

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES OF STREET CHILDREN IN ACCRA

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Ama Boafo - Arthur, hereby declare that except for references to other peoples' work, which have been duly acknowledged, this thesis is the result of my own research work carried out and submitted to the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, University of Ghana, Legon under the supervision of Prof. John K. Anarfi, Rev. Dr. Adobea Owusu, and Dr. Stephen Afranie.

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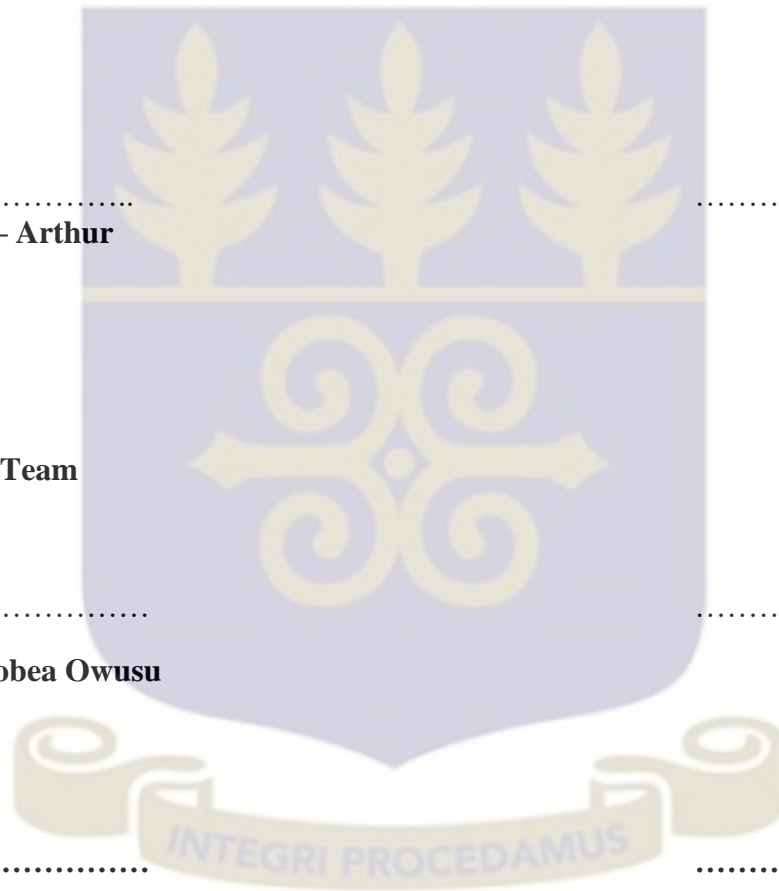
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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to children in street situations who have risen above the challenges that are encountered to make a living in order to support themselves and other dependents. I also dedicate this study to my son Benaiah as a point of contact to all other children who have been privileged to have enjoyable and work free childhoods. They should never take this for granted.



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Finally, to Dzifa my dependable companion I say you are one in a million. To my friends and colleagues, thank you for the advice, encouragement and support through this interesting and sometimes frustrating journey of PhD work. I say “God richly bless you all and expand your territories”.

ABSTRACT

Childhood is believed to be a period of innocence in an individual's life where he/she is trained, supported, assisted and given guidance primarily by parents and guardians to ensure that they grow into responsible adults. Street children are children for whom the street and other unoccupied dwelling places have become their abode and do not have the care and supervision of responsible adults. This study looked at the livelihood strategies of street children in Accra, specifically Tema Station and Agbogbloshie. The objectives of the study were to know the characteristics of street children, to identify the various livelihood strategies the children utilize, to explore the social networks and daily activities of street children, to examine the problems they encounter, and to explore institutional interventions and how these are targeted to the needs of street children. The study employed a mixed methods (survey, in-depth interviews, and FGD's) approach to answer research questions. The findings revealed that the children's livelihood activities included *kaya yei* (head pottering), scrap collecting, shop attendants, and some were cooks in local restaurants. Social networks were found to be a useful asset to the street children as they derived companionship, protection and job allocations via these networks. Problems the street children encountered included arrival shock, inclement weather, and risk of disease from parasitic insects. Institutions were identified as virtually absent in the lives and activities of the street children as the interaction between them was minimal. It was recommended that institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, be encouraged to pursue an awareness, advocacy, and outreach campaign concerning the services they provide, and the benefits children stand to gain by using their services. Additionally, it was recommended that state and non-state institutions find appropriate and appealing ways of meeting the needs of the street child population by pooling their resources and expertise together, as well as to engage them in order to develop interventions that meet the needs of the children. Parents must be encouraged to ensure that their wards stay in school until such a time before allowing them to take off in search of work. Future studies should explore the activities of the '*kubolor*' (thugs) boys on the streets.



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAP:	American Academy of Pediatrics
ADB:	African Development Bank
AMA:	Accra Metropolitan Authority
CAS:	Catholic Action for Street Children
CFC:	Chance for Children
COHRE	Center on Housing Rights and Evictions
CRC:	Convention on the Rights of Children
DFID:	Department for International Development
DoC:	Department of Children
DSW:	Department of Social Welfare
GPHC:	Ghana Population and Housing Census
GSFP:	Ghana School Feeding Program
GSGDA:	Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda
GSS:	Ghana Statistical Service
HRW:	Human Rights Watch
IRP:	International Recovery Program
KLERP:	Korle Lagoon Environmental Restoration Project
LEAP:	Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty
MES:	Metro Education Service
MOGCSP:	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
MOWAC:	Ministry of Women and Children
MTDA:	Medium Term Development Agenda
NCFH:	National Center on Family and Homelessness
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
NPF:	National Policy Framework
NSSC:	The New Social Studies of Childhood
OPD:	Out Patients Department
PRB:	Population Reference Bureau
SAID:	Street girls AID
SAP:	Special Attention Project
SLF:	Sustainable Livelihood Framework

TCS:	The Children's Society
TPRP:	Two Pronged Rescue Plan
TS:	Tema Station
TSCP:	The Street Child Project
UNDP:	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA:	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Fund
WEEE:	Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment



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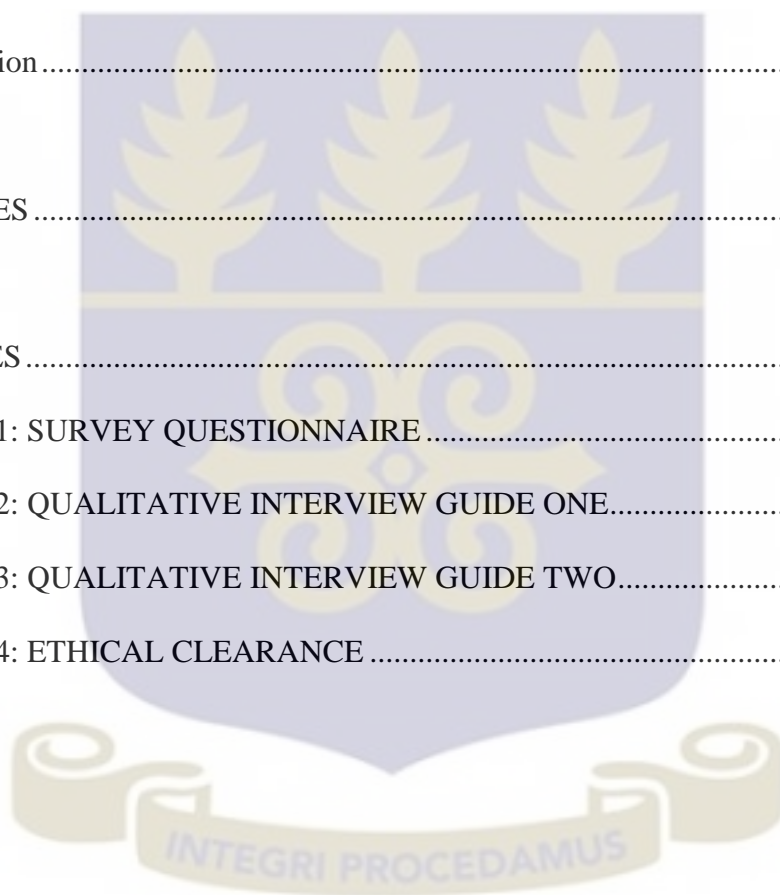
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

An important focus within the international development literature and policy debates is to understand poverty and poor peoples' livelihoods (Waddington, 2003). It is now generally recognized that poverty is multidimensional and not only defined in terms of economic growth. Poverty relates to a wider set of factors which include vulnerability, marginalisation, lack of access to knowledge and resources and people's lack of control over their own bodies and health (Lund et al., 2008). At the same time development, peace and security, and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing (WHO & UN, 2008). Livelihoods cut across a range of activities which may be drawn upon to ensure survival and to keep one alive. Generally, livelihoods are applied to households and adults; however, some children find themselves in positions that require the ability to act as adults. This means they engage in every possible activity in order to sustain themselves and to cater for their needs in contrast to the general belief that children ought to be looked after or catered for.

The issues regarding the expression and celebration of universal human rights happen to be a delicate one. Human rights apply to every living being, irrespective of one's age, gender and nationality. Universally, children are entitled to the same rights as adults. However, children are regarded as vulnerable and as such have certain provisions that outline or give special attention to their vulnerable status in society. Irrespective of the existence of these rights, many children globally, with an overwhelming majority in developing nations, suffer from homelessness, poverty, neglect, abuse, preventable diseases and sickness, unequal access to education, and justice systems that do not take

cognizance of their special needs (UNICEF 2011). Rights are entitlements. They also signify obligations and goals. Rights are primarily concerned with issues of social justice, non-discrimination, equity and empowerment. These rights are embodied in the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (Bajpai, 2007).

1.2 Conceptions of Childhood

Childhood is a period when one is cherished and the expectation is that children will grow up and become responsible adults by virtue of the training and education they acquire when growing up. Children naturally need care which is usually provided by parents, guardians, adults, as well as the institutions of state for good health, education, physical growth, personality development as well as progress.

Globally, childhood presents a period in one's life where the child may be regarded or seen as incapable of looking after himself/herself thus needing the care and support of family in order to survive. So studies on childhood emphasize and describe childhood as a period of immaturity in which children are to be taught, trained, and disciplined (Mintz, 2004). Others also explain that childhood is synonymous with innocence; this is because it is a time when children are spared the rigours of adult life; a time of freedom, of joy, and of play (Ansel, 2005; Freeman, 1992). Childhood is considered as a period of socialization in which children grow towards autonomy as self-providing and responsible individuals who can and must participate in society (Moran-Ellis & Sunker, 2008).

A child is expected to be located within a home or family setting. Within this setting, family members, specifically parents, take care of the health, nutritional and educational needs of the child. Children are therefore not in a position to provide these things for

themselves. Besides the parental warmth children receive at home, they are also given guidance and counselling which prepares them to face difficulties they might encounter outside the home.

Although childhood is believed to be, at best, located within the sanctity of a home, large numbers of the population of children in the world are not receiving adequate care from those this is expected of. As a result, the majority of these children are compelled to explore and experience life on the streets without parental or adult supervision. Children are supervised by parents to ensure adherence to the norms, etiquette, mores and societal values with regard to what they say, do and where they go. In this regard, Salm & Falola (2002) assert that elders in society give moral and ethical instruction to children so that they can fully grasp what is required of them and to satisfy the needs of the community and understand its traditions. So in order to meet the standards of the society, children are given guidance by parents and other adults within the family, and they are provided with training and teaching as well as the use of punishment and rewards. Ideally, a child's social life is negotiated under the supervision and consent of parents and or adults so their roles cannot be underestimated or taken for granted. Pollock (1983) wrote that parent-child interaction is a continuous process, and not a series of isolated events (p 66). Parents, consequently, are expected to be entrepreneurial individual(s), who are responsible, helping their children develop as good citizens (Jensen, 2010). According to the prevailing social norms and cultural assumptions of western societies, these young individuals are vulnerable and in need of adult protection and guidance (Boyden, 1990).

1.3 Who is a Child?

With regards to Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), a child means every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority (maturity) is attained earlier. The Article, thus, grants individual countries the discretion to determine by law whether childhood ceases at 12, 14, 16 or whatever age is found most appropriate (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). The CRC therefore recognizes that children are entitled to their fundamental human rights. The stance of the CRC reflects a move away from the popular notion of a child as a recipient of privileges bestowed at the discretion of the family, community and the State towards a more progressive view of the child as the bearer of legal rights under international law (Goonesekere, 1997). In spite of increased global awareness of the concept of childhood and the needs and rights of children which have been exhibited in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), many children, globally, still face problems including neglect, abuse, and homelessness.

Street Children

‘Children’ making a living on the street is a global phenomenon and not a new development. Studies on street children span several decades. Le Roux & Smith (1998) for instance indicated that the phenomenon of street children is alarming and a worldwide problem. Many capitals and urban centres of the world have become homes to many children over the years (Panter-Bricks, 2002; Scanlon et al., 1998). Children who live on their own and engage in various economic activities to support themselves, seem to have made a departure from the paradigm of ‘proper’ childhood, which requires that children should be reared by parents within a secure domestic setting and secluded from the dangers of the adult world (Boyden, 1991). Since street-living children do not fit into

the idea of 'proper' childhood, they are often viewed as 'abnormal' or 'lacking childhood' (Panter-Brick, 2000).

The definition of a street child varies. Research distinguishes two groups: *home based*; - 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 (Scanlon et al., 1998). 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 (Wargan & Dershem, 2009). These definitions have their shortfalls and cannot be applied globally as street children in different parts of the world have different characteristics and experience different circumstances and lifestyles (Panter-Bricks, 2001).

The problems facing today's child is further embodied in the 2005 report of The State of the World's Children entitled, "Childhood under Threat". According to the report, more than one billion children are denied a healthy and protected upbringing as promised by the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 2005). These, coupled with the growing disparity in incomes between the rural and the urban, and the unequal

development between the industrialized north and the developing south makes the already difficult circumstances of deprived children worse (Boakye-Boaten, 2008).

Street Children in Ghana

Ghana has over the past 20 years been experiencing an influx of street children in the main towns and cities of the country. Children from rural areas usually travel from the villages to the towns. This does not in any way suggest that there were no street children in the cities before, but they were not present in large numbers (Catholic Action for Street Children¹, 2009). Studies on street children in Ghana go as far back as 1992. Apt Van Ham et al., in 1992 conducted a survey on street children in Accra. This survey aimed at producing data on the size and conditions of street children in Accra. One thousand (1000) children in five locations in Accra were interviewed, 200 from each location. The survey included children who lived with parents and or relatives as well as children who lived on the streets independently.

Another study by Apt et al., (1997) on the working girl child provides characteristics of child “kayayei” (weight bearers/carriers) in Accra and the reasons why they engage in this economic activity. This qualitative study sought to involve the street girls in identifying their problems. Critically looking at the migration of individuals considering the pattern of child migrants to Accra in the 1990’s in particular, the Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS) and UNICEF in 1999 published a report of their four month study in Ghana on the migration of street children from the rural areas to Accra and other big cities in the country. The study was titled the ‘Exodus’, and the research team visited towns and villages in five regions of Ghana, the Northern, Upper East, Ashanti, Western

¹ The Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS) is a non-governmental organization that works with street children in Ghana.

and Central region. This study included parents of migrated children, children in school, and children that had dropped out of school (Beauchemin, 1999).

Following these studies, others have sought to study street children in Ghana in diverse ways. These studies have looked at the vulnerability of street children in terms of their reasons for migrating, their sleeping/housing conditions, their vulnerability to sexually transmitted diseases, their cultural and socio-economic profiles and the activities they engage in (Anarfi, 1997; Apt et al., 1992; Apt et al., 1997; Beauchemin, 1999; Boakye-Boaten, 2008; Hatloy & Huser, 2005; Ormie & Seipel, 2007; Yeboah & Appiah-Yeboah 2009). Over the years, it has become clear that the population of street children changes in size and character. A second generation of street children has emerged over the years (CAS, 2009).

In Ghana, a child is a person below the age of eighteen years (Children's Act of Ghana, 1998). Today, almost all cultures/societies share the view that the younger a child the more vulnerable she/he is physically and psychologically and is undoubtedly less able to fend for herself/himself. Globally, age limits regulate children's activities: when they may leave school; when they may marry; when they can vote; when they can be treated as adults by the criminal justice system; when they can join the armed forces, and when they can work. But age limits differ from activity to activity, and from country to country (Bajpai, 2007). Street children are also entitled to the benefits that all children deserve and they ought to be understood in light of a growing global discourse on child labour and children's rights (Beazley, 2002). The condition of children living and working on the streets of most urban areas has assumed problematic dimensions because many people are identifying the situation as needing urgent and pragmatic attention. Unfortunately, the realization of the problematic nature of the street children has not

corresponded with the required/expected response from governments and or state institutions to deal with the problem (Boakye-Boaten, 2008).

1.4 Problem Statement

The menace of 'Children' living on city streets is unmistakably a global problem as its presence is found in both the developing and industrialized developed worlds. Street children can be found in most cities of the world and possibly the most visible face of child labour. Some of these children are engaged in petty trading, manual labour, and garbage collection among others (Ochieng, 2012). Although they are very visible, they are difficult to study and it is equally difficult to tell the number of street children globally. This is because their way of life makes it difficult for anyone to take note of their numbers. Most statistics on street children are usually estimates or 'guesstimates' (Hatloy & Huser, 2005; Khan, 2012). Brown and Falshaw concluded that indeed counting the number of adolescents on the street and the number of associated criminal acts at any given time is an impossible task as many return home temporarily to run away again. They envisage the problems emanating from the streets as preferable to the problems within the family unit. Without interventions, these young people are likely to join the swelling ranks of homeless adolescents who may resort to crime in order to maintain an existence divorced from society (Browne & Falshaw, 1998). In short, they are a visibly hidden population. Possibly, for convenience sake because if their visibility is ignored, no one has to deal with it and its more like they do not exist at all.

The migration of children to urban areas has increased due to economic hardship and the desire for the good things of life in urban areas (Shanahan, 2001). Many children are driven by poverty to migrate to cities and large towns to fend for themselves leaving

them on the margins of society without education, basic health care and employable skills (Apt et al., 2012; p.5). Children are forced to cater for themselves in order to survive, thus increasing the occurrence of child labor, street children, and school dropout rates. Even though most of these children are likely to be migrants, there are others who are not migrants but find themselves on the streets of urban centres because of their personal circumstances. Strain theorists argue that motivation to commit crime increases when legitimate opportunities to achieve culturally defined success goals, including material success, are restricted or closed (Baron, 2001; Lalor, 1999).

The Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS) records that the increasing number of street children over the 14 years since CAS has been working in Accra makes it difficult to ignore the growing phenomenon (CAS, 2009). In 1990, a study by the University of Ghana suggested there were about 4,000 street children in Accra. In 2003, another headcount brought the number to be 15,300. A head count, conducted in 2006 in the selected areas of Tema and Ashaiman, proved the number of street children to be a whopping 21,140. In addition to this, 7500 street mothers were below the age of 20 and another 14,500 urban poor children. The most recent census of street children conducted in Accra in 2009, showed that the number of children on the streets has increased to over 30,000 (CAS, 2010). It has been estimated that the numbers of street children in Accra alone exceeds 60,000. The number includes all categories of street children (Department of Social Welfare, CAS, Street Girls Aid, 2012). These statistics show the astonishing rise in the number of children who live, work and spend at least some of their time on the streets of Accra.

What factors contribute to the prevalence of children attempting to make a living on the streets of Accra? Since livelihoods usually apply to adults, how do children succeed at playing a dual role as parents and adults? The literature on street children in Ghana mainly addresses the causes, the exploitation and the vulnerability of street children, as well as their characteristics (Anarfi, 1997; Apt et al., 1992; Apt et al, 1997; Apt & Grieco, 1995; Beauchemin, 1999; Hatloy & Huser, 2005). Studies have not explored the strengths of this ‘vulnerable’ population. Their social networks have also not been fully captured. How do children adapt to the conditions they face, make use of opportunities that are offered by being in the city, and find ways of improving their lives? Empirical studies looking at livelihood strategies of street children and particularly their social networks in Ghana have not been extensively researched on. This study therefore fills the gap in the literature on street children in Ghana and their unexplored livelihood strategies, strengths, and social networks which make them resilient and motivate them to adapt and struggle to succeed on the streets. Additionally, literature suggests that institutional interventions for street children have not been given enough attention (Berckmans et al., 2012) so the role social and or governmental institutions play with regards to children and street children in particular are also explored in this study.

1.5 Research Questions

Based on reviewed literature and identified research gaps outlined in the preceding sections the following research questions are identified.

1. What are the demographic and the socio-economic characteristics of the street children?
2. What are the livelihood strategies street children employ?
3. What are the social networks and the daily activities of street children?

4. What problems do street living children encounter?
5. What institutional interventions/provisions exist for street children and what are the targets of these interventions

1.6 Research Objectives

The general objective of this study is to identify and understand the livelihood strategies of street children, and the social networks they employ with the intention of gaining further insight into what motivates and sustains their migration (children) to the streets. The study also explored institutional provisions for street children and how these responses and provisions have met the needs of the children.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Describe the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the street children
2. Examine street children's livelihood strategies;
3. Identify the social networks of street children;
4. Examine the problems street children encounter;
5. Identify institutional interventions to streetism and determine whether institutional interventions meet the needs of street children

1.7 Rationale for the Study

Ezeah (2012) writing on livelihoods sees the recent attention paid to urban livelihoods as following from a wide recognition that significant proportions of the urban poor in developing countries are vulnerable in terms of their sustainable livelihood systems. The

absence of formal employment opportunities makes them take to various forms of informal economic activity in order to survive. Urban poverty in developing countries has been predicated on the fact that major urban centres in these countries face tremendous pressure of population without sufficient infrastructure and social services (Hossain 2005).

When children and youth are found in stressful situations in cities and elsewhere, it is wrong to assume that they are victims to be rescued: rather they comprise a major resource to be encouraged (Bourdillon, 2012). Children and youth have been the subject of much debate, ranging from issues concerning their rights, poverty, homelessness, and in particular their work (Ochieng', 2012). Livelihoods bring together the social and physical environment together with how people respond and relate to it, taking into consideration not only material but human and social resources, including local knowledge and understanding.

This study is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, it will enhance and add to the literature on the street children phenomenon in Ghana. It is important and relevant to explore the strengths of social networking among street children as well as bring to the fore their resilience levels. It is equally important in order to explore the lack of enforcement of existing provisions for child protection in Ghana as well as the specific interventions put in place by ministries and institutions set up specifically to cater for the needs of this population.

The study contributes to poverty reduction strategies by coming out with suggestions for alternative livelihoods as respondents' views, suggestions, and solutions were solicited.

Such knowledge is valuable in order to inform effective strategies and interventions for the identification of alternative livelihoods and social protection programs for street children. This study also seeks to help in the development of a policy framework for children who live and make a living on the street whilst efforts are made to curb the growing population of street children.

1.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was sought from The Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research Institutional Review Board (NMIMR-IRB). To ensure that the study proceeds smoothly, the researcher ensured that confidentiality was maintained and identities well protected. The voluntary participation of potential respondents was sought.

There was also anonymity with regards to revealing participants' names and respondents were at liberty to discontinue their participation at any time. Pseudonyms were used when transcribing and analysing data.

1.9 Organization of the Study

The study is organized into nine chapters. The first chapter provides an overview of the study and is comprised of the background, the problem statement, the objectives and the rationale of the study. The second chapter reviewed related literature on street children generally as well as in Ghana. Chapter three discusses the theoretical underpinnings of the study. The fourth chapter presents the methods employed and outlined the data collection and analysis process. This included the choice of, and description of study areas, sampling design and the method of analysis.

Chapter five gives a detailed account of the livelihood experiences and strategies of children on the streets. The sixth chapter focuses on the social networks developed and

relied upon, and the usefulness of these networks to the children. Chapter seven also looks at the problems street children encounter as well as their health seeking behaviours. Institutional provisions and how targeted these responses have been in addressing the street population is examined and discussed in chapter eight. Finally, the summary, recommendations and conclusion are presented in chapter nine.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

There is a large expanse of literature on street children with the bulk of these studies coming from Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Literatures from these parts of the globe are explored in order to capture and situate the problem of street children in its proper context. This takes into consideration the differences in culture and location, and how this has a bearing on how children are socialized and brought up to appreciate and accept responsibilities within the environment they find themselves. Children who ply a variety of trades on city streets have gained worldwide recognition. Their growing presence in Latin America, Africa and Asia makes them very visible as child workers. These child workers engage in shoe shining, truck pushing, helping to park cars, washing windscreens of cars, hawking various items, etc. (Kopoka, 2002).

Ghana and other African countries have been experiencing rapid population growth and urbanization arising from both natural increase and high rates of migration into various countries' main cities and large towns. In Ghana, the contemporary situation is that of children migrating from the hinterlands into the main commercial centres. Most of these young populations encounter difficulties locating jobs in the cities and towns especially within the formal economic sectors because of their often limited education and lack of employable skills required for formal employment. They are thus pushed into the informal economy and are left with no choice but to settle down and make a home in the streets in the absence of accommodation. On the streets, they are exposed to the vagaries of street life which includes exploitation, rape, commercial sex work and crime. The plight of this population although acknowledged and visible to all (both policy makers

and ordinary citizens), is often ignored because the recognition does not make available the resources needed to deal with the situation (Boakye–Boaten, 2008; Bourdillon, 2012; Apt Van Ham et al, 1992; Apt & Griedco,1997). Thus, the needs and attention which this group of children requires are visibly absent. Difficult as it may be, the children strive to make ends meet amidst daunting challenges.

This section of the dissertation reviews related literature on the phenomenon of street children. It specifically looks at livelihood strategies and social networks, the defining characteristics of streetism, the street child in the developing world, and street children in Ghana. In the Ghanaian context, streetism is explored, in order to understand the needs of this ‘vulnerable’ population and why children feel the need to do everything possible in order to do something meaningful with their lives. Some interventions that have been introduced to assist street children were also looked at.

2.2 Livelihood Strategies

Livelihoods have often times been used to describe and assess households and individuals but have not been used in the same way when it comes to children especially street children. Livelihoods are activities that allow people to secure the necessities of life, such as food, water, shelter and clothing. Engaging in livelihood activities means, acquiring the knowledge, skills, social network, raw materials, and other resources required to meet individual or collective needs on a sustainable basis with dignity. Livelihood activities are usually carried out repeatedly within an income stream such as agriculture, pastoralism, fishing, employment within a market sector, or as an entrepreneur. Ideally, people work within one or multiple streams providing goods and services to a market economy based on cash exchange or barter. Work provides the basis

for their food security and self-reliance, adding stability, prosperity and peace to the community at large (UNHCR, 2014). Livelihoods do not take place in a vacuum but in a wider context of social, political, historical and economic conditions, especially in an environment of conflict or forced displacement. Livelihoods are embedded in social relations and personal ties (Granovetter, 1985).

Livelihoods are understood not only in terms of income earning but a much wider range of activities, such as gaining and retaining access to resources and opportunities, dealing with risk, negotiating social relationships within the household and managing social networks and institutions within communities and the city. A focus on the livelihood initiatives of households and communities serves to highlight the importance of human capabilities and agency (Beal & Kanji, 1999). However, to track and respond to peoples' efforts at coping, requires being able to differentiate between "coping within existing rules and adapting the rules themselves to meet livelihood needs" (Davies, 1993:60). For Grown and Sebstad (1989, p. 941), the concept of livelihood systems is preferred, and refers to the mix of individual and household survival strategies, developed over a given period of time, that seeks to mobilize available resources and opportunities.

Children's personal efforts to improve their lives and their prospects involve a complex use of both individual and collective coping strategies for increasing and "accumulating" assets. Accumulation should not be considered on a restrictive material basis. On the streets, accumulation mainly refers to the process of accumulating skills, knowledge, expertise, experience and social networks (Harper, Marcus & Moore, 2003). Children in street situations are not passive recipients of intervention. On the contrary, they

demonstrate versatile and resilient behaviours in their efforts to secure autonomy and rights for themselves (Bourgois, 1995).

Curtin et al. (1997) argued that the lives and life chances of children in cities are shaped by the environment within which they find themselves. For about 70 per cent of urban children in the developing world this environment means conditions of continuous poverty, inadequate housing and food, lack of basic services and an institutional and legislative framework that is rarely supportive of their diverse interests and needs and often hostile to them. Children therefore adopt various strategies and mechanisms to cope with these conditions, both as individuals and as a part of families and households (Curtin et al., 1997:66).

Chambers and Conway (1992) also described livelihoods as comprising the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is said to be sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain and enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long term (Chambers & Conway, 1992 p. 7). In a bid to better understand how people develop and maintain livelihoods, the UK Department for International Development (DFID), built on the work of practitioners and academics and developed the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF). This framework is an analysis tool which is useful for understanding the many factors that affect an individual's livelihood and how those factors interact with each other. The SLF views livelihoods as systems and provides a way to understand:

1. The assets people draw upon
 2. The strategies they develop to make a living
 3. The context within which livelihoods are developed and
 4. Those factors that make a livelihood more or less vulnerable to shocks and stresses
- (International Recovery Program, 2006).

Eldis (2012) outlined livelihood strategies as referring to the combination of activities that people choose to undertake in order to achieve their goals. These include productive activities, investment strategies and reproductive choices. Livelihood approaches also try to understand the pursued strategies as well as the rationale backing people's decisions to reinforce the positive aspects of these strategies and lessen constraints. The choice of strategies usually is a dynamic process in which people combine activities to meet their various needs. For instance, in farming households, activities are not necessarily confined to agriculture but may also include non-farm activities to diversify income and meet household needs. Migration happens to be one common livelihood strategy be it seasonal or permanent. Access to assets, policies, institutions and processes that affect individuals' ability to achieve positive livelihood outcomes is a major influence on the choice of livelihood strategies they embark on (Eldis, 2012).

The strengths of livelihood perspectives and livelihood strategies according to Beall is its ability to capture the dynamic, historical and relational processes involved in livelihood strategies and how people build their worlds (Beall, 2002). This shows that poor people themselves are not just passively going on with their life, but they respond to activities in their societies regarding social and economic changes in order to make active decisions thereafter. Rakodi argues that people do make decisions and households create strategies

by making a number of choices based on economic circumstances, social context, cultural and ideological expectations and access to the resources (Rakodi, 2002). Knowledge of livelihood strategies helps planners to gain knowledge about peoples' livelihoods, their assets and which assets they may desire. When used appropriately, planners may use livelihood frameworks as sources of knowledge, which in turn can be helpful in planning for better livelihood opportunities (Satterthwaite & Tacoli, 2002).

Today, more and more children and youth around the world find themselves with no choice but to make a living for their own survival and often that of their families, thereby assuming roles traditionally played by their parents. Street-living children often try several jobs before they settle on one particular one, and the job they choose to take up is influenced by their family life, culture, geography, economic circumstances and other experiences (Aptekar, 1988). Drawing on interviews conducted, McFadyen (2004, p. 96-98), similarly argues that 'street children' take a range of initiatives and have the ability to adapt to new environments. This argument disputes the hypothesis of rescue-oriented agencies that 'street children' are vulnerable and incompetent. They weigh the positive features of autonomy against the negative aspects of their home lives (Taylor & Veal, 1997) and make a number of decisions which are paramount to their survival on the street.

2.2.1 Social Networks

Networking is an important aspect of the lives of every individual. So long as individuals cannot live in isolation, interactions do take place and relationships are built out of these interactions. When children are growing up, they are exposed to a wide range of people. Initially just immediate family with a lot more time being spent with mothers but as time

goes on this starts changing. One goes to school, meets teachers, make friends etc. and this begins a network outside that of the immediate family. Social networks provide children with nurturance, people to play with and talk to, they provide learning experiences, as well as the opportunity to negotiate social rules and to validate their views of the world and of themselves (Broffebrenner, 1979; Godde & Engfer, 1994).

The concept of a social network typically refers to a network of social relationships from which individuals draw support (Bolwijn et al., 1996). This does not mean that its constituent relationships are to be viewed as only supportive; they are also likely to be sources of stress. Social networks therefore could be defined as all persons and groups, (expressed in terms of actual persons), with whom one maintains direct and more or less lasting ties that satisfy the daily requirements of life (Wassermann & Faust, 1993). The structure of a social network consists of the actual people and ties that give shape and substance to the fulfilment of an individual's basic psychosocial needs.

Networks provide social support, self-esteem, identity and perceptions of control (Cohen & Syme, 1985; Brown & Harris, 1978). Both informal and formal social networks are essential components of 'social capital', a resource produced when people cooperate for mutual benefit. For Putnam social capital encompasses "...features of social life networks, norms (including reciprocity) and trust that enable participants to act together more effectively..." (Putnam, 1995; pp. 664). For Jacobs (1960), networks provide a basis for trust, co-operation and perceptions of safety.

The family support system inherent today is in favour of individual parenting. As such, when the family is not able to provide for the children, there is often times no one else to support them. This is unlike in the past where the African traditional extended family system gave support to the children in case the biological parent was not able and such support reduced the rate of child vulnerability and destitution (Sorre & Oino, 2013).

Once they arrive on the streets through their social networks, street children are able to develop survival mechanisms that sustain their lives in the absence of a parent figure.

The importance of social networks

In the knowledge society, in addition to technical skills and access to information technologies, it is becoming increasingly important for people to have diversified and supportive social connections. Although resources and opportunities may be available, one may not necessarily be aware of their existence, or even have direct access to them. In those cases, knowing people from different backgrounds, grades of expertise, and social levels is essential.

Social networks are very dynamic and relevant in diverse situations. Social networks have been used to link Congolese refugees to their country of origin, possible country of destination if known, to other relatives and family members across the world. Social networks of tribal members, nuclear family, and friends from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) or South Africa function as a social protection net. Whenever there is a problem, people go to their respective networks to get support. Congolese are known to contribute monthly to their tribal networks rather than formal club savings. There is no fixed amount that informal savings schemes' members must contribute to their networks, since not all members have the same possibilities (Amisi, 2006).

Cattell (2001) conducted a study on poor people, poor places, and poor health: the mediating role of social networks and social capital on two housing estates in London. From this study, Cattell developed typologies of social networks. These are the socially

excluded and truncated network, the homogenous network, the traditional network, the heterogeneous network and the network of solidarity.

1. The socially excluded and truncated network – this is limited to a small number of membership groups and a small number of people within these groups. Residents within these networks include newcomers, unemployed people, women with controlling partners, and some isolated elderly people. Other examples include single parents without local families, caregivers, refugees, and women who migrate because of marriages.
2. The homogenous network – this consists of a relatively small number of membership groups but there may be extensive contacts within these members. The homogenous network is made up of predominantly a local extended family, plus a small number of local friends and neighbours. This network is dense and members know each other very well.
3. Traditional network – this is made up of family, neighbours, ex-workmates, old school friends and friends from social clubs and sports clubs. This network structure is tightly knit. Individuals would have spent most of their lives in the immediate area. Other examples are made up of predominantly older persons, and a smaller number of younger persons who have worked locally and attended or been part of social clubs.
4. The heterogeneous network – this is an open network which consists of a relatively large number of membership groups. This includes dissimilar people in terms of age, ethnicity, interests, employment status or occupation, and place of residence. This is made up of dissimilar people with regards to age, ethnicity, interests, employment status or occupation, and place of residence. These networks are generally loosely knit, but in some cases – such as a person involved in interconnected voluntary

organisations – are not. Family and friends are less likely to know each other than in the other models. Examples are people active in voluntary organisations

5. Network of solidarity – the network consists of a wide range of membership groups made up of both similar and dissimilar people. The structure of the network is both dense and loose. Networks share many of the characteristics of both the traditional and the heterogeneous models, that is, strong local contacts of family and or local friends and neighbours on one hand, plus participation in formal and informal organisations on the other. Members have a wide range of positive reference groups (Cattell, 2001).

The networks that street children establish have been described by Ennew (1994) as capable of providing tremendous benefits to them. Drawing on a review of cross cultural research, these networks were presented as involving a wide range of contacts including hoteliers, educators, middle class housewives, the police and other street children. Children who were successful found the much needed support required to survive their harsh lifestyles from their peer support networks some of which are regarded as new families. The autonomy and success of children in the establishment of social support, and the support itself ought to be recognized as a true aspect of well-being. Being able to solicit support is a skill that is incorporated within the context of social competence.

Tyler et al. (1991) consider psychosocial competence as an organizing framework within which one can understand the multiple ways that people exercise choice and control over their lives. To be competent socially and psychologically competent, one must be able to achieve goals within a range of roles, be in a position to anticipate, improvise and to manipulate actions relative to changing circumstances (Baker, 1998; 47). Being able to

cope within one's social surroundings with appropriate behaviours that are sensitive to the needs of others, their desires and beliefs are crucial to achieving goals within that context. Grundling's (2005) study on the concrete particulars of the everyday realities of street children reports that more than 80% of street children in Namibia operate in groups which indicates that once on the street, the children develop networks or support systems which serve as an effective substitute for the family support system.

Growing up in the midst of constant change and contradiction can be a source of strength for some children (Boyden, 2003). Street children therefore could be one category of children that adapt to contradictions in their lives. It is further observed that street children operate within structures which they create on the street; this promotes resilience and teaches them how to solve problems and to successfully handle life's challenges. Boakye-Boaten (2008) noted that when street children are on their own, they rely on their own established networks on the streets for survival. Street lifestyle and networks develop a sub-culture that provides both a reference group and collective identity (Awad, 2002; Beazley, 2003). Members of a sub-culture therefore draw newcomers into their fold, teach them survival skills, and socialize them.

