent possible misunderstandings over the exact meaning of specific rules.³⁵

According to Koh's "Why do nations obey international law", he observes that in modern debates, the compliance question relates to John Austin's claim that international law is not law because, unlike domestic rules, international legal rules are not enforced by a coercive sovereign.³⁶ Koh further observes that on one hand, the realist charge that international law is not really law, because it cannot be enforced; on the other, the rationalists claim that nations "obey" international law only to the extent that it serves national self-interest.³⁷ The compliance debate seeks to explain why states comply or do not comply with international law in a decentralized system. Some scholars contend that international law exerts a 'compliance pull' on states whereby they incur obligations.³⁸

This may explain why Ghana has not been sanctioned with the worsening situation of street children despite leading the world in the ratification of the CRC. Compliance, therefore, does not automatically result in the effective implementation of treaties, since Ghana's act of compliance by means of the early ratification of the CRC has still not produced the expected outcome. Compliance theory is therefore useful in the understanding of the role of UNICEF in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection. The government of Ghana's attempts to comply by signing and ratifying almost all treaties have failed largely due to some factors that will be discussed in this study.

1.9 Literature Review

This study reviews literature focusing on thematic issues relating to the involvement of stakeholders in social protection provisions towards supporting state governments to address the challenge of street children.

1.9.1 The Mandate of the UN on Child Rights

Poretti et al. in their work titled “The rise and fall of icons of ‘stolen childhood’ since the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child”, have stated that, “the whole children’s rights field is centered around the UN system, which is the depositary of the CRC and the guardian of its interpretation and towards which INGOs constantly look”.³⁹ According to Poretti et al, “the centrality of the UN in the children’s rights field and its pivotal role in the production of collective representations of victimhood underscores the decisive role played by states and non-state actors in the international translations of children’s rights”.⁴⁰ Highlighting the highly politicized fields in which child rights advocates deploy their efforts, he mentions that “states occupy key positions in the Security Council, in drafting of the UNGA Resolutions, in the nomination of the members of the CRC Committee and in the UNICEF Executive Board, which approves the entity’s strategic plans and budgets”.⁴¹

Oestreich also agrees with Poretti et al. by acknowledging the fact that, “human rights have always been near the top of the UN agenda, yet UN efforts to promote human rights have been badly – some would say fatally – flawed, divided between two conflicting priorities”.⁴² He states that one little-noticed development in accomplishing this has been the activities of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and its approach in implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). In his view, “politicizing what had in the past been purely technical work is potentially dangerous, because UNICEF, as an international government organization, operates only with the consent of a host government”.⁴³ I concur with his assertion that countries often sign and even ratify conventions, treaties, and other internationally legally binding documents not out of conviction but rather because they feel pressure to enhance their

international image or to go along with more powerful Western nations, as I believe Ghana did with the CRC.

1.9.2 Challenges of Approaches to the Implementation of Child Protection Policies

In his work “Bottom-up approaches to strengthening child protection systems: Placing children, families, and communities at the center”, Wessels argues that the efforts to strengthen national child protection systems have frequently taken a top-down approach of imposing formal, government-managed services.⁴⁴ He blamed the failure of child protection policy implementation to this fact and proposed an alternate approach of community-driven, bottom-up approach that will enable non-formal-formal collaboration and alignment, greater use of formal services, internally driven social change, and high levels of community ownership in implementing policies to address child protection related challenges.⁴⁵ He identifies the governmental, non-governmental and international non-governmental organizations as the formal actors, different from the non-formal actors which include children, families, and communities. He argues that children are frequently protected by non-formal actors such as families, communities, and leaders such as elders, teachers, or religious leaders as embodied in Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) social-ecological frameworks of child development.⁴⁶

In the same ideology, Britto, Pia R et al. in their work “Nurturing care: promoting early childhood development”, strongly suggest that, “parents, caregivers, and families need to be supported in providing nurturing care and protection in order for young children to achieve their development potential”.⁴⁷ They also propose a multi-sectoral approach where “many sectoral interventions could serve as the basis for delivery of services that link policy level strategies of cash transfer, social policies, and income generation with programmatic interventions, such as parenting support that could benefit childhood development”.⁴⁸ Moreover, Britto, Pia R., et al. in

focusing on family support and strengthening package as the basic unit of the community identify three elements of family strengthening. These are: “access to quality services (e.g. antenatal care, immunization, and nutrition), skills building (e.g. positive and responsive parenting to reduce harsh discipline and promote stimulation), and support (e.g. social protection, safety networks, and family support policies)”.⁴⁹

Such bottom-up approaches not only complement the more widely used top-down approaches but also help to unlock the prodigious creative and practical capacities of communities.⁵⁰ With the right social protection systems in place in Ghana, the issue of street children can be managed. This is because the strong social policies properly implemented by the government will be able to address all social protection issues which will eventually tackle problems relating to child protection in the country.

1.9.3 Service Provisions for Vulnerable Children by INGOs

In another article “The role of international non-governmental organizations in service delivery for orphans and abandoned children in China”, Cheryl Chui and Lucy P Jordan explained that “the influence of INGOs and NGOs in China’s social service sector is almost impossible to ignore”.⁵¹ In their discussions, they confirmed that “INGOs play a significant role in filling the welfare gaps by importing and transferring professional knowledge, expertise, skills, financial and human resources, and evidence-based best practice models into localities”.⁵² I agree with their assertion that INGOs are also able to implement programmes and interventions that cater more towards children’s psychosocial needs. They, however, cautioned that “while INGOs play an important role in filling in some of the service gaps, they should not be perceived as the ‘magic bullet’ in response to inadequate social support and service for orphans, abandoned children or other at-risk children groups”.⁵³ In their conclusion, they state that INGOs are able to

help resolve some of the local government's difficulties in implanting mandated child welfare policies by developing programs and interventions that target specific, localized problems associated with children.⁵⁴

Gualandris et al. agree with Chui and Jordan by stating that, “governments and global corporations both confront and rely on international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) to identify, design, and deliver interventions that prompt transformational change in societies”.⁵⁵ According to Gualandris et al, INGOs have a vital role by stressing the importance of interventions that prompt people-centered development and that reshape collective thinking about both human progress and sustainable development.⁵⁶

In this light, the provision of services by INGOs in states where they have presence contributes immensely to the overall growth of the nation's development.

1.9.4 Political Commitments towards Vulnerable Children

Wise et al have also mentioned that “beyond absolute levels of child poverty, the observed differences in social inequality are also associated with different political attitudes toward ameliorating poverty's impact on children”.⁵⁷ According to them, the 6 dimensions that account for a child's well-being are; “material well-being, health and safety, educational well-being, peer and family relationships, behaviors and risks, and subjective well-being”.⁵⁸ According to them, UNICEF reports strengthen calls to improve public programs for children, including education and access to health services.⁵⁹ However, true progress in these essential areas may require a more fundamental awareness of the scale of social inequality in countries and a research and policy focus on strengthening social capital and its association with an improved sense of well-being and safety – a necessary prerequisite to better child health.⁶⁰

Also, in the recently released UN CRC General Comment No. 21 (2017) on children in street situations, the Committee calls upon States to strengthen international commitment, cooperation and mutual assistance which include identifying and sharing rights-based practices that have been shown to be effective towards research, policies, monitoring, and capacity-building.⁶¹

The General Comment under International cooperation, article 63, stresses the fact that, “Cooperation requires the involvement of States, United Nations bodies and agencies, regional organizations, civil society organizations (including child-led organizations and academics), children, the private sector and professional groups”.⁶² The Committee encourages those actors to foster continuous, high-level policy dialogues and research in relation to quality, evidence-based interventions for prevention and response.⁶³ According to the Committee, “this would include dialogues at the international, national, regional and local levels. Such cooperation may need to address the protection of children crossing borders as migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers and as victims/survivors of cross-border trafficking”.⁶⁴ This is very true in the case of Ghana which has seen an uncontrollable proliferation of children from Niger, Chad, and Mali who are seen begging in the streets of the cities while their parents and guardians sit behind and monitor them.

1.9.5 Motive behind Engagements in Social Work

Glauser has also argued that social workers and project activist in most parts of the world have increasingly taken over the societal concern for street children and implemented action on their behalf.⁶⁵ In his view, while many of their actions provide for individual street children, such activist many at times do so in their own interest.⁶⁶ He emphasizes that such actions tend to benefit the activist’s personal goals, pretensions, and satisfactions, which are often related to the

need to purge a sense of social guilt or to find a field of application of ‘good ideas’ about what should be done for the needy, more than they benefit the children they work with.⁶⁷ Hence, street children are a particularly handy target as they are permanently present as a visible issue of concern which does not seem to need any further legitimation.⁶⁸ Also, because they are an urban phenomenon, they are within easy reach of the activists, most of who live in the cities. His final observation is that street children’s concrete and tangible problems appeal to people’s needs to be protective and encourages an easier type of action on symptoms rather than on the deeper problems and causes.⁶⁹ In Ghana’s case, the on-going campaign to get children off the streets could be caught in this observation.

To support the view of Glauser, Howe, in his book titled “An introduction to social work theory”, has indicated that, “for most social workers, a behavioural approach is either viewed with extreme suspicion or embraced as the answer to a prayer”.⁷⁰ As an expert in social work behaviourism, Howe is of the opinion that more usually, skeptics hold a popular caricature of the intentions of most social workers as being manipulative, malign and not altruistic.

1.9.6 Ghana’s Human Security at Risk

The search for a definition of human security is justifiably stated from the contemporary debut of the concept in the 1994 Human Development Report (HDR) of the UNDP.⁷¹ The 1994 HDR explains that human security has two main facets – the safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease, and repression, and protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life such as in jobs, homes or communities.⁷²

Based on this concept, the Report identifies seven categories of threats to human security.⁷³ The threats are Economic Security, Food Security, Health Security, Environmental Security, Personal Security, Community and Political Security.⁷⁴

The Commission for Human Security (CHS2003:4) also describes the concept as protection of “the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance freedoms and human fulfillment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedom – freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations.” A critical reading of the Commission’s usage of the phrase ‘vital core’ suggests a reference to the very existence of humankind, sometimes described as the essence of life.⁷⁵ Looking at the adverse effects of children living on the streets, the challenge can be viewed as a threat to Ghana’s Human Security.

1.10 Research Methodology

To answer the research questions and achieve the research objectives, the study relies on qualitative methods of collecting and analyzing data gotten from selected officials relevant to this study. According to Lewis (1998), qualitative research is defined as a research process that uses inductive data analysis to learn the meaning that participants hold about a problem or issue by identifying patterns or themes.⁷⁶ Semi-structured interviews were conducted with stakeholders to support the secondary data gathered. The stakeholders were officials of UNICEF, the Department of Social Protection under the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, and finally Non-governmental Organizations who work with street children.

1.10.1 Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

In all, six people who work with the child protection and social welfare units of stakeholder agencies were selected to be interviewed. These persons included three child protection experts from UNICEF, one person from the Department of Social Welfare and two persons from NGOs working with children in street situations. These persons were selected due to their active roles and wealth of experience in key institutions responsible for handling the

issues of children in Ghana. The data derived from the interviews provide adequate information and opinions to support the research and are analyzed qualitatively in the form of narrations, descriptions, and explanations, which later on became useful at arriving at informed conclusions and pragmatic recommendations.

Considering how crucial properly gathered information is to research, the purposive sampling method is used for this study to allow key respondents to be selected based on the quality of information they possess. It allows choosing people who are willing and ready to provide information needed for the completion of this study and considering the nature and objectives of this study.

