Education as the revolving door into the streets and back home among street-involved children in Harare, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

This article explores the roles of education in driving children onto the streets and facilitating reunification with family. These roles are discussed in terms of how they contribute to street childhood and how they become part of a reintegration package. Against this background, education is considered a social vaccine against risky behaviours among children. The data were collected using a qualitative research approach, employing semi-structured interviews with street-involved children and key informants. The study purposively sampled 18 participants, including 10 street-involved children, eight informants from the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Non-Governmental Organisation staff, guardians and former street-involved children. Of the 10 street-involved children, five were females and the other five were males. Data analysis revealed that these children faced education-related risk factors such as material poverty, differential treatment, adverse childhood experiences, truancy, stigma, and peer influence. The children employed resilience pathways like reunification support and putting personal effort into their schooling. The article recommends the government ensure that children from poor, blended and at-risk families receive mental health and financial support to continue attending school. Street-involved and at-risk children require comprehensive schooling support, family strengthening and protection from abuse to ensure their well-being and safety.

Keywords: Street-involved children, education, resilience, vulnerability, well-being and family reunification

Introduction

International policy agendas, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), prioritise universal access to quality education, locating school as the place where children "belong" and education-presaged as improving outcomes and life changes as a remedy for poverty (Kaneva & Corcoran, 2020; Boyden, 2015). While education has become universally pertinent through global legislation and policy, translating those ambitions into practice is certainly less easy (Corcoran et al., 2020). The right to education is determinedly preserved within the United Nations and the General Comment on Children in Street Situations provides definitive international directives for governments to tailor policy and support programmes for street-involved children (United Nations, 2017). While the general comment is a useful advocacy tool, there is little research into how these rights are translated at the local level, or used to encourage collaboration between Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and local authorities for delivering context-appropriate interventions (Lucchini & Stoecklin,

2020). In Africa, studies on how these policies are implemented for children living and working on the streets are scarcely available.

Baker, Collins and Leon (2008) argue that education through schooling, leads to better health outcomes. Indeed, studies over the years show that schooling has significant preventive roles in many public health challenges, including reducing mortality and morbidity (World Bank, 2003). Literature shows that schooling reduces risky behaviours and increases healthier lifestyles, though some people in Africa exhibited HIV/AIDS-linked risky behaviours (Baker et al., 2008). Scholars reckoned that schooling has multiple positive outcomes on individuals, including cognitive development, acquisition of new knowledge, rise in social status, and getting better employment opportunities (Baker & LeTendre, 2005; Martinez, 2000).

Regarding children living and working on the streets, research literature indicates that street-involved youths are at significantly elevated risk levels than their non-street peers, posing challenges for their enrollment and success in school (Masten et al., 2015; Ferguson et al., 2014; Morton et al., 2018). Factors that affect their capacity to stay enrolled and succeed in schooling include survival behaviours such as sex work, stealing, dealing in drugs, engagement in criminal activities, drug and substance use, and mobility (Ferguson et al., 2011). There is a shortage of research on street-involved youths and their schooling experiences, suggesting a dearth of evidence-based knowledge influencing policymaking and decision-making regarding these youths' educational and employment opportunities. Among adolescents, poor levels of behavioural and emotional engagement in school are associated with substance use and delinquency (Li & Lerner, 2011), while other studies show that incarceration may be linked with disconnection from school (Jaggers, 2016). Thus, the current study aimed to explore the role of education on facilitating reunification among street-involved children in Harare.

Research question

This research study was guided by one research question:
i. What are the risk and resilience factors for schooling among street-involved children?

Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by Ungar's (2011) Social Ecology of Resilience Theory. The theory has four basic principles: decentrality, complexity, typicality, and cultural relativity. In line with the principle of decentrality, Ungar (2012) emphasises the importance of decentralising children's resilience to social ecologies like families, schools, and communities. The theory suggests that the intricate processes of risks and resilience resources hinder our ability to accurately predict children's developmental trajectories. Individual strengths enhance resilience; however, they also combine with social and physical resources to enable adaptive coping in at risk young people (Panter-Brick & Eggerman, 2012; Ungar, 2012).