Street children usually gain entry into the streets via their networks of relations which they have managed to establish through friends, themselves, and sometimes close relatives. Informal leadership exhibited among street children is vital for their survival on the streets. Order amongst street children is maintained by norms and rules that guard against unwanted behaviours and conduct among its members. The main pull factor for children to join the street according to Sorre & Oino (2013) is the strong networks of relations they have created with other children on the street that guarantees their own

survival when they arrive on the streets. Street children create inter and intra relationships among themselves that enable them to maintain their networks thus increasing their bonding. These networks however become obstacles to interventions that seek to remove street children as these interventions may act contrary to their wishes. When street children are reintegrated with their families, they maintain links with their street leaders and other networks they may have created while on the streets (Sorre and Oino, 2013).

2.3 The Street Children Phenomenon

‘Streetism’, happens to be a regular feature in many non-Western societies. However, this phenomenon also features prominently in the industrialized world. Studies on street children globally outline certain characteristics which permeate both the developed and the developing world. In the developed or Western societies, the phenomenon accounts for the rise in exposure to violence and disease among street involved children (Clatts & Davis, 1999). Street living may mean the same as homelessness and the literature from the Western world usually draws attention to homeless children instead of street children. Some authors use the term ‘homeless’ interchangeably with that of ‘street children’. Studies of individuals living in North America and Western Europe almost exclusively use homeless whereas the most frequently used term referring to children in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe is ‘street children’ (de Moura, 2002).

The numbers of homeless children in the United States has soared significantly in the last few decades. Reliable figures about the numbers of homeless children may not be established but it is estimated that one out of every 45 children – some 1.6 million – is homeless, according to a report released by the National Center on Family Homelessness (2011) in the United States. The majority of the children were under age 7. In New York

City, Schaffer and Caton (1984) reported that as many as 20,000 children were homeless. Some were transitionally homeless, leaving home or foster care for brief periods. They live a precarious and often violent world on the streets doing whatever possible to survive. As shown by some studies this often means exchanging sex for money, food, shelter, and drugs often resulting in unplanned pregnancies, criminal tendencies, and sexually transmitted diseases including HIV infection (Clatts & Davies, 1999; Futterman et al., 1993; Kipke et al., 1995).

The definition 'homeless' in the developed world includes those who sleep rough, live in shelters, squat, or double up with other families, made up of the literally homeless and those who are dependent on chance circumstances, unknown conditions, or uncertain developments (Chamberlain & Johnson, 2001; Glasser & Bridgman, 1999). The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in defining homeless populations includes those who currently live on the streets or in shelters as well as those who happen to be at risk of being homeless (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2005). Those described as at risk of being homeless include those who are in the process of terminating a stay in an institutional setting, in situations in which they have insufficient prospects or resources, or in precarious but conventional housing arrangements, including an increasing number of children living in poverty or in single-parent families, children who are recent migrants, and children caught in the complicated web of urban decay and conflicting housing and social policies (Urban Institute, 1991). Families with children are the fastest growing subgroup of the homeless population nationally and represent more than half of the homeless population in many cities (Bolland & McCallum, 2002).

Children experiencing homelessness in the United States have been described as America's Youngest Outcasts. Gradually they have become what they call a prominent part of a Third World that is emerging within the nation. Irrespective of their growing numbers, homeless children are invisible to most people; they have no voice and no constituency. These children have lost safety, privacy, and the comforts a home presents. Additionally they lose their friends, possessions, pets, reassuring routines, and communities. These losses create a life-altering experience that inflicts profound and lasting scars (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2005).

Homeless children historically were thought to be composed of 'runaways'. Contrary to popular images of homelessness as originating from "runaways", a great number of them are "castaways" and "throwaways". These are children who are homeless because they have exited foster care, those whose families are homeless, and the neglected and abandoned (Clatt & Davies, 1999). These ones find themselves sleeping in subway cars, train tunnels, in a park, or in abandoned buildings.

The short-lived unseen lifestyles of street children were described as making the estimation of homeless children in the U.S. difficult. Rew et al., (2001) estimated about 2 million homeless in the U.S. with about 2,000 in Seattle each year and 800 on the street on any given night. One in eight children leave home before the age of 18 thus becoming street persons in need of personal services, they leave home much earlier and stay on the streets much longer than before. About 40 percent never find their way back home (Kurtz et al., 2000). They find themselves sleeping at many different places including abandoned housing, exchanging sex for housing (transactional sex), regional institutions (possibly shelters) or in hotels. Some also take refuge on the couches of their friends or

sleep on the streets. About 52 percent of those found in these situations have reported cases of assault which comes their way while on the street (Youth Care, 2001). Factors causing individuals to become throwaways are several. Sampling 304 persons in Seattle, about 43 percent gave reports of they becoming street involved because they were asked to leave home. These usually result or emanate from inadequate family functioning, parental divorce and or separation, death of a parent, change in schools, grade failing in school, deviant and delinquent behaviour, falling out with peers and problems with teachers in school. Some also report alcohol or drug use, abuse and mental illness (Rew et al., 2001). Earlier reports identified families' inability to provide financial support as well as the lack of identification with their families (Gary et al., 1996; Smart, 1991). Bass (1992) also reported that 60 percent of homeless individuals were victims of physical and sexual abuse.

In the United Kingdom, it is estimated that about 100,000 children run away or are forced to vacate their homes each year to escape their problems. Runaways here refer to children less than 16 years who have run away from their homes or care, as well as those who have been forced by their parents to leave home. The main reasons given by children as the push factor include violence, abuse and instability of the family, conflict in the family, neglect, rejection and drug problems (The Children's Society, 2000). Still running, an extensive survey carried out in 27 different areas of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland revealed that 77,000 children under age 16 run away every year for the first time and 14,000 children who run away are forced to leave home by parents or carers. It is estimated that each year 129,000 running away incidents occur (some children run away more than once). Most children had run away once or twice but over a quarter had run away three times or more. More than half (53%) of those who had

run away in excess of three had initially run away before the age of 11. The survey discovered that running away had more to do with emotional and relationship issues that children experienced than prosperity and or poverty.

The National Center on Family Homelessness (2011) in the United States described homeless children as those from birth till age 18 who are accompanied by one or more parents or caregivers. This definition does not include children who are independent street dwellers (runaways, throwaways). This is made up of children who share the housing of other persons resulting from loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (referred to sometimes as doubled-up); children living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations; those living in emergency or transitional shelters; those abandoned in hospitals; children awaiting foster care placement; those using a primary night-time residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. It also includes those living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in some of the circumstances outlined above.

In summary, definitions and descriptions of child populations in street situations thus differ in some ways depending on the origin, cultural background, and expectations of any particular group. The developed world's children share characteristics and experiences that are quite distinct from that of those in the developing world. Childhood in these two parts differ in several ways so it is important that western stereotypes, definitions, notions and characteristics are not used to describe children in all parts of the

world. It will be appropriate and commendable to use definitions guardedly to suit the particular contexts within which issues may be emanating from. Street children in any African or Asian country may not be equivalent to the throwaways, castaways, or the homeless in the U.S. or the UK.

2.4 Streetism – Defining Characteristics

Street living has been categorized in several different ways. Many a time though, these categories are based on individual projects or territorial definitions which do not include the wider picture which would be all inclusive. These views often reflect perceptions of authors' conception of the problem and thus do not give an all-embracing way of understanding the phenomenon. Ballet (2013) elucidated the factors that are associated with street children and distinguished two main categories. Children firstly migrate onto the street using their own will or initiative resulting from unsatisfactory conditions of life at home. This has been hypothesized as *economic poverty*.

Aderinto (2000) conducted a study in Nigeria and concluded that children deliberately leave their homes to fend for themselves when parents are unable to adequately provide meals for them. In a Columbian study, 48 percent of street children were known to have left their homes for reasons identified as financial. Other studies give credence to the role that economic poverty plays in the phenomenon of children and their decision to migrate to the street (Olley, 2006; Peacock, 1994; Rizzini & Lusk, 1995).

In a study by Wargan and Dersham (2009) in Georgia, it was identified that the phenomenon is a manifestation of numerous socio-economic problems that vulnerable children encounter with their families and not a stand-alone occurrence. Making use of a

three-stage approach namely, 1. Pre-surveillance time location mapping, 2. Quantitative point-count estimate and 3, Face-to-face interviewing, the study revealed that in a majority of cases, a combination of family and community stressors may lead a child to the streets. Situations identified included economic problems emanating from poverty, unemployment and homelessness. Other reasons uncovered were absence of a parent, parents or an adult relative within the child's environment; alcoholism and violence at home, family relocation, lack of social protection systems, and a change in the setup of the family because of a divorce, separation or remarriage of a parent.

The *aberrant family* hypothesis – consisting of family conflict, family breakdown, abandonment, neglect, physical abuse or incestuous relationships is the second factor associated with street children (Aptekar, 1994). With this hypothesis, children are mainly driven to migrate from home because of emotional problems. A significant proportion of children, who migrate, in the case of Columbia, migrate because of domestic violence (Aptekar, 1988). UNICEF (2000) in a study conducted in Cairo and Alexandria, Egypt, found that of the number of children interviewed, 62 percent of them said their decision to leave home stemmed from parental neglect and lack of affection and supervision. Children who deliberately took a decision to move onto streets away from home and family constituted 82 percent and this was primarily because they encountered some degree of abuse within the family. Conticini & Hulme (2007) and Ballet (2006) in their studies on Bangladesh and Mauritania respectively, confirm the aberrant family hypothesis.

2.4.1 Cultural and Gender Dimensions

Gender and cultural dimensions of the phenomenon have also been advanced looking at the differences confronting boys and girls in their development trajectories. These reflect cultural norms associated with gender. The *cultural hypothesis* opines that families that are poor encourage boys to become independent much earlier than expected and most of these young boys eventually find themselves on the streets (Aptekar et al., 1995). Girls however are brought up to deal with poverty by staying at home. This makes boys' migration to the street not a sudden occurrence or breakaway from the family. In the girls' situation, however, it is a complete break away of the expected process of socialization. So children's migration to the street is not entirely tied to chronic family dysfunction when it concerns males: but when it involves females, it is regarded as such. The socialization street boys encounter or go through is commensurate to a follow up from the situations they find themselves in whereas girls experience a deviation from the norm and thus considered abnormal.

Aptekar & Ciano-Federoff (1999) gave credence to this hypothesis by clearly outlining significant psychological differences experienced by girls on the street and that of boys in Kenya. The findings of this study show that compared to boys, girls encounter more distress psychologically on the streets. Some other studies found no significant differences between street boys and street girls. In the city of Belo Horizonte, Brazil, Campos et al., (1994) found that, death or absence of a parent, and family contact (family background) had no severe bearing on both boys and girls. Similarly, in a study of Porto Alegre in Brazil, Silva (2002) found no striking differences between boys and girls on the streets. Raffaelli et al., (2000) recorded that cases of those who had ran away from home because of conflicts and abuse were predominantly girls and negative records of

parental relationship often reported. Authors conclude however that the difference in stories or backgrounds of children brings no different effects in the risks they are exposed to psychologically and the kinds of experience they acquired on the streets.

In a Bangladesh study, Concitini & Hulme (2007) revealed that parents were known to unleash physical violence on boys more often than girls whereas sexual violence was experienced by girls more often than boys. So when looking at the family, it is possible that societal perceptions of what is normal where violence is concerned produces different emerging relationships. Ballet et al., (2013) in a Mauritanian study explored and confirmed much of what the cultural hypothesis represents with a few twists. Girls' migration to the streets was considered or seen as leaving a mark that was more severe (in terms of the conditions, experiences and the effect of these over time) and characteristic of a dysfunctional family setting as compared to boys. The Mauritanian context reflects a violent and harsh treatment meted out to children. Chaining originating from the period of slavery is still used and more so on female children. In the cultural setting where expectations are that girl children should stay home while male children become financially independent, families are most likely to chain female children to achieve this. Another violent act females are subjected to is the art of force-feeding, the act of forcing girls (9 to 10 years) to drink large quantities of milk as a way of fattening them up to find husbands for them.

These two categories try to encapsulate the various interacting sides of the street children phenomenon but does not suggest in any way that no other dimension of this complex phenomenon exists.

2.4.2 Street Children in the Developing World

In Africa and other parts of the developing world (Asia, Latin America) the phenomenon of street children is not a new discovery because of the many problems associated with poverty and related issues. Street children can be found in most big cities and/or towns in the developing world. The cause may be attributed to poverty, abuse (sexual and physical), domestic violence, conflicts (internally displaced persons and refugees), family dissolution (divorce, separation) and its associated problems, large family size, breakdown in traditional support systems, truancy on the part of children, peer influence among others. In spite of the commonalities, street children differ from continent to continent, country to country, from city to city and from child to child.

Why are there street children? Where do street children come from? These questions may boggle the minds of all well-meaning citizens of countries where children flood city streets even during periods of the day when they are expected to be in school. Most street children in the developing world fall within the two areas that Ballet (2013) discusses. These are the *economic hypothesis* and the *aberrant family hypothesis* (family conflict, family breakdown/disintegration, abandonment, neglect, physical abuse or incestuous relationships). Many street and working children in different parts of the world have been murdered (sometimes assassinated) for nothing more than petty crimes and sometimes haughty behaviour (Boyden, 1991). Most studies in various cultures of street children had come to the conclusion that the worst fears of the children has nothing to do with going hungry or missing their families but rather the hostility they receive from the public and the police (Aptekar & Stocklin, 1997; Swart, 1990).

In Latin America, several related economic, social and political factors have been associated with the phenomenon. Several factors ranging from land reform, population growth, drought, rural urban migration, economic recession, unemployment, poverty, and violence have been cited as contributing to the situation (Scanlon et al., 1999). Brazil, with one of the most unequal distributions of wealth in the world happens to have the highest numbers of street children in Latin America. Here street children have been described as victims of ‘economic violence’ (Swift, 1989).

Street children face marginalization in Latin America, as many people from the judiciary, the police, the media, business groups and society all believe that these children are a bunch of delinquents, not redeemable and a moral threat to civilized society (Giggenback, 1994). The scary and disheartening part of all the atrocities brought to bear on the children is the emergence of the ‘death squads’ and vigilantes who work in consultation with security firms and the police seeking a solution to the ‘problem’ by elimination (Human Rights Watch, 1994). About 457 murders were recorded by the National Movement for Street Children in Brazil between March and August of 1998. Many street child murders were also recorded in Guatemala and Colombia (Lalor, 1999). An average of three children was killed daily in Rio de Janeiro. In 1993, a group of vigilantes opened fire on about 50 sleeping street children killing seven and leaving many others injured.

It has been estimated that about 90 percent of the child murders that took place in Brazil, the culprits went unpunished (Scanlon et al., 1999). Pakistan’s child street population also experience some of the inhuman treatments encountered in other parts of the world. Street children in Pakistan also lack access to basic needs and rights. Social services are

limited and while separated from their families, they do not get parental guidance, supervision and love which are factors significant to ensure the healthy development of children. On the streets, they are at the mercy of the police, drug addicts, criminals, as well as smugglers or kidnappers. The unhealthy environment they live in, insufficient food, improper shelter and basic health services exposes them to different types of diseases including Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), HIV/AIDS, exploitation and abuse of various kinds (Nasir & Siddiqui, 2012). The city of Lahore, the authors acknowledge, is famous for the serial killing of street children. Wernam (2001) outlined about seven types of violence that street children encounter within the international human rights framework.

Street children and juvenile justice – this is the vulnerability of street children to violence within juvenile justice systems. This includes issues relating to the first contact between the police and children on the street not excluding conditions they are exposed to and access to justice while in detention

Physical violence on the streets – this is violence orchestrated by state officials (police and military) against children. This may be the most obvious traditional type of violence that is associated with street children. This is where street children receive dehumanizing treatment from public officials because they are considered a threat and an embarrassment to society. The solution to the street child problem was to kill them so they are not seen again as was revealed by some police men in a study in Brazil (Jubilee Campaign, 1998). Sometimes death squads are established specifically to eliminate street children. Street children in Honduras have also been victims of this type of violence on numerous occasions (Casa Alianza, 2001).

Domestic violence – a great number of street children are victims of domestic violence and or sexual abuse. This is a difficult terrain because this is usually outside the public sphere and is considered private so difficult to reach, reveal and seek help. The children are exposed to such demeaning, painful, and harsh circumstances that life on the streets with all the inherent difficulties is still preferred.

Psychological violence – this is often an extension of what has been suffered at home. Children are vulnerable to psychological violence which intensifies existing insecurities and lack of self-esteem. This is an addition to the existing extreme forms of physical violence.

Sexual violence – the exploitation of street children sexually is quite common amongst both boys and girls. Girl street children generally are in the minority but are amongst the most vulnerable in the world. Factors pushing girls to the street include domestic violence, sexual abuse, neglect and rejection. This severs the relationship with their families so they move out to fend for themselves (Aptekar & Ciano-Federof, 1999; Concitini & Hulme, 2007).

The movement of girls to the street is described as more traumatic and permanent than that of boys. Girls are particularly vulnerable after transition to the street. Some are forced into survival sex in exchange for food, shelter and protection (Barker & Knaul, 2000).

Background culture of violence – many countries' cultural background; generally contribute to the swelling numbers of children on the streets (resulting from displacement and orphan creation) as well as contributing to the increase in levels of violence against street children.

Violence by children – violence is displayed and used by other children as a way of protecting themselves on the streets. This could also be due to the prior socialization patterns that the children might have experienced in their homes before migrating to the street. Gang culture also exhibits violence which may be employed to maintain discipline and authority within the gang or between other gang groups. Violence could also be related to substance abuse as certain drugs induce violence or could lead to violent behaviour. These types of violence as discussed above are the prevailing different types of violence that street children are exposed to within the context of the international human rights framework.

In some parts of Africa, street children have been subjected to similar treatments as visited on the children of Latin America. Street life has been described as very insecure and hazardous and Bibars (1998) asserts that in many cases street children in Egypt have been abused by their families or school teachers. What she failed to address was the kind of abuse being referred to. The police in Cairo regularly round up children living and working in the streets and keep them in crowded detention centres, where they are shaved and often beaten. In Nigeria as in other countries, efforts made over the years regarding street children are geared towards getting rid of the children from the streets (eradication) and rehabilitation. Much of the efforts aimed at addressing the issues have been punitive in nature thus not tackling the problem from its roots. A focus on punishment does not abate the problem and as the evidence suggests, it is fast becoming a permanent feature as the numbers are on the increase in many developing countries across the globe (Oloko, 1999; Ahiane, 2004).

Aptekar and Abebe (2001) distinguished between street and working children. These are sometimes presented as very distinct from one another in terms of personality characteristics and, universality to all cultures. In the Ethiopian example, differences exist between working and street children but evident in the definition is that it has more to do with what is seen by individual eyes than what the personality of the child is.

Working children in Addis Ababa engage in a variety of activities (shoe shining, parking cars, selling candles, groundnuts, cigarettes, etc.). It is assumed they go home to their families (if they have no night shifts). These children are usually of the Guarge ethnic group who are believed to be a cohesive group so rarely associated with having drug abusive, delinquent children or of being neglected or abandoned by their families (Veale, 1993).

Street children however, are often seen taking alms from passers-by. The perception of these children is one of a criminal nature with associated deviant behaviours such as hitching rides on the back of trucks. Their ethnic origin are not held in high esteem and are often referred to as veranda boys, a label given exclusively to children who break local norms of acceptable and appropriate child behaviour. Although Guarge children also work on the streets at an early age, they do not earn the same label. It is the veranda boys whose presence is offensive to the public. This draws attention to the western stereotypes about how childhood is constructed and given meaning to without considering the cultural and social environment within which they find themselves.

Cultural ethnocentrism according to Aptekar and Abebe (2001, p. 3) is a problem emanating from the definition given to street children by comparing them to children

from a fictitious ideal-middle class family in the developed world where homes consist of two parents, whereas the female headed homes common among poor families are blamed for the neglect and abuse of their children forgetting their capacity and survival strategies they rely on (Barker & Knaul, 1991; Ennew, 2003).

2.5 Street Children in Ghana

Ghana, like other developing nations, has had its fair share of problems. One of the problems challenging Ghana is the issue of street living and its associated complications. Ghana has a prolonged history of internal migration which pre-dates the nation's independence (Kwankye et al., 2007; Kwankye et al., 2009). In the past, internal migrants were usually adult males who hailed from the northern regions but moved around for employment opportunities in the mining sectors as well as in the area of agriculture (cocoa and production of palm oil). Current trends however reveal a shift in the direction of the kind of internal migration that is taking place in the country. Most migrants whose final destinations are usually in the cities of Accra, Kumasi and Takoradi are aged between 10 and 24. Migration to urban centres offers opportunities for employment, vocational training and education (Bartlett, 2011; Kwankye et al., 2007).

A lot of unskilled children move from the rural underdeveloped regions to the cities to engage in menial jobs (Boakye-Yiadom & MacKay, 2007; Twumasi-Ankrah, 1995). Most of these low skilled migrants find themselves working in the informal sector, doing jobs requiring very little or no education and skills, mainly as porters, petty traders, hawkers, etc. (Hashim, 2007). For many urban dwellers however, this urban advantage may not be a reality. Migrants experience many problems because of rapid urbanization

and among these are inadequate accommodation, absence of running water, poor sanitation and exposure to pollutants (Bartlett, 2011).

Street involved children in Ghana are faced with many challenges as encountered by street children in other parts of the world. Children migrate from homes with the mindset of doing something for themselves. Factors pushing children to the streets are several. Beauchemin (1999) in the study “Exodus” outlined some of the factors which push children to the streets. Reasons given include:

1. Economic reasons (poverty and unemployment)
2. Family - Within the family, several issues account for the increasing migration of children to the streets and places unknown to eke out a living for themselves.
 - a) Family disintegration - the growing exodus of children has been attributed to the break down in the extended family system as the reliance and belief in family nucleation has grown. Increasing poverty and western influences coming from diffusion has undermined the extended family system. A situation whereby traditionally children were cared for by uncles and or other family relations rarely happens in recent times. Children interviewed by Beauchemin (1999) cited the loss of a parent (s) and the resulting financial hardships as reasons why they dropped out of schools and found themselves on the street.
 - b) Single parenting - a product of teenage, unplanned and unwanted pregnancies take a toll on those who are burdened with the responsibility of looking after the children. Mothers usually find themselves in this position leading to female headed households and its resultant problems.
 - c) Another family-derived issue is divorce and or separation which also adds to households being headed by females and exposes children to domestic violence from perhaps pent up emotions as well as sexual abuse especially on the part of females. Some

step-parents have also been known to inflict undeserved pain and hardship on step children sometimes abusing them sexually. Here parental irresponsibility, neglect, and indifference set in, as parents do not feel obliged to take care of their children.

Some traditions also encourage families or women to have as many children as possible. These traditions discourage family planning because families end up with more children than they are able to adequately provide for. However because of recognition by society and the pride this brings, several children are produced without the needed resources to cater for them (Ballet, 2013). This makes it easier for such children to move out of home to try and make it on their own and usually end up on the streets. Polygamy, which is also widely practiced and especially so in the northern regions, also poses some problems. Polygamous families are often large and breeds unhealthy competition among wives and children too as to who has more children.

Within the family unit, several issues come up and all these add to the pressures and stresses that push children to a life unknown with hope as the only rope on which they can cling to for support.

The issues presented in the Ghanaian context also support the *economic* hypothesis and the *aberrant family* hypothesis elucidated by Ballet (2013).

In examining the socio-economic profiles of porters in Accra, Yeboah & Yeboah (2009) made use of a survey, in depth interviews, focus group discussions and stakeholder interviews to achieve their aim. Their results indicate that female porters exceed male porters by far. This is explained in terms of the level of importance accorded females as compared to males. There are various traditions which explain why far more girls are found on the streets than boys. Girls are regarded as less important and are often kept at

home to do chores and assist the women in running the household (Beauchenim, 1999). The study by Beauchenim (1999) revealed that when this happens girls did not get to attend school and over time sought to do other things. Migrating to cities to work happens to be one of the options available. The opportunities made available to those who began to move out to work makes it more appealing to others and more and more girls got hooked to this migration chain. This also rejects the general notion that the male street population exceeds that of girls as has been confirmed by studies in other parts of the world (Pilloti & Rizzini, 1994; Zuberi, 2005). Portering is associated with poor socio-economic background and little or no education. Generally, the porters migrate to the cities to seek better economic prospects for themselves and their families. It also revealed that even though as porters they have more choices in the cities as compared to their homelands, their choices are limited to a few options in the informal sector. Their lack of, or low levels of education limits opportunities for meaningful or other kinds of employment whether at home or in the cities.

To ascertain the HIV knowledge and sexual risk behaviours of street children in Takoradi, Ghana, a survey was conducted by Wutoh et al., (2005) in collaboration with the Mercy Foundation. Making use of convenience sampling and questionnaires, they sought to find answers to their questions. Majority of the respondents had some knowledge of HIV transmission and prevention and there were no significant differences by gender. A greater percentage of females as compared to males reported ever having sex. The study also showed differences in initial sexual experiences for males and females. While more males reported having their first sexual experience at their own will and for fun, females had more rape and forced sexual encounters even when they were still living at home.

2.5.1 Interventions for Street Children

Interventions for street children seem to be on the agenda of governments and institutions globally. What kind of interventions exists and how useful have these interventions been in impacting positively on the lives of the children? This is one of the study objectives and some of the interventions that have been employed or utilized by institutions are reviewed. This is to gain deeper understanding of how the street children are valued by all who seek their welfare, and have their interests at heart.

Interventions rolled out by institutions of state and non-governmental organizations fall around certain priorities and depending on the outline priorities, these interventions are implemented. Lugalla & Kibassa (2003) discussed some of these interventions. These interventions all served specific purposes or were targeted. They include interventions that are:

Social Welfare Oriented in nature – these are usually in the form of drop-in centres that specifically deal with street children’s immediate concerns like food, accommodation, clothing, and medical treatment

Social Work and Rehabilitation - some providers also aim to permanently move children away from the street situation/setting and strive to introduce them back into mainstream society. Those who manage rehabilitation well and are able stop taking drugs are then encouraged to go back to school or attend vocational training institutions.

Education and Vocational Training model – Other organizations seek to promote primary education as their prime objective. Some centres therefore provide vocational training for those it is felt are advanced in age to return to or begin school. These are

often times very informal thus, helps children to develop skills like carpentry, tailoring, and masonry; this enables them to begin their own income-generating activities.

Family Reunification – Re-uniting street children with their families is another common aim of some organizations. These strategies are often difficult to achieve/attain because the children are not willing to move back home as the conditions that drove them to the streets persist. Parents who may be experiencing extreme poverty may be reluctant to take in their children again.

Advocacy and Campaign for Children's Rights – Some institutions are involved in advocacy programmes that concentrate on defending and protecting the rights of children.

Notwithstanding the rationale behind these interventions, they have been criticized that the services provided only treat the symptoms of the problem and do not address the real causes of the phenomenon of street children (Lugalla & Kibassa, 2003: 4). The support offered by NGOs, however, often fills the gap where governments are unable or unwilling to intervene.

Many governments have forcibly rounded up children and held them indefinitely in detention centres or remand prisons (Human Rights Watch 1997, Ruvero & Bourdillon 2003). Attempts by governments to institutionalize street children has failed to bring an end to the problem as children develop different ideas over time of what childhood is about based on their exposure and experiences, and thus cannot be persuaded to revert to expected childhood activities like schooling and playing (Ruvero & Bourdillon, 2003 p. 4).

Lalani, (2009) also identified four categories of interventions at Eldoret, Kenya.

Children's Homes: The primary objective of these homes is to cater for street children. The children found within these homes are usually from diverse backgrounds. These homes often set out small and expand to offer school facilities.

Home-based Care: These are organizations that identify vulnerable children via schools and outreach programmes extended to slum areas surrounding Eldoret. Their aim is to help children within the home environment and to prevent children from leaving their homes. Small subsidies are made available for school fees and uniforms.

Rescue and Rehabilitation: Organizations in Eldoret that work directly on the streets are few. The Rescue Centre is a community-based organization offering outreach and rescue services to children. Children on the average stay for a period of about 3 months, when children begin to miss their life on the streets and get tired of being handed responsibilities given them by the rescue center they retreat. This center also provides an informal school curriculum. This is to make available a rescue facility before finding appropriate placements for the children, for instance at children's homes.

Child-sensitive Spaces: These are very few and are fraught with a number of challenges. Here, no rules are imposed on the children and all categories of children are brought together– both boys and girls, young and old. This space offers children a place to be fed and to take a shower.

One of the problems identified in Eldoret is the inability of most intervention programs to recognize the hidden vulnerabilities and individual risks of street children. Gradually however, this is being realized and programs are being introduced for specific categories like street mothers, and street families.

A Proposed intervention in the Ghanaian case according to the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection to show the commitment of government to help children in street situations is to initiate a Two-Pronged Rescue Plan (TPRP) for *Kayayei* in 2014. *Kayayei* are female children who engage in load carrying mostly in the central business districts of big towns and cities in Ghana. The TPRP in its approach is designed to get the *kayayei* off the streets of urban centres and is expected to be piloted in Accra and thereafter replicated in all other regions. This program is expected to be implemented in two phases

1. The first phase will be an attempt to develop a database after identification and registration of *kayayei* in the Accra Metropolis
2. The Ministry also intends to explore the possibility of including *kayayei* under social intervention programs such as the Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty (LEAP – direct cash transfers). This is suggested and it is the hope of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection that it will be successful as other cash transfer programmes from Mexico and Brazil that have been acknowledged as success stories (Bolsa Familia initiative – Brazil, 2003; and Oportunidades program of Mexico)

These proposals are aimed at fulfilling government's obligations to the child population as stipulated in the Children's Act of 1998.

The problem identified with this approach is that it seeks to follow a westernized program and fails to acknowledge the social and cultural background of the children who engage in this activity. There have been other approaches employed by other African countries which may be more relevant to replicate than the western models. An attempt to ‘remove’ or get the children away from the streets without first ensuring that all that will be needed to make their lives comfortable is made available to them will make the program a failure even before it is executed. The children move out to find jobs to do and not to be a nuisance or to engage in illegal activities. The focus also seems to be on just the *kayayei* whereas other street children whose conditions may be worse than that of the *kayayei* also exist.

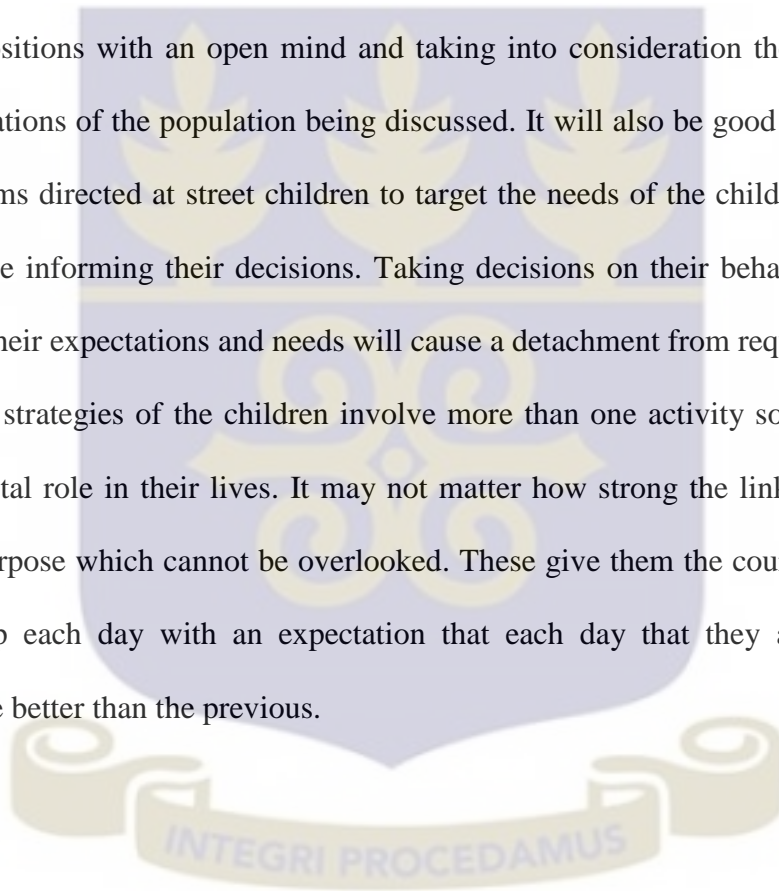
Other interventions that have been rolled out to assist street children by NGOs in Ghana include; Basic education, Vocational Training, Counseling services, Re-unification Programs.

Gaps in the literature

Reviewed literature especially Ghanaian literature revealed some gaps which this study seeks to explore in order to add to the body of literature on street children. Studies on street children in Ghana since 1992 have explored and examined several aspects of the lives of street children. Studies so far have mainly looked at the vulnerable nature of the children. It is undisputed that being children the vulnerabilities must be highlighted but looking beyond their vulnerable status this study sought to highlight strengths they possess to enable them survive. The social networks of street children as well as the role of institutions responsible for children are also explored. This study thus adds to the body of literature on street children by filling the identified gaps in the literature.

Conclusion

Street children in Ghana also face experiences that are similar to that of other street children in Africa. Differences however can clearly be seen between that of children in the developed world and those in the third world. Looking at the various definitions of homelessness bearing in mind throwaways, castaways, and the excluded, the situations and circumstances they find themselves in are not the same so it will be wrong to look at all children from or through western eyes. It is proper and appropriate to define children in street positions with an open mind and taking into consideration the cultural beliefs and expectations of the population being discussed. It will also be good for interventions and programs directed at street children to target the needs of the children involved and the rationale informing their decisions. Taking decisions on their behalf without fitting these into their expectations and needs will cause a detachment from required outcomes. Livelihood strategies of the children involve more than one activity so social networks play a pivotal role in their lives. It may not matter how strong the links may be, but it serves a purpose which cannot be overlooked. These give them the courage and the zeal to wake up each day with an expectation that each day that they are blessed with will/may be better than the previous.



CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

Theory has been established as serving as a lens for finding answers to research question as well as providing broad explanations (Cresswell, 2009). This study steps out to look at street children not as vulnerable individuals but as individuals who have shown extreme courage and strength in the midst of daunting challenges and experiences. Two main theories, namely social capital and the New Social Studies of Childhood (NSSC) were employed in the study. These theories were brought on board not because others did not exist but because in the light of the problem being explored, they were identified as most relevant. Social capital brings out the issues relating to networks and how the networks established by street children specifically help them to keep body and soul together in spite of the daunting challenges they face. The NSSC on the other hand enables us to see the children as individuals in their own rights who should be given as much as is required in order to help them achieve their goals and highlight their competencies. This perspective brings to the fore how children in trying to make themselves 'useful' become resilient and manage to cope under stressful conditions.

3.2 Empirical Applications of Theories

How social capital has been applied to children, particularly street children over the years reflects how important children also need to build meaningful relationships which may become useful to them in the short or long term. Volpi (2002) assessed street children looking at promising practices and approaches. It was identified that street children are the effects of deteriorating social capital and social exclusion. While the immediate factors responsible for the phenomenon are unique for each child, they generally

represent some combination of low family income, lack of housing, failure in school, family neglect and abuse, armed conflicts, natural disasters and epidemics.

Stephenson (2001) using a triangulation of various techniques and methods, analysed the strategies of homeless street children in Moscow and explored the informal social and economic networks created and used by the children to build opportunities for survival and social mobility. Survey findings revealed a complex system of social relations emerging on the streets with children finding their own positions alongside other actors. Their life-stories also revealed the children's individual attempts at social mobility within the street social structures, and the extent to which these attempts were connected with the accumulation of social capital.

Amoah and Jorgensen (2014) discussed the relationship between social capital, health and health care in current development literature with a focus on children and more especially street children. Their findings put forth a strong argument in support of the argument that irrespective of the fact that street children live without their primary care givers, they are not socially broken. Study participants demonstrated that, street children are able to develop their own subcultures characterised by unique forms of values, beliefs, practices and even language as described by James (2012, p. 126). Beazley (2000, p. 208) also asserted that such subcultures provide the children with '*a positive self-identity and sense of belonging*'. Street children therefore have the potential of forging and maintaining social relationships contrary to the position of other schools of thought.

Asheber (2005) in a study of street children in Addis Ababa looked at social capital as a survival mechanism. She also explored the informal social and economic networks utilized by street children in their everyday street lives. Findings showed that the sources of social capital for the street children are embedded in their networks with their families, relatives, and friends. Other authors that have explored how social capital has been applied in relation to children are Morrow (1999), searching for social capital in children's accounts of neighbourhood and networks; Ferguson, (2015), Measuring and indigenizing social capital in relation to children's street work in Mexico; Llorente (2010), studied social capital and wellbeing amongst child-headed households in Kigali, Rwanda.