1.10.2 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were taken into account first by seeking permission from the interviewees before recording their voices and opinions on the subject matter. An interviewee's informed consent is a major ethical issue in conducting research. According to Armiger: "it means that a person knowingly, voluntarily and intelligently, and in a clear and manifest way, gives his consent".⁷⁷ Also, an affirmation of the strict confidentiality with which the data will be held was explicitly indicated in the questionnaire. In addition, ethical considerations were also dealt with when the researcher briefed the interviewees as to the objectives of the research, their significance in the research process, and expectations from them.

1.11 Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study are those characteristics of design or methodology that impact or influence the interpretation of the findings from a research. They are the constraints on generalizability, applications to practice, and/or utility of findings that are the result of the ways

in which the researcher initially chose to design the study and /or the method used to establish internal and external validity.⁷⁸ In carrying out this study, some limitations encountered were;

1. There was limited literature on the role of UNICEF specifically towards the fight against the challenge of street children in Ghana. This could be due to the fact that UNICEF had not been actively involved with children in street situations since early 2009.
2. Another limitation was the absence of reports on street children due to technical hitches such as crashing of systems memory or systems cleansing. Hard copy reports could also not be found because library shelves of child protection units had to be cleared in order to make room for new documents. This limitation culminated into difficulties in obtaining accurate data on street children.
3. Additionally, a lot of NGO's who work with children in street situations could not be contacted due to time constraints.
4. Finally and most importantly, the busy schedules of respondents resulted in delays of completing the study on time.

1.12 Arrangement of Chapters

This research work is categorized into four chapters. Chapter 1 provides the main introduction with a background to the research problem, statement of the problem, a review of relevant literature, as well as theories and concepts that will run through the entire research. Chapter 2 gives an overview of the research topic and analyses the important details of children in street situations as authored or reviewed by other scholars. In Chapter 3, the research findings are presented. These findings answer the research questions posed in Chapter 1. Finally, in Chapter

4, a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations will complete the research work.



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CHAPTER 2

This chapter provides an overview of the problem of street children in the world and more specifically, Ghana, with its possible implications. Globally, there is the indication that there are a growing number of people who, for various reasons, leave their homes in rural communities, and most often than not, end up in urban areas. A lot of these movements are likely to be made by children either at their own will, being displaced by conflicts, natural disasters, or better still innate desires for a brighter future.¹ Internally, poverty and other developmental disparities continue to drive Ghanaians from the north to the south, particularly its urban centers.² Children caught in any of these positions are bound to engage in some activity, whether legal or not as a means to survive the harsh realities of life. Some of the children end up on the streets of cities where they carve out niches for themselves as child street dwellers.

Other issues to be discussed in this chapter include the effects of street children on human security, social protection, the SGDs, and the integration of state and non-state actors in meeting the goals.

2.1 Street Children in a Global Perspective

The presence of children and adolescents pursuing their survival on city streets is not a new phenomenon around the world. According to Raffaelli and Koller, precursors of today's street-involved youth can be found throughout history and across societies in different forms, as evident in the labels that have been used for unaccompanied youth seeking a living on city streets: waifs, gamins, urchins, street Arabs, guttersnipes, and etc.³ These labels offer insight into how societal views of youth on the street reflect a complex and contradictory mix encompassing

pity for their plight, a romantic view of their status as free-ranging adventurers, fear, and contempt.⁴

Attention to the situation of street-involved youth can be found in newspaper accounts and socially aware fiction of the last two centuries.⁵ For example, in the novel *Oliver Twist: The Parish Boy's Progress* (published in the 1830s), Charles Dickens depicted the life of an orphan who grew up in a juvenile home and a workhouse, was apprenticed to an undertaker, and eventually ran away to London where he fell in with a gang of juvenile pickpockets operating under the auspices of an adult criminal.⁶ The British journalist and editor Henry Mayhew is credited with first using the term “street children” in the 1850s to describe poor children who worked on London’s street as vendors, performers, scavengers, and laborers.⁷ In the latter part of the nineteenth century, U.S. writer Horatio Alger published a series of juvenile novels describing street-involved youth, such as *Ragged Dick, or Street Life in New York* (about a homeless boy who earns his living shining shoes) and *Tattered Tom, or the Story of A Street Arab* (a young girl who escapes her abusive guardian and lives on the street).⁸ Visitors to the newly established Soviet state in the 1920s were shocked by the large numbers of abandoned children – many of them war orphans or offspring of families affected by the epidemics or famines – struggling to survive in cities and towns.⁹ Jorge Amado’s 1937 book *Captains of the Sands* describes the lives of a group of orphaned and abandoned children living in a waterfront warehouse and surviving on their wits in Salvador, Brazil.¹⁰ These diverse narrations of the lives of street-involved children clearly illustrate that the phenomenon is not new at all.

Today, both the developed and developing countries have to battle with the challenges in addressing the situation of street children. Raffaelli et al. mention that “the world often tries to forget or ignore them, and sometimes even denies they exist. The scene is common and painfully

familiar; a busy street lined with shops or malls displaying the latest in fashion and electronic equipment, well-dressed people going in and out, the sound of vehicles whizzing by, expensive cars, and the flash of neon lights.¹¹ At night, big cities come alive and urban life reaches its peak. But in the background, children huddle in corners or walk about aimlessly, dirty and disheveled – a pitiful sight”.¹² They beg for spare change, juggle or perform magic tricks, work at street-based jobs (e.g. selling candy, washing cars, carrying groceries), engage in illicit activities (e.g. dealing drugs, stealing, selling sex), or hang out with peers.¹³

Furthermore, Nasir and Aliya have explained that “street children are the unwanted gifts of the impassivity of the modern era. They are the casualties of poverty, population boom, and economic growth, loss of cultural values, war, mental abuse and physical torture”.¹⁴ Street children are maltreated, imprisoned and, in some countries, killed. Street children, as the offspring of complex contemporary urban environments, represent one of our most serious global challenges”.¹⁵ In elaborating, Black mentions that “these are the visible child workers – the shoe-shiners, barrow-pushers, car attendants, and vendors of everything from trinkets to chewing-gum, straw hats to plastic bags, drugs, to sexual intimacy”.¹⁶

According to De Moura et al, “there have been so many definitions of street children which incorporate ideas and concepts which indicate the deplorable conditions of these individuals, differentiating them from others who are assumed to be normal”. De Moura et al. also make reference to the definition introduced by Cosgrove (1990) who defined a street child as “any individual under the age of majority whose behavior is predominantly at variance with community norms for behavior, and whose primary support for his/her developmental needs is not a family or family substitute”.¹⁷

De Mourra et al. further assert that “although the social problems in different countries and their cultural background and social policies differ substantially, international agencies and scientists tend to focus on similar issues to characterize and explain the genesis of street children. One possible explanation for this similarity would be that they are reporting on a worldwide social phenomenon regardless of peoples’ geographical location and historical, social and cultural context”.¹⁸

De Moura et al. further establish the fact that “the first relevant documents about street children on an international level that have been traced in the literature came from UNICEF. In a document dated 1986 (UNICEF, 1986), street children were classified into three categories: candidates for the street, children ‘on’ the street and children ‘of’ the street”. According to this document, candidates for the street are working youths who live with their poor families, while children ‘on’ the street are those working individuals who maintain some family connections but who receive inadequate and/or sporadic support. The third type, children ‘of’ the street, refers to working individuals who have been abandoned or have been sent away by their families and consequently live without family support.¹⁹ UNICEF reminds us that there are “millions of children living alone and unprotected on city streets...hungry, thirsty, cold and unwashed as part of their daily life...exposed to all kinds of exploitation, including physical violence, child labour, and trafficking”. This situation – UNICEF points out – violates the children’s rights.²⁰

According to Boakye-Boaten, “the findings of le Roux and Smith point to a problematic phenomenon that is emerging and threatening the very fabric of societal advancement”.²¹ The difficulties confronting the 21st-century child are further captured in UNICEF’s report, “The State of The World’s Children 2005: Childhood under Threat”, which posits that “more than 1 billion children are denied a healthy and protected upbringing as promised by the CRC

(1989)".²² This situation, "coupled with the growing disproportion in incomes between the rural and the urban, and unequal development between the industrialized north and the developing south further exacerbates the already difficult circumstances of deprived children".²³

This phenomenon has grown at an alarming rate throughout the world especially in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Boakye-Boaten indicates that "the condition of children living and working on the streets of most urban areas in Africa has assumed problematic dimensions because many people are beginning to be concerned with the situation as needing an urgent and pragmatic attention".²⁴ According to Asante (2016), "UNICEF estimates that there are more than one billion children who are growing up on urban streets around the world, and these numbers are most likely to increase as the global population grows and as urbanization continues to apace".²⁵

Epstein also asserts that "unfortunately, the realization of the problematic nature of the street children phenomenon has not corresponded with an aggressive response from governments to deal with the problem. Epstein asserts that the inaction of governments of developing states is as a result of many factors".²⁶ Among other things, he posits that; "subject to influences of several external economic dependencies and/or internal civil strife, most of the institutional apparatus that have been created in support of the state are immature or incomplete and are unable to fulfill the mandates that would offer the promise of broad social and political inclusivity".²⁷

Additionally, the social and political accountability of most African societies to these children is non-existent and to a large extent not challenged either by internal or external elements. The plight of these children is thus left in their own hands or on some few International

and Non-Governmental Organizations ((I)NGOs) who are limited by their function and sometimes resources to deal effectively with the situation.

2.2 Street Children in Ghana

According to CAS, “the phenomenon of street children is a growing concern in many developing states, particularly in Africa. Ghana is no exception to the general trend of children fending for themselves on the streets”. In Ghana, it is a common feature to see children roaming the streets and engaging in menial jobs for survival. According to the headcount conducted in 2009 by the Catholic Action for Street Children’s (CAS, 2010), it was indicated that there were about 35,000 and more street children in the Greater Accra region alone.²⁸

Some push factors identified to be responsible for the influx of street children in Ghana include disorganized and broken homes, accompanying parents to the street and finally, the desire to attain total liberation from parental control.²⁹ In the case of broken homes, most children are forced to the streets as a result of severe maltreatment received from a step-parent.³⁰ Another reason is the failure of members of the family to cater for children left behind by departed relatives. Additionally, many children have no choice than to accompany their parents to the streets mostly due to economic hardships parents face in their original rural settlements.³¹ Once they find themselves on the streets, they join other street children to toil in order to earn an income to supplement what their parents earn. Finally, most children when they become adolescents crave independence from their parents. Children often feel that they are confined and are not given the ample space to explore and be adventurous.³² As Sumter et al. explain, experimentation is often associated with adolescence. Their relationship with their peers and friends gains more importance. They, therefore, get into the streets as a result of peer pressure, inspired by the search for “total freedom”.³³

According to Boakye-Boaten, Ghanaian children on the streets live under uncomfortable conditions; a lot of street children sleep on the bare floor or on uncomfortable cardboards in front of shops, under bridges, on passenger waiting seats at lorry stations and in market squares.³⁴ Under such conditions, they are exposed to all sorts of dangers such as thieves and urban scavengers who attack them with knives and razor blades to strip them naked, steal their petty hard-earned income, beat them up, and rape them in case they are females.³⁵ Most street girls who engage themselves in “Kayayei” activities during the day experience even more precarious situations at night.³⁶ Boakye-Boateng also mentions that “apart from the general hardships of surviving on the streets, many of the girls endure the most gruesome sexual attacks on the streets; in the deep hours of the night, boys sometimes pounce on them in their sleep and brutally abuse them”.³⁷ Due to the delicate nature of their ordeal, with respect to sexual abuse and rape, they do not discuss it openly due to the stigma (includes “losing their boyfriends who would not want to be seen with someone who has been raped”) attached to such abusive occurrences.³⁸

This further results in unwanted pregnancies, further populating the street with innocent children who deserve a better living as stipulated in the CRC. These innocent children become the next generation of street dwellers and the challenge of street children becomes even more difficult to address. Healthwise, street children in Ghana become prey to merciless mosquitoes at night, who inflict them with sores and worse of all, deadly malaria.