Cheney (2010) used the new social studies of childhood (NSSC) to deconstruct childhood vulnerability. Perspectives from anthropology, international law, and education were applied to aid in the deconstruction of childhood vulnerabilities. Hart (1997) relied on the works of Ward and Fyson (1973) on street work that sought to include children in meaningful community research. Hart's work on children's participation also acknowledged the NSSC and the interests with childhood and geography as very revealing and valuable to child research. Holloway's approach to childhood research was shaped by the literature in the new social studies of childhood. Particularly appealing about the new social studies of childhood is their recovery of children from essentialist discourses through an examination of the social construction of childhood, an examination that pays due attention to the importance of children's agency in the constitution of different children's childhoods. Sharma (2014) used the paradigm to understand children's construction of identity. The perspective of studying children which views children as competent and active participants in all kinds of social

scenarios, such as making social distinctions, expressing or withholding judgment, drawing and redrawing boundaries between here/there, self/other, and so forth was carried forward by Scourfield et al. (2006). The use of agency and power by children has been validated by studies that have followed the tenets of the NSSC.

Barrett's (2007) study for instance investigated the development of national identification in children growing up in the Basque Country (Northern Spain). The attitudes towards national out-groups which were exhibited by these children did not show any changes as a function of age. This study revealed that national identification in Basque children is associated with the languages spoken in the family home. Other studies that validate the NSSC include O'Kane (2008), Campbell et.al. (2015), and Blerk (2012).

The New Social Studies of Childhood thus reflects a growing cross-fertilization of ideas in a variety of social science disciplines towards the childhood research. This paradigm evolved in response to the growing dissatisfaction among researchers with previous perspectives on different aspects of development in children, particularly regarding perceived vulnerabilities, representation of concepts, such as nation or national identity, identification of the self as well as how others recognize them amongst others. The two theories i.e. social capital and the NSSC are therefore deemed relevant to be applied to the livelihood strategies of street children in Accra.

3.3 Social Capital Theory

The expectation of reciprocity and trust has existed ever since small communities came together and human interactions took place. Social capital in its present form or stage and

usage originated from Pierre Bourdieu (1986), James Coleman (1988), Mark Granovetter (1973) and Robert Putnam (1995). They believed that social capital is beneficial to communities and also exists between individuals and so can be studied at the level of individuals as well as communities.

Bourdieu (1986), defines Social capital as the aggregate of actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words to membership in a group which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word (Bourdieu, 1986; p. 9). The existence of these relationships may only be in the practical state, in material and/symbolic exchanges which help to maintain them. The social capital possessed by an individual, group, community or an agent is dependent on the size of their network of connections which can be effectively mobilized and on the volume of the capital possessed by each of those to whom they are connected.

“The network of relationships is the product of investment strategies, individual or collective, consciously or unconsciously aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long term i.e. at transforming contingent relations, such as those of neighbourhood, the workplace, or even kinship, into relationships that are at once necessary and elective, implying durable obligations subjectively felt (feelings of gratitude, respect, friendship, etc.) or institutionally guaranteed (rights)” (Bourdieu, 1986; p10). Social capital’s reproduction requires an unceasing effort of being sociable, with continuous exchanges in which recognition is endlessly affirmed and reaffirmed.

Bourdieu's conceptualization of social capital can be related to that of other social network theorists who have built on earlier works and expanded the discussion on social capital. Baum (2000) viewed social capital as something that individuals possess by virtue of their networks and this can ultimately be brought down to economic capital. A theoretical framework to social capital given by Coleman (1988), defined it in a functional way basing it on two components: aspects of social structure and action facilitation by individuals within the structure. Putnam (1995:67) defined it as "the features of social organizations such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit". Two key ingredients of social capital according to Putnam are generalized reciprocity and general community trust (Putnam, 1993).

Narayan and Woolcock (2000) see the basic idea of social capital as a person's family, friends and associates constituting an important asset that could be called upon in times of crises, enjoyed for its own sake, and leveraged for material gains. What holds true for individuals however also holds for groups. So their idea of social capital also refers to the norms and networks that enable people to act collectively, and this serves several purposes. Firstly, there is a focus on the sources and not the consequences of social capital. Secondly, it permits different dimensions of social capital to be incorporated and recognition that communities can have access to either more or less of them. Thirdly, this definition sees the community as the primary unit while recognizing that households and individuals can also appropriate social capital as members of a given community.

The definitions of social capital attest to the fact that there is an embedded resource in social networks which enhances outcomes of action. Some explanations have been

forwarded by Lin (1999) to throw light on why this is so. The flow of *information*, firstly, is facilitated. In a market situation, social ties in certain locations and positions can provide useful information to individuals about choices and opportunities one may ordinarily not be privy to. These social ties secondly, may *influence* recruiters and/or supervisors who play a key role in taking decisions. Some ties carry more resources and wield greater power in decision making by virtue of their strategic locations and positions of authority. Thirdly, resources of social ties and their relationship to the individual may be identified by an organization or its agents as an endorsement and certification of the *social credentials* of the individual. Some of these may reflect the individual's accessibility through social networks and relations (his/her social capital), to resources. Social relations finally, are expected to *reinforce* identity and recognition. This means being assured and recognized as worthy, as an individual and member of a social group sharing similar ideas, interests, and resources as well as providing not only emotional support but also public acknowledgement of one's claim to certain resources.

The crux of social capital as this study has adapted, is about establishing purposeful relationships and using them (these relationships) to generate benefits in short or long terms. These benefits may be social, psychological, emotional and economical (Lin, 2000).

Social capital can be represented in several ways. These can be brought together broadly under five dimensions: *Networks* – these are associations that vary in density and size, this occurs among individuals and groups alike; *Reciprocity* – this is the expectation that services and kindness in the long and or short term will be reciprocated; *Trust* – which is the willingness to take risks or initiatives in the social context based on the belief that

others will respond as expected; *Social norms* – the unwritten shared values directing behaviour and interaction; *Personal and collective efficacy* – the willing and active engagement of members within the participative community (Bourdieu, 1983; Coleman, 1988a; Onyx & Bullen, 2000; Paxton, 2002).

As a broad term, social capital encompasses ‘norms and networks facilitating collective actions for mutual benefits’ (Woolcock, 1998, p 155). Moving away from the initial presentations the broad definition makes it possible for multiple interpretations and usage to emerge spanning multiple theoretical origins (Portes, 1998).

3.4 The New Social Studies of Childhood (NSSC)

The New Social Studies of Childhood has been considered as relevant for this study as it gives a whole new dimension to childhood studies. This not so recent theoretical perspective in researching childhood came in response to a lack of research on children and childhood as part of a social and material context. Children in times past were indirectly studied through sub disciplinary areas such as the family and education and dominated by socialization theory where children were seen as human ‘becomings’ and not beings who would be shaped into adult beings through the process of socialization (Adler & Adler, 1986; Alanen, 1988; Leonard, 1990). Socialization theory explains how children, who are born without the knowledge of the society’s language or organization, become inducted into the surrounding social worlds. However, this is done from the adult ideological viewpoint (Speier, 1976; Thorne, 1987). So in socialization theory children are considered as passive presupposing that the child is only in the process of becoming social – undergoing socialization (Dreitzel, 1973).

The NSSC brings a new perspective and dimension to childhood research and to the competences of children. This perspective seeks to highlight the strengths inherent in children with regards to their capacity and capability to handle certain issues and particular situations. The phenomenon of street children is one area that this perspective can be clearly tested. Amidst the daunting challenges and difficult circumstances, some children persevere in these seemingly impossible circumstances and or situations. Socially constructed childhoods, children as social actors, resilience and survival are further discussed to bring more meaning and focus to this study on street children's livelihoods. Emphasis is laid on the strengths of these children as against the weaknesses which are often highlighted by some researchers by virtue of respondents' 'position' as children.

3.4.1 Childhood as Socially Constructed

One of the tenets of the NSSC is that childhood should be explored as a political and cultural construction rather than as a natural phenomenon. It has been argued that childhood is like other socially constructed categories (particularly class) – a structural form or categories that is permanent and never disappears even though its members vary (Corsaro, 1997; Qvortrup, 2001). The transformation socially, from childhood to adulthood does not follow a direct physical growth; adults' recognition of children and vice versa is not dependent upon physical difference.

This theoretical perspective avoids giving a simple universal definition of childhood. Childhood, understood as a social construct makes reference to a social status defined by boundaries incorporated within the social structure and made manifest through certain typical forms of conduct, all of which are related to a particular cultural setting (Jenks,

1992). In simple terms, Jenks makes an argument that routinizing and naturalizing childhood through dominant childhood study theoretical frameworks and everyday language conceals the importance of the society in which children are brought up and glosses over the social experience of childhood.

The definition of childhood therefore cannot exclude the environment within which children live. It is influenced by children's socio-political and economic contexts. These in turn create other discourses of childhood. Western models or discourse sees childhood as a period of happiness and innocence, a period when children are to be protected and allowed to enjoy their childhood before being confronted by the challenges that adulthood and 'maturity' come along with. Ansel (2005) points out that the Western model has been globalised through migration, missionary activity, and colonialism. NGO's and international organizations have also played a role in exporting this model to Africa, Asia, and Latin America. She argues however that this model is inadequate to describe the experiences of young people.

Following the NSSC, this study adheres to the social constructionists' view which asserts that although we know what children are and what childhood is like, this is not knowledge that can be drawn on reliably. Such knowledge of the child depends on the predispositions of a consciousness constituted in relation to our social, political, historical and moral context. So the socially constructed child is a local one rather than a global phenomenon and particularistic (James et al., 1998). The view of children as natural beings according to Nilsen (2008) must be done away with in order to understand childhood perspectives. In understanding childhood, Jenks (1982) refers to all forms of conduct, all of which are related essentially to particular cultural settings. Children will

always be children but the experience of childhood differs from one society to another and dependent on their particular social, political, moral, historical, and cultural environment.

3.4.2 Children as Social Actors

Another tenet that the NSSC builds on is the notion that children should be considered as social actors with agency (in their own right). This challenges the traditional focus championed by socialization theorists and developmental psychologists who have been focusing on the processes by which a child develops into an adult of his culture with emphasis on material and cognitive development, social habits, and personality development. These project conceptions of what a child is expected to become thus preventing socialization practices that may be viewed as hindrances to their expectations for the child's developmental transformation. This development process is based on the implicit understanding of an adult's view of social life, with rules and norms guiding how to go about that life properly (Speier, 1976).

Smith (2000), speaking on how adults perceive children and societal expectations of them defined three aspects of childhood (which he also calls phases of experience and role categories), *children as consumers*, *children as interpreters*, and *children as actors*. As 'consumers', children are passive recipients of information or products and this perception is used in the context of education. As 'interpreters' children are expected to analyse the information received and be able to make their own choices. As 'actors', they are supposed to take initiative and responsibility, or even some leadership roles. These phases (stages) are considered in two ways: either as 'temporal stages in the process of receiving stimuli, processing them and then taking action' or as

developmental stages (Smith, 2000 p.6). So children move from a passive and more dependent state to a more proactive position. Smith's concern is that multiple contradictions can arise from these role expectations especially regarding children with limited resources.

The dominant theoretical perspective understands childhood as a stage, a process of becoming. So childhood is recognized as a yet to become stage (James et al., 1998). Some researchers following this propose that children should be considered as 'a structural class in relation to other classes who are capable of collective action and therefore able to engage in social struggles' (Alanen, 1988: 65). Proponents of the NSSC sought to offset the views of the dominant stream of child researchers by breaking away from those models. In the new perspective, the child is expected to be considered *as a person, a status, a course of action, someone with rights and differences* – a social actor (James et al., 1998). As social actors, there is the need to recognize and appreciate their (children) agency.

Children's agency was described by James and Prout (1997) as the ability to be active in the construction and determination of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and the societies in which they live. So as social actors children ought to be granted the status of participants in the processes that construct worlds that surround them.

Matthews asserts that '...children, as full members of society, have the human right to participate in its activities, according to the levels of ability, understanding and maturity' (2001:9). Other authors see the participation of children and young adults as a relevant and necessary condition for the future of democratic societies. Hart (1992) does not

regard democratic responsibility as something arising suddenly in adulthood. Rather, it is a condition that is nurtured and experienced at different times along a transition, and should therefore be a feature of all democratic education. Hart defined a participation ladder to show various degrees of children's involvement. With eight steps the ladder shows the road towards full participation starting from non-participation (manipulation, decoration, tokenism) and going through assigned but informed, consulted and informed, adult initiated, shared decisions with children, child initiated and directed, and child initiated, shared decisions with adults (Hart, 1992).

The development of research on children's participation has come to fruition because of these critical positions. So to give recognition to children's agency there is the need to conduct studies that ground their agency in social action: the lived world of childhood, their daily lived experiences and understanding, their interactions with adults and among themselves, as well as their strategies and tactics of action.

3.4.3 Resilience and Survival

Resilience highlights the adversities street living children are exposed to and how they adapt and manage to survive in circumstances and environments that are deemed difficult. The resilience perspective therefore is used to understand the mechanisms that respondents in this study used when faced with diverse challenges. Resilience originates from applied physics and engineering and refers to the ability of materials to bounce back from stress to assume the original shape or condition. The term was adopted by the health sciences and later by psychologists in the study of children who had mentally ill mothers. It is used widely in various fields now to understand people's reaction and coping mechanisms when faced with adversity. It is exclusively used when referring to

maintaining positive adjustments under life's challenging conditions; resilience therefore is the manifestation of positive adaptation in spite of significant adversities in life (Boyden, 2003; Boyden & Mann, 2005).

Resilience therefore is generally understood as adapting positively in circumstances where difficulties (personal, familial, or environmental) are extreme such that we would expect a person's cognitive and or functional abilities to be affected or impaired. It is the maintenance of normal functioning despite an interfering emotionality that a child may be going through (Boyden & Cooper, 2007). Generally, responses to adversity are understood in terms of how an individual adapts positively when exposed to risk. Risks here, refers to variables that increase an individual's likelihood of vulnerability to negative development outcomes (Boyden & Mann, 2005). Risks encompass negative situations and or circumstances that are known to be associated with adjustment difficulties. Positive adaptation is defined in terms of behaviourally manifested social competence when faced with developmental stage risks (Boyden, 2003; Boyden & Mann, 2005; Fraser, 2004; McAlpine, 2009).

Management of adversity and healing, are approached differently by various societies depending on their conceptualization of causality in misfortune, wellbeing, power and personhood. The way people experience and are affected by environmental stresses are structured around these notions (Hinton, 2000; Schweder & Bourne, 1982). Building on these notions Boyden (2003) stresses that when conducting research involving children, it is important to note that although their responses may not be the same as adults', it must be understood that their way of responding to harsh conditions, misfortunes or difficulty, must be with reference to the particular social, cultural, and moral contexts

within which they live or find themselves. Although childhood is considered a vulnerable stage, studies indicate the dynamic, interactive nature of child development and highlight children's coping strategies in adverse settings. These challenge the popular assumption that children are helpless in the face of instability and strife. Children are known to possess considerable inner strength as individuals and collectively to cope with challenges that confront them.

3.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework consists of the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs and theories that support and inform a research (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Robson, 2002). A conceptual framework has been defined as a written or visual product, one that “explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied - the key factors, concepts, or variables and the presumed relationships among them (Miles and Huberman, 1994 p.18).

The main objective of this study is to identify and explore the livelihood strategies of street children, the social networks they employ with the intention of gaining further insight into what motivates and sustains their migration (children) to the streets. It also seeks to explore the extent of institutional involvement in the lives of the children.

Factors considered in this thesis are social networking of street children and institutional provisions and interventions. These are shown as part of mediating factors in Figure 2.1. The causal factors of the street child phenomenon are the personal characteristics of the children including their parents.

3.5.1 Framework for Understanding the Street Children Phenomenon

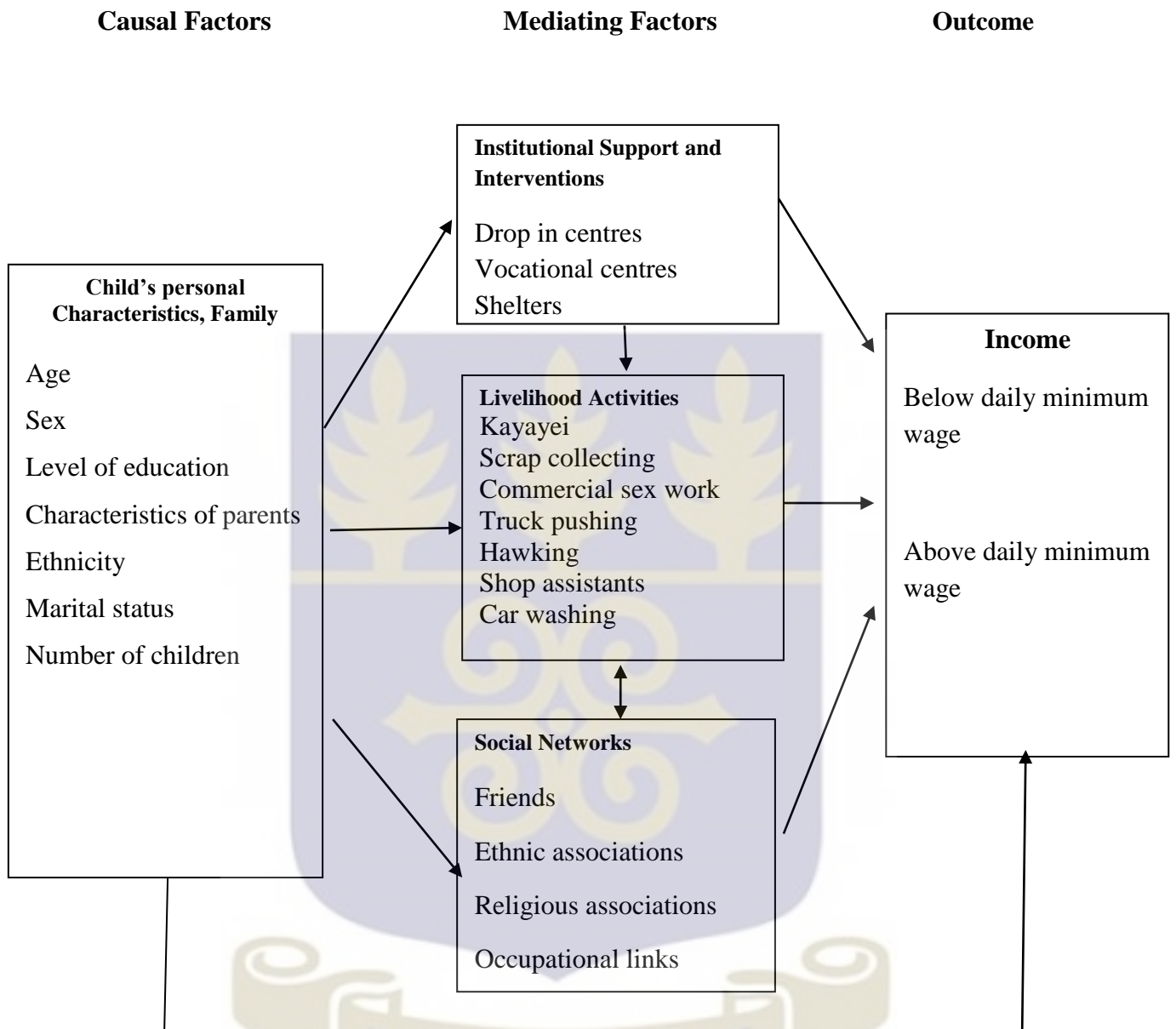
Atterhog's (1996) framework for understanding the street children phenomenon is adapted in this study to examine the relationships between the causal factors, mediating factors, and the outcomes of the strategies employed by children caught in street situations. This framework is directed toward the experiences of the street population and their peculiarities and is thus relevant to this study. Poverty has been identified as a fundamental factor pushing children to the streets. Within the context of poverty, a myriad of factors from various domains of influence in a child's social environment drive them to the streets. These factors may overlap but could be grouped as the 'causal' factors or the push and pull factors (Plummer, 2007). The push is made up of factors directly related to poverty, and at the family level, they manifest themselves as domestic violence, size of the family, orphanhood, divorce, polygamous homes, and sexual abuse. Pull factors attract children who have been pushed to the streets because of poverty, family and other reasons. They include peer pressure and influence and income gained by working on the streets.

In understanding the street children phenomenon the framework shows the complex linkages between societal and or structural factors, the family and the child's own personality/characteristics that facilitate the movement of children to the streets (causal factors). The mediating factors are those that pull or influence the children to stay on or leave the streets. These include institutions responsible for children (NGOs inclusive, Department of Social Welfare), the immediate community made up of relatives, neighbours, schools, churches, etc. as well as the child's own personality.

When the mediating factors are well positioned and active children may have their basic needs of shelter, education and healthcare met thus improving their wellbeing. This will result in the child deciding to leave the street or to continue dwelling in the street. Whether the child leaves or remains in the street is best seen via the outcomes. It may result that the livelihood strategies employed by the children will help enhance their life with increased incomes or their lives may not be enhanced in any way. Whether or not they become resilient as a result of their continual stay on the streets or their lives become worse off are all seen in the outcome window. The behaviours engaged in by children who remain on the street may have resulting problems which could make an already bad situation worse. The children in this study are out to earn incomes so whether or not this need is met can be seen in the outcomes. Will they earn incomes above the daily minimum wage or less than that? The differences in their income levels are expected to affect their wellbeing generally and trickle to their families too. The children's livelihood strategies in this study encompass everything they engage in to survive on the streets. This refers primarily to the economic activities they engaged in and their use of networks they were part of to get job opportunities.



Figure 2.1: Framework for Understanding the Street Child Phenomenon



Source: Author's, adopted from Kaime-Atterhog (1996)

The dependent variable in the livelihood strategies of the street children is income. Income earned is identified as the rationale behind the movement of street living children in Ghana from home to the street. The search for better lives by the children is pre-empted by the desire to earn what they consider as higher income. The higher the income earned, the better your standard of living is expected to be, all things being equal. Income

is further categorized into two, those who earn incomes below the daily minimum wage and those who earn incomes equivalent to or above the daily minimum wage. The daily minimum wage (DMW) was used as a standard to measure the incomes the children earned. This was six (6) Ghana Cedis (\$3) during the data collection. The DMW represents levels that are nationally accepted to be applied to the working class so it is expected that if one earns an income equivalent to the nationally accepted daily wage then that individually is expected to be capable of looking after himself/herself. The independent variables include the livelihood strategies (*kayayei*, scrap collecting, shoe shinning, shop assisting, and truck pushing), the characteristics of the children i.e. age, sex, level of education, origin, religion, marital status, and parental characteristics (living or not, education, occupation, married, separated or divorced).

The causal factors may be understood at three levels: the child's own characteristics, the role of the family (poverty, family turmoil, dysfunctional homes, family changes etc.), the social, economic, and political structures that exist, as well as cultural values. The child's own characteristics may determine the kind of institutional support or provision that is made available to the children. The institutions are both governmental and non-governmental and those identified and used in this study are the Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection, the Department of Social Welfare, Chance for Children and the Catholic Action for Street Children. Social networks also influence the livelihood activities and eventual outcomes of the children. These networks utilized are categorized into friendship, ethnic identification, and religious affiliation, and occupational ties.

The outcome emanating from the children's livelihood strategies is income. Income gained from their livelihood activities may enhance the livelihood of the children. Their

status by virtue of their income could be increased, remain the same, or could be worse than before.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter looked at the theoretical background as well as the conceptual framework of the study. It also explored empirical applications of the theories used especially in relation to children in order to highlight its usefulness.



CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examined the choices and strategies that were employed methodologically paying attention to the challenges and stressors that were encountered during the entire period of the research. It begins with the profile and choice of the study areas in order to gain some understanding of the background issues (education, drainage, economy, education, poverty, health, water, sanitation and vulnerability) prevailing in the metropolis. The nature of a research problem and its accompanying questions in addition to existing knowledge and information justifies and makes appropriate methodology and the selection of research methods acceptable for the study.

The nature of research with children, particularly children living on the streets with regards to their livelihood strategies and social networks suggests the adoption of methods that are sensitive. This is because one will be prying into the hearts and lives of minors' daily activities (commercial sex work, exploitation, abuse). Some factors that deserve careful consideration within such environments include (a) contextual differences between countries of origin and destination (which is interpreted in this study as paying attention to the socio-cultural background of potential respondents and their position on the streets). It also includes critically looking at the study participants outside what other studies from other countries may present, thus regarding them with a lens from their worldview), (b) conceptual problems with the translation of research instruments; (c) sampling difficulties; (d) linguistic problems; (e) observation of etiquette; and (f) personality characteristics of researchers (Pernice, 1994). These served as an important guide in the selection or choice of methods to employ to execute this study. The study made use of both qualitative and quantitative data. The two were used

complementarily as the quantitative data enabled the use of descriptive statistics whilst the qualitative brought to fore the rich understanding and insights into issues that the quantitative data were unable to do.

4.2 Choice of study area

The study took place in Accra, the capital city of Ghana. This is because Accra has the highest estimates of street children in Ghana (Department of Social Welfare, Street Girls' Aid and Catholic Action for Street Children, 2012). Two areas, Tema Station and Agbogbloshie were chosen as the study areas. This is because the selected areas have more child street dwellers than other areas in Accra mainly because of the activities that are undertaken there. Tema Station as the name suggests is a transport terminal so children often get to do odd jobs as well as assist users in a number of ways including carrying loads to and from the nearby Makola market, cleaning, loading trucks, shoe shining, attendants at food joints, selling of various items such as clothing, towels, brushes, etc. Agbogbloshie happens to have a huge market so here children engage themselves in multiple tasks in order to make a living. Some run errands for shop keepers, watch over goods and stalls, push trucks, carry loads for customers etc. These areas are in the central business district of Accra so the children are able to engage in brisk economic activities. The children thus try to carve a niche for themselves out of the varied opportunities they may create for themselves.

4.3 Profile of Study Area

Accra can be located in the Greater Accra Region which is the smallest of the 10 administrative regions in terms of area, occupying a total land surface of 3,245 square kilometres or 1.4 per cent of the total land area of Ghana. In terms of population,

however, it is the second most populated region, after the Ashanti Region, with a population of 4,010,054 in 2010, accounting for 15.4 per cent of Ghana's total population. Accra is Ghana's primate city, serving as the nation's economic and administrative hub. It is furthermore a centre of culture and tourism. The central business district of Accra contains the city's main banks and department stores, the Cocoa Marketing Board headquarters (dealing with cocoa, Ghana's chief export), and an area known as the Ministries, where Ghana's government administration is concentrated. Economic activities in Accra include the financial and agricultural sectors, fishing and the manufacture of processed food, lumber, plywood, textiles, clothing and chemicals. Accra is the most urbanized city in Ghana. The urbanization has been mainly due to development factors. Paramount to these factors has been the urban-biased development strategies adopted by policy makers since the colonial era. Thus, the concentration of industry, manufacturing, commerce, business, culture, education, political and administrative functions since independence till date continue to attract migrants, not only from all over the country but also from neighbouring countries. This has contributed a great deal to urbanization of Accra.

4.3.1 Urban Poverty

In spite of the seemingly economic strengths exhibited by the economy of Accra, there exist a number of challenges which include high unemployment levels of about 10.6%, increasing urban poverty from 4.4% to 10.6% is the major challenge the Metropolis is facing according to the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA, 2010 – 2013). The AMA defines poverty as the segment of the population that verifiably lacks information, power and resources and is usually excluded from development intervention especially women (poor single mothers) and vulnerable groups such as People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), illiterate populace, street children etc) who would always

require particular attention. The poor is defined, by the Assembly, as people who know what they want but cannot have them for lack of either access, or denial of access or lack of economic means because of sex, age, tribe, occupation, income level or social group (GSDSA, 2010 – 2013). Some of their needs may be education, health, employment or representation in public life. Social exclusion refers to people who are persistently deprived of their socio-economic rights. They are eventually excluded from the mainstream of activities of decision-making process and inability to compete. The pockets of poverty in Accra are varied in characteristics some of which are identified as dilapidated structures, poor sanitation, occasional outbreak of diseases and unemployment.

4.3.2 Education

Educational facilities are unevenly distributed within the metropolis. There are currently about 120 Kindergarten Schools, 359 Primary Schools and 428 Junior High schools within the Accra Metropolis. Together these schools hold nearly 170,000 pupils of which about 10,000 are kindergarten pupils (UNICEF, 2012). The Assembly recognizes that Education service delivery goes beyond enrolment and staffing. It also includes infrastructure, extracurricular programmes (sports, theatre arts, arts and craft etc.). Available classroom space is limited so in order not to deny the remaining children their right to education, the Metropolitan Education Directorate had, for many years, been compelled to adopt the Shift System of Basic Education. By this system, a classroom was shared between two classes.

Accra is also home to a number of Senior High Schools (SHS) and tertiary institutions (Universities, Institutes, and Polytechnics both public and private).

4.3.3 Health

There are 3 Government Hospitals, a teaching hospital, 6 Polyclinics, and 10 smaller facilities which are under the Ghana Health Service institutions that provide clinical health service in the Accra Metropolitan area. Four Quasi-Governmental and a host of private health care providers also offer clinical services. Services provided include Out-patient and In-patient, Public Health Services (Reproductive and child health services, Nutrition, Pharmacy, Laboratory and X-ray). Communicable diseases form essentially the major health problem of Accra resulting from poor environmental sanitation, ignorance, and poverty. Malaria has been recorded as the number one disease, accounting for about 95.01 per cent of all the Out-Patient Department (OPD) cases cholera has become endemic since its outbreak in the 1970s with seasonal outbreaks that coincide with the onset of the rainy season (Composite Budget of AMA, 2013).

The prevalent diseases of the metropolitan area include malaria, diarrhoea, pneumonia, and typhoid. The Accra Metro Health area is noted as one of the areas where the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) leading to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) in the country is quite high with a prevalence rate of 2.8 percent. Out of this, 75% are presumably commercial sex workers (GSDSA, 2010-2013). Been complaining about the poor sanitary conditions they are confronted with. High incidence occurs in the poor neighbourhoods (Composite Budget, 2013).

4.3.4 Sanitation

Accra currently has a sewerage system covering only 15 percent of the City, but it is in a complete state of disrepair giving rise to serious environmental pollution and degradation. The Ghana Shared Growth Development Agenda (GSGDA) reports that the concrete sewers are also completely eroded at certain sections of the network. It was laid

about four decades ago so the situation calls for a complete overhaul. There are highly unacceptable infrastructural facilities that result in the spread of diseases due to direct contact with raw human excreta (faeces). There are annual reports of outbreaks of Cholera, Dysentery and Diarrhoea. To solve this problem, the Assembly with the funding from African Development Bank (ADB) and Government of Ghana (GoG), is implementing the Accra Sewerage Improvement Project (GSGDA, 2013).

4.3.5 Vulnerability and Social Exclusion

The Metropolitan Assembly as an institution with the mandate to improve the quality of life of inhabitants within its jurisdiction outlines the issues regarding vulnerability and deems it necessary to address some of these issues through a number of initiatives and interventions. Two important issues concerning vulnerability and social exclusion within the Metropolis that the assembly holds dear has to do with Gender related issues and Street Children.

a. Women and Gender

There has always been the call for the creation of equal opportunities for women as for men. Literacy levels for instance in Accra has been fairly low (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010). Even with such low figures, the ratio of illiterate women to men is much higher with the highest level of education attainment of most women being the primary level. The Greater Accra region has a population of 4,010,054 of which males are 1,938,225 whereas the females are 2,071,829, almost all regions in Ghana have female populations exceeding that of the male population except in the Western Region where they seem to be at par (the Population and Housing Census, 2010).

This is because of the general perception in the past that women do not require much education as that of their male counterparts. Hence, most parents still prefer sending their male children to school to female children. Low educational attainment has negative effects on their employment, financial and social status. They have often times been victims of social and domestic violence and according to the Accra Metropolitan Assembly report, most women and some men also, live in fairly unstable economic conditions and hence live below the national poverty line. This limits their purchasing power and their access to healthcare, as well as other basic social services which affect the general living of the Metropolis and the country as a whole. A lot of these women usually live in the poorer sections of urban areas (GSGDA, 2013).

b. Street Children

The major problem confronting street children in Accra, and any street child for that matter, is the woeful inadequacy of suitable opportunities for proper physical and psychological development. Their survival depends on personal efforts of struggle, which sometimes ends them in illicit activities. They are further exposed to health hazards. However, the greatest danger to guard against is the social alienation of these children, as they could become a threat to public security because of trauma they may encounter on the street. Their plight clearly calls for specialized care so the Assembly through its donor-support programmes hopes to work to solve the problem of street children in Accra. Opportunities to support skills training of street children tailored to build the capacity of these children with employable skills to enable them engage in productive ventures through which they can also obtain their livelihood is expected to be created.

There is an estimated high school dropout rate amongst these children so majority of street children in Ghana can neither read nor write (Boakye Boateng, 2006; Hatloy and Huser, 2003). Some areas of training that have been identified as viable technical and vocational skills in which these children could be trained include but is not limited to auto electrical, auto-mechanics, electricians, masonry, carpentry, driving, sewing, catering, air conditioning, and refrigeration.

4.3.6 Slums, Illegal Settlements and Unauthorized Structures

Urbanization in Accra is estimated at an annual rate of about 4.2 percent increase and is still increasing with a heavy rural – urban drift due to the comparative advantages of the Metropolis. This phenomenon has resulted in the spring up of slums and haphazardly unplanned, illegal development of settlements due to the gross inadequacy of low-income housing and accompanying infrastructure for the increasing population. The AMA reports that this has led to the many slums that are currently present in the city. There are about twenty-nine (29) slum communities in Accra alongside some illegal settlements. In addition to this challenge, there are a growing number of unauthorized structures throughout the Metropolis. In Accra physical development according to the UN – Habitat (2012) runs faster than planning. This is because there are more areas, especially peripheral areas that are unplanned or where landowners choose to carry out inadequately planned activities. The weak statutory land use planning has created an avenue for some individuals to cash in for their housing needs. It is estimated that the alternative process houses about 58 percent of the population of Accra. To address some of these challenges, the Assembly sometimes undertakes demolition exercises to eliminate or reduce these unauthorized structures especially those on water ways (GSGDA, 2013).

Agbogbloshie is one of the illegal settlements of Accra. It is located on the left bank of the Odaw River in the upper reaches of the Korle Lagoon in Accra. This settlement was formed in the early 1990's and is home to more than 30, 000 people (The Center on Housing Rights and Evictions, 2004). Government has made efforts to evict occupants of Agbogbloshie but has been unable to carry this out. Government has three main issues regarding the use of Agbogbloshie as a dwelling place.

1. Illegal Occupation – the informal communities springing up results in serious overcrowding and the prevalence of insanitary conditions. Agbogbloshie is reported to have grown considerably when Ghanaians escaping from ethnic conflicts in the Northern region settled there in 1995. The community developed gradually along with its own market opportunities and over time people who sought to escape the increasing poverty and rising rents enlarged the community further.

2. Physical Location – the community has been identified as the primary source of pollution of the Korle Lagoon, and the continual stay or human activity will lead to the failure of the restoration project (The Korle Lagoon Environmental Restoration Project). KLERPs assessment of the community's drainage systems, water supply, housing and existing sanitary conditions confirmed that a major contributor to the Lagoon's pollution load is Agbogbloshie and the waste from the community is highly visible.

3. Health Considerations – when settlements are informal and/or illegal, they usually breed poor environmental health conditions. The health challenges of such a community will be huge and when the rains set in and mosquitoes start to breed, malaria becomes the order of the day. When sanitary conditions are also not checked as seen at Agbogbloshie, cholera also gets a huge chunk of the population as people defecate indiscriminately while others cook in the same environment (COHRE, 2004).

It is also home to one of the world's largest e-waste dumping site. When the processing emits toxic chemicals into the atmosphere (air, land and water), it is extremely hazardous to children as toxins are known to retard the development of their reproductive system, the nervous system and the brain. Both the young and the old engage in this activity without any safety equipment or protective gear. All these affect the growth and development of individuals and by extension the nation as a whole (Safo, 2011; Dogbevi, 2011).

4.4 Research Design

4.4.1 Research Design

This study sought to explore in detail the livelihood strategies of street children in Accra paying particular attention to the social networks they utilize and the institutional support they receive. Methods that have been employed in other studies with street children have been both qualitative (Apt & Grieco, 1997; Beauchemin, 1999; Boakye Boateng, 2008; Mizen & Kusi, 2010; Orme & Seipel, 2007) and quantitative (Adeyemi & Oluwaseun, 2012; Apt Van Ham et al., 1992; Hatloy & Huser; Ugochukwu et al., 2012). Qualitative methods however have in recent times gained extensive grounds in research on children. The study employed a multi method design in triangulation making use of convenience sampling approaches. This involved the use of two or more methodological approaches in exploring the same phenomenon with the aim of increasing the credibility and validity of a study (Hussein, 2009). Triangulation has been broadly defined by Denzin (1978, p.291) as "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon."

A survey questionnaire was administered to the street-child respondents to obtain information covering their livelihood strategies, social networks, problems encountered as well as their knowledge on institutions and aspirations. Two interview guides were

also generated and used to take information from interview participants and these were in two groups. The first group had participants made up of street children and the second group encompassed staff of institutions that are responsible for children who are profiled in this study.

Interviews were conducted with staff of four institutions (previously five as the Department of Social Welfare has recently been merged with the Ministry for Gender Children and Social Protection). Two members of staff from the Department of Social Welfare's (DSW) desk on Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) were interviewed (specifically two officers in charge of street children were interviewed). Two interviews were granted at the Catholic Action for Street Children by the Director and one field worker. At Chance for Children, the Deputy Director and a Social Worker were interviewed and at the Department of Children at the Gender Ministry two personnel at the Advocacy Unit were permitted to be interviewed. The Street Academy's Director and the Administrative head were interviewed. Here the aim primarily was to ascertain the relationship that exists between the children on the street and those who have been mandated or taken upon themselves the responsibility of caring for these children. It was also to enquire and outline the measures that have been put in place as support for the children (successes and failures), and what policies they had in place for their future.

Focus group discussions were employed to take data on the children's health experiences, as well as occupational hazards and the problems they encounter during their daily activities. Participants of the focus group discussion were street living children recruited from Tema Station and Agbogbloshie. This was to encourage them to discuss in detail issues pertaining to the above mentioned which ordinarily may not be

discussed but may be acknowledged and confirmed by some or all if mentioned by one person.

Considering that the focus of this study involved and included personal discussions, conversations and interactions with respondents, and other stakeholders, one of the methods employed is the qualitative approach. Qualitative approaches enables researchers to examine into detail the personal and daily activities of individuals require spending a lot more time with respondents in order to understand how they organize themselves to go about their daily activities. This method creates avenues for accessing information from private groups and aids one to establish a trustworthy working relationship with them (Lawson, 2000). Qualitative research gives a subjective understanding of knowledge; here the goal is to gain an in-depth understanding of themes. It also enables the world to be viewed in an ever-changing arena through the intersection of cultural, economic and social processes (Limb & Dwyer, 2001). Studies that give stronger consideration to the feelings, experiences, beliefs, and attitudes that individuals may have are appropriately addressed using qualitative research methods (Gatrell, 2002), and has the added merit of discovering issues and concerns that are not expected or taken for granted. The decision to use qualitative methods is also influenced by the fact that similar studies that have been undertaken on street children and their activities also employed this method. Bender et al. (2007), in exploring the strengths of the homeless in street situations and their capacity for survival used qualitative data from seven focus groups conducted and analysed using content analysis. These data, rich with interactions highlighted three important themes; developing street smarts, existence of personal strengths and the informal resources they relied upon. Mizen and Ofosu-Kusi (2010) also explored friendship among Accra's street children. They sought to obtain their views, feelings and reflections by relying on a combination of chance encounters

and informal conversation, participant observation, loosely structured interviews and group discussions, and, for others, they explored in considerable detail their movements, thoughts and reflections over time. These studies give credence to the importance of qualitative techniques in understanding phenomena.

Quantitative Methods was used to support and complement the qualitative data taken. Quantitative research explains phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods (Aliaga & Gunderson, 2000). The strength possessed by quantitative research is that it is known to produce quantifiable and reliable data that one can generalize to larger populations. This is in contrast to qualitative research which is largely exploratory (Anderson & Taylor, 2009). Mixed methods research focuses on collecting, analysing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its premise centrally, is that using qualitative and quantitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone (Cresswell, 2006 p.5).

4.5 Target Population and Sampling Approach

4.5.1 Selecting study population and participants

The target population for the study was street living children (Independent Child Migrants/children of the street) in Accra. The choice of using children of the street instead of children on the street is because studies over the years have not particularly focused on them. A lot of emphasis and attention has been given to all the children in most studies. The categories the children fall within are not usually differentiated. Children of the street refers to children who live on the street independently without adult supervision whereas children on the street are those who work and engage in activities on

the street during the day but go home at night to family, relations or guardians. These categories are not clearly spelt out in most studies on street children in Ghana. Researchers usually look at street children in totality and not in terms of their categories.

4.5.2 Sample Size

The total sample size for the study was 332. Of these 275 were survey respondents, 24 were focus group participants (three focus groups of 8 participants each), and 33 in-depth interviews (25 street children, and 8 staff of institutions). A summary of the respondents can be seen in Table 4.1 (page 98).

4.5.3 Community Entry and Field Activities

To identify the category required, several visits were made to the study areas on different days and at all hours prior to embarking on data collection to ascertain those who were actually living on the streets independently and those who went home after their daily activities. Respondents were drawn from Tema station and Agbobloshie. Children were drawn or sampled from these areas because they are hot spots for street children who fall within the target group. At Tema station, the bus terminal was visited very early in the morning, during the day and at night. This is because there are some children who work there during the day but go home at night and this category form part of the exclusion criteria. The same applied to the children at Agbobloshie as some of the children have families they go home to at night and care had to be taken not to include these children in the study. During these trips, efforts were also made to identify ‘supposed’ caretakers as well as key informants.

At Tema Station, the identified care takers were approached by the researcher and introductions about purpose and mission of the researcher appropriately made. Being on

their premises severally, it was possible to acknowledge that there was a regular group who were constantly at the station, most especially, at night. Enquiries made after meeting the caretakers confirmed this and they were able to identify from the lot those who fell within the target group required for the study. Although there were old, middle aged, young adults and children, the researcher was interested in respondents who were up to seventeen years of age and not older.

The caretakers who also served as key informants were engaged to help in the recruitment and organization of respondents for the data collection sessions. Because they were made to understand the purpose of the study and the relevance of the category required, they helped to arrange meetings with the children on three different occasions alongside the regular visits to the bus terminal at Tema Station and at Agbogbloshie. This was to make the researcher less visible to the respondents as the expectation for the data taking session was to blend in with respondents in order to feel part of the group and not appear as an outsider.

The first two meetings with the children was an introductory one and created the opportunity to explain what was required of the children and what roles they had to play. Each individual could be engaged only once. If one is recruited for the survey then she would not be recruited for the interviews and or the focus group discussion. This was because the researcher sought to cover as many children as possible and to restrict repetitions as some of the children may be acquainted with aspects of the study as some questions may be repeated. In this case, if one has not participated in any session then it will be with a virgin mind and so responses will not be influenced by previous interactions. The third meeting was deemed necessary to introduce the children to research assistants who had been recruited for data collection. This gave them the chance

to interact with prospective respondents before embarking on the data collection exercise and to get themselves prepared for the session.

At Agbogbloshie, the key informant identified was a field worker from CAS and an elderly woman whom most children visited at different times during the day as she sold items they patronized. Here two meetings were organized because the researcher had met some of the children during previous visits and attempts at familiarization. The first meeting was organized with the help of key informants to interact with the children and to sensitize them about the study after they had been given all the information concerning the study and the category of children required.

The first meeting was successful and a second one was arranged as was done at Tema Station, to introduce the respondents to the research assistants. This greatly enhanced the data collection as research assistants did not have a difficult time introducing themselves to the children they met.

4.5.4 Sampling Scheme and Procedures

Sampling methods employed were convenience, purposive, and snowball. Convenience sampling is a procedure that involves drawing samples that are easily accessible as well as participants who are willing to partake in a study (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). The street children are a mobile population so convenience sampling was appropriate to use. Respondents were purposively sampled to avoid recruiting respondents who fell outside the study requirements. Purposive sampling as described by Brink (1996, p.141) involves the selection of research participants who are knowledgeable about the phenomenon being investigated because of their involvement in or with the phenomenon and the experience that has been acquired regarding the phenomenon. In effect, street living

people who were 18 years and above were excluded from the study. Children under age five were also excluded from the study because they were dependent street dwellers.

Snowball sampling may be described as a technique for reaching respondents through the identification of an initial subject who serves as a link to provide or reach other subjects. These actors themselves may present opportunities for a wider network of contact and inquiry (Atkinson & Flint, 2004). Snowball sampling is relevant for studying concealed populations and was most useful when it became necessary to identify commercial sex workers. The researcher was led by others to the abode of children engaged in commercial sex work.

4.5.5 Data Collection Methods

Observation and Conversations

Participant observation is a research technique in which a researcher participates actively in the lives and activities of the research community by living within the host community for a period in order to experience first-hand everything that goes on in that community be it covertly or overtly. This also involves researchers' ability to understand the experiences of people within the context of their daily life and activities (Valentine, 2001).

Observation and conversations played an important role in this research. Through casual conversations, the children were able to divulge a lot of the experiences they had encountered. It was also possible to observe the children go about their daily activities and at their leisure time as they engaged in other activities like braiding of hair.

One remarkable observation was how comfortable the children were with the research team (both Tema Station and Agbogbloshie). Prior to the field work, based on what had been read and discussed at various platforms, a difficult session was envisaged on the field, as the assumption was that these were aggressive children by virtue of their circumstances and experiences. Contrary to these fears, they were very nice and not aggressive as one would ordinarily expect and this was very remarkable. It was not easy taking data from this population because they move around a lot but it could have been worse if they were hostile. The team was not seen as outsiders as children were always welcoming and willing participants each time they were visited. The Research team was thus made an acceptable part of their lives throughout the data collection period. These interactions opened up opportunities to observe behaviours and various activities in their own environment, thus gaining a broader understanding of this population of children.

In-depth Interviewing

In-depth interviews covering several aspects of the lives of respondents was conducted with special interest in their social networks, management of their experiences on the streets and their future aspirations and expected livelihood outcomes. Interviews have been conceptualized as communication events in which interviewers and respondents are engaged in active interaction and exchange of information through various channels of communication and codes (Yeung, 1996: 322). Interviewing qualitatively is a process whereby researchers engage participants discursively to attain inter-subjective knowledge (Winchester, 1996). Advantages that are gained via interviewing include its ability to embrace various topics since unanticipated leads emerge from peoples' experiences rather than from preconceived sessions/ideas. Interviews are also considered crucial in the development of new models and theories (Mattingly, 2001).

The aim of the in-depth interviews was to capture how the respondents view their world, to learn terminologies and judgments, and to capture the complexities of their individual perceptions and experiences (Patton, 2002; p.348) regarding the street children phenomenon.

Focus Group Discussions

Three Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) of 8 participants (street children) each were conducted in the study areas (Agbogbloshie and Tema Station) using sex and age grouping. Focus group respondents were all children aged 17 years and below. Two focus groups were conducted at Tema Station (younger girls, and child mothers) and one at Agbogbloshie (with the boys). This is because Tema Station was home to only females. The younger girls were aged 10 to fourteen years, the child mothers were fifteen to seventeen years of age, while the boys were between thirteen and seventeen years. The focus group discussion sought to find out and discuss issues pertaining to their health and the occupational hazards and difficulties that they encountered. The discussion included their experiences on the street and encouraged suggestions for alternative livelihood approaches. This approach was adopted in order to delve deeper into these issues and to derive in-depth understanding of the issues they encountered as a group as compared to their individual selves which the in-depth interviews could have settled.

Focus groups are important because the group process helps people to explore and to clarify their views in ways that would not be easily accessible in a one on one interview. Group discussions are appropriate when the interviewer has a series of open ended questions and desires to encourage participants to explore issues of importance to them in their own vocabulary, generating their own questions and pursuing their own priorities

(Kitzinger, 1995 p. 229). Focus groups also draw out human tendencies such as attitudes, and or perceptions with regards to a phenomenon, concepts or products (Krueger, 1994).

Questionnaire Survey

Prior to the survey, the questionnaire was piloted to check for accuracy and to limit errors and inconsistencies. The pilot was conducted with street children at Kaneshie after which it was applied to the study areas. A pilot is a small-scale test of the methods and procedures to be used on a larger scale (Porta, 2008). Questionnaires administered to the street living population were 300 but only 275 were valid, 12 of the questionnaires were not completed and 13 couldn't be accounted for.

4.5.6 Description of Study Variables

Dependent variable

The dependent variable is income. This is assessed based on the daily minimum wage which was six cedis during the data collection period. Data were analysed drawing on the income earned by the street children compiled from several questions used in answering “the livelihood activities they engage in?” This is measured by using a range of questions labelled A to E.

Independent variables

This comprised those related to the personal characteristics of street children, the social networks of street children, the problems street children encounter, as well as institutional interventions and the target of these interventions.

Personal characteristics of street children

The independent variables on the personal characteristics of the children included age (this was described in completed years), sex, level of education, ethnicity, religion, marital status, whether parents were alive or not.

Livelihood strategies

The following questions were asked to help in identifying the strategies employed by the children; how long they had been on the streets, what brought them to the streets, where they sleep at night and how they found their sleeping place. What activities they engage in, why that particular activity, whether they engage in any other economic activities. Their expenditure on food, water, and clothing, as to whether they remit cash to anyone and their source of entertainment were sought.

Social networks

Concerning their social networks the children were asked whether they belonged to any group, what kind of group it was, whether they knew the group prior to moving to the streets or after, and how they joined the group. Whether they got any support from their groups and what kind of support, activities they engage in as a group, whether they maintain ties with their families. Finally, whether they had some form of assistance on the streets, benefits they derived from their friendship associations, whether they missed home and what they missed most

Problems encountered

To ascertain problems the children encountered they were asked whether they faced any problems in their chosen economic activities, what kind of problems these were and the regularity of occurrence, whether they faced problems outside chosen activities and what

these were. Also, whether they had any problems with the police and levy collectors, whether bad habits were acquired on the streets and what some of these were, why people engaged in these activities/habits.

Health and health seeking behaviour

This was addressed by asking respondents if they had any health problems, what the most common and persisting ailments were, what they do when unwell, their health insurance status, and whether they got assistance from anyone when sick or unwell.

Institutional interventions/Provisions

To measure the level of interventions the children were asked whether they knew of any institutions that were responsible for children, whether they had been supported by any before in any way, whether they had been engaged at any level by any of the institutions before and what it entailed. How useful they found their engagement with institutions, and the regularity of their engagements if any.

Summary of Methods

Collection of data was in four phases:

First Phase – Community entry and recruitment. This is where the researcher observed the respondents at work and any other activities they were engaged in. The research team joined some of the children to braid hair as they sometimes do on Sundays. Here field notes and taking of photographs were the most useful tools used. This is a good way of acquiring new insights on subjects of enquiry (Merriam, 2002).

Second Phase – Involved individual in-depth interviews with 25 street children and 8 interviews with key people in the four institutions profiled in chapter three. There were two interviews in each institution.

Third Phase – Focus group discussions took the next stage after observation and recruitment of participants.

Fourth Phase – the final stage to conclude the data collection was the questionnaire survey.

All interviews and focus group discussions were recorded and transcribed fully. The main instrument employed in the survey to take quantitative data was the questionnaire which was administered to the street children.

Secondary data from scientific journals, books and other published academic materials relevant to the study were also reviewed. Information garnered from these sources led the researcher to review already existing studies, the various methods employed over the years as well as findings and limitations.

Research Assistants

The student researcher served as the principal investigator who coordinated and managed all activities relating to the study. Those who were recruited to assist in the data collection exercise were given careful consideration to recruit individuals who have been exposed to collecting data before. All research assistants were graduates of tertiary institutions who had previous experience in interviewing and documenting sessions. Another criteria given consideration was language. This was difficult to achieve because it was discovered that most of the members of the study population were migrants from the Northern part of Ghana. However, the most common language spoken by most

people in Ghana ‘the Twi Language’ was used as a qualifying mark because most of the children were likely to speak some Twi. Four assistants were recruited for the data collection exercise and a two-day training session was organized for all involved to get familiar with the instruments. The training session entailed training on rapport building, translation of survey questionnaire questions into the local language, note taking, taking of photographs, seeking consent of each participant and the voluntary participation of respondents and avoiding the use of force.

Challenges and Limitations

The researcher encountered some challenges on the field. The main challenge encountered had to do with language. The children did not all understand the English Language so it was a major hurdle. The widely spoken Twi language was also not understood fully by all the children so two interpreters had to be arranged before the study could take off smoothly.

Secondly, there were some disruptions because of their living areas. One could not arrange to meet them elsewhere in more comfortable and less disruptive environments. Besides the noisy environment, there were disruptions from some older women (who were also street dwellers) some of whom felt that the children were being exploited and being exposed unnecessarily. They opined that the pictures and information being given would be used to access funds outside Ghana as perhaps they had been informed was the usual practice. The researcher understood that they were not aware of the study as they are many in number so perhaps were not around throughout the pilot study prior to the commencement of the study. The opportunity was seized to explain to them that the study was purely an academic exercise and not an enrichment activity, as they seemed to think.

The third challenge faced was financial. It was a huge task financially. The children were given some amounts of money ranging from GH¢2 (\$1) to GH¢5 (\$2.5) depending on the kind of information and the time spent. Sometimes there was no payment at all as that bridge had already been crossed with some respondents. This served as compensation package for intruding in their lives and activities and taking part of their time. The survey and focus group participants received GH¢ 2 (\$1) each while the in-depth interview participants were given GH¢5 (\$2.5). The key informants (Chairman, Secretary, and Mma) received GH¢10 (\$5) on occasions when their services were engaged for long. The interpreters were paid GH¢15 (\$7.5) for each day's service except on days their services were not required.

Besides these, certain items were purchased for the children. These included mats, bed sheets, towels, mosquito repellents, some biscuits and drinks. These were also needs identified and given as a way of reaching out to them and meeting some of their needs in compensation for the time they took off their activities to engage with the researcher. These were given after concluding the data collection exercise. It was not enough and not required but this was to compensate them for being willing participants.

Limitations encountered include the possible interactions that might have taken place amongst the children. This could have influenced their responses because not all the interviews were done in a day. Another limitation was the sample size which was less than an acceptable number of 600 and the use of the DMW especially in the model which caused some children to be dropped from the model because they had income fixed at the daily minimum wage and above thus showing no variation in the model.

There might have been some variation if individual incomes earned were used instead of grouping incomes earned using the Daily Minimum Wage (DMW).

4.6 Analysis of data

All the interviews conducted and Focus Group Discussions were recorded and transcribed to aid in the analysis. Where the language used is not English it was transcribed in the original language and translated into English. The analysis was done using the content as well as the constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) of qualitative data analysis. This method enables quotations from transcripts that exemplified common concepts and themes. As additional quotations are added, they are compared to similar quotations in the transcripts. This comparison process enhances consistency and expands the comprehensiveness of each code. The codes are later combined using broader (common) themes developed around livelihood strategies, social networking, problems encountered, institutional provisions and institutional responses. Descriptive statistics were used in the analysis of quantitative data obtained from the survey. The descriptive statistics covered key socio-economic variables for the respondents. The means were calculated for continuous variables such as age, income, number of children, savings, medical expenditure etc. For categorical variables which included education, ethnic origin, marital status, sex, push factors leading to the street situation percentages were calculated.

Cross tabulations and chi square tests were employed in the analysis of the quantitative data. Cross tabulations analysis, also known as contingency table analyses are often used to analyse categorical data. A cross tabulation is a two (or more) dimensional table that records the number (frequency) of respondents that have the specific characteristics described in the cells of the table thus providing a wealth of information about the

relationship between two or more variables. Chi-Square test was used to test for the statistical associations between the dependent variable (income) and selected independent variables outlined under socio-demographic variables including age, educational level, religion, and occupation. This was also done with their economic activities and income as well as for their social networks and income levels.

Chi-square is a statistical test commonly used to compare observed data with expected data according to a specific hypothesis (Mann, 1995). Chi-square is performed on categorical data and as such, the relationships between the independent variables that are likely, to have a relationship with the dependent variable were tested.

Fisher's exact tests were employed where chi square tests were violated. Fisher's exact test is a statistical significance test which is employed when sample sizes are small. It is however valid for all sample sizes. It is one of a class of exact tests, so called because it can be calculated exactly, rather than relying on an approximation. Fisher's exact test is more accurate than the chi-squared test or G-test of independence when the expected numbers are small. A chi-squared test approximation is inadequate when sample sizes are small, or the data are very unequally distributed among the cells of the table, resulting in the cell counts predicted being low. The usual rule of thumb for deciding whether the chi-squared approximation is good enough is that the chi-squared test is not suitable when the expected values in any of the cells of a table are below 5 or below 10 when there is only one degree of freedom (Kinley, 1978). In fact, for small, sparse, or unbalanced data, the exact and asymptotic p -values can be quite different and may lead to opposite conclusions (Mehta et. al., 1984; Mehta, 1995). In contrast the Fisher exact test is, as its name states, exact as long as the experimental procedure keeps the row and column totals fixed, and it can therefore be used regardless of the sample characteristics.

Binary Logistic Regression

Two binary logistic regression models containing variables of interest were fitted for the outcome variable (income). Model 1 was used to assess the association between the economic activities of the street children and income earned. Income is viewed based on whether respondents earned incomes below, equivalent to, or above the daily minimum wage. The minimum wage used was 6 Ghana Cedis (\$3). Model 2 included characteristics of the children such as age, sex, level of education as well as institutional support, reasons for coming to the street and cash remittances. Model 2 was used to assess the extent to which other characteristics could influence the results obtained in model 1.

The binary-logistic regression analyses results are presented as odds ratios (OR) with confidence intervals (CI) set at 95%. Significance levels (P-values) were set at five percent. The quantitative data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 20.

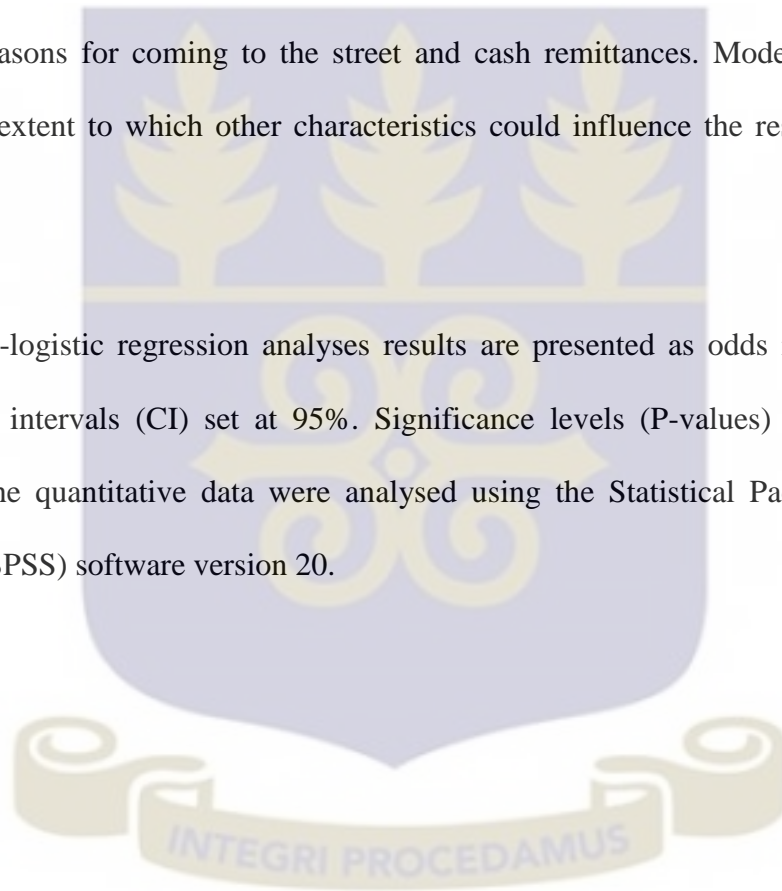


Table 4.1: Summary of Sampling Procedure

Data collection method	Number of respondents	Age categories
Focus Group Discussion	24	
Younger girls	8	10 – 14
Child mothers	8	15 – 17
Boys	8	13 – 17
Interviews	33	
Street children	25	10 – 17
Girls	10	10 - 17
Boys	10	10 - 17
Child mothers	5	15 – 17
Institutional staff	8	
MGCSP	2	
CAS	2	
CFS	2	
Street Academy	2	
Survey	275	
Boys	94	
Girls	181	
**Tema Station	114	
***Agboghloshie	67	

*Agboghloshie **Study area 1 ***Study area 2



CHAPTER FIVE

LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES OF STREET CHILDREN

5.1 Introduction

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. Estimates suggest that between 2005 and 2015, 250-310 million people would become urban residents resulting from migration (UNFPA, 2007). Much of these movements are likely to be made by children either voluntarily, being displaced by conflicts, natural disasters or perhaps independently (Bell, 2008). Children caught in any of these positions are bound to engage in some activity, whether legal or not as a means to survive from the harsh realities of life. Some of the children end up on city streets where they carve a niche for themselves as child street dwellers. This chapter focuses on responding to the research question “what livelihood strategies do children of the street employ?” In Ghana street children engage in several activities some of which are hawking water or food items, selling various items, ‘*kayayei*’ (head portering), scrap collecting, working as cooks in ‘*chop bars*’ (local restaurants) or help others to sell food, washing dishes and others engaging in commercial sex work.

Before looking at the various strategies the children employ in order to make a living in detail, it is instructive to discuss the characteristics of the street children. So the children’s background was delved into to ascertain their educational level, their ethnic origin, marital status and their age in completed years. This helped to understand why they chose any particular activity and the circumstances surrounding their departure from their homes or families to reside on the streets of Accra.

5.2 Personal Characteristics of Respondents

The survey results on personal characteristics, livelihood strategies, social networks and institutional knowledge and interventions are first presented before looking at the fine details that were obtained from interviews, conversations and observation. These results are presented in Tables 5.1 and 5.2.

The survey covered a total sample of 275 out of which 65.8 percent were females while 34.2 percent were males. The literature on street children reports that there are more male street dwellers than females in most countries (Pilloti and Rizzini, 1994; Zuberi, 2005) but in Ghana, there are more female street children than male street children (Opare, 2003; Oberhauser & Yeboah, 2011). Male domination of street spaces has been explained in various ways that the females find other avenues to cope since they are often times needed in their homes to do chores and cater for their siblings (Abdelgalil et al. 2004; Aptekar, 1994; 2004; Rizzini et al., 1994; Scanlon, 1998) compared to the males. The circumstances or events compelling male children to choose a life on the streets instead of staying at home are therefore not the same as what female children encounter hence the difference in numbers. Fayola and Salm (2002) argued that although there are no legal barriers to girl child education, domestic responsibilities increasingly cause females to drop out of school. Girls in Ghana also perform similar chores as described in other countries yet still the female population of street children exceeds that of males. This is discussed in detail later in the study.

Table 5.1 shows the sex, age, education, religion, and ethnic origin of study respondents.

Table 5.1: Personal Characteristics of Respondents

	Percentage
Sex	
Males	34.2
Females	65.8
Total	100
Age	
10 years or less	10.6
11 – 13	15.6
14 – 16	48.0
17	25.8
Total	100
Religious Affiliation	
Christian	56.0
Moslem	42.9
Other	1.1
Total	100
Educational level	
Primary incomplete	29.8
Primary complete	9.1
JHS incomplete	18.2
JHS complete	20.4
SHS incomplete	2.2
SHS complete	2.5
Vocational incomplete	0.4
No education	17.5
Total	100
Origin	
Northern Region	70.9
Upper East	4.0
Upper West	2.5
Ashanti	4.7
Greater Accra	5.8
Central	3.3
Western	1.8
Brong Ahafo	0.4
Volta	5.8
Eastern	0.7
Total	100

Source: Survey Data (2013)

The ages of research participants ranged from 5 to 17. Children between the ages of 14 to 16 constituted the majority, 48 percent of the respondents belonged to this age category as shown on Table 5.1.

Most of the respondents had ever gone to school, as only 17.5 percent had never been to school before. Of those who had been to school, the majority are those who did not complete their primary education. About 20 percent completed Junior High School (JHS) while about 2.5 percent had completed their Senior High School (SHS) education (Table 5.1). One of the reasons given by the children for their inability to complete school was the inability of parents to pay for their school fees. Most of them stated that, their fathers did not have money to take them to school while those who happened to have been to school dropped out of school due to the parent's inability to sustain their stay in school. These give credence to Opare's study outcome, that there is a high rate of migration of teenagers who have never been to school as well as those who have limited schooling thus making it easy for them to launch into leading market centres in southern Ghana (Opare, 2003).

Regarding their region of origin, majority of respondents sampled hailed from the Northern Region of Ghana. About 71 percent of the respondents come from the Northern Region while the remaining 29 percent reported to be from the other regions. This could be as a result of the study areas (Tema Station and Agbogbloshie) harbouring particular groups as usually individuals tend to want to dwell amongst those they felt comfortable with. So the results are consistent with the fact that Tema Station and Agbogbloshie are heavily populated by migrants from the Northern Region of Ghana.

Respondents' characteristics were cross tabulated and the outcome is seen in Table 5.2. In the table, educational level ($p < 0.009$) and origin of respondents ($p < 0.000$) were statistically significant. Children aged between 14 and 17 years formed the majority among both male (76.6%) and female (83.4%) street children. There were however some differences in the educational level of respondents. About 51% of male children had primary education while 32.6% of the females had primary education. On the other hand, 47% of females attended Junior High School against 37.2% of males. Overall, 20% of females had no education whereas only 11.7% of males had no education. There was however no significant association between age and sex of the respondents.

In summary, results indicated a statistically significant relationship between sex and educational levels, and sex and the geographical origin of the street children. Children with no education moved to the streets in lower numbers than those with primary education and above. With regards to geographical origin, children from the Northern parts of Ghana moved to the streets in higher numbers than those from the other regions.

Table 5.2: Age, educational level, and origin, by sex

	Sex						Chi-square	P-Value
	Males		Females		Total			
Age	(N=94)	Percentage	(N=181)	Percentage	(N=275)	Percentage	1.882	.170
13 and below	22	23.4%	30	16.6%	52	18.9%		
14 - 17	72	76.6%	151	83.4%	223	81.1%		
Educational Level	(N=94)	%	(N=181)	%	(N=275)	%	9.472	.009* **
JHS & above	35	37.2%	85	47.0%	120	43.6%		
No education	11	11.7%	37	20.4%	48	17.5%		
Primary	48	51.1%	59	32.6%	107	38.9%		
Origin	(N=94)	%	(N=181)	%	(N=275)	%	41.627	.000* ***
Northern	53	56.4%	163	90.1%	216	78.5%		
Other	41	43.6%	18	9.9%	59	21.5%		

* $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$

Source: survey data (2013)

To ascertain the characteristics of the children that were more likely to be earning incomes equivalent to the daily minimum wage and above, and those earning below the minimum wage, some variables that were considered relevant were tested for association with their income status using cross tabulation and chi-square (Table 5.3). The variables used were age, sex, educational level, religion and marital status to find out which of these predisposed them to earn incomes equivalent to the daily minimum wage (DMW) and above, or below the daily minimum wage.

Sex and Income

In Table 5.3, it is observed that among the male respondents, almost 95 percent had incomes equal to, or above the daily minimum wage whereas 5.3 percent earned below the minimum wage.

Table 5.3: Characteristics of children and income earned

	Income		Total	Chi-Square	P-Value
	Below DMW	DMW and above			
Sex	(N=49)	(N=226)	(N=275)	15.273	0.001
Male	5.3%	94.7%	94		
Female	24.3%	75.7%	181		
Age	(N=49)	(N=226)	(N=275)	5.661	0.129
10years or less	33.3%	66.7%	9		
11-13	7.0%	93.0%	43		
14-16	20.4%	79.6%	152		
17 years	16.9%	83.1%	71		
Level of education	(N=49)	(N=226)	(N=275)	0.836	0.361
Low (below JHS)	16.6%	83.4%	205		
High (JHS & above)	21.4%	78.6%	70		
Religion	(N=49)	(N=226)	(N=275)	6.785	0.034
Moslem	24.6%	75.4%	118		
Christian	13.0%	87.0%	154		
Other	0.0%	100.0%	3		
Marital Status	(N=49)	(N=226)	(N=275)	1.104	0.293
Currently not in union	18.1%	81.9%	270		
Currently in Union	0.0%	100.0%	5		

*P≤0.05; **p≤0.01; ***p≤0.001

Source: Survey data (2013)

Among the females, about 76 percent earned above the daily minimum wage while a little less than a quarter had incomes that fell below the minimum wage. There is also a statistically significant variation in income earned by sex of the respondents.

The ages of respondents were also aligned to their income and those who earned below, up to, and above the minimum wages were identified. The daily minimum wage used here was 6 Ghana Cedis (\$3). Those who earned above the minimum wage were 79.6 percent. Respondents who were 17 years had 83 percent earning incomes above the daily minimum wage. The 11 – 13 year old age category had 93 percent above the minimum wage and those 10 years and below had about 67 percent of the respondents earning above the minimum wage. Age therefore has no statistically significant influence on the income earned by the street children as irrespective of the age categories most of the respondents earned above the daily minimum wage.

Regarding their level of education, respondents were grouped into two based on whether their level of education is high or low. High education referred to those who attained Junior High School (JHS) level and beyond while the low education referred to those below JHS. Amongst those with low education, 83.4 percent earned something up to or above the daily minimum wage. This was also seen among those with higher education as a majority of them (78.6 %) earned above the minimum wage. There was thus no statistically significant association between one's level of education and the income that was earned.

Religion was also explored and it was revealed that 75.4% of street children who were Moslems earned above the daily minimum wage while 87 % of Christians also earned above the daily minimum wage (DMW). Respondents who were not in any union

numbered 270 and of these 82 percent earned above the DMW. Those in unions were five in number and they all earned above the DMW.

The results thus revealed that there is a statistically significant association between sex ($p < 0.001$), religion ($p < 0.023$), and income earned whereas there was no statistically significant association between age ($p < 0.129$), level of education, ($p < 0.361$), marital status ($p < 0.293$), and income earned by children.

5.3 Livelihood Strategies

The history of respondent's livelihood strategies was traced from their entry point. To begin with, their duration in terms of how long they had been in Accra was important. This is because in order to trace the various tasks they may be undertaking or might have done in the past to keep body and soul together one must have a genesis and a reason for doing or taking up any particular job. The study investigated how long children had been on the street and where they sleep to ascertain the type of livelihood strategies adopted by them as survival measures on the street. Data obtained from the survey are presented in Table 5.4.

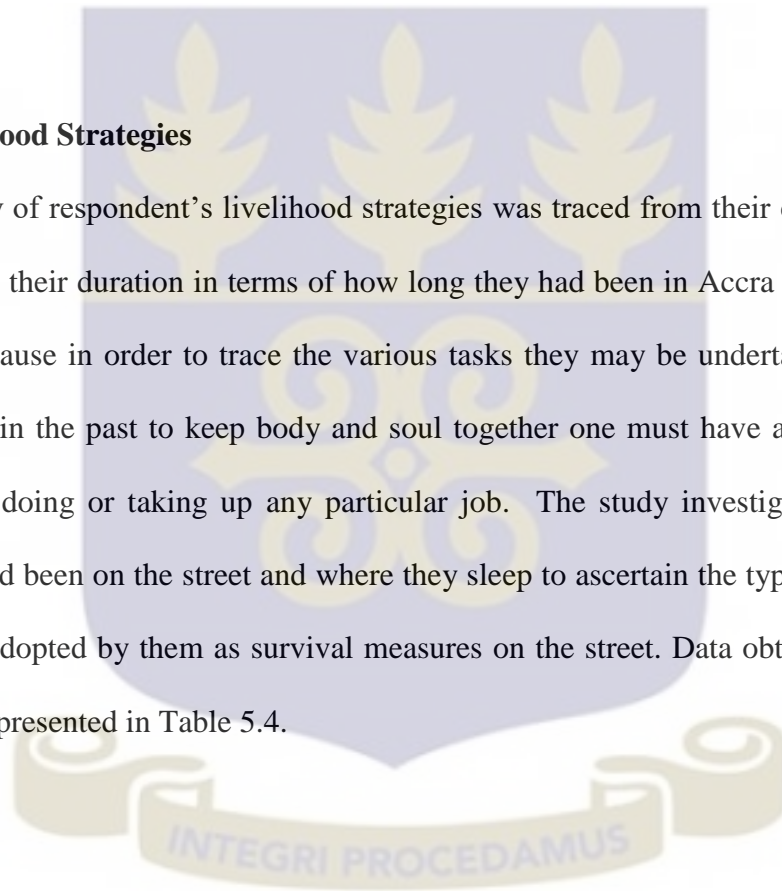


Table 5.4: Length of time on the street and where children sleep

	Frequency	Percentage
Length of time on the street	N=275	
Below 3 months	56	20.4
3 months to 1 year	116	42.2
1 to 2 years	81	29.5
3 to 5 years	22	7.9
Where street children sleep	N=275	
Bus terminal	114	41.5
Shop front	39	14.2
Market	19	6.9
Kiosk	46	16.7
Dormitory	45	16.4
Other	12	4.4

Source: Survey data (2013)

It was observed that majority of respondents (42.2%) have been living on the street between 6 months to one year as at the time of the study. It was also observed that 29.5 percent had been living on the street between one and two years while 20.4 percent were street living children under three months (Table 5.4). The table also shows that 7.9 percent of this population had been living on the street between 3 to 5 years. Table 5.4 shows reasons given by children for opting to move to the streets and their levels of income.

Further interaction revealed that, bus terminals in the cities are the most popular places of abode patronized by the street children. This was confirmed by about 41.5 percent of the children sampled who stated the bus terminals as their sleeping place at night as shown in Table 5.4. From the table, it is again observed that, another popular sleeping place for the street children was in front of shops at the market place as was confirmed by 14.2 percent, 16.7 percent sleep in kiosks while 16.4 percent also stated that, they sleep in dormitories around for a fee. They also revealed that, they have been sleeping at

their various abodes for as long as they have been on the street with some citing between 3-5 years while others also cited 1 – 2 years. About 42.2 percent of respondents stated that they had been in Accra between 3 months and one year giving the indication that they had moved to the street within the year

A cross tabulation showing sleep place by duration revealed a statistically significant ($P < 0.000$) relationship between the children's sleeping places and how long they had been on the street. The bus terminal accommodated most of the children who had been on the streets less than a year.