Furthermore, Boakye-Boaten clarifies that “street children in Ghana are exposed to all the possible ills in society”.³⁹ Drug use such as marijuana (popularly known as ‘weed’), glue sniffing, and the recently reported abuse of tramadol among the youth, both male and female prostitution, pickpocketing and other activities which border on criminality, are very high among street children.⁴⁰ On the other hand, Asante explains that “street youth are faced with

discriminatory and socially oppressive actions from the general public.⁴¹ These activities result in them being vulnerable to public violence as they are mistaken to be thieves and pickpockets”. They, therefore, become victims of severe beatings, false accusations of theft, and are ridiculed and tagged with derogatory names by the public.⁴²

Moreover, Boakye-Boaten explains that “street children in Ghana form some complex relationships to ensure their survival on the streets”. For instance, they sleep in groups and the more experienced children serve as resource persons for street novices. They also sometimes pay older people to protect them from other street scavengers. Boakye-Boaten also mentioned that “while the street boys protect themselves by engaging in groups or gangs, the tradeoff for security for street girls is to be in sexual relationships with boys who can protect them. This, unfortunately, produces a second generation of street toddlers”.⁴³

2.3 Social Protection in Ghana

According to Frempon-Ntiamoah, “Social Protection is a range of actions carried out by the state and other parties in response to vulnerability and poverty which seeks to guarantee relief from destitution for the vulnerable in society”.⁴⁴ It is vital to realizing sustainable development since citizens must be cushioned against impoverishment, enabled to realize their basic rights and to participate meritoriously in socio-economic life. Indications from across the globe demonstrate that well-targeted social protection measures plays a pivotal role in the reduction and alleviation of poverty.⁴⁵

In historical times, the traditional family system and community arrangements provided Ghana with a rich culture of social protection as well as support and emergency relief provided by faith-based organizations, welfare groups, and the government. Frempon-Ntiamoah mentions that “Ghana has developed a National Social Protection Policy to guide the consistent and

systematic provision of relevant programmes aimed at poverty reduction and the provision of relief for sections of the Ghanaian society who, for any reason, are unable to provide for themselves”.⁴⁶ To clarify further, “Social Protection consists of access to basic essential health care for all, with particular attention to maternal health, minimum income security to access the basic needs of life for children, minimum income security for people in working age and minimum income security for older persons”.⁴⁷

Bayali, however, states that as “guided by the Directive Principles of State Policy in Chapter five of the 1992 Republican Constitution of Ghana, the main responsibility is placed on the Government to ensure effective and consistent social protection delivery through financing from public sources”.⁴⁸ Bayali continues by recounting the progress of social protection in Ghana as follows; “since 2007, efforts have been made by the government of Ghana to enhance the coordination of major social protection interventions within a strategic framework.”⁴⁹ In 2013, a study to rationalize social protection provision and spending in Ghana recommended that interventions for the extreme poor should be prioritized and the national effort guided by key social protection programmes.⁵⁰ This thus called for the development of a policy, an idea which was given further impetus when Ghana’s cabinet, in June 2014, approved the strategic, oversight and monitoring roles of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) and mandated the Ministry to lead the development of a National Policy on Social Protection.⁵¹ In line with this initiative, the Ministry has formulated and launched a Child and Family Welfare Policy (CFWP) which is designed to prevent and protect children from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation.⁵² The Policy is also designed to ensure the effective coordination of all child and family welfare systems, and empower children and families to

better understand abusive situations and make choices to prevent and respond to situations of risk”.⁵³

Furthermore, Bayali explains that “the policy is anchored in Ghana’s national development planning arrangements and is aligned to the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA II 2014 – 2017); the Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies (2014 – 2020), as well as a range of sectorial policies and programmes”.⁵⁴ Social intervention programs currently being implemented in Ghana include the Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty (LEAP), a cash transfer system to poor households, Ghana School Feeding Program, the National Health Insurance Scheme, and very recently, the Free SHS for qualified Ghanaian citizens. All these programmes help to relieve parents and guardians off the financial burdens they usually encounter.

Among the social protection stakeholders in Ghana, UNICEF offers leadership in the provision of technical support to the national social protection system. According to UNICEF, their support is targeted at “improving the efficiency, effectiveness, and coverage of all flagship programmes; improving the targeting of social protection; facilitating the development and implementation of a comprehensive social protection policy; developing a communication and advocacy strategy to ensure that the public is aware and informed about social protection, among others”.⁵⁵

2.3.1 The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989)

The CRC is the most widely ratified human rights treaty. It is the international instrument that is most directly relevant to the issue of children’s rights. It sets forth a wide range of provisions that encompass civil rights and freedoms, family environment, basic health and welfare, education, leisure and cultural activities, and special protection measures.

The Convention has several ‘foundation principles’ that underpin all other children’s rights. These include non-discrimination; adherence to the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival, and development; and the right to participate. Diers (2013), breaks down the additional rights into three categories. Survival and development rights include the right to health services, formal education, leisure and cultural activities, and parental guidance.⁵⁶ Protection rights are those that protect children from abuse, violence, and exploitation.⁵⁷ Finally, participation rights recognize that children have the right to express their opinions and have a say in matters that affect them.⁵⁸ Two optional protocols were adopted in 2000 (one focused on the “sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography” and the second on the “involvement of children in armed combat”). In 2011, a third optional protocol was adopted that established a procedure for children or their representatives to communicate with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child if their rights are being violated and they are unable to obtain justice in their home country (see Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2015, for more information on these optional protocols).⁵⁹

The Committee on the Rights of the Child (composed of 18 international independent experts), a body charged with the implementation of the CRC, has highlighted the situation of street-involved youth in responding to reports submitted by member states.⁶⁰ Attention to street youth involved youth has also been evident in other documents prepared by UN agencies, most notably UNICEF’s annual *State of the World’s Children’s* reports.⁶¹ For example, one report (UNICEF, 2006) focused on “Excluded and Invisible” children (a broad definition that included “street children”); a latter report on urban children discussed the situation of children living and working on the streets (UNICEF, 2012).⁶² These reports acknowledge that children living and working on the streets are often overlooked or undercounted in international statistics.⁶³

Street children have also been the focus of consideration at the highest levels of the United Nations.⁶⁴ At its 92nd plenary meeting, the UN General Assembly (1992) issued a resolution on the “plight of street children”. The resolution expressed concern about the human rights violations street children experience, reminded governments of their responsibility to protect children’s rights, and suggested that the Committee on the Rights of the Child issued a general comment on street children. General comments provide interpretations of the rights contained in a particular convention and clarify the responsibilities of states parties.⁶⁵ The Committee on the Rights of the Child has issued comments on different populations of youth, including unaccompanied and separated children (Committee on the rights of the Child, 2005), children with disabilities (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2006), and indigenous children (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2009).⁶⁶ At least, one of these general comments mentioned street-involved children (e.g. the general comment on children with disabilities noted that such children often end up on the street).⁶⁷

In 2011, nearly 20 years after the UN General Assembly resolution on the “plight of street children”, the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution inviting “the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to conduct a study on challenges, lessons learned and best practices... to protect and promote the rights of children working and/or living on the street” (UN Human Rights Council, 2011, p.6).⁶⁸ In response to the resolutions, a report was prepared by the UN Office of the High Commission for Human Rights (UNOHCHR, 2012). The report noted that the CRC applies to “all children in all circumstances” and that although the convention does not refer specifically to street-involved children, they are covered under its umbrella.⁶⁹ The report also identified several additional UN conventions that are particularly relevant to street-involved children, such as those relating to child labor, trafficking, and juvenile

justice. In this way, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights affirmed that street-involved youngsters are guaranteed their rights under the CRC and that states parties must be held accountable for promoting those rights.

At the same time, the authors of the report noted that children in street situations are often not seen as “rights holders” by those charged with protecting their interests. Instead, street-involved children and adolescents are typically viewed as either victims to be rescued or delinquents to be controlled. While reflecting very different perspectives, both approaches may result in youngsters being denied their rights. For example, the goal of removing a child from the street can be accomplished by placing the child in a shelter (welfare approach) or by detaining the child in a juvenile facility (repressive approach). Unless the child’s interests are consulted, both responses will likely violate his or her rights (UNOHCHR, 2012). After analyzing the situation of street youth and their rights, the report closes with a recommendation that the Committee on the Rights of the Child should develop a general comment on children in street situations.⁷⁰ It is against this backdrop that the committee released the General Comment No. 21 on Children in Street Situations in 2017.

The CRC is currently ratified by at least 195 countries since it was adopted unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly in November 1989. Ratification of the convention obligates countries to a code of binding commitments in favour of their children. By virtue of the CRC, “child rights are now at the cutting edge of the global struggle for human rights, to be ensured by the adult society as a matter of legal obligation, moral imperative, and development priority”.⁷¹

Even though almost all of the world’s governments are party to the CRC, they are often confronted by the overpowering numbers of children on the streets. High levels of poverty,

family disintegration due to poor health or demise, neglect, abuse or abandonment, and social turbulence are all common triggers accountable for a child's life on the streets.⁷²

According to a report on a census conducted by the Department of Social Welfare and Ricerca e Cooperazione, "the issue of street children is considered secondary to other issues affecting the development of society. However, the potential of street children is equal to that of other children, and this potential can be harnessed for the benefit of society. Among Street Children are future leaders, doctors, lawyers, psychologists and social workers, just to mention a few. The development agenda of the world will be defeated if these children are not protected and helped to develop their potential to take up positions in society".⁷³

2.3.2 Other Legal Frameworks

Among the legal frameworks that uphold the rights of the child in Ghana are the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) and also, the Children's Act 1998 (Act 560) of Ghana.

The ACRWC "recognizes the child's unique and privileged place in African society and the fact that African children need protection and special care". According to the Department of Social Welfare and Ricerca e Cooperazione's census report, "the Charter aims to protect the private life of the child and safeguard the child against all forms of economic exploitation and against work that is hazardous, interferes with the child's education or compromises his or her health or physical, social, mental, spiritual, and moral development. It calls for protection against abuse and bad treatment, negative social and cultural practices, all forms of exploitation or sexual abuse, including commercial sexual exploitation, and illegal drug use".⁷⁴

Also, the Children's Act 1998 (Act 560) of Ghana was enacted as a legislative instrument by the government of Ghana in fulfillment of its constitutional obligations as a signatory to the 1989 Geneva Convention on the Rights of the Child. Among other things, the Act seeks to clearly outline the rights of the child e.g. the right to life, dignity, education, shelter, etc., from his parents', as well as the rights and responsibilities of parents whether imposed or otherwise towards the child.

In reference to the Children's Act, "even though parental responsibilities have been well elaborated in the Act, many parents in Ghana, especially in rural areas, are not aware of the existence of the Act until they find themselves in conflict with the law".⁷⁵ As such, the offices of the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) and other government agencies throughout the country are swamped with daily complaints of parental negligence.⁷⁶ Parents handle their children as if they are their sole property and they can therefore choose what they want to do with them. Sadly, "they shirk the responsibility of taking proper care of their children's daily needs, including their needs at school. Many of such children do not feel cared for, and they go on to live their lives the way they want. These are some of the children who leave home to fend for themselves on the streets. The Children's Act provides for a Family Tribunal to deal with cases of parental irresponsibility. In the rural areas, however, many of such cases are not sent to the Family Tribunal because of traditional beliefs that frown on taking 'home matters' outside the home".⁷⁷

2.5 Effects of Street Children on Human Security

Human Security as expounded in Chapter 1 is defined as the protection of "the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance freedoms and human fulfillment, and by so doing, protecting people from critical and pervasive threats and situations. Ideally, the street is not the perfect habitation for children. Compared with the other young adults in the general population, street

youth are at a higher risk for violence and violence-related behaviors.⁷⁸ The living circumstances of homeless children and youth may coerce them to become victims of violent behavior from the general populace.⁷⁹

According to Aransiola and Zarowsky, persons living in densely populated urban areas close to crime zones are potential victims of crime than those who live in more secured areas.⁸⁰ Hence, street children by the fact of their daily routines carried out on the streets are potential victims or perpetrators of various kinds of crimes in order to cope with street life.⁸¹ They are vulnerable to trafficking for various purposes, which is one of the problems threatening global human security and a fundamental issue on the abuse of human rights across the globe.⁸² Street children are also used by religious fundamentalists as well as top political officials as instruments of violence in most African urban cities.⁸³

Furthermore, Brett et al. have explained that “children who are separated or displaced from their families or communities are, as particularly vulnerable or marginalized populations, among those at greatest risk of recruitment by armed forces and armed groups”.⁸⁴ Typical of such a situation is the Sierra Leone civil war fought between 1991 and 2002 which saw a lot of child soldiers used as perpetrators of the crime.

Alfredson defines a ‘child soldier’ as “any person under 18 years of age who is a member of or attached to the armed forces or an armed group, whether or not there is an armed conflict”.⁸⁵ According to Alfredson, research has shown that children need not necessarily be ‘combatants’ to be perceived as members of or attached to armed forces or groups.⁸⁶ They may perform a variety of other tasks, both military and non-military, including scouting, spying, sabotage, training, drill and other preparations; acting as decoys, couriers, guards, porters, sexual slaves; as well as carrying out various domestic tasks and forced labor.⁸⁷

2.4 Compliance with International Conventions and Protocols

It has been clearly established that adequate provision for street children has been made at the global, continental and national levels. Despite the excellent provisions available to address the daunting challenge of street children, the implementation aspect has remained pretentious, since children – principally the street dwellers – lack parental care, education, health, and above all, their psychosocial growth. Many street children toil to earn their daily living. The domestication of the CRC by the legislative arm of the Government of Ghana is what produced the Children's Act (560) with all its wonderful provisions. But clearly, the implementation has gone sour.

There is typically a large gap between ratification of a treaty such as the CRC and full implementation by states parties. This is particularly likely to be true when a treaty involves a population that has experienced systematic denial of basic rights. Integrated changes are required across multiple sectors of a society to ensure that street-involved youth benefit fully from the provisions of the CRC.⁸⁸

2.6 The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Among the 17 goals of the SDGs, this study finds goals 1, 2, 3, 4 and 11 relevant to addressing the problem of street children on the continent. Goal 1 is about ending poverty in all its forms. With poverty being alleviated, children will be well catered for by their families and hence will not resort to the streets for supplementary income. Goal 2 also talks about ending hunger and achieving food security. Street children go hungry especially when they are not able to make any income during the day. In achieving this goal, hunger will no longer be a driving force for children to get onto the streets.

Goal 3 is to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. This goal gives enough justifications for helping street children to be well housed and given the chance of

living healthy lives. Additionally, goal 4 is to ensure equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. This goal will empower street children to acquire the requisite skills and training in order to be more useful to society.

Finally, in making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable towards achieving goal 11, the problem of street children need to be curtailed. This is because sustainable cities begin with children. Besides, a majority of the world's population now live in cities, which are growing particularly fast in developing countries. However, most of the new arrivals are poor and vulnerable and often end up in difficult circumstances such as living in the streets in cities which, in turn, leads to the birth of street children who get caught up in a “street children trap”.⁸⁹

2.7 Brief Background of UNICEF

The United Nations Children's Fund is a specialized agency of the United Nations, led by an executive director and governed by a 36 – member executive board.⁹⁰ Young explains that “UNICEF is supported entirely by voluntary funds, with an annual budget of just over \$3 billion, and works for children in over 150 low and middle-income countries around the world.”⁹¹ UNICEF was brought into existence on December 11, 1946, by a resolution of the UN General Assembly, as the International Children's Emergency Fund, charged with the responsibility to prevent epidemics and stave off the worst consequences of malnutrition among millions of children who had been exposed to the ravages of war”.⁹²

In providing further details, Young emphasizes that “when UNICEF began in 1946 in the aftermath of World War II, it worked primarily in Europe and Japan to deliver emergency assistance to children in need.”⁹³ In 1950, UNICEF's mandate was broadened to address the long-term needs of children and women in developing countries everywhere.⁹⁴ Subsequently, in 1953,

the UN General Assembly decided to continue the work of the fund indefinitely, to drop the word emergency in its name, and to treat it as a permanent organ of the United Nations, charged with responsibility for children”.⁹⁵

Young also mentions that “over the years, the reach of UNICEF’s work has expanded to include the millions of children around the world – from Africa to Latin America – whose lives are affected by poverty, conflict, and emergencies.⁹⁶ It evolved from its emergency beginnings to become an organization dedicated to enhancing the well-being of children in both emergency and nonemergency situations”.⁹⁷ UNICEF’s current global program is focused on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which succeeds the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The SDGs, adopted by 193 countries on 25th September, 2015, has 17 goals and 169 targets to signal the accomplishing of all 17 goals.

2.8 Integrating State and Non-State Actors in Implementing the CRC

The CRC works in the spirit of partnership and pragmatism to make the right choices in order to improve life, in a sustainable way, for future generations. There is, therefore, the need for integrating both state and non-state actors in meeting the effective implementation of the CRC. This presents a huge opportunity as well as a great responsibility to national governments. Member states have the opportunity to utilize the reports from the Committee of the Rights of the Child for aligning and tracking their country’s progress with the implementation of the CRC.

2.9 Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter has discussed street children from a global perspective as well as in the case of Ghana. It has also been established that there are adequate laws and policies in Ghana at the global, continental and national levels to address the problem of street children. To add, possible implications that threaten human security in Ghana if the problem is not properly

addressed has been discussed. Finally, a background of UNICEF has been provided in order to appreciate the historical underpinnings of the world body that has the welfare of children as its top priority.

This dissertation studies whether UNICEF's role of providing financial and technical support is to ensure that the government of Ghana complies with internationally acceptable standards in dealing with children in street situations.



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CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION

Social Protection is the base of a secure and acceptable life.¹ Investments in social protection globally have shown to have sustainable impacts on poverty reduction as poor people become productive.² If implemented well, social protection also prevents and responds to protection risks faced by children and young people, hence a Child Protection system. According to the Government of Ghana Child and Family Welfare policy (2015), “Ghana’s child protection history has been dominated by Anglo-Saxon traditions and models where the child and family welfare systems were based on imported colonial models and approaches”.³

In the past few years, there has been an increasing understanding that these approaches are no longer appropriate for Ghana. Since 2010, there has been collaborative work towards establishing and strengthening a child protection system in the country that sets standards for addressing issues in a holistic manner. Moreover, there have been efforts by key stakeholders in the child protection sector to develop an overarching and comprehensive policy that will seek to better protect children’s rights to survival, protection, participation, and development.⁴ The result of such efforts is the formulation of the Child and Family Welfare Policy which was published in November 2014. The key stakeholders include the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Community and Religious Leaders and UNICEF, which is the major development partner on matters of child rights and child protection.

This chapter highlights UNICEF’s partnership with key stakeholders, particularly in the fight against the problem of street children, some activities of stakeholders in relation to their

work with children in street situations, the role of UNICEF and actual restraints aiding the failure of interventions to address the problem. It is useful to note that major parts of this chapter are findings from semi-structured interviews with personnel from the various stakeholder agencies.

3.1 UNICEF Ghana and Stakeholder Relationships

According to a 2013 UNICEF Ghana report titled “Advocating for Development That Leaves No Child Behind”, it was established that “UNICEF has been working in Ghana since 1982. To promote sustainability, UNICEF Ghana works closely with the Government of Ghana, building national capacity to design pro-poor policies, reform and manage systems and deliver services to Ghanaians.⁵ UNICEF Ghana as part of its monitoring and evaluations processes works with the Government to produce, analyze and advocate on key data for evidence-based policymaking.⁶ One of UNICEF’s key strengths is that it works from multiple angles, advocating the highest levels of policymaking within government while also working on the ground to demonstrate the impact of interventions that can be scaled-up”.⁷

Accordingly, “UNICEF has the technical capacity to develop quality, cost-effective and focused models that it can test as pilots before lobbying and supporting the government to expand them throughout the country so as to meet internationally acceptable standards.⁸ In Ghana, UNICEF is focused on the development of capacities to deliver quality, accessible services for children and women to ensure that they survive and thrive”. Their goal is to create a positive cycle through which the next generation of children can break free of poverty and participate fully in Ghana’s growing economy.⁹ UNICEF believes that “no child’s future should be so tenuous that it depends on a game of chance”. As such, UNICEF says it is “committed to working with the Government of Ghana to reach every last child”.¹⁰ The government agency

which partners with UNICEF on issues of children is the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection.

3.1.1 The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCP) was created by an Executive Instrument 1 (E.I. 1) in January 2013, as a successor to the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs. The primary objective for this establishment was to have a Ministry responsible for policy formulation, coordination and monitoring and evaluation of Gender, Children and Social Protection issues within the context of the national development agenda.¹¹ Among the three departments of the Ministry is the Department of Social Developments which is solely responsible for addressing issues of child protection in Ghana.

3.1.1.1 The Department of Social Welfare/Development

The Department of Social Development was a department under the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare as the Department of Social Welfare. The enactment of Executive Instrument (E.I, 2013) re-aligned Ministries, Departments and Agencies in accordance with directives of the Office of the President in order to create harmony in the conduct of Government business.¹² As a result, the Department of Social Welfare became a department under the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection with the name Department of Social Development to reflect its mandate.

The current mandate of the department is to take the lead in integrating the disadvantaged, vulnerable, persons with disabilities and the excluded into mainstream society.¹³ Among the framework that guide the mandate are all local laws including the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, the Children's Act 1998 (560), and very notably International Protocols and Conventions (UNCRC).¹⁴

In finding out how Ghana has fared with the implementation of street children eradication policies, Mr. Dela Ashiabor, Deputy Director (Programmes Development) of the Department of Social welfare, in an interview, explained that the department, “in an attempt to get the views of street children during the International Street Children’s day in April 2018, established contact with the leaders of street children and invited them over for deliberations on how best they can be helped by the department”.¹⁵ According to him, “most of the leaders admitted that their current situation did not matter so long as they were able to make an income and support themselves and their families. Going back to their places of origin even after skills training was not an option at all.”¹⁶ In analyzing this information, it is interesting to confirm that street children have become comfortable in their situation having carved out niches for themselves..

The Deputy Director further recounted that the department also conceived the “operation get off the streets now for a better life” project two years ago and worked tirelessly towards its launch in November 2017.¹⁷ However, the department is currently cash-strapped, thus impeding the progress of the project. During the interview, the Deputy Director explained that the department sought to have an updated database of all children in street situations, which was sent to the Ministry, and proposed further processes to address the issue.¹⁸ The interview also revealed that since it is difficult to source funding from the government, the department planned to resort to donor partners to help fund the various laid down interventions since every donor has programs of interest it may want to sponsor. However, the only challenge is that the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, is yet to approve this approach.¹⁹

Under the directive of the National Security, the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) and the department initiated special clearing exercise to take street children and beggars off the ceremonial streets in Accra. The exercise which was in collaboration with the La Dadekotopon

Municipal Assembly (LADMA) began on Thursday, May 25, 2018.²⁰ Of the 200 children picked up from the exercise, some were sent to the Royal Seed Home (RSH), an NGO, and others were taken to a shelter in Madina which was being sponsored by the American Embassy.²¹ But due to lack of government support, running such facilities have become a difficult task. He added that some street children who are in such facilities are still addicted to drugs and alcohol.²² To add to this, one may say that adequate planning and consultations with key stakeholders were not done before such interventions were carried out. Hence, due to inadequate preparation, the challenges faced are very much expected.