Table 5.5: Sleep place by duration

Sleeping Place	Duration		Total	Df	P-Value
	Below 1 year	1 year & above			
Bus terminal	91	23	114	5	0.000
Shop front	16	23	39		
Market	7	12	19		
Kiosk	21	25	46		
Dormitory	34	11	45		
Other (specify)	5	7	12		
Total	174	101	275		

Source: survey data

Interviews conducted with street children helped to unravel some of the knotty issues which arose from the survey. Responses to questions on street living revealed different interpretations and there were further probes in order to understand the rationale behind their responses. When the participant is a new entrant, it was easy to tell after being with them from the pilot stage and familiarization stage before the actual fieldwork took off. For some of the 'residents' at Tema Station and some of the participants at Agbogbloshie, migration is seasonal. It was seasonal because they do not just come to Accra and stay for good. Some children do not go back and it was realized during the data collection stage that those who usually do not go back are those who had their own

personal reasons for leaving and their leaving had nothing to do with going to look for money and going back but rather on the desire to leave home and live their own separate lives. There was the tendency to assume that once someone has taken a decision to leave home and subscribe to life on the streets then it must be a case of one not thinking or ever wanting to go back home.

Most street children in Accra go back home at regular intervals and return to live on the streets to try to make ends meet. Evidence from earlier studies (Apt et al., 1997; Beauchemin, 1999; Opare, 2003) suggests that children from the northern region of Ghana spend approximately six months to one year at a time in Accra. This study confirms this and also discovered that they do not just go back after the six months or one year period but they usually return after at most a month's stay at home, with the exception of nursing mothers who usually stay for about three months but they also do return to continue with their activities.

Fifteen year old Asaana for instance said she has been on the street for 5 months but prior to the 5 months she's talking about; she had been in Accra twice. She had come to Accra twice when she was much younger to babysit. She had now returned, as an older child, to find work and make some money to enable her learn a vocation.

Some of the respondents were in Accra for the first time and amongst these were some Senior High School leavers who had come to make some money. Some left with the blessing of their parents while others left without informing anybody, all with a definite purpose to succeed.

Table 5.6: Reasons for street entry and Income levels

	Income		Total	Chi-Square	df	P-Value
	Less than the DMW	DMW & Above				
Reasons for coming to the Street	(N=49)	(N=226)	(N=275)	11.460	2	0.003
Financial difficulty	22.6%	77.4%	195			
Job search/other	9.6%	90.4%	80			

Source: Survey data (2013)

Street children's reasons for being on the street were generally attributed to financial constraints. According to the respondents, they moved to the city in search of better lives as their parents were not endowed enough to adequately cater for them and their siblings. Seventy seven percent of respondents who were on the streets because of financial challenges earned incomes above the daily minimum wage while about 23 percent were below the daily minimum wage. Those in search of jobs had about 90 percent of respondents earning above the daily minimum wage. Others also attributed their predicaments to wanting to gain their freedom as individuals, money, better lives, as well as job search. There was a statistically significant association between children's reason for moving to the street and the income earned ($p < 0.003$) with df (2) and a chi-square value of 11.460.

5.3.1 Destination: Accra

One may wonder why the destination of the children was nowhere else but Accra. There are street children in other parts of the country's big cities and towns such as Kumasi and Takoradi. Since this study was in Accra it was prudent to ask why Accra was or is the sought after destination. For some of the children, Accra is the ultimate place to make it (succeed) because it is perceived that there is a lot of money there. In answer to what made her decide to travel down to Accra, Fuseina said a lot of her town's folk were in Accra.

Fuseina said:

We (referring to her friends and herself) were in the north when they (other community members who had come to Accra) came and said they had made money so if I also go to Accra, I will make some money to start business as they had done. So I also came to Accra to look for money to start my own business. But since I came I have been unable to do that because from whatever savings I have, I buy gifts for everyone anytime I have to go home because it's a way of showing that I was successful when I came. The little that is left I use during my stay there so I come back and start afresh.

In the words of Laila:

It was time for me to come and also make some money like my friends who came before me. There are no jobs in the north so one has to move out in order to secure something for herself. If you do not do so, you don't get anything and only grow older and older. There is no life there.

Muna also added:

There is plenty of money in Accra, even the little we make here is better than the nothing I would have had if I was still in the north. Those who came ahead of me always come home with nice clothes and gifts for their family and children if they have any. I also want good things for myself so that is why I came to Accra.

I came to Accra because I have been here once before and this was the only destination I could think of when I decided to leave home (Kwesi comes from the Central Region of Ghana).

So for these children, there was no option left for them but to raise funds to board the next available bus to Accra in order to make some money for themselves. There are financial difficulties and visible poverty in the case of some street children. However, the migration of children from specifically the northern part of Ghana to Accra and other cities is fast becoming a way of life and not just the desire to make it or be successful in life. Some of those who migrate have come from good homes where they were comfortable. One respondent in describing how terrible life is in Accra said:

At home I don't buy food, I don't sleep outside, I don't buy water, my only chore is to fetch water sometimes and to help my parents on the farm sometimes. I cook and eat when I am hungry but in Accra, everything must be paid for. I pay to bath and use the toilet, water to drink is bought, food...everything. Above all, I sleep outside in the cold with the mosquitoes and other insects.

These give credence to the socio-cultural orientation taking place, where children, especially in the northern parts of Ghana are interested in the 'been to' label or tag, of having been exposed to life either in Accra or outside their towns of origin.

5.3.2 Embracing Reality

Most people who move from a particular setting or set up to another, usually encounter upheavals which could be positive or negative depending on what the change or move is about and what this change brings in its wake. The street children of Accra particularly Tema Station and Agbogbloshie are not left out of this turbulence in terms of the change and the alteration in the lives and activities of especially these young ones.

Barikisu's experience showed the realities children are confronted with upon arrival in Accra.

Barikisu is seventeen years old and had just completed SHS. She had come to Accra to make some money in order to pursue her education to the tertiary level. When Barikisu was setting off from home, she had someone in mind that she called aunty (a family friend) that she could look up to upon arrival. She got to her destination and started asking after her aunty. After asking several people she was directed to the public place of convenience at the destination and upon reaching there (she points towards a low wall), she saw the woman lying there asleep. She said she couldn't describe her surprise and shock when she called out to her and she woke up. She was actually hoping it wouldn't

be her because she did not think that she will be anywhere near the vicinity. So she got up and welcomed her telling her that is where she was.

But the greater shock came when she realized that Tema Station (TS) was their abode.

She thought they would have a place to sleep with a roof over their heads. She said:

In the evening, my aunty pulled out a rubber sheet, spread it on one of the paved portions on the floor and called to me to come and sleep. I was shocked but that was when it dawned on me that indeed things were done differently and I wanted to cry.

Barikisu is not alone in this situation, most children going to the streets for the first time away from families they have been with all their lives usually encounter similar situations. Most of them are forced to cope and become resilient to the challenges they face over time. Those like Mary, who for various other reasons could not cope, returned home after making enough to pay for transportation.

Mary, who had also come to Accra after her SHS education, said she was going back the following week after the interview. She could not overcome her shock at how dehumanizing their sleeping place was and could not condition her mind to live there so she called her father to tell him that she has changed her mind and wants to return. Her father said she could so she was going home on the coming Tuesday. She couldn't hide her excitement that she was going to leave the mosquitoes and bare floors behind to go and sleep at home with her family.

Muna was also utterly shocked upon arrival but she took solace in the fact that she was not alone as she could see several others, some much older, some had been around for years and nothing had happened to them so she believed she would also pull through and

make it if she works hard. She said, *“The day that I came it rained heavily and I had to virtually stand upright the whole night as the floors were wet and it was very cold”*.

Embracing reality and adjusting to the shock of living on the street is not an easy one. One must come to terms with the new dawn and wake up to the realities whether young or old. The young boys and girls who are left no choice or options but to live under such sometimes traumatic conditions are brave and this strength and determination to make it in life must be acknowledged. They deserve every encouragement and advice necessary to make their lives worthwhile.

As stated earlier, most of the respondents slept at a bus terminal (41.5 percent), 16.7 percent slept in kiosks while 16.4 percent slept in dormitories (see Table 5.3). The dormitories are wooden structures which can accommodate as many as thirty or more individuals. These give them shelter from the rains and so are better than the bus terminal and they pay a weekly fee to the owner of the structure. The kiosks are similar to the dormitories but just smaller so fewer occupants of about five or six and sometimes more. Some also slept in front of shops and in the market place making use of the tables of traders who have closed for the day.

One interesting thing to note is how they secure their sleeping places. Friendship seemed to be the easiest way out for these young children who find themselves on the streets. Most of them identified or got their sleeping places through friends. Even though all the study sites had children sleeping in the open, structures were more common at Agbogbloshie since Tema Station happens to be a bus terminal making it impossible to put up even temporary structures. Some of the children moved from TS to Agbogbloshie when they settled and felt Tema Station was not good enough. For instance, Neeta and Meena decided to relocate after they were led by another friend to a dormitory owner

who agreed to accommodate them. These two were part of those who were in Accra for the first time so it was very ideal to find out from them why they found it so relevant to relocate when they still had to shuttle to the city centre on a daily basis to work.

Neeta: TS is not a good place to be sleeping at Meena:

You have to get up very early in order to pack your belongings, bath and out of the way of vehicles and traders since they start arriving at the station from as early as 3 am.

Neeta:

When it happens to rain too then it means you will be useless during the day because you stand throughout the night and it's very cold. The '*kubolor*' (truant) boys worry us and mosquitoes feast on us.

So to find out more and satisfy curiosity, questions were asked on why most of the Tema Station residents do not see the need to relocate or find other means of accommodation considering the circumstances and the inconvenience that they are exposed to. It was interesting to note that while those who were willing to relocate said their colleagues did not want to spend any money on accommodation, some said that it was expensive while others mentioned that accommodation was not readily available. Prices of some available accommodation deduced from interviews indicated that it ranges from GH¢ 2 (\$1) to GH¢ 5 (\$2.5) every week and they do not want to pay this amount which will keep them secure from the rains and other inconveniences.

Those who had failed to find appropriate accommodation for themselves also said that they had nowhere to go, they do not have money, and it is expensive. But from the data collected, it was realized that it was just a way of raking sympathy from whoever is doing the asking or enquiring. On the other hand, they do not make the time to even think about making alternative arrangements. They just decide to remain there because it is free. They had other uses for the money earned. So the desire to earn and save more

for other things from food to sweets, accessories etc. overrode the need for decent accommodation free from some of the avoidable inconveniences that they encounter on a daily (nightly) basis.

5.4 Economic activities

Whenever activities or jobs engaged in by street children are mentioned in Ghana, most people tend to think of the *kaya yei* (head porters). However, this study sought to look beyond the head porters to ascertain whether they had other activities they engaged in. It was identified that those who are seen along major roads in the capital are either young adults, or children coming to work on the streets during the day and retiring at night to their homes. This group happens to be those who hawk various items along main roads in the city (water, chips, pie, popcorn, handkerchiefs, face towels etc.). Aside the head portering, it was discovered that the children at Tema Station and Agbogloshie engaged in other activities which are often overlooked. The children sampled for the study were engaged in similar multiple activities which ranged from head portering, attendants at local restaurants, and assistants to food and tea sellers, shop attendants, commercial sex work, collecting scrap etc. In addition to having a main activity, they support or supplement their main activities with other activities like braiding hair, helping traders to set up their stalls in the morning and pack up in the evening, pick sachet rubber (for recycling), hawk food items, jewellery and sachet water.

Most of the females engaged in head pottering (*kayayei*) while the males were scrap collectors. Other economic activities engaged in by these street children included hawking, cleaning, truck pushing, shop attending, washing cars and washing of bowls.

Table 5.7: Economic Activities of street children and Income levels

Economic activities	Income		Total	Chi-square	df	P-Value
	Less than DMW	DMW& Above				
	(N=47)	(N=228)	(N=275)	.9.410	2	0.009
Kayayei/Hawking	23.5%	76.5%	166			
Cleaning/washing of bowls/other	11.1%	88.9%	45			
Truck pushing/scrap dealer	7.8%	92.2%	64			
Total	17.8%	82.2%	275			

Source: Survey data (2013)

The economic activities engaged in was statistically significant with incomes ($p < 0.009$); df (2) and chi-square value of 9.410. Those engaged in *kayayei/hawking* had 76.5 percent of respondents earning above the daily minimum wage with 23.5 percent earning below the daily minimum wage. Those who engaged in cleaning/washing of bowls had 88.9 percent earning incomes above the daily minimum wage (6 Gh Cedis) whereas those who collected scrap and pushed trucks had 92 percent who earned above the daily minimum wage. This showed that the income earned by the children in their various economic activities was favorable to them and quite rewarding thus having a majority of them earning incomes above the daily minimum wage. Their income was also not particularly dependent on the kind of activity engaged in but mainly on the individuals involved as well as how favourable each day could be. So, all activities had those earning above the daily minimum wage in the majority. Those cleaning and washing bowls had all respondents earning above the daily minimum wage because they earned fixed wages so it did not matter whether the employers had good days or bad days, their incomes were assured for as long as they reported to work.

While exploring the reasons for engaging in chosen economic activities it was revealed that some children chose their economic activities because of anticipated profit, adding

that there were no other jobs available and because the activity engaged in was easy to do. However, the majority of them representing 62.5 percent said they had no choice, as that was the only jobs available to enable them earn some income to take care of themselves and for others, their children.

5.4.1 Economic activities of older and younger children street children

A chi-square test was conducted to compare the observed frequency of activities with the expected frequencies of the activities that older and younger street children are engaged in. A breakdown of the economic activities engaged in by older street children and younger street children (Table 5.8) showed that the common activities engaged in are *kayayei* and scrap collecting. This is done by both young and old child street dwellers. Most of the children (81.1%) fall into the older street child category (14-17 years). About 15.1% of younger children were engaged in *kayayei* while 84.5% of the older ones were engaged in *kayayei*. Younger children engaged in scrap dealing were 32.2% as against the older ones who were 67.8%. Other activities engaged in (as shown in table 5.8) were washing of cars, shop attending, shoe shining and hawking. Activities that were least opted for were hawking, truck pushing cleaning, and washing of bowls. These show that although activities engaged in were skewed towards *kayayei* and scrap collecting, their ages did not restrict them in anyway. Jobs were not age dependent but rather on willingness and or preparedness of the children.

Table 5.8: Percentage distribution of economic activities of Younger and Older Street Children

Economic Activities	Age		Chi-Square	df	P-value
	Younger (5-13) (N=275)	Older (14-17) (N=275)			
Shoe shine/washing cars	10%	90%	11.854	5	0.037
Kaya yei/truck pushing	15.1%	84.9%			
Hawking	40%	60%			
Cleaning	33.3%	66.7%			
Scrap dealer	32.2%	67.8%			
Shop help/washing bowls	16.7%	83.3%			
Total	18.9%	81.1%			

Source: Survey data (2013)

Studies on the activities of street children have often times generally looked at the activities participated in. Not much separation is done on trying to look at the activities engaged in by age. This could be the result from the notion that a street child is a street child and irrespective of their activities. Some studies have however also looked at identifying the change in activities amongst older street children and younger street children.

Marquez (1999) in her study in Caracas identified clear differences in the activities of older and younger children. Drawing attention to the children in this study who were focused on economic activities mainly and did not have anything to do with drugs, older children in Caracas became increasingly interested in women, larger amounts of money, other types of drugs, or a safer life (Márquez 1999, p.52) among other things. The children she points out were also more concerned about their looks and clothing styles.

Street children in Durban were also described as changing street careers over time. Some children adopted new behaviours while others abandoned old ones. The sniffing of glue for instance was common among younger street children while older ones had learned to do without it. Some took to other hard drugs or tried other stimulants. In the same way,

activities or careers engaged in changed as some became more important and others less important. They identified new ways of making income so if begging was identified as more profitable they changed from scavenging to do that. So their activities change, as they grow older.

The children in this study however were identified as engaged in similar economic activities irrespective of their ages. This could be attributed to the unavailability of jobs, the means to be actively engaged in any particular activity, the income generated from the activities engaged in and the children's ability to engage in the activity that is available to them.

Choice of Economic Activities

The respondents chose their particular economic activities based on what they had and what they could get to do. Apt et.al (1992) also found that for those who carry loads they felt it was the easiest thing they could do because carrying is something that they do all the time at home so it is just a progression or continuation and this was confirmed in this study. Secondly, it can be done without the head pan and a wooden plank was usually used to carry goods until one had saved enough to purchase the items required to start.

Memuna's comment illustrates the point:

When we were at home, we always carried water and farm produce so it's the same thing. It's just that sometimes the load we carry here is very heavy thus giving us headache but because the money is what we are after we still carry it. If you say, it's too heavy and do not carry it, someone else will and you will lose the money. So it's easier at least for me that is why I chose to do the *kaya*.

Azara works at a local restaurant and she had this to say:

Those I know from my village worked as attendants and cooks at chop bars so when I came I looked for those who

come from my village and they led me to the owners of some *chop bars* (local restaurants) and they agreed to let me work there alongside others who I have found also come from my hometown.

Aisha also commented:

Some of my friends sell tea and others sell food; as for me, I did not go in that direction because I do not like it when people shout at me to do something. I cannot pretend that because I need a job I will go and be shouted at all the time for the slightest mistake. Sometimes you do not do anything wrong and still get shouted at, I don't have the heart for that so even though carrying items is difficult and I have no pan or board, I'll still manage it like that. Those people who own the other businesses like shouting at people too much

Ethnic and identity lines were clearly drawn amidst a population of which majority hailed from the Northern Region. These were very prominent even in their choice of occupations, sleeping patterns, as they tend to gather firstly along age lines, then young mothers, as well as village groupings. It's easy to assume that they are all the same as they originate from similar backgrounds but when one interacts with them one realizes that they think differently and their world views equally are differently constructed. Their views on various issues both political and social are not the same. Their ethnic and tribal affiliations are very strong and they cling to them with every breadth that they take. Although their circumstances may be the same, it does not take away how they feel about other groups' opinions and behaviours. The survey data revealed that respondents' choice of economic activity was based on it being the only option available to them, the unavailability of jobs, which also meant that was the only option they had. Because if they had the option to choose other jobs, they would or might have chosen another. Other respondents also felt their chosen economic activity was profitable as well as easy to undertake hence their decision to adopt that activity.

Most of the respondents were dependent on just one economic activity. So they were asked further if the income from their regular activity met their needs. Of these only 23.3 percent of respondents were satisfied with their earnings while 64.7 percent were unable to meet their needs from their earnings. Seventeen year old Lariba who had a 1 year old daughter bemoans her ordeal on a daily basis:

I must find food for my daughter, buy diapers, feed myself; it's not easy at all. Shoppers too do not usually pick me because of the child so it's even more difficult. Sometimes I roam the whole day but come back with nothing. See this child (pointing to the baby), she wants breast milk but see (she pulls out her breast for emphasis) there is no milk for her because I don't get enough to eat to produce the milk she needs.

For those who managed other jobs to supplement their income, they engage in truck pushing, cleaning jobs, hawking, shop helps and others do the *kaya* (head portering). So on days that they do not go to work, whether at the chop bars, as food or tea sellers, they do the *kaya*. Others also hawk sachet water and braid hair for a small fee just to supplement income from their main activities.

Economic activities and income

Two binary logistic regression models were used to assess the impact of a number of variables on the likelihood that respondents would earn incomes equivalent to the daily minimum wage and above, or below. The result is presented in Tables 5.9 (Model level 1) and 5.10 (model level 2). The model level 1 looks at the bivariate relationship between livelihood activities and income. The chi statistic was significant thus indicating that the model fits the data.

Table 5. 9: Binary Logistic Regression explaining the relationship between Livelihood Activities and Income

Characteristics	Coef.	Stand. Error	Odds Ratio
<i>Economic activities</i>			
<i>(RC=Kayayei/Hawking)</i>			
Truck pushing/scrap dealer	1.287	0.500	3.622 **
Other	0.524	0.790	1.689
Constant	1.181	0.183***	
Pseudo R-squared	0.036		
Wald chi-square	(2)	8.560**	

* $P \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$

Twenty eight (28) street children involved in Cleaning/washing of bowls were dropped from the model because all of them had an income fixed at the minimum wage or above and there was no variation in the variable.

Overall, about 4 percent of the variation in income of child street workers is explained by the economic activities that they are engaged in. The rest are explained by other factors or activities which are not represented in this model.

The economic activities of the individuals and the incomes that they made were explored in the model. The economic activities of the children had a positive influence on their individual income. Individuals who were engaged in truck pushing and scrap collection were 3.622 times more likely to earn an income equivalent to the daily minimum wage or above as compared to those who were engaged in *kayayei*. Probably scrap collectors had increased income because they constantly had scrap to sell and a ready market too compared to *kayayei* who had to rely on individuals who required their services before they could make some money.

In model 2 (Table 5.10), other factors, age, sex, economic activities, level of education, reason for going to the street, support accessed, and cash remittance are included to ascertain their impact on the income of street children.

Table 5. 10: Binary Logistic Regression explaining the relationship between street children's characteristics, livelihood activities, and income

Characteristics	Coef.	Robust	
		Std. Err.	Odds ratio
Age group (RC=\leq10 years)			
11-13	2.278	1.036	9.761 **
14-16	1.164	0.850	3.204
17	1.931	0.906	6.898 **
Sex (RC=Male)			
Female	-14.916	1.147	0.000 ***
Economic Activity (RC=Kayayei/hawking)			
Truck pushing/scrap dealer	-13.905	1.276	0.000 ***
Other	0.058	0.830	1.060
Ever received support from institution (RC=Yes)			
No	-0.211	0.654	0.810
Level of education (RC=Low)			
High	-0.324	0.404	0.723
Reason for coming onto the street (RC=Financial difficulties)			
Job search	0.980	0.507	2.663 *
Cash Remittance sent (RC=Yes)			
No	-0.174	0.382	0.841
Not yet	0.279	0.799	1.322
Constant	14.818	1.685	***
Pseudo R-squared	0.0909		
Wald chi-square	(11)	372.71	***

* $P \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; *** $p \leq 0.001$

Source: Survey data (2013)

Economic activities ($p < 0.01$), sex ($p < 0.01$), and age were statistically significant at the 1% level. Reasons for going to the street ($p < 0.05$) however was statistically significant at the 5 % level.

The Wald chi-square of the model is significant indicating that the model fits the data. Age, sex, economic activity and reason for going to the street were significant predictors of income levels of street children. Age and reasons for going to the street had a positive relationship on their income while sex and economic activities had a negative effect (Table 5.10). Overall, 9 percent of the variation in income of the street children was explained by the model when the other variables are included. The rest were motivated by other factors which are not represented in this model.

Street children aged 11 to 13 had higher odds of earning an income equivalent to the minimum wage or above. Children between the ages of 11 to 13 were about 10 times (9.761) more likely to earn incomes equivalent to the DMW or above as compared to children below ten years. This was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). It was probably easier for children older than ten years to navigate the markets and scrap yards as compared to the younger ones. Younger children probably had more difficulty getting jobs, besides their age, maturity, and the kind of livelihood activities the children engaged in increased the chances of older ones compared to the younger ones and this is evident across all the age categories Children aged between 14-16 were 3.204 times more likely to earn incomes equivalent to the minimum wage or above compared to those ten years and below. In the same vein 17 year olds were about 7 times (6.898) more likely to have an income equivalent to the minimum wage or above compared to 10 year old children and this was significant.

Females had reduced odds of earning incomes equivalent to the minimum wage or above. So, female children were less likely to earn incomes equivalent to the DMW relative to male children. This was also statistically significant. The activities males engaged in were distinctly different from that of females and this evidently had an impact on their earnings. In a study on children living and working on the streets in Lebanon, Ammar (2015) identified that income among street based children (SBC) tends to increase proportionally with age. The lowest average daily income was registered among SBC between five and eight years old (13,200 Lebanese Lira (LL), US\$8.72), while the highest daily income was earned by 14 to 17 year olds (20,300 L.L., US\$13.42). Male SBC earned more on average than females at 17,600 L.L per day (US\$11.63) and 14,400 L.L. (US\$9.52) per day, respectively. Street children in Pakistan did not have age playing a crucial role in their earnings. However, males were reported as usually receiving higher earnings than females. Ali *et al* (2004) found that most of them were earning no more than 60 rupees daily (US 1\$: Rs. 60). Most boys earned between Rs. 40 and 80 and the girls between Rs. 20 and 60.

Similarly in a Sudan study, age was also revealed as not a factor for increased earnings on the street, however, females earned more than males. Boys in this study reported earning 4250 Sudanese pounds on average (2500 Sudanese pounds to 1 US Dollar), and girls 6900 Sudanese pounds.

Street children engaged in truck pushing and scrap dealing activities also had reduced odds so were less likely to earn incomes equivalent to the DMW and above compared to children engaged in *kayayei*. Female street children who came to the streets purposely because of job search were about 2.663 times more likely to earn incomes equivalent to the DMW and above compared to those who came because of financial difficulties. This

was statistically significant at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$). Those who set out to search for jobs probably had a different purpose compared to those who just wanted relief from financial difficulties. This can influence their income earning activities as those who needed jobs probably might have some other needs and responsibilities which required that they go an extra mile to earn extra income in order to meet those needs.

What do street children spend on?

Accra being the capital city of Ghana has its lifestyle challenges. Cost of living in Accra has been described as very high by almost all respondents. In spite of the high cost of living, they still manage to survive and thrive. What are some of the costs that are incurred by street dwellers who try to make ends meet amidst the hiking prices in recent times? Most participants complained that they have to buy everything in Accra compared to their villages. So they buy water (for drinking, bathing, and for washing), they buy food, they pay to use the washroom and the toilet as well as pay levies depending on the type of activity one is engaged in.

Respondents spent on food and on items required, as part of their various needs especially drinking water. Those who sold food get a meal free, usually in the afternoon so they bought breakfast and supper. They were unable to cook so they depend solely on food from vendors. The public toilets and baths happen to be the only available place for them especially the young ladies to bath and attend to nature's call. On some occasions, some of the children were sighted bathing outside in the night including the older ones. This was explained in the course of the interviews that the public places they use closed at 5pm so if one does not hurry up in order to take a bath then you have no choice but to either bath outside when night had fallen or wait till the following day.

This is where health issues may emanate as the nature of the work they do, be it head portering, scrap collecting, food selling etc. all under the scorching sun makes them sweat a lot. If the sweat is not washed off coupled with the heat and they rush off to work, it leaves the stench of the sweat on their bodies, they also develop rashes sometimes and this they describe as uncomfortable. This was the situation with both the males and females who took part in the study. Some also do not bath regularly (because of the cost involved) especially not on days when they feel they have not earned enough as well as days when they retire after the facilities have closed for the day. They spend between 50 pesewas and GH¢3 on water daily. Food is another thorny issue, as one cannot do without it. Participants spent between GH¢1 and GH¢5 on food every day. Some spend more on food depending on their earnings by the close of each day.

Kwaku admits:

After working the whole day sometimes, I want to enjoy from my labour so I give myself a treat by buying more fish or meat and then a drink too. I cannot work all the time and not enjoy myself sometimes.

So for those who spend more on food it's because they want to relish their meals after working all day. Others also spend more because they have children to cater for so they buy Cerelac and other baby food just to ensure their babies are also happy. Lariba and Lamisi both have babies and this they explained kept their expenses especially on food higher than others.

Lariba:

You cannot say you will keep the baby hungry; neither do I want to go hungry. The baby always makes me spend more and their meals have to be varied sometimes so instead of buying *koko* (porridge) all the time, you sometimes buy Cerelac or some other baby food.

Lamisi:

Life is always more expensive when you have a baby. You have to provide food for two. Some say it is just small but it is still an added expense. I cannot wait for her to attain two years so that I can go and leave her in my village. She's too young to be taken there now so I try to cope hoping and waiting for her to be old enough to be sent home so that I can really work hard without disruptions.

The children also spend money on clothing, health, and transportation. They spend between GH¢5 and GH¢30 a month on clothing and this is not done monthly. Some of them wait for those who sell used clothing to close and they go and pick from amongst what they leave behind so they save on expenditure. This is what they wear for their day to day activities. They buy the good clothes for when they want to dress up as some of them do on Sundays. Others also wear the same clothes everyday (some scrap dealers) until they can no longer be described as clothes then they discard them and get new ones. Not all the children incur transportation costs. Some of them visit friends and others from their hometowns especially on Sundays when activities are not brisk. About a third of respondents (36.7%) at some point in time spent money on transportation while 63.3 percent did not. They spend between GH¢1 and GH¢16 weekly depending on the distance to their destination. This also is not a regular occurrence but something they do every now and then.

Remittances and Savings – meeting responsibilities and expectations

The children engaged in what is called '*susu*' (micro savings). They save between GH¢2 (\$1) and GH¢5 (\$2.5) daily and this they take back when they have need of their money. Their response to why they do not use the banking system was that the banks are a bother because they are unable to meet their account opening requirements. For people who do not have a home of their own, there is no way they can produce utility bills. They also said they have been told that if you get someone to do it for you too, you risk being

robbed by whoever is granting you the favour. If that doesn't happen and you need your money from the bank in an emergency, the procedure again is cumbersome but with the 'susu' (*micro credit/informal loan scheme*) one could retrieve the money at any time without any problems so they believed the 'susu' was better than the bank. *Susu* is an informal means of collecting and saving money through a savings club or partnership.

Some of the children disclosed that they sent remittances home to various people for varied reasons. Remittances were either sent in cash or goods but most of them sent cash transfers home. About one third of respondents (30.9%) sent remittances home while 69.1 percent did not and some explained they were yet to send money home.

Table 5.11 below looks at the income levels and cash remittances of street children in Accra. In this table, no statistically significant association was seen between cash remittances and income. About 81 percent of respondents who sent remittances home earned an income equivalent to the DMW and above while 19 percent earned an income below the minimum wage.

Table 5. 11: Income levels and cash remittances of street children

	Income		Total	Chi-square	P-Value
	Less than daily minimum wage	Minimum wage and above			
Cash Remittance	(N=49)	(N=226)	(N=275)	0.760	0.684
Yes	18.8%	81.2%	85		
No	18.1%	81.9%	171		
Not Yet	10.5%	89.5%	19		

Source: Field Survey (2013)

Those who sent no remittances had about 82 percent earning incomes equivalent to the DMW and above. Some had not sent any remittance home but were likely

to do so later and this category had about 89 percent earning incomes equivalent to the DMW and above.

Remittances mostly go to parents and sometimes to siblings. What is striking here is that young as they are they have responsibilities no matter how small. Remittances are sent sometimes weekly, monthly, every three months, some send it yearly and for emergency reasons when messages are delivered about situations which require some money and they are forced to send something home. Others send home items in the form of jewellery, toiletry, clothes, food items, spices, fish etc. In trying to find out whether these items were not available in their villages, the response from Muna was:

Yes, they could get some but they do not have the money to purchase them that is why I will buy all that and send it to them so that they can also enjoy their meals. Sometimes my mother specifically ask for certain items and if you send money for that purpose they may use it for something else so to avoid having to send money again I buy the items they request for and send it to them.

The remittances according to respondents were used for housekeeping, school fees, business, maintenance, and all other things that are deemed necessary by recipients and those sending the money. So besides the remittances, with what they have left, they buy nice things for family and friends back home so that when they decide to go home they will have something to give to them to show that they have also arrived from the city. Some buy cooking utensils to keep in storage in anticipation of their marriages since that is what is expected of them, others purchase furniture, sound systems, refrigerators etc. What was left was kept for their use (upkeep) when they visit home.

As to whether they owned any assets, their answers were again very similar. Some of them had purchased phones, and with this, they were able to access the radio so they do not purchase additional items to serve the same purpose. They rather purchased some of these items when they were going home. They conveyed a lot of items home and these included sound systems, fridges, furniture, mattresses, alongside the clothing, food items and drinks/beverages.

Alima's response was:

I will not buy anything that is worth a lot of money because it will be stolen. Over here yourself have seen where we pack our things during the day. What we keep on our bodies even sometimes gets stolen in the night when we are sleeping so it will be too risky to buy nice things when someone could rob you easily. When I am ready to go then I buy and pack on the vehicle and go straight home, otherwise we pay for it and let the shop owners keep it for us until we are ready to go. It's too risky keeping things here.

Grace, a commercial sex worker who has a rented room in a wooden shack, said:

Over here, no one buys nice things to put in the room oh! I used to have a TV set and a video deck as well as a stereo. I have sold all because I've realized that people get jealous when they realize that you have nice things in your room and they can go as far as getting rid of you (getting you killed). I don't know why but that is what I realized so I got rid of everything that I felt could arouse attention or cause someone to stare at me weirdly. Eiiii, I want to live long.

Other items they use their money on include recharge cards for their phones, sanitary towels, exercise books and school accessories for those who have younger siblings at school in their hometowns, diapers, etc.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter sought to outline the coping strategies employed by street children as part of their livelihoods. As mentioned earlier, most of the street child population in Ghana are females contrary to what exists in other African countries as well as in the developed world. Most of the respondents were head porters or *kayayei* as they are called. It was identified that this was the option that appealed most to the children. Because one can start without any capital and this is an extension or progression of the duties they usually embark on in their homes. Again because of the temporal nature of what they do, they do not make any efforts to get any technology attached to their efforts. Truck pushing has been left to the boys and boys have some permanency when it comes to their residential status. They do not go home as often as the girls do so they can afford to work with items that signify permanency.

Relevant to this study is the *socio-cultural orientation* of destination Accra by young female children from the northern region. The study reveals children who are in street situations and not the typical street children discussed in the literature. These children are not constrained or pushed out because they are orphaned, abused or have no other option but to move out but rather children who move voluntarily even though they have enough to eat. School also seems not to be very important to them possibly because they do not get the support and encouragement that they need to spur them on. Ethnic identification was also seen to be a key ingredient among respondents. This was made evident because even though they mostly hail from the north; they stick together based on their origins and their reliance on hometown folks. This was again evident in their speech, their chosen occupations, as well as their sleeping patterns.

CHAPTER SIX

SOCIAL NETWORKS OF STREET CHILDREN

6.1 Introduction

Networking is an important and integral part of the lives of most people. Here networks refer to meaningful social relations that individuals build, identify with, and utilize either in the long or short term. Networking of street children is most relevant when it comes to children negotiating and coordinating their daily activities. Identifying the kind of networks that the children make use of either before, during or after their move to the streets or exit off the streets is very important.

When people decide to move from one place to another, this movement is often accompanied by some amount of mental upheaval and emotional displacement (Portes & Sensenbrenner 1993). This does not only involve a departure from individuals' communities and networks which could have taken years to set up, it also involves an encounter with an alien way of life. Literature suggests that people hardly move into a social vacuum (Bashi 2007; Massey *et al.*, 1993). Studies have found that the process of moving is often a social one which involves a host of people in the decision-making that precedes and necessitates the move. Moreover, it has been shown that migration is likely to be influenced in a large measure by the existence of networks of people already dwelling at destination areas, whom the potential migrant already has some ties with. Street children are no exception.

Upon arrival, networks are identified as crucial, initially, for the adjustment of the new entrant, and later for their economic integration into the new environment or society (Bashi 2007; Massey 1993; Portes 1998). When new entrants to a community decide to engage in any economic activity, their communities are expected to act as providers of a strong support base. The community is thus a source of cheap and flexible labour, as well as an easy source of information and credit. All these give credence to the supportive role of migrant communities (in this study the friends, ethnic affiliations, etc.) to members (Portes 1998; Waldinger 1989; Aldrich & Waldinger 1990). These perspectives suggest that migrant communities usually have supportive effects on its members. Communities could also have some negative effects on its members depending on what issues may be under discussion. Thus, care must be taken when discussing the influence of networks on any particular individual, society/community.

This chapter discusses the influence and help that support networks wield and provide to members of the 'street community' at Tema Station and Agbobloshie, drawing on data gathered from observation, interviews, conversations, and focus group discussions. As part of research objectives, this study sought to find out the kind of networks the children utilized before making an attempt or taking the decision to move and after moving to the street. As discussed much earlier, most of the children sampled in this study do not fall into the category of typical street children. Typical street child research suggests the phenomenon as being rooted in poverty, hunger, family and neighbourhood violence, family dissolution, and in the breakdown of traditional supportive community structures thus leading to their eventual migration to the streets (Anarfi, 1997; Beauchemin, 1999; Gracey 2002; McCreery 2001; Panter-Brick 2002; Rudenberg et al., 2001; Van Acker et al., 1999).

So most of the study participants are coming from a background that is not the same as the literature often suggests but they come amidst socio-cultural issues and with a mind-set of making some quick money and going back, and not the image of individuals escaping from deplorable conditions that make the streets more appreciable as a dwelling place. They move to the street knowing that there may be some relations around and with most of the children coming from the Northern Region of Ghana where bonding is easily done so everyone is a brother or sister and older ones parents. So what networks do the children employ or use on the street to ensure their survival and to meet their immediate needs? The data from the survey questionnaire again begins this process and Table 6.1 shows the networks of street children.