When asked about why Ghana keeps recording an increase in the number of street children despite all the interventions, Mr. Ashiabor sadly admitted that the task of addressing the problem was a difficult one which needs more attention and support from all stakeholders especially the government, than is currently being given. In analyzing his statement, one may say that the government of Ghana has not lived up to the task of implementing the convention which it was so quick to ratify.

In response to the question of UNICEF's role in addressing the problem, the Deputy Director emphasized that UNICEF has really supported, being one of the biggest development partners of the department on the welfare of children in general. Since the issue of street children has not been captured in UNICEF's program for the year, support from UNICEF on the current agenda has not been forthcoming.²³ However, support for other issues such as orphanages, child marriage, etc. have been impressive.²⁴ In the department's view, UNICEF currently does not play any specific role to its street children agenda. However, the UN General Comment No. 21 (2017) on children in street situations published by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has provided a good framework for the government to work with.²⁵ After the launch of

“Operation get off the streets now for a better life”, there has been a series of technical committee consultations which are yet to yield the needed results. Some issues hampering the progress of the project are lack of funding and in some cases, a conflict of interest within the ministry.²⁶ Out of these revelations, one can critically deduce that there has been no clear-cut agenda for addressing the problem of street children within the government agencies. That may be enough reason for UNICEF’s lack of interest in the current agenda “operation get off the streets...”

On the intellectual abilities of street children, the interview revealed that most street children are matured in their thinking and have great coping skills even at their young age due to their experiences and therefore need to be engaged in a friendly manner without recourse to force.²⁷ The Deputy Director stated that about seventeen (17) street children who are currently housed at the Royal Seed Home (RSH) have, through frequent engagements, now sobered and even attend classes at the school which the home runs.²⁸ These positive attributes of street children clearly show that they have the potential of contributing to Ghana’s socio-economic development when provided with the needed conditions to fully develop.

The Deputy Director also explained that the department tried to engage the services of Street Invest, a UK based NGO widely known for their street children data collection ability.²⁹ Apart from their operations in the UK, some successes of Streets Invest’s operations have been recorded in some African countries such as Kenya, Uganda, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania.³⁰ However, due to some inconsistencies between their approach (right-based) and that of the Ministry (forceful removal), the progress of their collaboration has been impeded.³¹ In analyzing this finding, it is imperative for the government of Ghana to embrace new ideas of handling

issues relating to child protection, instead of being just motivated to score political points. All approaches should be in the national interest and not a political party's interest.

With the issue of foreign street immigrants usually from Niger, Mali, Chad, and Nigeria, the department has tried to engage their embassies to assist with the problem. However, one factor aiding the situation is the ECOWAS Protocol A/P.1/5/79 Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Residence, and Establishment.³² Children of such migrant families have their parents also there with them supervising their activities. These migrants have been oriented to come to Ghana and beg for survival because of the hospitality of Ghanaians.³³ Some of them are seasonal and return back to their countries for others to also come and replace them in their begging spree.³⁴ Simply put, it is their lifestyle and in their nature to beg. The issue is quite dicey and needs to be handled in a way that would not sever the diplomatic ties between the governments of Ghana and that of the migrants.³⁵ A critical analysis of this finding only tells that since Ghana has no provisions for her own street children, it is difficult to address the issue of foreign street migrants. With that said, one can be confident that once the government of Ghana is able to come out with workable interventions for Ghanaian street children, such interventions could also be replicated in addressing the issues of foreign street migrants.

3.1.2 NGOs in Ghana Assisting to Tackle the Problem

UNICEF Ghana maintains a close working relationship with NGOs in Ghana. In 1997, UNICEF with its urban partners organized an International Workshop on Africa's Urban Poor Children.³⁶ This workshop brought together mayors of African main cities to discuss how the cities could become more child-friendly. This resulted in the formation of the Coalition for Child-Friendly Cities (CCFC). Members of the coalition included; UNICEF, CAS, S.Aid, CENCOSAD, Salvation Army, GNCC, and AMA.³⁷ Several other NGOs who later joined in the fight against

the street children menace include; Street Children Empowerment Fund (SCEF), AGREDS, ACES, PPAG, Save a Street Child Foundation, Chance for Children, etc.

Most of these NGOs provide street children with services such as education and training, shelters, feeding, a sense of belonging, protection, policy formulation, advocacy and empowerment to be self-sufficient, but do not provide interventions or work with taking them back to their homes because they have the rights to live where they so wish.

The current Country Representative of UNICEF to Ghana, Ambassador Susan Namondo Ngongi has stated that “UNICEF has a mandate to all children, particularly those who suffer the worst deprivations in society”.³⁸ According to her statement, “UNICEF will achieve their mandate by collaborating with all stakeholders in Ghana to ensure that the country’s economic growth benefits all its children”.³⁹ In this study, interviews sessions were granted by the founders of two NGOs namely; Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS) and Street Children Empowerment Foundation (SCEF).

3.1.2.1 Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS)

The Catholic Action for Street Children has been working with the street children in Ghana and have conducted a number of researches since October 1992.⁴⁰ Together with UNICEF, CAS embarked on a four-month study from December 1998 to March 1999, to discover the reasons that lead to the proliferation of many children from rural areas to urban centers.⁴¹ CAS is of the view that “a nation that neglects tens of thousands of its children and allows them to fend for themselves on the streets without any parental or social support is mortgaging its future”.⁴² UNICEF provided funding for this research and also funding for community-based development projects in most of the districts in the Northern Region where the study was conducted.⁴³

The operations of CAS are centered on providing day care facilities for street children. For instance, street children can walk in, take their bath, have breakfast, learn a skill and be educated through classroom activities, counseling sessions, entertain themselves and then go back to the streets to continue their daily activities.⁴⁴ In an interview with Bro. Jos Van Dinther, Director of CAS, he also agreed with Mr. Ashiabor that “tackling the problem of street children was really a daunting task and had grown out of control”. He revealed that the statistics of street children in 2011 was successfully collated as a result of the collaboration of over 100 Social Workers from NGOs interested in the welfare of street children and the Department of Social Welfare.⁴⁵

In addressing the question of how Ghana has fared in tackling the problem of street children, he expressed his sentiments on how the government had not made use of any of such researches. In his view, street children are the least of government’s problems and that is responsible for the doubling of street children numbers every 5 years as CAS has discovered from the trends since 1992.⁴⁶ From his perspective, the number of street children in 2018 is 90,000 and counting. He stated that the process of head counting street children is very expensive because of the need to involve experts.

Furthermore, the Director revealed that it was only in 2008 that the government particularly got involved with street children. Prior, NGOs, FBOs, and INGOs were the only stakeholders and are the initiators of all the Acts and legal frameworks for children in Ghana. He continued that NGOs proposed an Act specifically for street children in Ghana but that was never published.⁴⁷ In analyzing these findings, it is evident that the government of Ghana had not foreseen the problem to escalate to its current condition, hence the government’s inability to make provisions to address the problem from its infant stages.

When asked why Ghana kept recording an increase in the number of street children, the Director explained that the main reason for children on the streets is not poverty but the breakdown of family systems because every street child originates from a family. Had the family systems remained strong, all children will be well catered for especially in Ghana where we had the extended family system providing shelter, protection, and care for their children in the past.⁴⁸ He is of the opinion that poverty is used by the government to attract donor support to solve the problem but until family systems are strengthened, the issue will remain a daunting task. He continued by stating that “If poverty is the problem, then all the government needs to do is to create jobs for the poor parents so they can earn an appreciable income to cater for their children instead of allowing them to go onto the streets to beg their way through for survival”.⁴⁹ In analyzing his statements, one may agree that in the past where we had the traditional systems being effective, children, being members of families, which in turn are subsets of societies and communities, under a traditional ruler, were well catered for by the community. Unity, love, and care was the norm. A hungry child could leave his/her home to that of a relative or friend and be fed. The welfare of the child was everyone’s responsibility. This sense of belonging, protection, and provision, created a comfortable environment for children to survive and there was no thought of leaving one’s community to seek for greener pastures elsewhere.

In his opinion, another reason for children who end up on the streets is due to the educational reforms by the government in the late 80s. He said this explaining that in the past, the middle school system allowed children who failed their exam a four-time opportunity to retake the exams in order to pass and advance to the secondary, vocational or university levels. The Director recounted that in the past, CAS established four vocation schools in the Northern region, two for boys and two for girls, only for children who had no chance to continue their

education but could work with their hands. Most of these children were school dropouts or migrant children who had no hope of a brighter future. On recounting their successes, the Director revealed that some of these children after the vocational training advanced to the Universities and Polytechnics. Others got scholarships abroad and are currently staying in countries such as Canada, the United States, and the Netherlands. Among them now are mining engineers, civil engineers and other astute professionals who are now supporting some street children registered with CAS. According to him, school dropouts and migrant children who usually end up on the streets are highly capable of excelling only if given the needed push. The Director was, however, quick to add that when children are trained in certain professions, they are bound to migrate to urban centers due to the lack of certain infrastructure in rural areas. For instance, street girls trained in the hairdressing profession will be incapable of operating in a rural setting without electricity.⁵⁰ In a critical analysis of the above findings, one may say that Ghana's current educational curriculum from the basic level is not very relevant to some aspects of the Ghanaian economy, especially when it comes to areas of manpower and skills development. Street children are very hardworking and as such sitting down in classrooms to imbibe a lot of theory without practical experience could be disturbing. What they need, is to be productive and earn an income. Their education should be practical and competency-based, and not to sit for examinations which they may fail and would not be able to progress in life.

According to the Director, the problem now is the second generation street children who are born on the streets and no nothing else apart from street life. These children are in most cases catered for by a single parent, usually the mother. Only in a few cases are there street couples with their children making life meaningful for themselves on the streets. They are usually aware of their environment and love their environment. Such people will frown at any alternative

arrangement they are not familiar with. Illiteracy is very high among them making it difficult for them to think in a broader perspective but they are able to survive on their own. “They do not need a certificate to live happily...that is their reality”.⁵¹

CAS is currently assisting the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection to find solutions to the problem of street children and has constant meetings with the Ministry as part of the Technical Committee. According to the Director, the plan of the Ministry wanting to remove 300,000 children from the streets is not realistic and overly ambitious. This is because the government has no experience with street children and have no idea of the issues involved with their approach. One mistake by the government could worsen the situation. The CAS Director suggests that government takes their time in understanding the problem and consult with all stakeholders to develop short, medium and long-term sustainable plans to holistically approach the situation, instead of a knee-jerk response which could be clearly referred to as political. Street Children is a national problem and not a political problem.⁵²

In answering the question on the role of UNICEF in addressing the problem, the Director recollected that in the past, CAS was assisted by Plan International Ghana and some NGOs to approach UNICEF Ghana for support. He acknowledged the immense technical and financial support from UNICEF Ghana in their past operations. When asked about governments follow up after the launch of “Operation Get off the Streets now for a better life”, he expressed his misgivings about the approach of the government in the collection of data. According to him, over the 5000 questionnaires collated, many of those interviewed i.e. the “Kayayei” (girls) and “Kubolo” (boys) were street adults and not children. He is of the opinion that the data is limited because the government’s ambition is to tackle 300,000, and also lacks authenticity because the aim was street children and not adults above seventeen years. At the moment, the project is at a

standstill. The recent knee-jerk directive by the government through the National Security for the AMA and Department of Social Welfare to clear street children off the ceremonial streets of Accra was an approach not supported by the instituted Technical Committee. The outcome has not improved the situation on the streets which is clearly evident.⁵³

The Deputy Director of Programmes Development of the Department of Social Welfare, Mr. Ashiabor, also acknowledged the efforts of Father Campbell of the Christ the King Catholic Church in supporting lots of street children by providing daily meals for them through his “soup kitchen” and even sponsoring the skills training and education of the brilliant ones among them. Some street children of yesteryears as a result of these kind gestures are now Bankers, Artists, Doctors, etc.⁵⁴

3.1.2.2 Street Children Empowerment Foundation (SCEF)

Another interview with Mr. Paul Semeh, the Founder and Executive Director of SCEF, revealed that SCEF advocates for the rights of street children in schools and also give scholarships to street children. Most of these street children are those who have a non-formal education but lack formal education. SCEF empowers street children with life skills that help in shaping their lives. SCEF currently has a classroom, a library, a craft lab and a play space to involve children in play-based learning methodologies with a focus on life skills in order to win their interests in formal education.⁵⁵

The founder of SCEF also mentioned their approach of supporting parents of street children to take over from the NGO within five years by providing skill training. During this period parents through SCEF, form associations, micro-enterprises and engage in SCEF’s bread business in order to save and raise capital. Also, resource persons are engaged to counsel parents on best child care practices, teenage pregnancy, family planning and other related issues. More

information on this model is available on their website <http://www.scef-international.org/what-we-do/micro-enterprises/>. All these interventions empower parents within the five-year duration to be self-sufficient and cater well for their children. By this approach, the numbers of children on the streets are reduced. To reiterate the importance of the family system, the founder emphasized that “no child is birthed by the streets, all children come from families”.⁵⁶

Through SCEF’s collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare, they are able to establish contact with relatives of street children all over the country through the district social welfare and possibly help street children in Accra, go back to home to their families. This revelation is positive in the sense that all street children in Ghana can have their roots traced through the Department of Social Welfare. In my opinion, this can be one of the very effective ways of helping to strengthen the family systems in Ghana. The founder also mentioned that SCEF collaborates with other NGOs working with street children periodically through a network called Street Social Workers Network Ghana. According to him, SCEF is looking forward to a future collaboration with UNICEF. The closest they have come to collaborating with UNICEF is being a part of the consultative forum for UNICEF’s recent Child-Friendly Policing policy.⁵⁷

“We are sitting on a big time bomb waiting for explosion if all stakeholders do not come together and specifically address the issue of street children”.⁵⁸ He agrees with the Director of CAS that the current project of the Ministry “Operation Get off the Streets...” could be political. The reason behind his stance is that government has been silent within the ecosystem of street children since the launch of the operation. The government, in his view, pays little attention to local NGOs. As a result, many NGOs have decided to stay put and focus on their individual mandates.⁵⁹ “Government needs to look at how society has been modeled and come out with cross-cutting measures and a holistic restructuring of systems and institutions in areas of politics,

religion, economic, marriage/family, education, and health. These institutions constitute society, regulate behavior, and meet basic needs”.⁶⁰ To analyze the above findings, one may suggest that the government should look at addressing national challenges not from the seat of government, but from the grassroots, through its decentralized agencies which are at the community and district levels as proposed in Wessells and Britto’s work, “Nurturing care: promoting early childhood development”.,

3.2 UNICEF on Street Children in Ghana

3.2.1 Background

In an interview with Mr. Iddris Abdallah of the Child Protection Unit of UNICEF in charge of Alternative Care Support for the Department of Social Welfare, it was revealed that UNICEF became involved in addressing the issue of street children over the past ten years by collaborating with other development partners and the then Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare to come out with a policy framework which was to provide some guidelines for stakeholders to get involved in the addressing the issue of street children, particularly when the issue of “Kayayei” (female head potters) began to emerge in the early 2000s.⁶¹ UNICEF also partnered with the Center for Social Protection Policy Development (CSPPD) to undertake some research but the policy framework became a draft framework since it was not completed. However, UNICEF got involved with the Department of Social Welfare on the issues of “Kayayei”, who were emerging as new entrants to the phenomenon of street children.⁶²

After interviewing most of the “Kayayei”, UNICEF found out that issues of poverty and lack of economic opportunities were major push factors responsible for the phenomenon. Through their interactions, the “Kayayeis” told UNICEF that should they be empowered and equipped with skills in order to be self-sufficient, they would not come down south. UNICEF,

therefore, worked with Social Welfare, Community Development and supported a number of NGOs such as Street Girls Aid, Assemblies of God Relief and Development Services (AGREDS) and Salvation Army to provide the Kayayei with the requested empowerment programs. A lot of community-level sensitizations were done to address the outflow of children in the rural areas. After being trained in various skills and vocations as well as given the needed start-up capital, a majority of the Kayayei went back to their places of origin but not long after, a greater majority of them returned back to the urban centers recycling themselves into the system again.⁶³

This intervention by UNICEF also resulted in motivating others and triggered a further outflow of children to come down South and be seen as beneficiaries of the opportunity, thus worsening the situation. What accounted for such an outcome could not be figured out because the girls were trained in activities relevant to their survival in their places of origin, e.g. baking of bread, sewing of smock (locally known as “batakari”), hairdressing, etc.⁶⁴

However, one positive outcome was UNICEF’s collaboration with the Street Girls Aid to cater for street girls who got pregnant on the streets. Such girls were taken off the streets and housed in the shelter of Street Girls Aid. Such unexpected consequences informed the decisions of some girls to take the bold step of going back home despite the anticipated ridicule and stigma that awaited them back home. Continuous monitoring of these girls was done by Community Development in order to provide assistance with any challenges they faced back home. Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) were also involved in the reunification program and were happy to be part of the solution. UNICEF became overwhelmed with the outcome and therefore decided to fold back around 2008 on addressing the issue of street children in Ghana.⁶⁵

Notwithstanding, UNICEF supported the Department of Social Welfare on undertaking a survey on the numbers of street children in 2010. The results indicated a swell up in the numbers owing to factors such as a change in population size.

3.2.2 UNICEF's Current Approach

Since 2010, the focus of UNICEF has shifted from Issue-Based approaches to Systems Strengthening approach.⁶⁶ Issue-based programmes dealt with individual issues such as street children, child trafficking, children in orphanages, children as victims of abuse, etc. However, UNICEF realized that most of the problems in Ghana were inter-related. This informed their current approach of systems strengthening measures in order to strengthen all the child protection systems in order to respond to all the child protection issues. The main components of the child protection system include the laws, the services, and the behavior change component.⁶⁷

1. Laws – Ghana has adequate laws and policies on issues of child protection. Gaps in the laws are being worked on by the Legal Reform Process which is currently running.
2. Services – This component looks at how institutions mandated to provide services such as the Police, health care, and social welfare are strengthened. The focus is not only on the formal structures but the informal as well. UNICEF supports key institutions with specific mandates to children by increasing their capacity so they can deliver their services. In most cases, UNICEF runs a pilot test to show the way for key institutions to emulate. Classic examples are the Child-Friendly Policing programme and the Alternative Care for Children programme.
3. Behavior change component – this component includes the development of some resources and training manuals to equip stakeholders and institutions that work at the

community level. Such resources games and tools that can be used to trigger a conversation about child protection issues. An example is the family-based care system for people who want to be enlisted as foster care parents. Different methodologies are used by social workers depending on what works for them in their localities. UNICEF also encourages the family system for the upbringing of children.

All these components will help to strengthen child protection systems in order to address a lot of challenges faced in Ghana including street children. UNICEF also supported the Child Labour Unit to develop the National Plan of Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Ghana (2017 – 2021) towards Achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8.7. This initiative indirectly addresses issues relating to children in street children situations. The major challenge of such initiatives is the government's inability to adequately resources these institutions.⁶⁸

Currently under the Ministry's "Operation get off the streets" initiative, UNICEF, having been invited by the government of Ghana to be part of the committee, have pledged support to the agenda by coming out with ways of linking street children to services while on the street. Services which are not only provided by government but also NGOs including; education, health care, protection from abuse, psychosocial, as well as facilitating voluntary returns if the agenda being pushed forward is successful. This approach has been christened the Case Management System (CMS) and it is one of the pillars of the Systems Strengthening approaches.⁶⁹

In an interview with Mr. Antoine Deliege, a Child Protection Specialist with UNICEF, he explained that the CMS involved different cycles until a case is closed. For instance, a case could be made by a social worker when he identifies a child who is a victim of abuse or violence. Based on the assessment made, the social worker will make a case out of the situation. The social

worker then refers the child to services the child needs after identifying the need of the child, and follow up on the case until the case is closed. He mentioned that social workers in Ghana have no national Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that guide their work. UNICEF has just developed the Case Management SOP for social workers that come with standardized forms to harmonize operations of child protection in different districts.⁷⁰ According to the child protection specialist, UNICEF has currently recruited a consultant to also work on an inter-agency Case Management SOP to guide child protection agencies to also harmonize operations when dealing with child protection problems. These Case Management SOPs will synchronize the operations between and among social workers and child protection agencies.⁷¹

In Mr. Deliege's view, a test for the Case Management SOPs in a street child scenario may begin with a social worker meeting a child on the streets. A case will then be opened for the street child, whether trafficked, abandoned, working, etc. in a file. An assessment is then done to identify the services the child needs e.g. psychosocial support, alternative care, etc. The case will then be referred to services which may not only be provided by the government but in many cases, NGOs, such as fosterage, healthcare, education, family reunification, etc. Monitoring of the progress is done by the social worker until the case is closed.⁷² The approach is a cycle meant to tackle the related problems within the systems of child protection. On the issue of the number of NGOs involved, Mr. Deliege stressed that involving all NGOs providing services to children within the districts will make the project a great success. He also admitted that Ghana has a lot of good policies but the problem is always the implementation of the policies.⁷³

To address the implementation challenges in Ghana, Mr. Deliege stated that UNICEF has worked with the National Development Planning Committee (NDPC) to include child protection indicators into the performance plan of the MMDAs as well as the Medium Term Development

Plans. This means that those MMDAs will have to report on certain child protection indicators that refers to the case management machinery.⁷⁴ The hope of this idea is that MMDAs will invest some funds into social welfare so that social workers within the districts will be able to provide case management services and continue with the follow-ups, monitoring, etc. This approach ensures that MMDAs leverage resources for social workers. Instead of giving money to the MMDAs to do the case management, UNICEF makes sure that they themselves provide their resources. Just a little amount is given by UNICEF as a pilot test to prove that much is not needed to implement. In this way, UNICEF shows the way to go in order for MMDAs to adopt such methods. UNICEF then monitors the process in order to check for quality assurance and best practices. Usually, Consultants play the role of compliance officers.⁷⁵ “Government needs support and our role is to provide that. I think our role as UNICEF is not so much about giving money. It is more about providing that technical support needed, and to make sure that people who are recruited are the best. By going through all the agendas, we ensure that partners know what they are doing, their objectives and their outcomes on the impact of children. Technical assistance and quality assurance is our duty for government to be committed to delivering on its mandate in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child”.⁷⁶

Mr. Deliege continued that one of the programmes he and Mr. Iddris had worked on in the past was the Care Reform Initiative. The background to this initiative was that in 1996, Ghana had ten orphanages. Ten years later in 2006, Ghana recorded one hundred and fifty orphanages. As such, the Committee on the Rights of the Child raised questions about Ghana’s performance with regards to the Convention. In 2007, the government of Ghana with support from UNICEF and NGOs came out with a Care Reform Initiative. The idea behind this initiative was to reduce the number of orphanages and to make sure that children lived with their families.