The study, as part of realizing its objective of knowing in detail the livelihood strategies of street children, explored the social networks utilized by the children. This chapter looks at the social networks of street children and in answering this question; several aspects of the children's lives were explored. Areas explored included the kind of networks established, how and where these networks were established, how these networks enhance their stay on the street, the benefits they derived from these networks and expectations of the group of its members.

6.2 Negotiating Migration – *the decision making process*

Change is difficult and takes a lot of effort to embark on a journey that takes one away from what he or she is used to. In identifying the networks that were utilized, respondents were asked questions concerning their decision making process, what gave them the impetus to move to Accra when they did not readily know what lay in wait for them. Responses from the discussions that were undertaken revealed that the children

had been exposed to different people and they themselves had made their own observations and taken their decisions. They had been exposed to 'been to' relations/returnees, friends and fellow town folk.

They encountered these people at several levels; some had relations who had left to Accra to work but come home periodically to visit family (immediate and extended) and they had stories to tell. They also come with money and lots of nice things from the city of which some of the children are recipients. They make a show of what they have gained by going to the city and talk about the opportunities that the big city offers to all who manage to get there and so the children begin to aspire to go to the big city and make something of their lives. In the same way, friends and other town folk also lure the children to the city by the way they conduct themselves (nice clothes and shoes, accessories and money to do different things). Friends, especially age mates pose the greatest challenge because the question that emanates is why can she not go too if her colleague has been able to achieve something significant in the city?

Another group of people that they were exposed to are other town folk and returnees. They also present a rosy picture of the city, rosy in the sense that if one is hardworking then one can achieve a great deal, make a lot of money in the city and they encourage the younger ones to also go and have a go at making their families more comfortable and empowering themselves. Some parents do encourage their young ones to go to Accra in search of the Golden Fleece that exists there and make something meaningful out of their lives as well as to also help their families back home.

Aside these encounters with returnees, friends, and relations some of the children had already been exposed to life in Accra. Some had already been to Accra as baby sitters for other relations who had babies to enable them continue work. When babies are weaned and are sent home to the village, babysitters then decide to come back independently to work. These ones had already connected with activities on the street thus making their return less demanding and stressful as compared to others. With these observations of what one could make in the city and the experiences some children had, they decide to embark on the journey to success and better life.

So their hope is in their knowledge and assurance that it is possible and since lots of people from their towns and villages are already in Accra, they are just joining their friends, relations and fellow townfolk to partake in the opportunities life presents them. These are the only networks or links they have with Accra and with that, they are willing to work hard to survive and to succeed. The dynamics of city life are explored with the children as their lives are delved into to ascertain the kind of support they are able to garner to ease the pressures that cities bring to bear on them.

6.3 Networks Patronized

Social networks may be described as all persons and groups that one maintains direct or indirect, short or lasting ties with, to satisfy one's daily requirements of life (Ayuku *et al.*, 2003). Ennew (1994) describes most writings on street living populations in developing countries as situated in disorganized, illegal misery. This is because they are envisaged as unfit psychologically, not able to form relationships because of their position as children and as a result are definitely headed for an emotional, social and economic failure in their adult life (Ennew, 1994 p. 419).

However, contrary to the idea that street living children were alone and unprotected, these children have social organizations where the main support is living and working collectively. In Delhi, McFayden (2004) discloses that groups although living and some working together, children are free to make decisions for themselves.

As social relationships do not exist in isolation but rather embedded in social networks (Heinomen, 2011), the children position themselves to make the most of the conditions they are faced with. The formation of social networks or being members of a group is seen as a key component of the survival strategies of street populations. These networks play a role of giving support in terms of fulfilling basic human needs (food, shelter, and security) as well as dealing with emotional needs for companionship, closeness, and a source of identity (Kruger & Donald, 1994b).

After embracing the reality of life in Accra, the children have no choice but to adapt to the conditions they are faced with and make the most out of it. When going to the field, the expectation was that the children would have organized themselves into one or more groups where they would have organized programs for themselves just to enhance their stay and activities; the reality however was not as envisaged. Formally or purposefully, they had not organized themselves into any such groupings but informally and unconsciously, some groupings had evolved and were observed which the children themselves were not aware of. The most obvious network of the street children was friendship.

In Table 6.1, respondents awareness of and membership of Social networks were explored. The survey results revealed that 243 children representing about 88% were members of one network or the other while 32 (11.6%) said they did not belong to any

network (table 6.1). The kinds of groups that they became part of were friendship groups, associations, church groups, occupational groups and township/ethnic groups. About forty three percent (42.8%) of respondents admitted that they knew the group before making a move to the streets while 57.2 percent did not know anyone prior to their move to the streets.

Table 6.1: Awareness and Membership of Social Networks

	Frequency	Percentage
Part of any Network	N=275	100%
Yes	243	88.4
No	32	11.6
Prior Knowledge of group	N=275	100%
Yes	117	42.8
No	158	57.2

Source: Field Survey (2013)

Social Networks and Income

The relationship between the social networks of the street children and their income was also explored (Table 6.2) and only support from family ($p < 0.028$) was statistically significant with df (.2) and a chi-square value of 10.873. All other factors (support from religious groups, institutions and the kind of support received) had no statistically significant relationship with income.

Friendship networks had 82.4 percent of its members earning income equivalent to the daily minimum wage and above (Table 6.2). Only 17.6 percent of members earned below the daily minimum wage. Members of church groups, and other associations had 90

percent of members earning above the daily minimum wage. Only 10 percent of respondents in this category earned incomes below the daily minimum wage.

Table 6.2: Social Networks and income

Group Joined	Income		Total	Chi-square	P-Value
	Less than daily minimum wage	Minimum Wage And above			
	(N=52)	(N=223)	(N=275)	0.785	0.675
Friends	17.6%	82.4%	233	df (2)	
Church/other associations	10.0%	90.0%	10		
No groups	21.9%	78.1%	32		
Total	17.8%	82.2%	275		
Kind of support received from family	(N=69)	(N=206)	(N=275)	10.873	0.028
Financial	32.0%	68.0%	25	df (2)	
Emotional/occupational/other	17.5%	82.5%	103		
No support	15.6%	84.4%	147		
Total	17.8%	82.2%	275		
What kind of support do you receive from Network Groups	(N=42)	(N=194)	(N=236)	0.674	0.714
Encouragement	16.1%	83.1%	137	df (2)	
Financial/job opportunities/advice	20.2%	82.3%	99		
No support	17.9%	82.1%	39		
Total	17.8%	82.2%	275		
***Fisher's Exact Test					
Kind of support received from religious Group	(N=16)	(N=93)	(N=109)		0.44 5
Encouragement	13.3%	86.7%	83		
Financial	16.7%	83.3%	18		
Other	25.0%	75.0%	8		
Ever received support from institution	(N=49)	(N=226)	(N=275)		0.619
Yes	13.3%	86.7%	30		
No	18.4%	81.6%	245		

***Fisher's exact tests

Source: Survey data (2013)

In the Fisher's exact test in Table 6.2 the p-value obtained is greater than 0.05 so the kind of support received from religious groups make no significant difference in the income earned.

Group activities

As a group street children engaged in socialization, encouraging themselves, had occupational discussions and kept, each other company to escape from boredom. To remain in their groups some were expected to pay dues, remain faithful to other members and to be trustworthy. Most of them maintained ties with their family especially via phone calls. Only about 25 percent of the respondents did not maintain ties with their parents. Respondents were also asked whether they had people they could rely on, or someone who took care of them while on the street. About 39.3% of the respondents said they had people they could look up to while 60.7 percent of them did not look up to anybody. Individuals that children usually looked up to for support were friends and older persons. These people usually encouraged them, served as protection, advised them and gave them financial assistance when needed.

The survey also asked respondents whether they missed home or not. A majority of respondents (66.2%) said yes, 10.2% responded in the negative while 23.6% indicated they sometimes got homesick. They expressed that they missed their parents, siblings, some said family, food (home food), friends and children.

6.3.1 Friendship

Friendship was identified as the single most important asset of the children. As suggested by some authors friendship seems to be the most important resource used by the children

(Ayuku *et al.*, 2003; Mizen & Kusi, 2010). The data taken from children (from interviews, conversations and observations) revealed that friendship is the only thing they had which was most helpful and or useful to them. This is what Davies (2006, p. 158) terms adjusting to adjustment. In this scenario, the poor are pushed to carve new ways of survival in the face of declined and or zero opportunities for formal employment and falling wages. Within this environment of the survival of the fittest, and the strategies developed by street children who find themselves within this enclave, friendships come as sources of help, security, and survival. Friendship for these children is dependent on reciprocity, shared interests, mutual respect, and trust. Children who are unwilling to share, cannot be trusted, unfriendly and disrespectful to other people will not be accepted within the main group (McFadyen, 2004). The survey also showed that irrespective of the age of the children, a crucial association or grouping that cannot be overlooked is friendship. The kind of networks and ages of respondents were cross tabulated and Table 6.3 shows the responses obtained.

Table 6.3: Percentage Distribution of respondents by age and the networks utilized

Ages	Networks/Groups			Ethnic
	Friends	Rel. groups	Occupation	
	Percentages			
5 – 7	66.7	33.3	0	0
8-10	100	0	0	0
11-13	92.5	0	5	2.5
14-16	97	2.2	0.7	0
17	96.6	3.4	0	0
Total	95.9	2.4	1.2	0.4

Source: Survey Data (2013)

The table shows that friendship had the biggest percentage across all ages. The proportions of children relying on friendship as their network ranges from 66 percent among the 5-7 year group to 100 percent among the 8-10 year group.

Thus friendship cuts across all the age groupings as all the respondents identified more with friends than with any other group. As explained the social network groupings, their ethnic identifications, occupational attachments and the age groupings were uncovered during the in-depth interviews and via observation. Beside friendship being the main asset, it was discovered that the children in Accra bonded in different other ways. Religious groups follow friendship as another significant network grouping.

One of the ways the children bonded was *by age groups* – it was observed through regular and consistent interaction that the children bonded around age groupings especially those who were coming out of school, or were out of school. They usually kept together because they had similar things to discuss and could understand each other better. They do not admit to deliberately keeping these groupings but that is what they end up doing. This was observed at both study areas (Tema station and Agbogbloshie). However, respondents who had just come out of school were not identified at Agbogbloshie, but were all at TS.

Child mothers – another identified group is the ‘child mothers’. These were the children who had babies they were nursing. When they move around or gather, be it their leisure time or pauses in between work it was observed that they also kept together. This was because they also had more in common. Besides discussing their daily activities, they also had their babies to talk about in relation to their feeding, diapers and general growth.

Occupations – others also kept to themselves based on their occupations. So one meets different groups and each group is made up of individuals who are involved in the same economic activity. For example, a group whose members all work in chop bars (local

restaurant) performing different tasks or a group whose members help to sell food (*waakye, jollof*, plain rice, tea etc.) for others.

Older street dwellers – some of the children also have mentors in the older street dwelling population. They share sleeping spots in the evenings and even though they all engage in different activities and earn individual wages, they keep each other company. Especially on Sundays when there is no work to do they sit around and when the younger ones are braiding hair or anything else they offer suggestions to them based on their experience on the street and maturity as adults. Boys however especially those engaged in scrap collecting worked every day of the week Sunday inclusive.

6.3.2 Identification, Associations, and Groups

A sense of identification was felt very strongly among the street child population. The children at Tema Station were all females whereas those at Agbogbloshie were made up of both males and females. About two thirds of the children (70%) according to the survey happened to be coming from the Northern Region of Ghana while the remaining 30% came from the other nine regions but irrespective of where they happened to be coming from, they all had strong attachments to their ethnic identity. This was clearly seen where all groups felt strongly that no one coming from their areas of origin would do anything untoward. For instance in the interviewing process, when trying to find out the kind of vices that children are likely to find themselves engaging in and which category of individuals are likely to be drawn into such vices, they were quick to agree that some children do engage in acts like stealing/pick pocketing, transactional sex, drinking, etc., but they will go on to say as Miriam puts it

‘It is not us, none of us engages in such bad activities;
Mamprusi people are not like that; maybe it is the Dagomba

people. They usually may go all out to get the money they seek’.

Anita from the other end also opines that

‘Dagomba people are not as bad as other groups want them to appear. They only try to say things about them just to make them look good and feel better than all others’.

Because of these tensions about their ethnic groupings, even though they are in the same environment there are touchy moments and often accompanying heated arguments and quarrels between groups. This also adds to their bonding dimensions, as they tend to gather bearing in mind the rewards they gain from each other as members of a group. These benefits include financial support, companionship, encouragement and job placement.

Another group of people that constantly came up were the *‘kubolor’* (thugs) boys. The children saw these boys as their greatest worry when it came to asking about those who engaged in activities that are frowned upon. So besides blaming other ethnic groups, the children also saw the *‘kubolor’* boys as the perpetrators of wrongful acts. The boys, however, were slow to accuse anybody as they often said that they know some of the boys steal or pick pockets, engage in excessive drinking or watched pornographic videos but didn’t do so themselves. Some also admitted that they have taken in alcohol before but this is not something done on a regular basis.

6.3.3 Religious Affiliations

Two religious groups that the children were identified as part of were Islam and Christianity (Table 5.1). Almost all the children (98.9%) belonged to either of these groups. The Christians usually attended their regular Sunday services and once a while

attended evening services. This affiliation offered them comfort and solace when they were down emotionally or economic conditions were harsh. So they sought comfort in the confines of religious activities. This was not too different from those who were Moslems.

Some of the children like Fati said

‘In my spare time I go to *makaranta* (Islamic school) where I am taught teachings from the Quran and other issues that pertain to life’.

6.3.4 Gang Activity

One of the surprises of the research experience was the nonexistence of gang activity amongst the children. This was a surprise because the literature from other parts of the world laid emphasis on the activities engaged in by child street dwellers and gang activity is one of the prominent ones. The gang activity comes along with engaging in drugs and glue sniffing very early in their lives as a part of street life but these activities was non-existent among the participants of this study. Gang activity is described as a regular feature amongst Kenyan street children (Oino & Auya, 2013). As far back as the 1950’s, Whyte (1955) identified that while on the streets, the children often remain organized within their gang groupings. He found that street gangs were socially organized in their daily activities; they were able to distribute their various tasks among themselves and were guided by group norms and regulations they had created for themselves. Heinonen (2011) also explored male and mixed-sex gangs in Addis Ababa and how influential these gangs are in their social environment. Gang activity therefore is not a new phenomenon amongst street populations all over the world. Gang activity however was not seen among street children studied at Tema Station and Agboghloshie.

6.4 Functions of the Established Networks

The relevance of networks to individuals cannot be underestimated especially when individuals are negotiating conditions that are considered difficult and problematic. Children on the streets of Accra also derive diverse benefits from the networks that they are part of in order to endure harsh conditions that come their way. How do they find solace within these networks that they have found themselves in?

6.4.1 Protection

The participants interviewed felt protected within the various groups they found themselves in when asked what benefits they derived from their networks. Amongst the commercial sex workers, they found/sought protection from their groups in two ways, from difficult clients who become violent and from intruders who may come in the form of thieves to steal from them. When any of these happen, they come together to fight and these are tough ladies who do not care what the end result of the intruder will be. Naana in an interview pointed to a big stone and said:

‘Look at this stone lying by my side; it’s not there for the fun of it. It is my weapon so if any of my colleagues here is confronted with a difficult client I fight that person as if it’s my own. I will use this stone to hit that person with every strength I can muster. In the same way if I am confronted with a difficult client, they will do the same for me’.

Maame also described a similar occurrence,

‘If we catch any of the ‘*Kubolor*’ boys who come and steal from us, we all come together and beat the thief to a point where he becomes helpless; this is because it is not all the time that we catch them but they steal from us all the time and we are not happy about it so we must teach them a lesson’.

To this Kwaku, added:

‘It is only lazy people who do not want to work who take things that do not belong to them so when we catch such a person it is okay to beat the person and let him go’.

They also found it easier being in groups than living as individuals because it’s easier for one person to be attacked by anyone and much more difficult to attack a group. These were some of the reasons why they felt protected within their established networks.

6.4.2 Companionship

Companionship was another area that was of essence to the children. They kept each other company thus doing away with loneliness, boredom and homesickness. Companionship was most important to them when they took a break to rest in - between jobs. One usually sees the girls in groups sitting under trees, free pavements, or parking lots busily chatting amongst themselves, some sleeping off their fatigue and others eating and watching passers-by. The role companionship plays in their existence does not interfere with their daily activities, as this would reduce productivity. They also keep each other company when they retire from work in the evening. They huddle together and chit chat about the day’s activities, those they found irritating, those they found funny etc. This takes away the homesickness and boredom which usually sets in when there are no activities to occupy them. Asana put it this way:

‘In the evening we just chat and sleep. We talk about ourselves and the day’s events. This makes it easy to forget the pains and challenges we encounter on a daily basis. It also makes it easier to deal with our memories of home and all that has been left behind’.

Bernice added:

‘It is the best we can do for ourselves, we cannot do anything besides making the best of the conditions we find ourselves in. When we close from work, there is nothing else to do, no TV, no movies, no radio. We just have our friends, we sometimes use the radio on someone’s phone to listen to music, on some days we

wish we could get some movie to watch for a change but if you don't have it, you deal with what we have. So having friends helps to make life more comfortable than it would have been'

Mary, who had an eight month old daughter shared that if it had not been for her friends, she would have, ran into circumstances that are more difficult. This is how she put it:

'There are some days when one may get a job to do quite late in the evening. When this happens, I leave my daughter with my friends and often times by the time I get back they would have bathed her and fed her for me. The bathrooms here close by 5:30pm so it saves me from having to do all that when I get back. I will be a bad person if I do not acknowledge this help and support.'

Companionship was found as an essential ingredient which the children need and this is shown in their responses on what this means to them and how beneficial it has been in the past and is still ongoing as relevant for the future.

6.4.3 Financial Support

Respondents also referred to the financial support that they sometimes had from their friends when they were in need. There are some days that the children report that the day's work did not bring in any earnings, so they come back with virtually nothing.

Other times too some are unable to go and work because of ill health (headache, tummy upset) and this means that they will have no money that day. When that happens their friends who were able to make some wages relieve them of this difficulty. This is reciprocated if another person finds himself or herself in the same position.

Reciprocity is an unspoken law which exists amongst them which no one has to spell it out because they all know of how the system they find themselves in. Other times too some of them are faced with extreme difficulties when perhaps there is an emergency at

home and one needs to send some money but has no means of doing so. At this point, they are assisted by their friends to raise some money and send home. Sometimes too, serious sickness may befall one of them (not just headache or tummy ache), they all contribute some money and buy medicine at the pharmacy and if it's critical send the individual to the hospital. Bernice narrated that there have been times when they all had to contribute some money in order to send a sick colleague to the hospital to receive the needed medical care. It would have been impossible to do that if they had no friends to rely on for assistance.

6.4.4 Emotional Support

All individuals experience strong feelings of love, anger, joy, hatred, or fear at some point in their lives. The children at Tema station and Agbogbloshie also encounter all these life experiences. In moments when news of bereavement is delivered, one becomes distraught and the only consolation is what they get from friends. In their absence, they would have had to cope on their own. Some of them had lost relations whom they are unable to be a part of the burial process because Moslems bury their dead almost immediately. They are thus unable to pay their last respects to departed family members. At other times too, it is all joy when someone is getting married or is able to deliver safely without complications. In these times, too there is no one to share the news with except those within their friendship networks or community. If they are unable to go and participate in marriage ceremonies they imagine and discuss what could be happening, what one would have enjoyed if she was there and all the fun portions to be missed. If it is possible, they plan their stay in such a way that they can organize and take a holiday to coincide with the ceremony in order to participate fully.

There have been occasions too when they have been infuriated by other people and these can lead to outbursts of anger especially when one is frustrated from the day's activities. Sometimes they all rally behind their friends in order to defend their colleague but at other times, they serve as referees in separating their friends from engaging in a continuous verbal exchange with others. There were times during the data collection when fights had to be stopped and tempers calmed down for peace to prevail. This was more rampant amongst the females than the male population. This might have been because the females exceeded the males in number or simply because females are naturally more emotional than their male counterparts.

6.4.5 Job Placement

Opportunity to access jobs is also a benefit derived from social networks. Some of the children engage in more than one activity and this includes helping traders in their stall or shops to either sell, unpack items to be arranged in front of shops as well as to pack them back at the close of day. Sometimes those who help in the shops may fall ill or may travel for some period. When this happens and they require replacements, they are able to suggest other friends who come and replace the one who might be leaving. Those who suggest will consult and inform those within their close networks first before letting anyone else know about it. Bernice could not help but to exclaim

‘Eeei...εboa papa (eeei, its very helpful). When you get something else to do that brings a steady income in addition to your own regular activity it enhances your income greatly so you are able to save more. So you do everything within your strength to maintain both’.

At times too, for those who carry loads (*kaya yei*), they are introduced to shop owners by their friends so that when customers come and purchase goods; they are called upon to convey the goods to destination points for customers. It is only in their absence that

another person may be called and this makes them more marketable. They also get a lot of income with less stress when they are not forced to roam in search of their own clients.

The boys also encounter similar situations; although they do not attend to shop owners, they are also alerted of possible areas where they are likely to get a lot of scrap metal. When one is notified of such a place, he also informs those within his network and they move in that direction. If one doesn't belong to any group, you may not be aware of some of these discoveries. Kwame hinted:

‘When I started this job I did not have any friends so I only picked what I came across and leftovers from the adults after they have burnt their metals. When I got to join my current friends, I have realized that there are hints of possible areas where one could get more metal. You will not believe it but we do not remain at the same place for long, if we hear of a possible location where there is scrap, tomorrow we will wake up early and move in that direction. So it's very helpful to be with a group and to have friends who think about the whole group and not just about themselves’.

In the case of the boys, this is very crucial, as it will be difficult to know all the places where metal could be picked if someone does not tell you. Sometimes it is just a matter of being smart and keeping one's ears attentive otherwise one will be left out. Getting jobs means more income and the ability to meet more of their needs. This is something that every individual desires so it is not strange that the children also derive great gains in being able to generate more from their associations with others.

6.4.6 Identification – a sense of belonging

The children derive some pride from their presence in Accra irrespective of their difficult circumstances. They also acquire the ‘been to’ label and this identification is very important to them, identification first by one’s self (self-identification), as well as being identified by other people (identification by others). This label is one of the attractions that entice young children and adults alike to the city as when one is recognized as having travelled outside their village.

Identification has been described by de la Rúa (2007) as referring to processes and activities and not to essence. This definition gives room for one to consider that identifications can vary according to the moment. Thus, identifications may be considered as actions that are situational and contextual. It also expands the definition for specificity as to those who are the identifying and the identified agents, which allows the establishment of a distinction between self-identification and identification by others (Dubar, 1992; Goffman, 1997). Self-identifications and identifications by others may not strictly coincide or interact with each other. Identifications by others can exert pressure on the self- identifications and vice versa.

Goffman (1959) defined the self as consisting of multiple social roles, which are constantly and continuously shaped by others and situational norms. He explained that ourselves, and thus our presentations of self, are shaped by interactions with others and the social norms of the context in which we are presently engaged. Self-presentation is an exercise constantly engaged in on a daily basis, whether we are aware of it or not. Although each of us to a certain extent are autonomous beings, capable of choosing self-presentational strategies to perform for others, our actions are strongly influenced by the

presence of others and the context and or environment we find ourselves in (Goffman 1959).

The street children find themselves within this identification structure knowingly or unknowingly although it is informally created. This is because their desire to feel part of or be included in a particular context or environment clearly has linkages to their being identified, acceptable or accepted. The context under discussion here is the 'migrant', 'been to', 'successful' status which is achieved when they are able to cross over to Accra. The process becomes possible only after the initial move has been made to the land or region of possibilities. This affords them the opportunity to struggle to work, make some money and go back home as a success story.

This feeling of belonging and being included in discussions and activities undertaken by peers in their communities become possible after even one trip to Accra. As some of the migrant children explained, they had come to Accra because it was time for them to also be counted as having been to Accra before. To be counted among those who are capable of bringing some joy and hope to their families, as well as being identified as successful.

Within their social context, this is important to them and as such beneficial. For those who came from other social settings, it was their desire to succeed and make a living for themselves in order that whenever they go back home, no one will look down at them and describe them as failures.

Anthony explains:

Back home nobody thinks or knows that I'm in Accra. This is because I did not inform anyone about my departure. The next time they see me I will be a big boy, responsible and capable of looking after myself. When that happens no one, will disrespect me or see me as a child to be treated anyhow.

I will be my own boss and that is what I want, to be a successful person (14 year old from Twifo).

So their being identified as successful and part of existing bodies is relevant and of great importance to them. Children must also be understood within the context and social environment they find themselves. The prevailing social expectations they are socialized into plays a great role in their worldview and expectations of and about life. This is what largely informs them and aids them in taking decisions about their lives, existence, as well as to shape their thought patterns on what is the right or expected ideals to pursue.

Forming social networks or being part of a street youth group has been identified as a key component of street children's livelihood strategies. These networks serve as support in fulfilling basic needs of life like food, shelter and physical security. They also satisfy their emotional needs for companionship, closeness and protection and are an important source of identity (Swart-Kruger & Donald 1994b; Woodhead 1999). Social networks play an important role in learning to survive and they also offer protection against violence. Members of a network derive a feeling of belonging, and could be observed that the participants have strong solidarity among themselves (Schernthaner, 2011). As Conticini & Hulme (2007) stress, issues such as the social bonding that children experience on the street, the formation of urban sub-cultures and the evolution of their self-perception are significant in understanding the attachment that children develop to the street amidst their difficulties.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter looked at the social networks that street children employ or make use of when they embark on the street journey. Effort was made to capture what the children made use of in the area of networks before their decision to move and after they had made

the move to the streets. It was discovered that for most of the children, they had previous encounters with 'been to'/returnee town or village folk, their peers as well as some family relations. Their engagement with these people influenced their decision making process.

On the streets, the main group they found expression within was their friendship groups. These groups play a pivotal role in helping them maintain or gain grounds in the area they found themselves. With friendship, they bonded along age groupings, child mothers, as well as by education. They also found themselves among ethnic associations which they were able to identify and use to their benefit. Another group they found useful were along religious lines. These were Christian and Islamic groups. Each group patronized those they identified with all in the hope of making life less stressful, making their stay away from home easier and enabling them to adapt better.

What was absent in the study populations was the existence of gangs which the literature on street children makes clear is a way of making it on the street. The children in the study areas of Agbogloshie and Tema Station did not reveal any sign of gang activity.

Finally, the importance or relevance of the networks patronized by street children was explored and it revealed that the children sought companionship, financial support, emotional support, job placements and identification from their networks thus making their social networks a great resource to them.

These findings all go to show how the children manage to cope on the street in the midst of the challenges they encounter, bearing in mind that the strengths exhibited by the children on the street is worthy of recommendation and needed to be explored. It was convincing that these amongst others contribute to make the children resilient and

resistant to the myriad pressures that come to bear on their lives. They are strengthened in their vulnerability because of the support they give each other to help them adapt to the realities they are confronted with.



CHAPTER SEVEN

PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH STREET LIVING

7.1 Introduction

Children in street situations are exposed to a myriad of problems. These may be due to or emanate from the children themselves, the environment they find themselves in as well as being contributed by activities or occupational hazards. Reports from other countries present a gloomy picture of the problems and difficult situations encountered by children who find themselves living on the streets. These reports are not limited to developing countries but also occur in the developed West. Their living conditions are described as diverse and unstable. They are also reported to be exposed to victimization, drugs and alcohol (Wagner *et al.*, 2001).

This section of the thesis looks at the problems encountered by street living children in Accra because of their living conditions and livelihood activities. Findings presented are results emanating from interviews, observations, conversations as well as from the questionnaire survey.

Table 7.1 looks at data from the survey and participants were asked if they faced any problems in their day to day activities. About two thirds of respondents (74.2%) said they faced some problems while a quarter of respondents (25%) said they sometimes faced problems. One respondent however said no problems were encountered. The problems they faced included exploitation, rape, problems with shelter, attacks, theft, among others. It was further revealed that some of these problems were not a daily occurrence but experiences they are sometimes confronted with as explained by some of the respondents.

Table 7. 1: Percentage distribution of Problems Encountered by street children

	N=275	Percentage
Problems encountered		
Yes	204	74.2
No	1	0.3
Sometimes	70	25.5
Kind of problems		
Exploitation	122	44.5
Rape	16	5.8
Shelter	35	12.8
Attacks	38	13.9
Theft	46	16.8
Other	17	6.2

Source: Field survey (2013)

7.2 Culture Shock

Interviews and conversations with respondents revealed that most of them were gripped with their first problem immediately upon arrival. Besides having to sleep on the ground in the open amidst mosquitoes, other insects and ants, they had to grapple with independence. They only had themselves to deal with until they settle in properly with newly made friends or they find someone they can relate to from perhaps their hometown or village. This is one of the biggest hurdles they had to cross upon arrival in Accra.

Bernice's comments illustrates this point:

“When I came, it took me about two days to locate someone from my hometown I could identify with. I arrived on a Sunday at about 5pm. I was not able to find anyone because darkness fell very quickly and it was not possible to find anyone that day. The next issue was that over here, they wake up very early and come back late so it makes it extremely difficult to search for someone especially when you don't know specifically who you are looking for. So I only had myself to deal with while I asked around to locate someone who came from my hometown. When I eventually located one after two days, it made life a lot easier for me. Fortunately this was someone who was nice to me and helped me immensely”.

Aminu also said,

“I had serious problems settling in as I couldn’t believe that all the people I was seeing were actually sleeping on the bare floor. I asked myself whether I could do this but my sisters (ethnic associates) encouraged me and made me understand that all the people who come back home with nice things and are the envy of the town all go through the same processes. That is the life that one finds in Accra so to succeed one has to endure it. The truth is that I could tell from everything happening around me that it was true but I couldn’t understand why it had to be so. Why did one have to come on such a journey only to meet these conditions? When you start making some money for yourself then you start forgetting some of these problems. It’s not easy but there’s nothing we can do. This is what we have but (she pauses) it’s not good at all”.

For those who had been in Accra before as babysitters for older women, they had already been exposed to this situation so it was not a surprise to them. This was because they had already lived in that environment before. However, what they now faced had to do with their upkeep because this time they had to fend for themselves especially in terms of feeding and getting jobs to do. Children on the street find themselves faced with the challenge of having to live in the open without any accommodation and with some having to keep a rigid rising and sleeping routine. This is because for those residing at the terminal they have to wake up early enough and pack all their belongings which they kept in covered buckets and containers before the buses start arriving to pick and to drop off travellers. They also have to make way for the traders whose stalls they use as sleeping places as they will come to set up for the day. This routine compared to their lives back home poses a huge challenge which they try to deal with consoling themselves that they are not alone. Thousands more including adults find themselves in similar situations so with their purpose for travelling to Accra and the determination to succeed at the back of their mind, they encourage themselves and settle in to work. Their prayer being able to make the most out of what life has presented them with.

This situation differs from what happens in other places or what other studies have discovered. Some studies reported that children's movement to the street is a gradual process (Evans, 2004; the Street Child Project, 2014). They begin by running away for a day or two and return home. So by the time they decide on moving to the street permanently they have a fair idea what the street situation presents. The motivations for moving out of the home also differed from child to child (Aderinto, 2000; Aptekar, 1994; Aptekar, 1998; de Moura, 2005). For some, it may be a case of abuse, others adventure or the quest for freedom. So their arrival and stay on the street does not completely shock them to the point of wanting to go back but they were restrained because of what they have purposed to achieve.

Some studies also have the case of families moving or staying together on the streets and this also offers some guidance to the children thus taking away the shock of finding one being forced to live outside the usual expected protection and care which one gets when at home under secure shelter or accommodation (Harish, Leela, & Rajeesh, 2006). These accounts differ from that of the shock that one encounters with a migration that is more geared towards eking out a living with the purpose of returning and not with the permanency other accounts present (Harish *et al.*, Scanlon *et al.*). Also for most of the respondents, they had not the slightest idea that their destination would be on the streets, at terminals or shop front floors until they were confronted with the reality.

7.3 Accommodation

Accommodation was one of the issues mentioned by the children as a big problem. It was their desire that they would not have to be sleeping in the open at the mercy of mosquitoes and other insects as their sleeping places were nothing compared to having a roof over their heads. As described earlier, the children slept on the bare floor with some making

use of cardboards and mats as beddings, and for some, polythene draped around stalls to serve as improvised tents. For the children, this situation is problematic because they are exposed to conditions that promote ill-health, inadequate rest (because of their early rising in order to make way for those who use the terminal during the day i.e., the traders and vehicles), rains, theft, and fear.

7.3.1 Ill-Health

When left at the mercy of the mosquitoes as was quite evident on the arms, face and legs of some of the children, one could realize that getting malaria was not an unusual phenomenon. They also had other bites from ants and both flying and crawling insects.

Amin describes that it was one of her worst nightmares.

She says:

I usually come back very tired so when I fall asleep I'm not aware of the bites going on around me until I wake up and see the stings on my body. It is an uncomfortable thing especially when the rains set in but we get used to it, as this is the only option available. There is no place to run and seek shelter from these insects. (She pauses and smiles) If I am not deeply asleep then I try swiping at the mosquitoes with a cloth but this does not continue throughout the night, so once you stop they come back. This usually happens during the rainy season but is much better during the dry season.

Kwaku's encounter is not too different from Amin's encounter.

When we lie down to sleep, you can hear the mosquitoes buzzing around us but we are used to it. We slap our bodies as and when they settle on us but they usually feast on us as you can see on my arms and legs and on Kwame's too (pointing to his friend). We do not have any control over the mosquitoes especially. They enjoy our blood every night because of where we sleep.

The encounter with mosquitoes is likely to result in malaria or fever of a kind as the mosquitoes may bite a healthy child after biting an infected person and thus spread malaria. This could lead to serious complications if not properly treated so their problem with the insect bites is not an idle one.

7.3.2 Rains

Another problem posed by the lack of proper accommodation was the threat presented by rains. Because they sleep in the open, they are virtually at the mercy of the rains. Because data collection was started during the rainy season, it offered the opportunity to sometimes witness what the children described as terrible and inhuman. Because they sleep on the floor and have no roof over their heads, they usually have no option but to stand whenever it is raining until the rain ceases.

Ruki remarks:

The last time you were here when it started raining, even that one was not heavy as other days. You know we cannot lie down when it's raining, as we will only get soaked on the ground so it is better for us to move from our sleeping places. Sometimes we end up standing for hours until the morning when the rains do not cease. It is a sight to behold as both the young and old are seen scrambling for places to stand or perch as the rains come down heavily. Those who have the polythene wrap themselves with it to try and warm themselves up. It is usually very cold too when we enter this season.

The rains thus have a toll on the children as they have no roofs over their heads. Being exposed to this over a period may bring along some ailments associated with the cold temperatures including the spread of flu and other ailments.

7.3.3 Security

Theft and the fear of being robbed of the little they have is also a problem for the children. Sometimes they recounted that they were robbed when they were sleeping by the unscrupulous '*kubolor*' (thugs) boys. These were the periods or times when they distinguished themselves from other children where they attach deviant tags to those they identified as responsible for the thefts and bad encounters they experience. The '*kubolor*' boys were those the children labelled as responsible for the theft of their personal belongings as well as those responsible for causing harm to them when they confront them with their suspicions.

Ama had this to say:

The last time when we saw some of them loitering here, my friends and I raised an alarm and they were chased out. The following days, unknown to us they had planned to come and attack us and what they did was to stand afar off and throw stones at us. One of the stones hit the head of my friend and she started bleeding. It was so bad that we all had to contribute some money to send her to the hospital where she got some stitches.

Bernice added:

The '*kubolor*' boys also steal from us. Some of them have charms which they use to make one sleep deeper than usual. When that happens, they are able to reach beneath our clothes to our pockets and steal our money.

This story was shared by several children who said they had either experienced this or had friends who had gone through this experience where they were made to sleep deeply in order that the unscrupulous individuals could rob them of their earnings. Those who paid to sleep in wooden structures also shared some of these happenings.

Muna reports how she lost GH¢300 one day while her friends also lost various sums of money which they had saved from their daily activities. Muna was asked how they could lose such huge sums when they lock their doors whenever they step out. Muna responded:

These are not properly constructed houses with security gates. The thieves thus easily break the locks and enter the rooms. If you are lucky to have been moving around with your money you are safe otherwise you do not come back to meet it. Sometimes too these thieves use charms and break into our rooms while we are asleep at night. They then steal from all of us, at least those whose monies are discovered.

Curious as to why they kept such sums of money on themselves and did not make use of the widely used '*susu*' (micro savings) system used by most of the children, their response was that they were advised by some older ones that the '*susu*' collectors sometimes escaped with monies given them so not everyone patronized their services.

There were also reports of attempted rape by the '*kubolor*' boys since the cases they referred to were those they were caught and beaten but they do not know of any that the truant boys had succeeded in raping even though they do not rule it out. As far as they are concerned, it was possible they had succeeded in raping some people that they were not aware of.

7.4 Cost of Living

Living in Accra was also disclosed by the children as a tough one. In a place where one had to purchase everything, life becomes a hard nut to crack. Because their residences were not stable or permanent, they did not assume a permanent status in terms of their living arrangements. In explanation, they revealed that they were unable to settle for items like cooking utensils, stoves, refrigerators and other home appliances. Not even those in structures are able to do that. This makes the cost of living even higher because they

cannot save on meal preparation and preservation. They only buy prepared food because even if they were to get the required items they will be unable to get a place to put them. They also do not have access to electricity so they cannot store food even if they had enough space to accommodate a refrigerator.