Living in an orphanage is very harmful to children especially babies. The Care Reform Initiative was meant to reduce the number of children in orphanages as well as reduce the number of orphanages. The statistics for 2006 was 5000 children in 150 orphanages. Currently, as a result of the initiative, the numbers have reduced to about 3500 children in 115 orphanages. Some new orphanages have also been closed. Even though the situation is not perfect and progress is slow, UNICEF believes it is in the right direction. In other areas of child protection apart from street children such as child marriage, poverty alleviation, etc., the indicators are reducing in Ghana as compared to other African countries. However, a lot more could be improved with time.⁷⁷

In his view, the issue of street children is exploding because the government has not really done much in a long time. . Children in street situations are one of the more complex issues to address because they have their own background. Many of such children tried to escape domestic violence. Reasons such these make it difficult in the family reintegration process. These children actually have the right not to be reintegrated because they have been on the streets for a long time and have assumed love and identity with the streets. The issue should not be about how to take them off the streets but rather how alternative support and protection can be provided for them as the UN General Comment No. 21 (2017) has clearly stated. UNICEF believes that the family reintegration of children from the streets should be voluntary. “If forced off the streets, it will not work”.⁷⁸

Mr. Deliege has hope in the Case Management System to also address the problem of non-Ghanaian migrant children. According to him, the mandate of a social worker in Ghana is to every child within the territorial jurisdiction of Ghana. The government of Ghana should have an approach which will help not only the child but their parents too. The government should look at how to provide ways of linking non-Ghanaian street migrant families to services such as jobs for

the parents, literacy classes for the children, shelter, etc. for them to contribute their energies to the country's productivity. Through this approach, their presence on the streets could be terminated. Mr. Deliege explained that it is the same situation with children in orphanages. About 80% of orphanage children are not orphans. Parents normally abandon their children because they think they are poor and cannot take care of them. They wrongly assume that orphanages can better cater for their children.

Since government services such as the LEAP are strengthening families in many regions in Ghana, alternate services could be provided by the government to strengthen the families of non-Ghanaian migrants. Afterwards, the government should enforce her laws and policies concerning their issue. It will take time and a lot of resources but it is attainable. There should be an inter-country protocol to make sure that cases of non-Ghanaian migrant children who are unaccompanied will be referred to their countries so that their families can be contacted for the necessary processes to reintegrate the children with their families.⁷⁹

On compliance with the CRC, UNICEF believes that for the sake of sustainability, the local people (government) should be in the driving seat, own the policies, and be fully responsible for the implementation of interventions. UNICEF will support should the government come out with their own well thought-through development programs. UNICEF does not have the mandate to impose sanctions on states that do not comply to the CRC. Officials of UNICEF are diplomats and therefore are not in to fight non-abiding governments. After reviewing reports on Ghana, they may provide advice where there are shortfalls in the hope that the government will comply. However, the role of the Committee on the Rights of the Child more likely ensures that the government complies with the CRC. Every five years, the government of Ghana is expected to submit her report on the implementation of the Convention

to the Committee. The Committee after assessing the report identifies the gaps in the government's implementation and makes recommendations. UNICEF Ghana then supports the government of Ghana in the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.⁸⁰

3.3 Child Protection Funding on the National Budget

The annual budget proposed by the department is usually heavily slashed by the Ministry of Finance. This makes it difficult for the department to meet their well thought-through plans for street children. According to the UN General Comment, "states are urged to adopt holistic and long-term strategies and make the necessary budgetary allocations for children in street situation. States should take a cross-sectoral approach to understand how policy in one area, for example, finance, affects policy in another, for example, education, which in turn affects children in street situations".⁸¹

3.4 Key Interventions by the Government in Close Cooperation with UNICEF

UNICEF Ghana welcomes the Government's efforts to prioritize funds for social protection programmes, which are dedicated to assisting the country's poorest families. UNICEF identifies that poverty is one of Ghana's major problems and once addressed will have its ripple effects on other poverty-related issues. Poverty-related issues are major push factors for children to get onto the streets in order to engage in activities for their survival. It is in this light that UNICEF collaborates with the Government of Ghana to address poverty in the poorest areas. Some interventions to address the phenomenon of street children include inter alia:

1. Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty (LEAP) Programme: In a 2013 UNICEF briefing paper, it has been documented that "since the launch of LEAP in 2008 as Ghana's flagship programme of the National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS), the

LEAP programme has enabled the poorest families in the country to meet their basic needs (food, clothing, and shelter), be healthier, enroll their children in school as well as improve their attendance, and adopt strategies to pull themselves out of poverty”.⁸²

LEAP is a Government of Ghana initiative and is supported by Development Partners including UNICEF, Department for International Development (DFID) of the U.K Government, the World Bank, as well as CSOs. It is the hope that when poverty is addressed in rural areas, rural dwellers will not be compelled to seek for greener pastures in big cities and towns, thus reducing the spate of children loitering on the streets.⁸³

2. National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS): The National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) is a social intervention program introduced by the government to provide financial access to quality healthcare for residents in Ghana. Poor families can, therefore, be beneficiaries of accessible and affordable healthcare.
3. Inclusive Education (I.E) Policy: Increasing access to education remains a vital tool for eradicating extreme poverty, improving the quality of lives and growing economies. UNICEF estimates that nearly 500,000 children are out of school in Ghana. These children have never been to school or have dropped out of school because of a myriad of educational barriers.⁸⁴ UNICEF supported the implementation plan (2015 - 2019) of Ghana’s Inclusive Education Policy. The Policy, launched in 2016, among other things “seeks to cover all children who are marginalized whether because of a disability, poverty, because they speak a different language or because they are girls”. The I.E Policy’s mandate is to change the way children with disabilities, ethnic minorities and the ultra-poor are perceived, assisted and involved

in the education system in order to give all children a brighter future.⁸⁵ This policy is meant to encourage all children of school going age to stay in school rather than to loiter on the streets.

4. **School Feeding Programme:** The Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) has been in implementation since 2005. According to government's reports, "over the period of implementation, the basic idea of the program has been to provide children in public primary schools and kindergartens with one hot nutritious meal, prepared from locally grown foodstuffs on every school-going day. The broad and specific policy objectives of the programme are to improve school enrolment, attendance, and retention among pupils in the most deprived communities in Ghana as a strategy. The GSFP is a continuing investment that nourishes children and decreases food insecurity while contributing to the achievement of the first four SDGs".⁸⁶ UNICEF is among the development partners of this initiative.

Other interventions worth mentioning are the establishment of Community Child Protection Teams, the Savanna Accelerated Development Authority (SADA), the Capitation Grant, the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) and the registration of young girls doing Menial Jobs (Kayayei).⁸⁷

3.5 Outcome of Key Interventions

The study revealed that there is difficulty in tracking the numbers of beneficiaries due to system cleansing of obsolete reports and documents which no longer exist. On the whole, Ghana has not fared very well with the laws, policies, and interventions that are supposed to guide her operations with children in street situations. However, the outcomes of such interventions are not evident in the cities, but in the rural areas where there are very poor dwellers. Once street

children are able to return home, they are able to benefit from some of these interventions and not think of returning back to the urban centers.

3.6 Challenges Resulting in the Increase of Street Children Numbers in Ghana

The interventions by the government seem not to have achieved the desired results due to a number of challenges outlined in this section;

One major challenge is the political environment in Ghana. Many governments try to use the situation to their advantage in order to score political points against their opponents. In this way, there are a lot of inconsistencies in their approaches to tackling the problem. Instead of continuing what was started by the preceding government, politicians rebrand the situation in order to own the interventions and look good in the eyes of the general public. For instance, in the erstwhile NDC government, the MOGCSP started a project dubbed ‘From Street to School’ in 2015. Two years down the line, in 2017, the MOGCSP under the new NPP government also launched “Operation get off the streets for a better future. Governments are forced to apply quick fix interventions which are not well thought through because they have a short term in office. Moreover, there is no culture of handing over, as well as no effort of successors to find out what has been done by their predecessors, thus weakening institutional memories. Unfortunately, the trends have shown that it is an issue of lip-service on the part of the government.

Another challenge is that of inadequate funding from the government’s annual budget. For instance, out of the ₵1,483,657 allocated by the Government of Ghana to Child Rights Promotion, Protection, and Development in the 2018 Appropriation Bill from the Finance Ministry, ₵1,243,657 caters for Compensation of Employees, while a paltry amount of ₵240,000 caters for Goods and Services. This clearly shows that government’s commitment to child protection is not at its best. However, an amount of ₵5,000,000 in Donor support for goods and

services complements the government's meager support.⁸⁸ Clearly, without donor support, the situation would have worsened than it currently has. Issues of child protection is clearly not an attractive area to give governments the political advantage they obtain from the building of schools, roads, airports, market and other physical infrastructure, forgetting that the management of these resources in future will be done by present-day children. This can be said to be a case of misplaced priorities.

Worth noting is also the issue of the low level of commitment on the part of Civil servants in discharging their mandates to the government. This includes the reallocation of resources to unintended areas of operation normally for their own personal gains and the lackadaisical attitudes towards work. Where there is a listening minister in charge, they are able to crack the whip and make sure civil servants perform as expected. For instance, under the leadership of certain astute politicians, civil servants have been seen to perform satisfactorily because of the phenomenal style of leadership exhibited by such leaders.

There is also the issue of too many institutions trying to tackle one problem without coordination or synergy. Roles are not clearly defined at the district level, for example, community development and social welfare are mostly at each other's neck as to who is to implement certain child protection policies.⁸⁹

Inadequately trained personnel (social workers) to help in executing mandates are another major challenge confronting the Department of Social Welfare. Most workers do not have the social work background. For instance, in the course of gathering data for this study, I spoke to a female staff at the DSW, who wanted to find out the requirements for admission to a bachelor's degree programme in social work at the University of Ghana. At the moment, the department is understaffed.

The philosophy of UNICEF working with governments at the upstream level has not yielded the desired results. UNICEF's mandate is to support governments to deliver. Perhaps, if UNICEF were to be an implementation agency, a lot more could have been achieved. A change in this philosophy can only be effected at the New York HQ level.

The handling of data in the department of social welfare has not been with care resulting in the crash of database systems. For instance, reports on street children conducted in collaboration with Ricerca e Cooperazione, an Italian NGO could not be found. As a result, the NGO got frustrated and left.⁹⁰

Also, the emergence of "Kayayei queens" who take a number of children from up north and claim to be mothering them, only for them to be used as "Kayayei" for their own economic gains, a clear case of child labour, has only added to the numbers on the streets.

In addition, there is a problem with government's attempts to forcefully remove children from the streets into institutions with inadequate facilities that are not properly funded by the government. The children will certainly end up back in the streets. The longer they stay on the streets, the more difficult it is for them to go back home due to the freedom and independence they enjoy. The income earned on the streets is a motivation for them to be kept on the streets.

Worth mentioning is the poor education system in the rural areas. The quality of teaching and learning in rural areas is nothing to write home about. Most children who school in very remote areas can hardly read or write. This impedes their educational progress and makes resorting to the streets of big cities and towns a better option. Post-basic education programs for children who are not able to be absorbed into the secondary institutions is a missing gap which needs to be addressed.

Media houses are not willing to assist the department in its advocacy programs. Exorbitant prices are charged for adverts on child protection sensitization which the department cannot cope with because of inadequate resources.

Finally, inadequate Family Strengthening Measures and the lack of good family support programs to support vulnerable families are major challenges to the increase of street children in Ghana. Research has shown that broken homes and the breakdown of the extended family structure is a strong basis for the phenomenon of unsupervised children in the streets of our societies.

3.7 Conclusion

In answering the research questions, firstly, UNICEF's role since 2011 has not been to specifically address the problem of street children but rather to strengthen the child protection systems in general with the hope of addressing all child protection related issues including the problem of street children in Ghana. Secondly, the problem of street children in Ghana has become a difficult task to handle and as such, the government has been unable to progress significantly in the fight against the problem. To answer the third question, there is inadequate documentation by the Department of Social Welfare on how street children in Ghana have benefitted from the policies. However, stakeholders are confident that the current situation could have been worse without the implemented policies. Finally, despite being the first country in the world to ratify the CRC, Ghana records an increasing number of street children due to many factors outlined in the previous session above, notable of which are – the breakdown of the extended family system, the lack of a clear focus in addressing the problem due to the political environment in Ghana, as well as inadequate source of funding by the government to particularly address the problem due to government's scale of preferences.