Their challenge on livelihood expenses cuts across every activity they engage in from their rising to their settling down to sleep at night. They need money to execute every activity from using the bathrooms, toilet, drinking water, food to eat, laundry, etc. Things that ordinarily might have been freely available in their home communities have to be paid for in the city – water, food, toilets and bath. Those who were unable to meet all these needs have to settle for something else. For instance, some of the children sometimes took their baths outside and attended to nature's call in the open to avoid having to pay to do these appropriately.

Respondents were asked whether these problems they encountered were a regular occurrence or something that did not often take place. They explained that some of the problems were experienced seasonally. For instance, when it comes to the problem with rains, it is very problematic but most especially during the rainy season but outside the season they are not too worried about the rains. This makes it easier to cope with the situation. As for the theft and attacks, they are on and off because one couldn't tell when anyone will decide to attack. Problems faced by male street children and that of females were cross tabulated to identify what problem both groups found as most unfortunate. The output is shown in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2: Nature of Problems faced by male and female street children

	Exploitation	Percentage			Theft	Others
		Rape	Shelter	Attacks		
Sex						
Male	53.2	0.00	16	13.8	9.6	7.4
Female	40.0	8.9	11.1	13.9	20.6	5.6
Total	44.5	5.8	12.8	13.9	16.8	6.2

Source: Field Survey, (2013)

Exploitation was common amongst both male and female respondents as a significant proportion of males (53.2%) expressed that exploitation was a big challenge. Forty percent of females also described exploitation as a problem encountered regularly. Rape however was uncommon with the males as only females expressed fears concerning rape. More females encountered theft (20.6%) as compared to males (9.6%) while about 14 percent of both males and females were prone to attacks.

7.5 Relationship with Others

Respondents' relationship with others outside their work schedule was explored. This was done specifically, with regards to their relationship with the police, levy collectors and the public. Their relationship with the police was described as cordial by 60 percent of respondents, 5.8 percent of the children said it was strained, 31.6 percent were indifferent while 2.5 percent found them a bother. The streets are often associated with the acquisition of bad habits and children affirmed this situation when respondents admitted that some bad habits were acquired on the street. Some of the bad habits mentioned were smoking, stealing, prostitution, gambling, and alcoholism among others. These are acquired according to the children because of peer pressure, laziness, and some resulting from the absence of jobs.

Table 7.3 explored street children's relationship with others. Respondents' relationship with levy collectors was generally indifferent as was described by 50 percent of respondents.

Some respondents also saw the relationship as cordial with 14.9 percent seeing them as bothersome. It was explained that for those who tried to avoid paying the expected levy, they were usually at loggerheads with the collectors. Those who promptly paid their levy without excuses usually had no issues with the collectors. When asked about the general public, 52 percent of respondents said their relationship was good while 22.9 percent felt it was not so good while 0.2 percent described the relationship as very bad.

Table 7. 3: Relationship with others

	Frequency	Percentage
The Police		
N=275		
Cordial	165	60
Strained	16	5.8
Indifferent	87	31.6
Bothersome	7	2.5
Levy collectors		
Cordial	76	27.6
Strained	14	5.1
Indifferent	138	50.2
Bothersome	41	14.9
Other	6	2.2
General public		
Very good	13	4.7
Good	143	52.0
Not so good	63	22.9
With disdain	35	12.7
Bad	19	6.9
Very bad	2	0.7

Source: Field Survey (2013)

Relationship with the Police

Participants were also asked whether they encountered any threats or were harassed by the police or law enforcement agencies but unlike the occurrence in other countries, they had a problem-free encounter with the police in Accra. The children had not experienced any violent encounter with the police. No officer(s) had asked them to vacate their places of abode, neither were they confronted as engaging in illegal activities. Interviews and conversations with the participants suggested that they were just there to work; as such, they did not have any problems with the police because they did not indulge in activities that suggested or showed that they were engaged in illegal activities. In other studies in Kenya, Brazil, Columbia, Egypt, Nigeria etc. (Boyden, 1991; Scanlon et al., 1999; Nasir and Siddiqui, 2012), it has been shown that the street children in these countries were made to face brutalities and endure difficult and dangerous situations including being killed because they were seen as miscreants, troublesome, thieves, criminals, etc. They were thus subjected to a lot of abuse. The children at Tema Station and Agbogbloshie were free from police brutalities and they had not been subjected to any inhuman treatments as experienced by children in other parts of the world.

7.6 Health Seeking Behaviours of Street Children

Concerning the health of street children, the questionnaire survey also asked questions to help answer some of their health problems. Table 7.4 shows the health seeking behaviours of the children. It captures the common ailments they experienced, their health insurance status, measures they take when unwell and how they support themselves when unwell.

In response to whether they had any health problems, most of the children (64.8%) said they had health problems while 35.2 percent said they had no problems. Common

ailments experienced were malaria, headaches, rashes and bodily pains. When unwell about 70 percent of respondents opt to go to the drug store or pharmacy for assistance. About 11 percent go to the hospital while traditional herbs are patronized by about 4 percent of the children.

Those who engaged in self-medication also constituted about 13.5 percent. Children were also asked their health insurance status and about 75 percent were not registered with the scheme. However, 25 percent said they were insured and of this number 69.1 percent said their insurance status had been helpful to them when unwell.

Table 7.4: Health Seeking Behaviours of street children

	Frequency	Percentage
Do you have any health problems? N=275		
Yes	177	64.8
No	98	32.5
Most common ailments experienced		
Malaria	106	38.5
Headaches	75	27.3
Rashes	25	9.1
Bodily pains	57	20.7
Others	5	1.8
What do you do when unwell?		
Hospital	30	10.9
Drug store	193	70.2
Traditional herbs	10	3.6
Self-medication	37	13.5
Other	5	1.8
Health insurance status		
Insured	69	25.1
Not insured	206	74.9
Who supports you when unwell?		
Friends	198	89.2
Associations	5	0.7
Religious group	19	1.4
Other people	53	8.6

Source: Field survey (2013)

When unwell, they got assistance from friends, associations, religious groups among others. About 90 percent of respondents got assistance or support from friends which goes to show that they depend a great deal on each other in their times of difficulty.

Most of the children interviewed had all faced ill health at certain points in time. Majority of their health concerns centred on bodily pains and headaches because of the activities they engaged in. Some male respondents at Agbogbloshie faced conditions related to catarrh and colds probably because of the activities engaged in in that part of town. This is in reaction to the chemicals inhaled in the scrap/metal burning process. Indeed one of the research assistants was taken ill after coming into contact with the process. Some of the materials being burnt contain poisonous substances so the constant exposure of the children to these chemicals is likely to have long term effects which will greatly affect them in the near future.

E-waste and Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) describe discarded appliances that use electricity. E-waste refers to waste electronic goods, such as computers, televisions and cell phones, while WEEE includes traditionally non-electronic goods such as refrigerators and ovens (Robinson, 2009). E-Waste has been identified as chemically and physically distinct from other forms of industrial waste; it contains both valuable and hazardous materials that require special handling and recycling methods to avoid environmental contamination and detrimental effects on human health (Cobbing, 2008).

E-waste is not harmful to just the environment but also detrimental to the health of humans especially children who are exposed to the toxins emanating from the waste. Exposure to e-waste is hazardous to children, as these toxins inhibit the development of

the brain, nervous system and reproductive system. They suffer from toxic substances emanating from the burning of used and discarded electronic cables from the dumpsite. McAllister (2013) asserts that exposure to toxic metals, such as lead, results mainly from the open-air burning methods used to retrieve valuable components such as gold. Combustion from burning e-waste creates fine particulate matter, which is linked to pulmonary and cardiovascular disease. Children in Gaiyu, China, were found to have higher blood levels and lower cognitive abilities than other children who were not exposed to these chemicals (Huo *et al*, 2007).

7.6.1 Self-Medication

Some study participants revealed that whenever they faced any health challenges they go and buy medication from drug stores or wherever medication is sold. Self-medication seemed to be a normal thing for them because they did not find anything wrong with this practice. This was because according to the respondents the hospitals only waste their time since they are not attended to early enough. The other problem had to do with the money that they had to pay in exchange for health care. Because of these, they opt to buy medicine when they are unwell instead of going through that long process.

Azara said emphatically:

‘I will not go to the hospital when I can buy from the drug store. Hospital is time wasting because one ends up spending the whole day there. The last time we went to the hospital when our friend was seriously sick, we spent the whole day there before we got to see the doctor. They do not take their time to attend to us, in the end we still had to go and buy the medicine from the drug store even though we had paid some money for her card and we thought it would cover everything. So when I am not feeling well I will go straight to buy my medicine and not pick a car to go to the hospital’.

The stress or emphasis on costs incurred when hospitals are patronized naturally led the researcher to enquire about respondents' health insurance status and why they were not making use of it. Most of the children simply shrugged their shoulders when this question was posed to them. For most of them, the National Health Insurance (NHIS) card is simply not functional because when it is taken to the hospitals they still have to pay some money so it loses its validity.

Anita recalled what some of her friends had encountered:

When the NHIS (National Health Insurance) cards are taken to the hospital, it is not regarded or used, as one would expect. Rather you are made to pay for the service to be given you. When you tell them you want to use your health insurance then you are asked to stand aside and wait, you will never be attended to if you insist on using the health insurance.

On the other hand, Bernice said:

We do not use the health insurance here because for those of us who registered in the North we are unable to use our cards here. We are supposed to register again in order to make it functional, but even that is no encouragement because from what some of my friends have told me, the cards do not give them any advantage so left to me alone, it's not worth it. It will not be beneficial to me.

These reactions were not just by the two singled above but for a majority of the respondents. The other reaction that not registering on the scheme was not because of anything. It was just that they did not have any particular reason for not registering even though they had heard and knew about the health insurance and its usefulness. This was especially so on the part of the males.

Kuuku, when asked about why he had not enrolled on the National Health Insurance simply shrugged and retorted:

It is not because of anything. I don't often fall sick and the few times I have been unwell it was either because of a headache or a catarrh and these do not require my going to a hospital so...I will not need it for anything.

Kwame also saw himself as very fit and not a weakling so did not require the use of the health insurance. He says

'Oh! I do not fall sick so I do not need it. It's not because of anything, just me'.

These remarks were made when questions on health seeking behaviour and the patronage of drug stores and self-medication were posed to respondents. So when it comes to their health conditions the children were quite relaxed and not too worried about having serious challenges because although it is expensive they are not forced to go to the hospital. They have an alternative which is their choice of drug stores and chemical sellers. These are cheaper options and less stressful to deal with than going to the clinic. However, when the ailment becomes critical then they will visit the hospital because that is when it becomes a stage when a doctor's advice will be required. Children's choice of health care and income was explored with a cross tabulation of the income of respondents and their choice of care when they are not feeling well. Table 7.5 shows the choices and options available to the street children.

Table 7.5: Income and choice of health care

Choice of Health Care (%)					
	Hospital	Drug store	Herbs	Self- med.	Other
Earnings (daily) (GH¢)					
1-5	20.4	65.3	4.1	10.2	0
6-10	9.7	79.6	2.2	8.6	0
11-15	4.9	82.9	2.4	9.8	0
16-20	9.3	79.1	2.3	9.3	0
21	10.2	38.8	8.2	32.7	10.2
Total	10.9	70.2	3.6	13.5	1.8

Source: Survey data (2013)

Findings, as seen in Table 7.5 indicate that irrespective of their earnings, going to the drug store was the popular choice. It did not matter the amount earned but rather dependent on the severity of the ailment. For those who earned between GH¢ 1-5 daily, about 65 percent chose to go to the drug store when sick; similarly, 32 percent of those who earned above GH¢ 21 also used the self-medication option. The drug store is the most used option for the street children when unwell as overall, 70 percent of all respondents used the drug store. Some respondents also opted for the hospital and some explained that this depended on the referral sometimes by the drug store that they go to the hospital. Other options available to the children were self-medication and the use of herbs in the treatment of diseases. The drug store and herbs are also kinds of self-medication but the former is orthodox while the latter is not. The children had the option to choose which of these to use.

7.6 Conclusion

Problems encountered by children who live and work on the streets have been explored in this section of the thesis. When one considers childhood with all the challenges faced even within the traditional and acceptable home setting, then it is expected that outside these settings life will be very challenging. Challenges and stresses are likely to increase and the researcher was exposed to these from the frequent interaction, discussions, and conversation with the children.

The study revealed that problems the children faced include cultural shock, accommodation problems leading to ill-health, being drenched by rains especially during the rainy season, security problems as they are usually robbed of their monies and their personal belongings as well as the high cost of living. Asking questions on the health seeking behaviours of street children, it was discovered that visiting the drug store was

the popular option that the children relied on. This was an option that was cheaper and faster compared to time spent in hospitals.



CHAPTER EIGHT

INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND INTERVENTIONS

8.1 Introduction

Institutions play a myriad of roles in a country based on what it is mandated to do and the resources available to them. Just as there are institutions set apart to perform various functions these are put into special categories in order that specific tasks can be performed. This thesis sought to look at one category of institutions and this specifically is geared towards those which are responsible for children. Children are gifts that families and countries alike have been blessed with and if the children will grow and take up the affairs of this country as is expected, then measures must be put in place to ensure that their future is secure.

This section of the thesis, therefore, set out to explore the role institutions played in the lives of street children.

8.2 Children's View of Institutions

Making use of interviews, conversations and observation the children's knowledge of, and the role institutions have played in their lives were interrogated for clearer understanding. The children were asked whether they knew any institution that catered for children in general and specifically street children. The children interviewed clearly did not know any institutions that were responsible for children. This question was asked in different ways to be sure that they indeed did not know any such institution. The researcher then resorted to mentioning some of the institutions to try and elicit some response from the children. A few then admitted they had heard of some of the profiled institutions before but did not know what exactly took place there. Some responses were:

Akyaa

‘Ahhh...giggles...I have heard of that one (referring to CAS) before but I do not know what they do there at all’.

Kumi said:

‘Yes I know that one (referring to the Department of Social Welfare) but I don’t know where it can be found and I did not know they were responsible for children’.

Sammy also responded:

‘I have not heard of them before, (referring to CAS, CFC, and DSW) no one has mentioned them to me before too’.

These were some of the comments respondents made regarding their knowledge of institutions. Beside the government institutions identified as the profile of institutions suggests, NGOs which could be found around the study areas were identified and included and beside the Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS) which has Agbogbloshie as part of their targeted field sites, the children at Tema Station simply had no idea what these institutions were involved in. One reason identified as responsible for their uninformed status has to do with the motive or rationale of the children when moving to the street. Because their reason for being where they are revolves around work, they do not make time in their schedules for anything else. The second identified block has to do with the choice of areas the field workers patronize. CAS for instance had not sent field workers to Tema Station for years now. The CAS field workers explained that over their twenty years of work in the arena of street children, they have come to understand that the children at Tema Station have mind-sets that are very different from those found in other areas. So gradually, they have stopped visiting Tema Station because the children do not understand what it is that they stand for and represent. They however still visit Agbogbloshie and that explains why some of the children at Agbogbloshie admitted to having heard of CAS.

The questionnaire survey also revealed that most of the street children (62.2%) did not know about institutions responsible for children's welfare (Table 8.1). This shows that advocacy and education by institutions needs to be strengthened in order that children will be educated extensively on the opportunities available to them and how to access them.

What kind of provisions or interaction had the children experienced, witnessed or been part of? Some respondents were witnesses to some interventions by some institutions but had themselves not experienced any such service delivery.

Table 8.1: Children's Knowledge of Institutions and Interventions

	Frequency	Percent
Institutional knowledge		
N=275		
Yes	104	37.8
No	171	62.2
What Institution do you know of?		
NGOs	45	16.4
Social Welfare	24	8.7
DOVVSU	6.0	2.2
CAS	23	8.4
Chance for Children	2.0	0.7
Other (specify)	5.0	1.8
Total	105	38.2
No idea	170	61.8
Have they done anything for you before?		
Yes	30	10.9
No	75	27.3
Total	105	38.2
No idea	170	61.8
If yes what exactly		
Financial support	13	4.7
Accommodation	3.0	1.1
Other (specify)	14	5.1
Total	30	10.9
No support received	245	89.1
Did you like the help they offered?		
Yes	28	10.2
No	2.0	0.7
Total	30	10.9
No support received	245	89.1

Source: Survey data, (2013)

Twenty eight respondents (10.2 %) admitted that the assistance they got was useful while 2 (0.7%) did not find the service useful. This means that if institutions opened up and became more visible to the street child population, the children will derive a lot of benefits from their interaction with them (Table 8.1). Most respondents however, (89.1) had no support from the institutions so couldn't access the relevance of assistance given.

8.3 Institutional Provisions

One of the areas explored by way of ascertaining the children's knowledge of institutions was to ask questions on what programs had been held for them over the period that they had been around. Which people had visited them and what had been discussed with them? Apparently, much of what had been done over the period had been what other researchers had come there to do especially foreigners. The foreigners they revealed only came to ask them questions as had been done by this research team. Some of them however recalled what they had been told about some people who wrote their names and promised them sewing machines which never materialized. This was also mentioned at Agbobloshie when this same question was asked. Here, it was disclosed that the children were bussed back home with the promise of setting them up in training and business but unfortunately most of them came back to hustle in Accra because the machines needed to commence training never reached them, neither did they receive any capital to commence any business. They also only referred to the government, as they did not know which institution specifically took up this project. This story was corroborated by the Department of Children in the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection. It also confirmed that the children were not telling lies.

As far as the children were concerned, there had not been any intervention by any institution that they were aware of. What they described and what was witnessed one

night by the research team was the distribution of condoms alongside education on Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) by Marie Stopes International. Profiled institutions only had continuous contact with the children who patronized their centres and participated in their activities regularly. One of the NGOs had the age limit for accepting children pegged at 13. The children at Tema Station were close to two of these institutions but they did not interact with them in any way because of perhaps the reasons earlier outlined explaining why children at Tema Station seemed to have been left out of the field workers territories. None of the children admitted knowing either Chance for Children (CFC) or the Street Academy.

Some of the children at Agbogbloshie who had been in touch with CAS described their experience with them as good. This is because they were free to participate in any activity of their choice even though it was monitored. This was done for classroom activities to the outdoor games they played. They also had sessions where educators were brought in to discuss issues pertaining to adolescence. I witnessed one of these sessions on one of my visits to the center. They were also given some lessons on personal hygiene; some got a change of clothes and a warm meal.

Thirteen year-old Kingsley comments:

Going to CAS is always fun time even though sometimes the aunties make my friends and me angry because of the way they treat us. But when I go there I learn a lot about how to care for myself, we are given classroom lessons and there's time when we can play. The play time is my favourite part of the day followed by the meal times.

So even though interventions were not brought to the children at their sleeping places or abodes, a well laid program on children and their activities were properly laid out provided one would take the opportunity to visit either Chance for Children or the Catholic Action for Street Children.

8.4 Success Stories

Owing to the fact that no concrete program had been rolled out by any particular institution for the children except what the NGOs had at their various centres, the children found it difficult to assess whether or not programs were successful because they did not directly benefit from them. This was especially for those at Tema Station. They had not experienced any interventions beside the unsuccessful ones that their predecessor had told them about.

8.5 Institutional provisions/interventions

The Department of Social Welfare has a desk for children and a special desk for street children. During the initial visits to the Department, staff who were to support and assist in the information required or needed were absent from their desks. The explanation was that they were on the field visits. This was exciting but it was short-lived when instead of receiving information on field activities over the period on the street children, it was taken as a census on street children. The interpretation deduced was that the department itself did not deal directly with the street children. They only assisted in the census of street children.

Although the Department of Social welfare has shelters for deprived children, these are limited and do not include street children as it will be difficult to accommodate and cater for all the huge numbers that can be found in the streets.

8.5.1 Department of Children (Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection)

The Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection (MGCSP) has as its vision to protect the rights and welfare of children in Ghana. They also coordinate activities that

promote the rights and welfare of children in Ghana. Their involvement with children so far has not had much to do with street children specifically. The only activity they had in the past involving street children was their involvement in an exercise that registered some 'kayayei' in the year 2000. The 'kayayei' happen to have the highest number of child street dwellers. The rationale behind this exercise was to rally the children and to send them back home to their various towns and villages as well as to equip them with some training to enable them gain some skills to keep them in gainful employment. This exercise, therefore, was quite extensive, as they had to find out where each child was coming from and what they were interested in pursuing as a career. This desire to help the children off the streets did not become a reality, as budget expectations were never met. This dream thus became an illusion. That was the last encounter they had with street children. Their current target however is to engage and educate the street population on the importance of education and sending their children to school. Advocacy happens to be their sole focus whereas the Department of Social Welfare engaged in service provision.

The Department of Social Welfare has a desk for orphans and vulnerable children of which street children are included. As the focus of this study is solely on street children, the direction of questions zoned in specifically on issues related to street children. Here too, disappointment sets in, as expectations were not adequately met. The focus of the Department happened to be on trafficked and abused children. It will not be fair to accuse or blame the Department for inadequacy when they are not equipped with the necessary resources needed. But for the purpose of the study, these were findings that were uncovered. Staff at the Department said that as and when funds were available for projects they were carried out. The most recent exercise the department had with street children was the census of street children in 2012 with UNICEF, CAS, and Plan Ghana.

8.5.2 Shelters and drop-in centres

Although provision of shelters was applauded as a good and commendable thing, the only shelters available were that for trafficked and abused children. Shelters for street children have not been considered as necessary and the interviews made this evident.

The staff were surprised when the question was asked whether they had considered shelters and drop-in centres for street children.

Madam Boatemaa (staff of the Department of Children) said:

We have shelters but these shelters are for trafficked and abused children. They are kept in the shelters while their cases are being investigated into or when there is no information about their background (families, friends, home). But for street children no, we do not have any such thing in place for them. It is the NGOs who sometimes help them with such facilities. We do not have them.

It was quite clear that some of the roles of the Department of Children and that of Social Welfare were overlapping. Although the Department of Children described its role as more of advocacy, they still undertook exercises that went beyond advocacy. On the other side the Department of Social Welfare did not just do service provision because they were handicapped financially and had the Department of Children playing similar roles. From the interaction with the two Departments it will be ideal for the two of them to come together when drawing their programmes not just those involving street children but all other children so that when one Department takes up advocacy the other can deal with the service provision or they could blend the two to achieve more successes. From the interviews, because activities were not clearly outlined, sometimes funding came to either Department for activities that should be undertaken by the other. This overlap in roles of the two departments was described by staff of the advocacy unit of the Department for Children as breeding discontent amongst the two Departments. This hopefully may change in the near future, as both departments are to come together within the MGCSF.

Continuous and constant interactions with street children have thus become the preserve of Non-Governmental Organizations like Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS), Chance for Children (CFC), and Street Academy.

8.5.3 Activities for Street Children

CFC's activities as outlined in their profile cuts across basic home grooming lessons to classroom activities. They accept children of ages of 6 – 14. This is because they wish to work with children who are still able to listen and work under guidance. At age 15, it is believed that characters formed will be more difficult to change thus making training a lot more difficult. CFC believes that it is not enough to decide to join the group but documents are filled formally and commitment by the child is vital in their dealings. The child is expected to take a decision himself or herself, to move away from the street and take a different path. This process is made possible with the help of their Street Department which is made up of professional social workers.

Expectations

Suggestions and expectations for street children were high and this requires the efforts of all and sundry. The Deputy Director at CFC was positive that a multi-sectorial approach is required in the next few years to help address the street child phenomenon. This approach is aimed at trying to revive the traditional system of child care where extended families had keen interests in the upbringing and welfare of children because of the desire to protect and maintain family names. This he was certain would deal with the perception of wayward children being traced back to families and society frowning on antisocial behaviours put up by children. Children from Accra on the streets are very few as most of the children in street situations have their towns and villages outside Accra.

Policies may be made but the enforcement will be another issue that needs careful attention. When policies are made but the resources needed to execute them are absent, they only become ‘white elephants’. Policies that are drawn up must be accompanied by the necessary action and the zeal to see it carried through. The children’s act amongst others require resources and professional will to ensure that all that is put in place for children is given the utmost attention required in order that children get the full benefit of what the act stipulates. The same applies to what is put in place for orphans and vulnerable children.

On the issue of providing shelters for children, it was seen as one of the solutions but also seen as a potential for increasing the numbers of street children. As described by one of the directors at CFC:

During the rainy season, we have discovered that the number of children decline because they usually return home during that period and they increase in the dry seasons. If hostels or shelters are encouraged, they will invite others to also come because they will then have places to sleep and will not be deterred in any way. A lot more needs to go into preparing for that kind of thing.

In other country reports, however, shelters are made available to the children to give them the option of a safe place to lay their heads at night. These shelters among other things provide meals, toilet and bath for children’s use as well as clothing so they could keep warm and neat (Lugalla & Kibassa, 2003). So provision of shelters will help the children escape from the chills, ailments and attacks they may be exposed to when sleeping outside on city streets.

8.5.4 Target of Existing Programmes

Profiled institutions were asked their targets or rationale backing the programs they introduce. This was relevant because one of the principles being explored, is not to see the

children as vulnerable and needing to be sent back home. The children are being viewed based on the strengths they possess as individuals, which has helped them to survive and perhaps succeed on the streets outside the home where children generally are expected to be. This is also relevant because evidence emanating from interviews, discussions and observation shows that the children are simply in Accra to work to make some money so even though they do not live at home with parents it is not that they are deviant and have refused to go home. With the exception of a few who came to Accra and did not inform parents about where they were going, almost all of them have the blessing of their parents or guardians to come and get some work to do.

The NGOs as part of their administrative mechanism have in place structures for handling and organizing the children. Their targets are two-fold. For all three institutions, their wish is to eliminate children on the street to the barest minimum as they acknowledge that it is impossible to get rid of all the children. Their programmes thus are structured to meet the needs of children as well as to target and help those who need to be helped off the street. Some of them have reintegrated some of the children with their families and because it was not forced and willingly accepted by the children based on their peculiar issues, they were successful. They engage in regular follow up programmes in order to keep track of the progress of children who have been returned to their families.

Another issue that needs careful consideration is the issue of the numbers of children on the street. Because the children outnumber greatly the resources available, it requires a lot more than just the capability of a few NGOs to get their attention. The numbers that get to the available institutions are just a few and they can only attend to a few of them so although the cause is being supported, it is not enough. Their activities thus are set in place and formally organized such that even though the children are extensively engaged

on a daily basis, administrators do not take everyone but consider those that are viable within their limited resources. That is the reason why they require that children who use their facilities and wish to be sponsored to go far in diverse vocations and professions must show commitment to the cause they have chosen.

Some institutions too, especially the government institutions aim purposely to send the children back home to their families. Children who are on the streets need to be understood based on how they appreciate their conditions and strive to succeed or make it though it is tough on them. It will be prudent for institutions to get the children to understand them and to be drawn into their vision for them in order to get them to cooperate with them. If they are forced to do certain things then it will not be successful because they will not understand and thus will not respond positively even though the rationale for whatever program may not be negative.

When promises are not fulfilled over a period, it makes it difficult for new ones to be believed. Because the desire is to send them to their villages without anything to fall back on, the children always find ways of getting back and with the permission of parents and guardians. Ever since that drive by government institutions to get the children to go back home failed, nothing specific has been put in place for street children by governmental institutions (MGCSP and the Department of Social Welfare).

However, on the 5th of February 2014 a member of Parliament brought up for discussion the plight of street children especially the '*kayayei*' on the floor of Parliament. Other members added their voice and the Minister of the MOGCSP was invited to respond to the issues that had been raised. This interaction was keenly followed and the Minister's response is summarized below.

In her response on the 27th of February, the Minister made it clear that the phenomenon was a developmental challenge spanning various sectors. She mentioned some of these challenges as rural - urban migration, climate change and tradition and cultural values. She believed that if living standards are improved for residents in supply areas especially the three Northern regions, the phenomenon will gradually come to a halt. A Two-Pronged Rescue Plan (TPRP) for specifically the '*kayayei*' was expected to take off in 2014 and this was designed to get the '*kayayei*' off the urban areas.

The first phase involved the identification and registration of the children in order to develop a database. This will be piloted in Accra and replicated in the other regions where the children abound. The information generated is expected to aid the Ministry on the proper intervention methods to use in addressing the issues.

The Ministry will also explore the possibility of including the children under social intervention programs specifically cash transfers such as the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP).

These responses based on historical antecedents are not too far from the usual paper work that is put forth and never implemented. The identified target of this exercise is also one directional, to get the children to go back to their homes. This is a feat that even developed countries have not been able to achieve. What is identified as odd and needing reconsideration is the choice of using an Asian model which is deemed successful without considering mechanisms that have been put in place by other countries in the sub-region. Again, although a three pronged approach is mentioned, only two were outlined in the Minister's presentation.

8.6 The future of street children

All profiled institutions were asked what they saw the future of the child street population to be. A lot of commitment is expected from government if this cause is to work. Some of the field workers (of NGOs) complained about how they were constantly being cautioned if not harassed by the Department of Social Welfare for usurping their position.

“The Department of Social Welfare is part of the reason why we have even reduced the number of field trips we embark on. This is because they complained that we are doing things that show that we are taking over their roles, duties and responsibilities. We were accused that we are not social workers so we should not behave as if we are professionals in the field. Meanwhile we have on board or as part of our team practicing social workers. The Department acts and talks as if they do not see the children we are working with but ironically some of the children sleep in front of their premises and they do not find anything wrong with it. It’s just too bad that these things have to be battled when we need to work to support each other for the same purpose, to achieve the same things, the safety, security and welfare of street children”. (CAS Field worker)

Institutions are thus identified as working in isolation without effective collaboration taking place. There is no enforced guide on how the children need to be handled by the institutions or how institutions should operate in relation to the government’s description of an acceptable mode of operation. This describes what was discussed earlier about the overlapping roles of governmental institutions breeding tension and mistrust within the ministries and various Departments. What is evident is that government is not in a position to take over from all connected institutions to handle this on their own. This stems from the unavailability of resources as NGOs also seek for funding externally even though they do get some support internally to support their activities.

These findings emphasize the urgent need for stakeholders to come together in collaborative efforts in order to enhance the results of their labour. The need to build and enhance capacity development for stakeholders to ensure meaningful progression in their

dealings with children in street situations cannot be overlooked, as this will greatly improve the position of street children in the country. Aransiola (2013), in his study on providing sustainable supports for street children in Nigeria, arrived at similar conclusions all drawing attention to the need for countries in the sub-region to look within the context children find themselves today and identify solutions that best fit the problems taking into account the peculiar circumstances of the children. Drawing the categories and differentiating one category from the other appropriately instead of bundling them all in the bracket will also help in drawing different programs for the various categories. Most of the children sampled in this study are not typical street children thus meaning that the solutions to their problems should be distinctly separate from those belonging to other categories. Their needs may be similar but not entirely the same. It is important that the ‘*kayayei*’ as well as scrap collectors are distinguished from other categories of street children especially when the discussion is about the Ghanaian case.

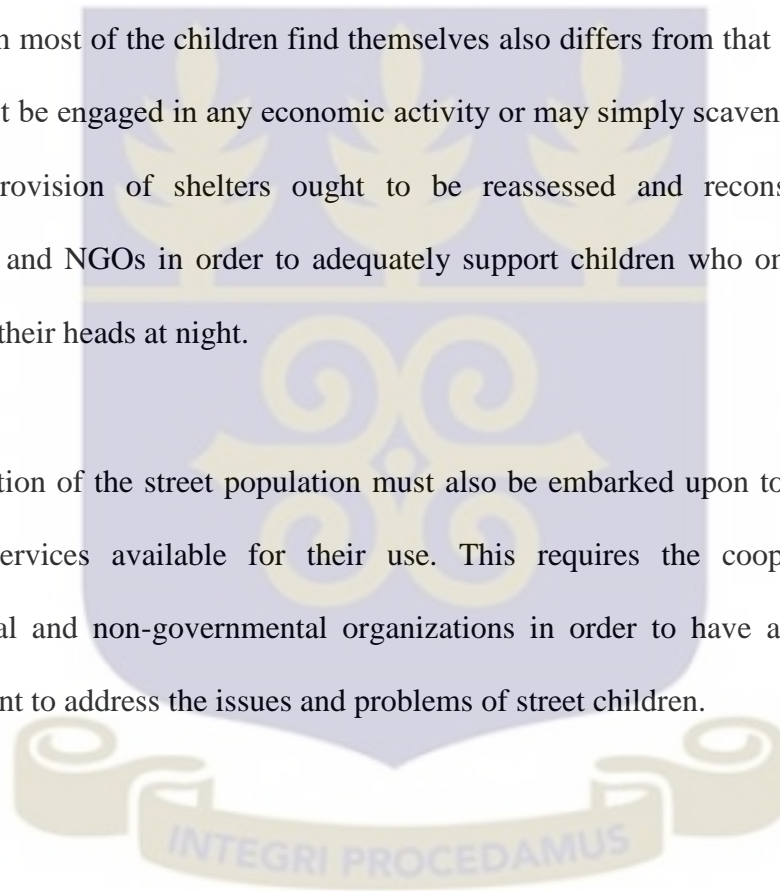
8.7 Conclusion

It was concluded that institutions are working hard to support children who find themselves in street situations. However, the numbers exceed by far the strengths and capabilities of institutions and organizations that seek to support them. This is even more challenging when there are different categories of these children on the streets of Accra. Most of the activities and programs rolled out to support street children are done by non-governmental organizations since government often times do not have the resources to embark on these programs themselves.

It is however important to note that drop-in centres for children are woefully inadequate because it is usually one center to an NGO and this must be improved upon. It will be useful to have more drop-in centres so that more access will be given to children who may desire

this service. Shelters are also not readily available to the children thus making their stresses more profound. Shelters have been made available by some NGOs to children they have observed as ready and willing to give up life on the streets. Shelters, hostels, or cheap accommodation for the children must not be tied to leaving the street, as some of the children are street children simply because of their sleeping places and not the activities engaged in. The children in this study may cease to be called street children if and only if their sleeping places could be changed because the activities they engage in are services that are needed. The situation most of the children find themselves also differs from that of street children who may not be engaged in any economic activity or may simply scavenge from peoples' leftovers. Provision of shelters ought to be reassessed and reconsidered by both government and NGOs in order to adequately support children who only wish to get a place to lay their heads at night.

More education of the street population must also be embarked upon to make known to them the services available for their use. This requires the cooperation of both governmental and non-governmental organizations in order to have a solid and more effective front to address the issues and problems of street children.



CHAPTER NINE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Introduction

Children and childhoods have been given considerable attention on various platforms globally. This purpose of this study was to explore the livelihood strategies of street children in Accra. This thesis essentially presents an expansion to the literature on street children in Ghana, contributes to policy initiatives, and will advance further research involving street children. Research questions were answered with data taken from a questionnaire survey, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and observation. Related questions explored were the social networks utilized by street children, problems and challenges experienced, and the role of institutions and organizations that are responsible for children. This section starts with an overview of theories used and their relevance after application.

9.2 Theoretical Understanding of the Findings

The use of social capital and the New Social Studies of Childhood (NSSC) in this study served as a guide for exploring and explaining the livelihood strategies of street children in Accra. The framework used gave a structure for the interview guide and questionnaires that outlined and identified the relevance of the causal factors, mediating factors, and the outcomes of the livelihood strategies of street children. The components of the framework were the children's personal characteristics, institutional support, livelihood activities, social networks and income (Figure 1).

All the components of the framework were seen to have some association with the street children and their livelihoods. The personal characteristics of the children had direct

linkages and influence on their livelihood activities, social networks and institutional support. Children's age, sex, educational level and parental characteristics influenced the children's decision making processes. The kind of livelihood activities undertaken and their social networks was a two-way process. This is because their networks affected their livelihood activities and vice versa. Institutional support also affected the likely livelihood activities the children undertook.

The findings indicate that although education is expected generally to elevate the status of individuals including income and aspirations, this was not so with the street children studied. The children's educational level did not affect their options and activities on the street. This was because there were limited options so whether one is educated or not you engage in the same activities which yielded similar results in income. Street living required some skill and a ready-to-work personality in order to survive. Age, sex, and ethnicity greatly influenced the kind of livelihood activity chosen and the networks that the children were part of. Their networks were mainly based on friendship usually along the lines of age, ethnicity and sex. Children's personal characteristics thus played a major role in their livelihood choices and outcomes. This evidently explained the values that unconsciously children attached to these characteristics they possessed.

The findings suggested that interactions with institutions enhanced the livelihood choices of street children. The mediating factors (networks, institutional support, livelihood activities) in turn predicted the outcomes of children's activities which in this framework (Figure 1) is income. Income was measured in terms of wages earned equivalent to the daily minimum wage (DMW) and above. The children chose their activities based on the availability and the easiest options available to them. This revealed that they had limited options and these options were also dependent on the network circles they belonged to.

Income was thereby dependent on the effective functioning of the mediating factors which also drew significantly from the personal characteristics of the children. The results showed that some of the children engaged in supporting activities to supplement what they made from their main activities. So a lot more depended on the children being able to secure other activities to increase their income levels. Here females were identified as engaging in multiple activities as compared to the males who were mainly dependent on one activity.