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CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a summary of the main issues that emerged from the study. It draws out the key findings, the main conclusions from the study and provides recommendations for stakeholders to address the problem of street children in Ghana with the provision of support from UNICEF. This work sought to study the interventions provided by UNICEF in supporting the government of Ghana in tackling the problem of street children. The thesis essentially presents a vivid picture of the activities of various stakeholders being UNICEF, the government of Ghana and NGOs in addressing the problem of street children. UNICEF's past approach and current approach to child protection related issues have also been discussed.

4.1 Summary of Findings

The findings of the study are outlined below:

1. After 2008, UNICEF changed their approach from the issue-based model to systems-strengthening approach. This was in order to strengthen child protection systems because all the problems were inter-related. The main components of the child protection system are laws, services, and the behavior change component. One pillar of the systems-strengthening approach is the Case Management System. The case management system works by way in a cyclical process. The first process is to open cases for children with child protection problems. Second, an assessment of the case is made. Third, social workers link children to the needed services and finally, follow-ups and monitoring are done until the case is successfully completed and closed. This current approach of UNICEF is not meant to specifically deal with street children but

- all children who face child protection problems. UNICEF has developed a Case Management SOP for social workers and is currently in the process of developing an inter-agency Case Management SOP which will synchronize the activities between and among social workers and child protection agencies.
2. The government of Ghana has overlooked the issue for many years until it has become uncontrollable. Ad hoc measures by the government which may be politically motivated will only worsen the situation. The recently launched “Operation get off the streets now for a better life” by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, lacks the right approach and has not seen any progress so far.
 3. Thirdly, how street children have benefitted from the implemented policies is not as evident in the urban centers as it is in the rural settlements. As such, many potential rural migrants have been prevented from migrating to the cities as a result of the interventions by the government of Ghana with the support of UNICEF. The current situation could have been worse if not for those interventions.
 4. Finally, Ghana has some of the best laws and policies but the problem lies in the implementation. Implementation challenges range from the wrong approaches in tackling the problem, lack of political will, inadequate government funding, misappropriation of donor funding, lack of effective monitoring and evaluation, inadequate trained social workers to carry out the implementation of policies, etc. these and many other reasons may account for why Ghana keeps recording increasing numbers of children on the streets despite being the first country to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

4.2 Conclusion

On the premise of the research problems and objectives, this study sought to interrogate how effective the role of UNICEF has been in supporting the government of Ghana in tackling the problem of street children in Ghana. The study has revealed that UNICEF mainly provides technical and financial support to subsidize the government's budget in implementing policies as well as providing assistance in policy framework formulations. Most poor families in rural areas are benefitting from the rolled out interventions even though the outcome is not evident in urban areas.

However, the increasing numbers of street children in many urban areas are due to several factors but worth noting is the non-prioritization the problem of street children on the part of the government. This can have dire consequences on the future of the nation as a result of the situation churning out future leaders who will not be adequately resourced to take over the reins of governance and socio-economic development.

Ad-hoc measures of curtailing the problem might result in even more disastrous outcomes. Individual NGOs are achieving positive impacts on the lives of so many street children. Why not the government? The government needs to be committed to this cause in order to achieve the desired successes. UNICEF assures the government of their availability to support her activities and provide the necessary quality assurance checks.

Finally, the problems related to child protection in Ghana have not been prevented because Ghana was the first country in the world to ratify the CRC. Compliance with international protocols and conventions will have no effect on a nation whose government develops an attitude of an "armchair position" towards her problems. Therefore, the hypotheses

of this study can be justified. Compliance does not guarantee effective implementation of policies.

4.3 Recommendations

This study has been challenging but interesting and the experience gained would not have been possible relying on secondary data alone. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are hereby proposed and may aid in providing solutions to the challenge.

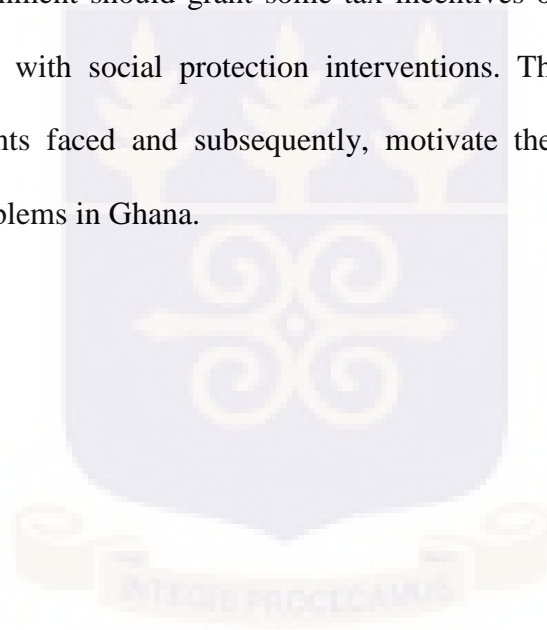
1. In order for Ghana to attain significant strides in the fight against the problem of street children, UNICEF should review its approach of working with the government only at the upstream level. UNICEF should get involved by not only providing technical and financial support but also in the implementation process. This grassroots approach will serve as a strong system of checks and balances to ensure that all government departments discharge their mandates judiciously.
2. Second, when there is financial malfeasance in any government department supported by UNICEF, UNICEF should totally withdraw support from the government for a period of time. This will cause difficulties in the facilitation of interventions for the poor. Consequently, such disgruntled poor who are in the majority will vote out the government under whose administration they experienced severe economic hardships. This will serve as a punitive measure to such governments. In this way, governments will be forced to do the needful when in power for the fear of losing elections just within a term.
3. NGOs, FBOs, and CSOs who are making positive strides in providing services of child protection related issues should be directly supported by UNICEF in order to increase their capacities and enhance their impact on society.

4. The government of Ghana should breakdown the interpretation of internationally acceptable standards, and translate them locally in order for them to be seen through the lenses of local culture and experience. By so doing, there is the hope that citizens will be more willing to take such standards to heart in the near future.
5. There is also the need for the government to implement policy enforcement and public accountability instruments in order to guarantee quality and reliable service delivery for vulnerable child groups in Ghana in the long-run.
6. The extended family structure in Ghana should be rejuvenated through the creation of public awareness programmes. This will foster the promotion of family strengthening mechanism.
7. The government and NGOs with the support of UNICEF should get involved in relevant skills training for children in street situations. Children should be consulted for their specific interests prior to the training and skills acquisition. After successfully completing the training, the government can allocate a space in the urban areas for them to practice their trade in order to make ends meet. For those who will be willing to go back home, the government should provide the conducive environment for them to survive back home so that they are not forced to return.
8. The focus of government should not only be geared towards improving the macro-economy. There is the need to balance both economic and social development.
9. Very importantly, schools should be set up specifically for street children or school dropouts. These schools should have a well thought out curriculum with a rich content which should be geared towards addressing certain key sectors of the economy such as technology and invention, agriculture, technical and vocational skills development,

sports, etc. Street children are generally hard working and if educated in such areas, may gear their energies towards economic development. Basic and specialized training for these children should include attitudinal and behavioral change.

10. Most FBOs such as churches and mosques have their large auditoriums empty and shut at night while poor street children sleep unprotected in the open. FBOs should take up the mandate of housing street children during the nights. Through this intervention, they can positively engage in transforming the attitudes and behaviors of street children.

11. Finally, the government should grant some tax incentives or concessions to NGOs and charities assisting with social protection interventions. This will ease the burden of financial constraints faced and subsequently, motivate them to work harder towards solving social problems in Ghana.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW GUIDE ONE

LEGON CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND DIPLOMACY

Topic: A Study of the Role of the United Nations Children’s Fund in Tackling the Problem of Street Children in Ghana

Name of Institution: United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)

QUESTIONS

1. Kindly provide me with a background of the activities of UNICEF in supporting the government of Ghana in her development agenda?
2. What has been your role in addressing the problem of street children in Ghana?
3. How effective is your role?
4. In your opinion, how has Ghana fared with the implementation of policies?
5. How has Ghana progressed in the fight against the challenge?
6. How has Ghana benefited from the implemented strategies?
7. After the launch of “Operation get off the streets for a better future”, what has been or is being done to accomplish the objectives? Any positive results?
8. How is UNICEF involved in this current agenda?
9. How many street children have benefitted and how have they benefitted from the policies?
10. How is your relationship with other NGOs having the same goals in mind?
11. How do you measure their contributions to this cause?

12. What are some of your key intervention measures?
13. What has been the outcome of these measures?
14. What are some of the challenges faced?
15. Why do we continue having a surge in numbers of street children despite being the leader in the CRC ratification?
16. What other measures aside previously implemented ones do you think can better address the challenge of street children?
17. How will addressing this problem help in achieving the sustainable goals in Ghana by 2030?
18. Can Ghana succeed in her quest to get street children back to their families and the classrooms with UNICEF's support?

APPENDIX 2: QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW GUIDE TWO

Name of Institution: Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection

QUESTIONS

1. Please describe your role in this Institution.
2. Can you provide me with a background of the activities of the Ministry in relation to street children?
3. How is your relationship with your donor partners, especially UNICEF?
4. Kindly describe UNICEF's role in addressing the problem in Ghana.
5. What has been your role in addressing the problem in Ghana?
6. How effective is your role?
7. In your opinion, how has Ghana fared with the implementation of policies?
8. How has Ghana progressed in the fight against the challenge?

9. What are some of the benefits of the implemented strategies?
10. After the launch of “Operation get off the streets for a better future”, what has been or is being done to accomplish the objectives? Any positive results?
11. How is UNICEF involved?
12. How many street children have benefitted and how have they benefitted from the policies?
13. How is your relationship with other NGOs having the same goals in mind?
14. How do you measure their contributions to this cause?
15. What are some of your key intervention measures?
16. What has been the outcome of these measures?
17. What are some of the challenges faced?
18. Why do we continue having a surge in numbers of street children despite being the leader in the CRC ratification?
19. What other measures aside previously implemented ones do you think can better address the challenge of street children?
20. Do you think addressing these problems can help in achieving the sustainable goals in Ghana by 2030? If yes, how?
21. How can the nation succeed in its mandate to get street children back to their families and the classrooms?

APPENDIX 3: QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW GUIDE THREE

Name of Institution: Non-governmental Organizations

QUESTIONS

1. Please describe your role in this Institution.
2. Kindly provide me with a background of the activities of your institution in relation to street children?
3. What is your organization's relationship with the state?
4. What is your organization's relationship with UNICEF?
5. What has been UNICEF's role in assisting government to address the challenge? Any examples of successes?
6. In your opinion, how has Ghana fared with the implementation of international conventions and policies?
7. How has Ghana progressed in the fight against the challenge of street children?
8. What are some of the benefits of the implemented strategies?
9. After the launch of "Operation get off the streets for a better future" in November, 2017, what has been or is being done to accomplish the objectives? Any positive results?
10. How many street children have benefitted and how have they benefitted from the policies?
11. How is your relationship with other NGOs having the same goals in mind?
12. How do you measure their contributions to this cause?
13. What are some of your key intervention measures?
14. What has been the outcome of these measures?
15. What are some of the challenges encountered in discharging your duties?

16. Why do we continue having a surge in numbers of street children despite being the leader in the CRC ratification?
17. What other measures aside previously implemented ones do you think can better address the challenge of street children?
18. Do you think addressing these problems can help in achieving the sustainable goals in Ghana by 2030? If yes, how?
19. What recommendations can best aid UNICEF's approach in handling the challenge?
20. How can the problem be eradicated totally in the future given that there is strong partnership between INGOs, NGOs and government agencies? Any other thoughts?