Children's network activities and resulting outcomes confirmed benefits that Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988), Granovetter (1973), and Putnam (1995) assert. Reciprocity and trust was found to be a required ingredient of all networks. These were purposeful relationships that were established to generate benefits in short and long term so far as members of that network perform creditably as expected.

Similarly, the new social studies of childhood's (NSSC) relevance reflected in the children's daily activities. Although they were minors, and considered incapable of efficiently looking after themselves, the strengths inherent in the children came to the fore as they went about their activities. This suggests that children ought to be viewed with different lenses in different environments. Developed Western society's understanding of childhood differs from what pertains in the developing world. This confirms the assertion by Prout and James (1990) that childhood is socially constructed and not a natural phenomenon globally. Children play diverse roles in their socialization process and these mould and shape the children to be able to step into expected and acceptable roles in their society.

Children's ability to adapt positively in circumstances where difficulties are described as extreme demands some capabilities beyond that which is generally expected. These highlight the strengths inherent in children.

9.3 Summary

The nine chapters of this thesis sought to answer the research questions that the study is built around. Chapter two reviewed existing literature on street children, specifically, at the presentation of street children globally. It also looked at existing and accepted categories of street children, definitions and how they differ across borders in order to understand the children within the context and environment which they find themselves.

Chapter three reviewed theories identified as relevant to the study. Two theories reviewed and applied are The New Social Studies of Childhood (NSSC) and Social Capital. The NSSC gives a new dimension to childhood studies. It goes beyond social constructions of childhood and draws on the ability and competence of children thus highlighting the strengths and capabilities of children. The NSSC has as part of its core tenets childhood as socially constructed. Here Corsaro (1997) and Qvortrup (2001) argue that childhood is like other socially constructed categories (particularly class) – a structural form or categories that are permanent and never disappears even though its members vary (Corsaro, 1997; Qvortrup, 2001). Another tenet the NSSC is built on is that children must be identified as social actors or individuals with agency. James & Prout (1997) described childhood agency as the ability to be active in the construction and determination of their own social lives.

Social capital was also relevant because of the interest in the networks utilized by street children. The essence of social capital as was adopted, adapted, and used, in this study, is

about establishing purposeful relationships and using them (these relationships) to generate benefits in short or long term.

The study employed by way of methodology a multi method design in triangulation making use of convenience, purposive and snowball sampling approaches. Qualitative data were collected using in depth interviews, focus group discussions, observation and participation in some activities undertaken by the children. The quantitative data were taken in a questionnaire survey. This was administered to 275 respondents.

9.4 Findings

The study revealed among other things that another category of street children exists which differs from what has been identified by or in previous studies. There is a group on the streets that are street living but this is not because they had nowhere going, abused, abandoned, or escaping from home due to large family sizes. These children primarily are migrant children from the Northern Region of Ghana. These are simply migrant workers and they were identified as children in street situations. This is because they primarily are job seekers who have their families, and homes to go back to. From interactions and observations, they are not in such dire conditions at home but are simply seeking greener pastures and find themselves sleeping at bus terminals and shop fronts because of inadequacy of cheap accommodation or hostels. This category cannot be lumped up with those who are homeless or have left home for reasons that have been discussed in the literature.

Street children in Accra specifically at Tema Station and Agbogbloshie had some main livelihood activities. These are *kayayei*; scrap collecting, cooks at local restaurants and food sellers. Beside these, they engaged in other supporting activities to serve as a back

up to their wages. These include assisting traders in their shops, packing and unpacking of goods, braiding hair, picking sachet rubbers to recycle, shop helps/attendants, hawking of food items and sale of sachet water. All these activities served as extra income to add up to their regular activities. Most of the children had a regular savings scheme (*Susu*) which all the children utilized. This was their only way of saving because they could not access the banks.

In the area of social networks, it was revealed that networks existed before children moved to the streets while other networks were formed or joined on the streets. Interactions with returnees, peers, return migrants and relatives exposed them to the prospects of life in Accra. These networks were useful to them financially, emotionally, in the area of occupation, offers companionship, serves as security.

The street children recounted problems they faced in their new 'homes' (on the street). Problems encountered included arrival shock, accommodation problems thus exposing them to rains, insecurity, and ill-health, coupled with the high cost of living. Their health seeking behaviours were also explored and this showed that the children relied more on self-medication than going to the hospitals for treatment. This was because they found the hospitals as time wasting and they were not promptly attended to. They were not too concerned about the National Health Insurance card but this was because they believed the card did not serve any useful purpose to them. They complained about card holders not being attended to promptly and still being asked to purchase medication outside the hospital. They found the waiting time at the health facilities problematic thus preferred visiting the pharmacies for over the counter drugs.

Institutional programs and the target of these programs were also explored. Children interviewed in the study did not have much knowledge about institutions and they did not

know that they could actually approach certain institutions for assistance. This was because there was no mechanism in place to educate children about opportunities they could utilize. Although some of the institutions like the Department of Children under the Gender Ministry admit they are into advocacy, they did not deal directly with street children. The children therefore, were not exposed to firstly the existence of these institutions, and secondly, to the opportunities that were available to them.

The institutions profiled in this study were the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGSP), the Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS), Chance for Children (CFC), and Street Academy. These institutions though are doing their best are still handicapped in many ways as they are overwhelmed by the numbers of children on the street and their diverse needs.

9.5 Limitations

Like most studies, this study had some limitations. The limitations of this study included recruitment and mode of data collection and sampling. This study was unable to use random sampling as intended owing to the population being studied and their locations. Recruitment methods were changed in order to have a larger sample size. Convenience and snowball sampling was therefore employed to recruit participants who were willing to participate in the survey. Convenience sampling though popular in survey research, decreases external validity thus limiting the generalizability of study results. The results of this study therefore should be interpreted with some caution.

9.6 Policy Implications

Loop holes in the management of the phenomenon of street children that must be acknowledged and worked on lie primarily with parents and guardians. The focus and

concentration of government is on the children but they do not live in a vacuum. If the phenomenon will be reduced to the barest minimum, then parents ought to be included as targets of policy on street children.

The phenomenon of street children has been researched in Ghana for decades. Many programs have been put in place for children over the years and although street children have been added to orphans and vulnerable children in Ghana, the needs of each group of vulnerable children are different from the others so they must be separated. So far, since the street children and street living became an issue for national consideration no policy has been specifically put in place to address the needs of street children. It will be easier to address this phenomenon if there was a policy document in place to guide the process. Stakeholders must take into considerations the various categories of the street children and their peculiar needs in order to effectively tackle the phenomenon. A one size fits all approach will not be helpful. Care also ought to be taken in order not to politicize the street child phenomenon as that may only deepen their woes. It is also important that the kayayei are not identified as the only street children since there are some other categories that have been identified. All must be given the necessary care and attention required.

9.7 Implications for Development

The street child phenomenon has a great impact on a nation's development and Ghana is no exception. Accra being the capital city is the worst affected by this phenomenon. Street children usually congregate in open spaces and because they are often found in places identified as illegal residences a lot of challenges ensue.

Poverty

The implications of streetism on development cannot be discussed without discussing poverty. Poverty manifests in terms of the lack of adequate housing or shelter, food,

clothing, destitution, deprivation and impoverishment. Most issues confronting children on the streets are founded on poverty. Most children on the streets would not be there if their parents or guardians had enough to adequately cater for them. Their presence clearly tells the story of a nation that has not succeeded in its quest to reduce poverty levels. Much has been done but more is still required of government, institutions as well as parents and guardians. If conditions in the homes of the children meet their expectation and needs, they will not decide to embark on this journey. This will not be the story for even those who go to the streets in big cities to make a living because they may be able to find other activities to engage in where they come from under the supervision of their parents.

Social Protection and Child Development

Children who live on the street create problems for social security and protection. It gives a clear indication that social protection has not been given to the children. In spite of the strengths that children exhibit by being able to independently care for themselves in the absence of parents, they also face developmental challenges. When children are exposed to conditions that are traumatic, it may result in some psychological problems. Children also are exposed to hazardous conditions on the street which may lead to disability or some other challenge and this affects their life in several ways. Basic education is a resource that all individuals ought to partake in order to be able to compete adequately wherever one finds himself or herself. When children find themselves on the street they often times are denied this opportunity thus restricting their opportunities in future. Children who are the future leaders may not realize their full potentials if they are not encouraged to stay in school up to an appreciable level. This will restrict their climb or growth up the educational ladder which also means that they will not be able to do as much as they could if they had the opportunity to further enhance their knowledge in

school. The Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty (LEAP) may have to be expanded to cover more households to give some relief to most impoverished households.

9.8 Recommendations

This study has been challenging but interesting and the experience gained would not have been possible relying on secondary data alone. Based study findings the following recommendations are made.

Children must be encouraged to go to school until they are 16 years when it is allowed for an individual to engage in economic activities. Parents must also be encouraged to ensure that their wards stay in school until such a time before allowing them to take off in search of work.

Government Institutions responsible for children must collaborate with all other institutions more in order to have a solid front when tackling the street child phenomenon. Both governmental and non-governmental institutions must pursue an awareness, advocacy, and outreach campaign regarding the services they provide, and the benefits children stand to gain by using their services. It is recommended that state and non-state institutions find appropriate and appealing ways of meeting the needs of the street child population by pooling their resources and expertise together, as well as engaging them in order to develop interventions that meet the need of the children. Additionally, staff of institutions ought to adopt a positive, welcoming, and encouraging stance that will make it easier for children to approach them to seek counsel. The networks that street children utilize that have been identified must be used as a channel to address some of the challenges that children face.

Stakeholders (institutes/organisations) must work together on the categorization of street children in order to identify their diverse needs. More drop-in centres must be created to assist children in their daily activities. This can be done by state institutions through the Department of Children under MOGCSP, Department of Social Welfare in collaboration with NGOs whose services contribute to the welfare of children. In creating more drop-in centres, their location must be close to the children and as a priority, they must have toilet and bath facilities, health facilities and peer counselling sessions which the children can have easy access to. As indicated by the findings some drop in centres make provision for change of clothes and a hot meal. Other country reports on institutions and drop-in centres have these facilities in place and this makes the child feel welcomed to walk into the drop-in center with ease. Drop-in centres when properly put up and regulated should be made to operate every day of the week including holidays. CAS does not open its doors on holidays and weekends and this serves as a barrier to the children as those are days that they may have more time at their disposal to be with professionals and educators at the center. CFC however operates over the weekend and this is the time that the children get to spend some time with the psychologists.

Cheap accommodation or hostel facilities must be considered by all concerned institutions. Forcing children to go back home or trying to get them to leave the street will not be an appropriate action to take unless the need that led them to the street in the first place has been met.

9.9 Contribution to Knowledge

This study identified a category of children who do not belong to the generally discussed population of street children in the literature. These are child migrant workers who have become street children by virtue of their living and sleeping places. Their rationale for

moving there falls outside the aberrant family hypothesis. This has become what could be termed as a ‘way of life’ as most of these migrants hail from one region and they do not have the usual descriptions of problems that cause them to move to the street.

The role of institutions which have not been explored in Ghanaian street child literature was explored in this study.

The social networks and strengths of street children prior to their decision to move out and how these networks assist them in their livelihoods have also been explored in this study.

9.10 Future studies

The *kubolor* boys are an interesting phenomena worth exploring or studying in the future. Consequently, there is the need to add to the literature on such street children such as the *kubolor* boys.

9.11 Conclusion

Research on street children especially regarding the causes, the push and pull factors, coping strategies and their vulnerabilities abound. The livelihood strategies of street children in Accra was explored in order to provide a document that can serve as a guide to policy and to strengthen social protection strategies. The theories that underpinned the study clearly showed the agency and strengths exhibited by children on the streets which had not been fully explored.

The methodology employed also helped to unravel issues peculiar to street living children only. Previous studies failed to look at the categories of street children independently of each other. This study, however, blended several methods to answer the research questions that helped to answer what livelihood strategies of street living children in Accra were. Study results revealed that social networks are very helpful to the existence and survival of children on the streets.

Street children's interactions with institutions also revealed that Non-governmental institutions interacted with street children more than the state institutions. Most of the children were unaware of the existence of the institutions and what kind of support they could get from them.

Finally, the discussion of the street child phenomenon has not been exhausted. It is therefore, necessary to document identified components that have so far been overlooked in the discourse. The situation street children find themselves is not one that cannot be redeemed. The future of children certainly must be secured. This can be done by incorporating the findings of studies conducted on street children into policy initiatives. Children's agency and resilience must not be overlooked as their perspectives and lived experiences will help to shape and to influence policy initiatives, direct research, and social protection initiatives.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES OF STREET CHILDREN IN ACCRA

A: Informed Consent

NOTE: To be administered to street children in Accra

Hello, my name is Ama Boafo-Arthur, a student of the University of Ghana undertaking a study on the Livelihood strategies of street children in Accra. This study will draw respondents from the Tema Station and Agbogbloshie. I would like to ask you some questions about your living conditions, the relationships developed over time and institutional support and interventions made.

I would like to assure you that the information you provide would be kept strictly confidential. There is no way your identity will be revealed to anyone apart from the members of the research team. Your participation in this work is very important to help the student gather the relevant information for the study and also help to throw light on how some children manage to overcome huge challenges and make it in life through tough circumstances.

You are free to participate in this study which will take about 30 minutes of your time to complete. If you agree to participate in this study, there are questions you may skip if you are not comfortable with... You can also discontinue the interview if need be at any stage.

You may also ask any question about this study if you so wish at this stage. Are you please willing to take part in this study based on the information I have provided you?

YES = 1, NO = 2

Date of interview (dd/mm/yyyy)

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2	0	1	3
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Address: _____

Mobile Number _____

Section A: Personal Characteristics

A1. Sex 1. Male . Female

A2. Age in completed years

A3. Have you ever been to school? 1. Yes () 2. No ()

A4. What level of education have you attained?

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Primary complete | 2. Primary Incomplete | 3. JHS complete |
| 4. JHS Incomplete | 5. SHS complete | 6. SHS Incomplete |
| 7. Vocational complete
(specify)..... | 8. Vocational incomplete | 9. Other |

A5. Of what ethnic origin are you? 1. Akan 2. Ga-Adangme 3. Ewe

4. Guan 5. Gurma 6. Mole-Dagbani 7. Grusi 8. Mande

9. Other Specify)

A6. In what region is it? 1. Northern 2. Upper East 3. Upper West 4. Ashanti

9. Greater Accra Ahafo 6. Central 7. Western 8. Brong

9. Volta 10. Eastern

A7. From where have you come to Accra? 1. Northern 2. Upper East 3. Upper

West 4. Ashanti 5. Greater Accra 6. Central 7. Western

8. Brong Ahafo 9. Volta 10. Eastern

A8. What is your religious affiliation? 1. Moslem 2. Christian

3. Traditionalist 4. Other

A9. Marital status; 1. Not married/single 2. Married 3. Divorced

4. Separated 5. Widowed

A10. Do you have children? 1. Yes 2. No

A11. How many children do you have? 1. One 2. Two 3. Three
4. Other

A12. Are your children with you? 1. Yes 2. No

A13. Where do your children live? 1. With parents back home
2. With other relatives back home 3. With father/mother of child
4. Other (specify).....

A14. Who takes care of your child(ren)? 1. Parents 2. Siblings 3. Relatives
4. Child's father/mother 5. Other (specify).....

A15. How many are you? 1. Boys 2. Girls 3. Total

A16. Are your parents alive? 1. Yes both alive 2. Yes Father alive
3. Yes Mother alive 4. No

A17. If both parents are alive are they living together? 1. Yes 2. No

A18. a. Mother's educational level:

1. No education 2. Primary complete 3. Primary incomplete
4. JHS complete 4. JHS incomplete 5. SHS complete
6. SHS incomplete 7. Vocational complete 8. Vocational incomplete
9. Other (specify)

b. Father's educational level:

1. No education 2. Primary complete 3. Primary incomplete
4. JHS complete 4. JHS incomplete 5. SHS complete
6. SHS incomplete 7. Vocational complete 8. Vocational incomplete
9. Other (specify)

A19. a. Mother's occupation

1. Teacher 2. Farmer 3. Trader 4. Housewife

5. Other (specify).....

b. Father's occupation

1. Teacher 2. Farmer 3. Trader 4. Unemployed

5. Other (specify).....

B: Livelihood strategies

B1. How long have you been on the streets? 1. Below 3 months 2. 6mths to 1 year

3. 1 to 2 years 4. 3 to 5 years 5. Other (specify).....

B2. What brought you to the streets? 1. Financial difficulty 2. Job search

3. Abuse 4. Freedom 5. Other (specify).....

B3. Where do you sleep at night? 1. Bus terminal 2. Shop front

3. Market 4. Kiosk 5. Dormitory 6. Other (specify).....

B4. How long have you been sleeping there? 1. Below 3 months 2. 6mths to 1 year

3. 1 to 2 years 4. 3 to 5 years 5. Other (specify).....

B5. How did you find your sleeping place? 1. Friends 2. Only available spot

3. Good Samaritan 4. Other (specify).....

B6. Do you pay to sleep there? 1. Yes 2. No

B7. If yes how much do you pay monthly (GH Cedis)?.....

B8. What economic activities do you engage in? 1. Shoe shine 2. Kaya yei
3. Hawking 4. Cleaning 5. Truck pushing 6. Scrap dealer

7. Commercial sex work 8. Shop help 8. Other (specify).....

B9. Why did you choose this particular economic activity? 1. Only option available
2. Profitable 3. No jobs available 4. Easy to do

5. Other (specify).....

B10. Do you engage in any other economic activity besides the main one? 1. Yes

2. No

B11. If yes what other activity do you engage in?

.....
.....
.....
.....

B12. If no, is what you make from your economic activity sufficient to meet your needs?

1. Yes 2. No

B13. How much profit do you make daily from your economic activity (GH Cedis)?

.....
..

B14. Do you pay any levy? 1. Yes 2. No

B15. How much do you pay as a levy daily (GH Cedis)?

.....

B16. How much do you spend on food daily (GH Cedis)?

.....

B17. Do you buy water? 1. Yes 2. No

- a. What kind of water do you buy? 1. For drinking 2. For bathing
3. Cooking 4. Washing 4. All the above 5. Other (specify).....

b. If yes how much do you spend on water daily?

Drinking.....

Bathing.....

Cooking.....

Total.....

c. If no where do you get water from?

.....
.....
.....

B18. How much do you spend on clothing monthly?

.....

B21. How much do you spend on your health monthly?

.....

B22. Do you spend money on transportation? 1. Yes 2. No

B23. If yes how much do you spend on transportation weekly?

B24. Do you pay to use toilet and bath facilities? 1. Yes 2. No

B25. If yes how much do you pay for:

a. Toilet?

b. Bath?

B26. If no

- a. Where do you bath?
- b. Where do you go to toilet?

B27. Do you remit cash to anybody? 1. Yes 2. No 3. Not yet

(if no move to 28)

a. Who do you remit?
.....

b. How often do you remit cash? 1. Every week 2. Monthly 3. Every 3 months
4. Every year 5. Other (specify).....

c. How much do you remit at a time? 1. 20 2. 30 3. 40
4. 50

5. 60 6. 70 7. Other (specify).....

d. What is the remittance used for? 1. School fees 2. Housekeeping

3. Business 4. Other (specify).....

e. What else do you remit?
.....
.....
.....
.....

B28. Do you get remittances? 1. Yes 2. No 3. Sometimes

B29. If yes who remits you?

B30. What kind of remittance do you get?
.....
.....
.....
.....

B31. What assets do you own (multiple answers)?
.....
.....
.....

B32. What else do you spend your money on?
.....

B33. Are you able to save? 1. Yes 2. No

If yes a. How much do you save daily (GH Cedis)?

b. How do you keep/save your money? 1. Myself 2. Friends

3. Susu 4. Bank 5. Other specify).....

B34. What is your major/main source of entertainment?
.....
.....
.....

.....
.....
B35. Where do you go to entertain yourself?
.....
.....
.....
.....

.....
B36. Do you spend on entertainment? 1. Yes 2. No

B37. How much do you spend on entertainment?
.....

B38. How often do you do this? 1. Daily 2. Weekly 3. Every two weeks

4. Monthly 5. Other

(specify).....

C. Social Networks

C1. Are you a member of any group or network? 1. Yes 2. No

C2. What kind of group have you joined? 1. Friends 2. Associations

3. Church groups 4. Occupational 5. Township/ethnic

6. Other (specify).....

C3. Did you know the group before coming to the streets? 1. Yes 2. No

C4. How did you join the group? 1. Through friends 2. Relations

3. By chance 4. Good Samaritan 5. Other (specify).....

C5. Do you get any support from your group/network? 1. Yes 2. No

C6. What kind of support or contribution do you get from your group which strengthens your stay in the street?

1. Encouragement 2. Financial 3. Job opportunities

4. Advice 5. Other (specify).....

C7. What do you do as a group? 1. Socialise 2. Encourage ourselves

3. Occupational discussions 4. Other

(specify).....

C8. What is expected of you to remain in the network? 1. Dues

2. Faithfulness 4. Trust 5. Other

specify).....

C9. Do you maintain ties with your family? 1. Yes 2. No

C10. How do you maintain ties with your family? 1. By phone 2.

Visitation

3. Sending someone 4. Other specify).....

C11. a) Do you see your parents often? 1. Yes 2. No

b) How often do you talk to your parents? 1. Daily 2. Weekly

3. Monthly 4. Yearly 5. Other

(specify).....

C12. Do you get any support from your family? 1. Yes 2. No 3. Sometimes

C13. What kind of support? 1. Financial 2. Emotional 3. Occupational

4. Attacks 5. Theft 6. Other (specify).....

D3. How regularly do you face these problems? 1. All the time 2. Sometimes

3. Rarely 4. Never 5. Other

(specify).....

D4. Do you face other problems which have nothing to do with your chosen activity?1.

Yes 2. No

D5. What are some of these problems?

1.....

..2.....

...3.....

....4.....

.....

D6. Have you ever had any encounter with the police? 1. Yes 2. No

D7. What kind of encounter was it?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

D8. What is your relationship with the police? 1. Cordial 2. Strained

3. Indifferent 4. Bothersome 5. Other (specify).....

D9. What about the levy collectors? 1. Cordial 2. Strained 3. Indifferent

4. Bothersome 5. Other (specify).....

D10. Are there some bad habits acquired on the streets? 1. Yes 2. No

D11. What are some of these bad habits?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

D12. Why do people engage in these habits?

.....

.....

.....

.....

D13. Do you engage in any of these bad habits? 1. Yes 2. No

D14. If yes why?

.....

.....

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.....

.....

D15. If no why?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

D16. How does the general public treat you?

.....
.....
.....
.....

E. Health and health seeking behaviour

- E1. Do you have any health problems? 1. Yes 2. No
- E2. What is the most common and persisting ailment you suffer from? 1. Malaria
2. Headaches 3. Stomach ache 4. Rashes 5. Bodily pains 6.
Other (specify).....
- E3. What do you do when you are not well? 1. Hospital 2. Drug
store/pharmacy
3. Traditional herbs 4. Self-medication 5. Other (specify).....
- E4. a) Do you have health insurance? 1. Yes 2. No
b) If no why? 1. Its expensive 2. Don't know where to get it
3. No reason 4. I don't need it 5. Other
(specify)..... c) If yes has your health insurance been helpful when
you are unwell?
1. Yes 2. No
- E5. Do you get any support from anyone when you are sick? 1. Yes 2. No
- E6. Who supports when you are ill? 1. Friends 2. Association 3.
NGO's
4. Religious group 5. Other
(specify).....

F. Aspirations

F1. What do you like about school?

1.....
.
2.....
.
3.....
.
4.....
.

F2. What do you dislike about school?

.....
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.....
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.....
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.....
.

F3. Why did you leave school? 1. I wasn't doing well 2. Couldn't afford school fees
3. Boredom 4. Peer pressure 5. Adventure 6. Parent(s) died
7. Wanted to learn a vocation 8. Other
(specify).....

F4. What was your aspiration when/if you were in school? To be a: 1. Doctor
2. Lawyer 3. Teacher 4. Business man/woman 5.
Trader

F5. What do you think about education? 1. Good 2. Not really good
3. Not necessary 4. Other
(specify).....

F6. What do you expect from your family to make education a success? Love
2. Finance 3. Care 4. Other
(specify).....

F7. What do you expect from government to make education a success?

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F8. Where do you see yourself 5 to10 years from now?

1. In school 2. Entrepreneur 3. A professional (teacher, nurse)

G8. If yes what was it about? 1. HIV/AIDS 2. Reproductive health 3. Sanitation
4. Other (specify).....

G9. What about a vocational package? 1. Yes 2. No

G10. What did it entail? 1. Tailoring 2. Hairdressing
3. Shoemaking 4. Other (specify).....

G11. How useful were these packages? 1. Useful 2. Somewhat Useful
3. Not Useful 4. Not useful 5. Other (specify).....

G12. How regularly do you get support from these institutions? 1. Not at all
2. Sometimes 3. Always 6. Not interested 7. Other
(specify).....

H. Resilience

H1. Do you need anything to make you cope better here? 1. Yes 2. No

H2. What do think you need?
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.....

H3. What qualities must one possess to enable a child cope under similar conditions like
you find yourself in?
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H4. Are you doing well here? 1. Yes 2. No

H5. Why do you say so?
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H6. What does it mean to you when others make it in life or succeed?
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H7. What are the main challenges you face or encounter?

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H8. What goes through your mind when something bad/unfortunate happens? (fire outbreak)

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H9. What do you do when bad or unfortunate things happen to you or those close to you?

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H10. Who helps you to cope with the unfortunate happenings that come your way?

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H11. Can you give examples of problems you have had before and how you dealt with them?

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H12. What do other people do to cope with the problems and challenges that come their way?

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H13. Do you know or have you heard of any stories of people who were in difficult circumstances but managed to be successful in life? 1. Yes 2. No

H14. Who is/are these?

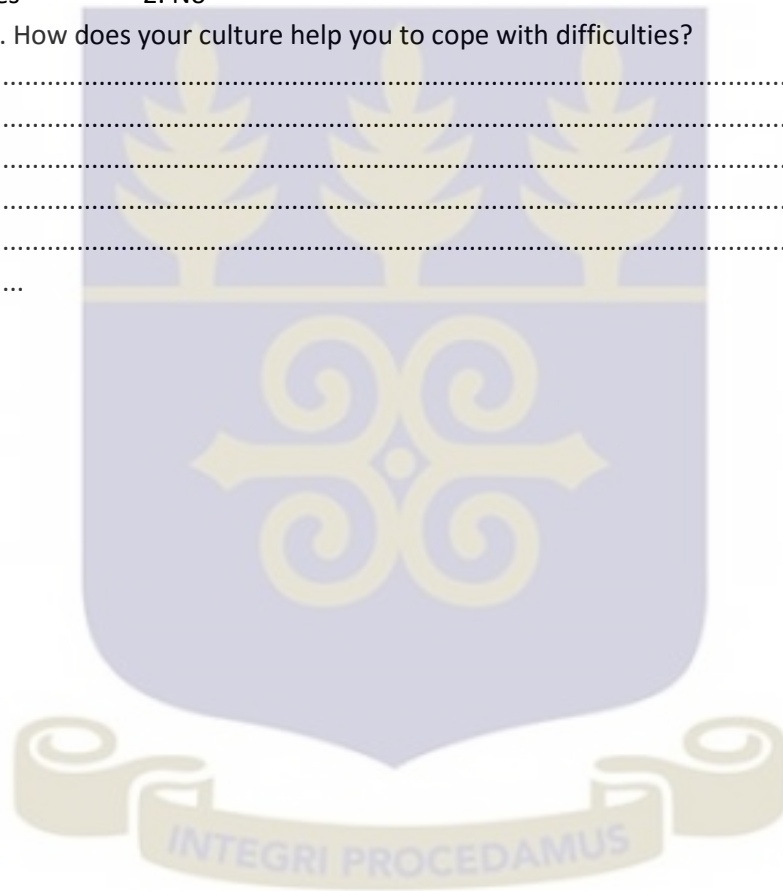
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H15. Does your culture help you to cope with difficult situations or circumstances?

1. Yes 2. No

H16. How does your culture help you to cope with difficulties?

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APPENDIX 2

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW GUIDE ONE

Livelihood Strategies of Street Children in Ghana Instruments for data collection

Interview Guide for Street Children

Age.....

Sex.....

A. Personal background

1. Where do you come from?
2. How long have you been in Accra?
3. How did you come to Accra?
4. What language(s) do you speak?
5. Are you married?
6. Do you have children?

B. Family background

1. How many siblings do you have?
2. What position are you in relation to your siblings?
3. Did you/do you live with your family?
4. Did you/Do you live with both parents?
5. What do your parents do?
6. What is the educational level of your parents?
7. Do your siblings go to school? If yes why not you? If no why not?
8. What grade are your siblings?

C. Educational Background

1. Are you currently in School?
2. Have you ever been to school?
3. What is your educational level?
4. Did you/do you like school?
5. What are some of the experiences you had in school?
6. Would you want to go back to school?
7. Have you talked to anybody about school?
8. What contributions to society do you wish to make when you grow?
9. What do you expect your family to do to make your education a possibility/success?
10. What do you expect the government to do to make education meaningful to you?
11. What is your concept of education?
12. What should be put in place to make school fun and meaningful?

D. Experiences on the Street

1. How long have you been on the streets?
2. What brought you to the streets?
3. How did you come to the streets?
4. What is your typical day on the streets?
5. What are some of the difficulties/problems you encounter on the streets?
6. What kind of activities do you engage in?
7. What influences your choice of livelihood activity?
8. What support structures do you rely on in the streets?
9. How do you fend for yourself?
10. Where do you sleep?
11. How long have been sleeping there?
12. How do you find/locate a place to sleep?
13. What is your relationship with other street children?
14. How many street children do you think are in Accra?
15. What is your relationship with the police?
16. How does the general public treat you? Are they friendly or hostile? Why?
17. How do you access healthcare when you are unwell?
18. Who cares for you when you are sick?
19. Do you receive any form of assistance from any organization?
20. What services would you want from organizations and the government?
21. Do you have any advice for other street children?
22. How do you feel about your present conditions?
23. Would you recommend the streets for other children?

E. Expenditure

1. How much do you make daily from your livelihood activity?
2. How much do you spend on food, Water, clothing, healthcare, remittance?
3. What else do you spend your money on?
4. Are you able to save?
5. How much do you save daily?
6. How do you keep your money?

F. Family System

1. Do you see your family often?
2. Do you get any support from your family?
3. Do you have a surrogate family in the streets?
4. How are you protected?

G. Social Networks

1. What social networks have you established?

2. How and when were these networks established, (Was it before or after getting to the streets?)
3. How do these networks strengthen your stay on the streets?
4. What contributions/support do you receive from your networks?
5. What is expected of you to remain as part of the network?

H. Religion

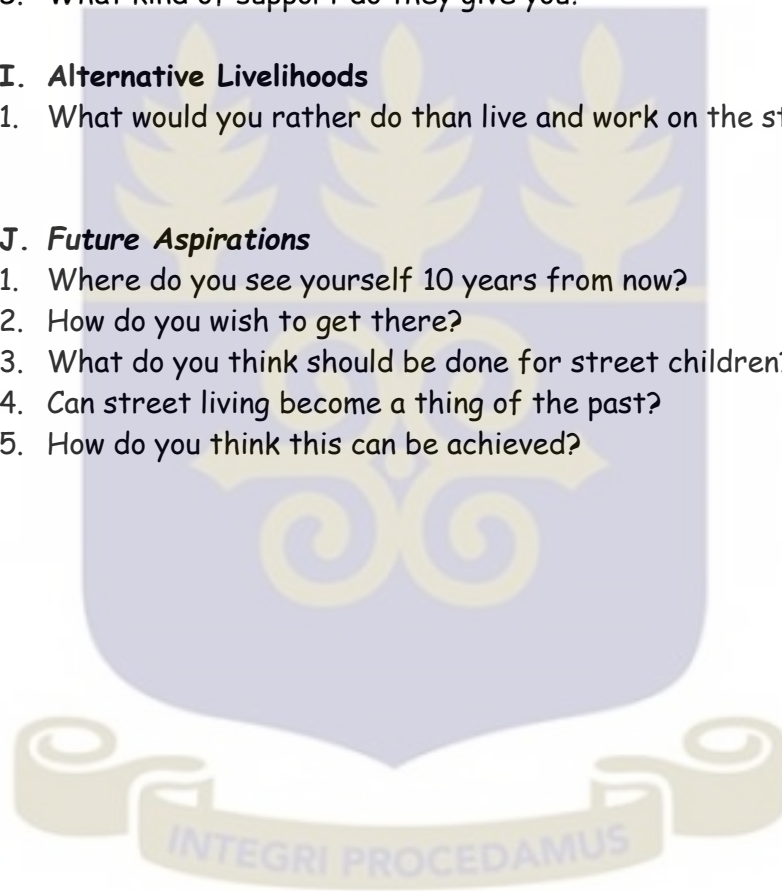
1. Do you believe in God?
2. Where do you worship?
3. How does your belief help you in your daily activities?
4. Do you get any support from members of your religious group?
5. What kind of support do they give you?

I. Alternative Livelihoods

1. What would you rather do than live and work on the street?

J. Future Aspirations

1. Where do you see yourself 10 years from now?
2. How do you wish to get there?
3. What do you think should be done for street children?
4. Can street living become a thing of the past?
5. How do you think this can be achieved?



APPENDIX 3

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW GUIDE TWO

Interview Guide for Stakeholders

This interview is for academic purposes only. It is to find out the intervention programs that have been rolled out for street children or institutional provisions that have been made for street children and how targeted these provisions/programs are in order to meet the needs of this population.

Date of Interview

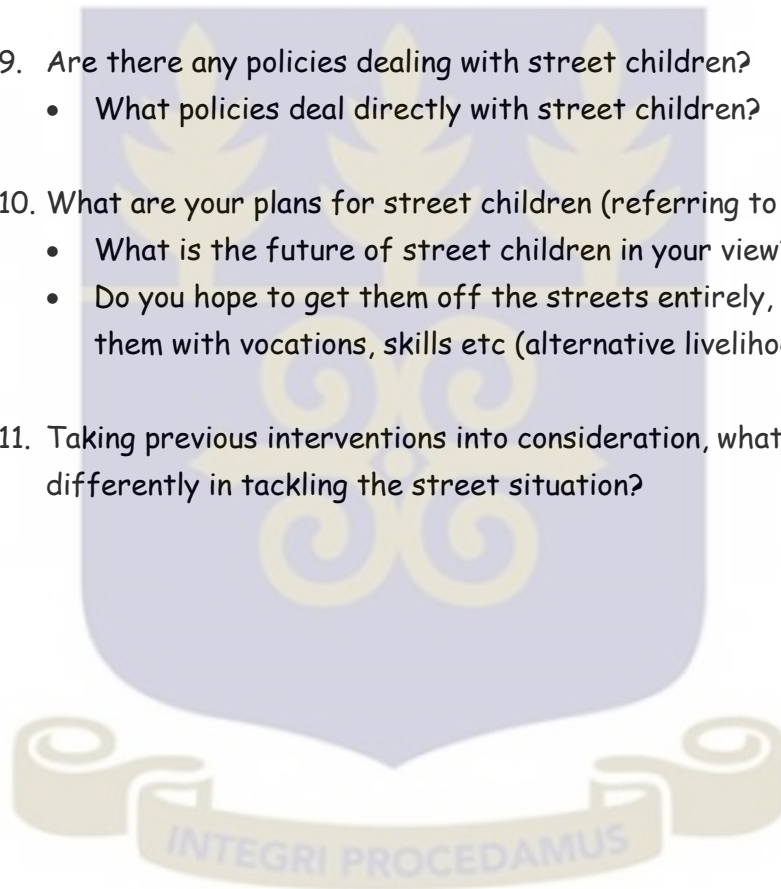
Name of Organization/Institution

1. What does your institution stand for when it comes to children?
 - Objectives/Aim of institution
 - Do you have an estimation of the number of street children in Accra?

What role does your institution have to play in the lives of children?

- What relationship does your organization have with street children?
2. What programs do you have in place
 - What have you introduced previously and what is in place now?
 3. What is the rationale behind the programs already introduced?
 - What were your considerations?
 4. How targeted were these responses or programs?
 - To cater for the needs of the street children?
 - To send them back home to parents or guardians?
 - To get them off the streets?
 5. Do you get any assistance/support?
 - What is the source of your assistance/support?
 6. How do the children meet their needs?
 - What social networks do they have?
 - How are these networks established (before the streets or after)?

- How do they make use of these networks?
7. Do you include the street children when taking decisions on the programs to be implemented?
 - If yes what contributions/inputs have they made in the past or are making currently?
 - If no, how do you decide on what to put in place for their benefit?
 8. How would you measure the performance of those programs?
 - Success rates, failures, limitations
 9. Are there any policies dealing with street children?
 - What policies deal directly with street children?
 10. What are your plans for street children (referring to future plans)
 - What is the future of street children in your view?
 - Do you hope to get them off the streets entirely, or support them with vocations, skills etc (alternative livelihoods)?
 11. Taking previous interventions into consideration, what should be done differently in tackling the street situation?



APPENDIX 4
ETHICAL CLEARANCE