The theory's third principle is typicality, whereby youths at risk sometimes use typical ways to cope with their context of risk (Ungar, 2011). This aligns with the concept of hidden resilience, which Malindi and Theron (2010) highlight for young people with street life experiences in a South African care institution. Through the principle of cultural relativity, the theory demonstrates how culture can enable or compromise resilient coping with young people at risk (Panter-Brick & Eggerman, 2012; Ungar, 2011). This implies that resilience is nuanced by culture.

Some scholars argue that orphans potentially experience differential disadvantages relating to a lack of material support, affective support, and love (Goldberg & Short, 2012; Ngwenya, 2015). Ngwenya (2015) points out that orphans are sometimes asked to work in the fields or to look for firewood or water before going to school. In some cases, the orphans are denied food, while in other cases, they are forced into early marriage by guardians. To make matters worse, some orphans do not receive any grief-counseling and face extreme poverty in the context of psychosocial challenges like depression, anxiety, social integration, self-esteem, and behaviour challenges (Biomedical Research and Training Institute [BRTI], 2008)). Goldberg and Short (2012) suggest that some guardians deem orphans as 'extra' and 'heavier luggage.' All the identified factors buttress the orphan differential disadvantage (Goldberg & Short, 2012) and are likely to push the orphaned children to the streets. Ndlovu (2015) found that the majority of his street-involved children's participants were orphans, with 33 out of 42 (78.6%) having lost at least one parent due to death.

Methodology

Research Design

The current study employed a qualitative research approach to generate data about the phenomena under exploration. The approach also involves a detailed and holistic analysis of the lifeworld of the respondents and their subjective experiences (Ennew, 2003).

There were 10 street-involved children and eight key informants drawn from the staff at the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, NGO staff, guardians of the street-involved children, and former street-involved children. Of the 10 street-involved children, five were females and the other five were males. The children were aged between 12 and 18 years old. The study believed that it would exhaust the various categories and dimensions of the current study after interviewing the 18 participants.

The study employed a purposive sampling procedure in selecting the participants for the current study. Purposive sampling is used to recruit specific, predefined subgroups of hard-to-reach populations, such as street-involved children, since they are normally disenfranchised, excluded and may not have a sampling frame (Shaghaghi et al., 2011). The procedure involved choosing the sample based on a judgment by the researcher on whether or not the participants met the inclusion

criteria. The inclusion criteria were that the child should have been on the streets for at least two days, reunified and staying at home or back staying on the streets.

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the street-involved children and key informants to collect data on risk and resilience factors associated with schooling among street-involved children. The data collection methods were administered to collect data on the objective of the study, which was to explore the experiences of orphaned children and how their experiences led to street childhood. The researcher designed the data collection tools to meet the research objectives and after consulting with peers. The tools were translated into the vernacular Shona language. The data collection process took four months and the participants' responses were audio-recorded after getting permission from the participants. The interviews were audio-recorded to enable correct transcription of the data for analysis. For those who refused, the interviews were only hand-recorded. The interviews were conducted in the homes of children who had been reintegrated with their families and on the streets for those who were still staying on the streets.

Data Analysis

The data collected in the current study were thematically analysed. This method helped to gain insigths into the psychological world through the constructs and beliefs obtained from the participants (Braun et al., 2005). The data analysis focused upon the generation of themes from the quotes given by the participants.

Step 1: Familiarisation and coding. The first step of thematic analysis is familiarisation, which involves deep immersion into the data. This was done through reading and rereading the interview transcripts.

Step 2: Coding was the second step. According to Braun et al. (2015), rigorous and systematic coding builds solid foundations for theme development. Codes label and identify issues of interest in the data that seek to meet the research objectives, such as substance use as a resilience pathway for the street-involved children.

Step 3: Theme development was the subsequent step, which involved grouping codes to identify "higher-level" patterns for identifying broader meanings and to capture many ideas.

Step 4: Refinement was the fourth step which involved reviewing the themes by first working with the coded data, and then going back to the whole dataset. The step involved checking whether the analysis fit or properly met the research objectives.

Step 4: Naming was the fifth and most important step. This step involved intentionally deciding what name or label to give each theme. The names could be plain or ordinary or creative. The names needed to capture the essence of each theme.

Step 6: Writing up. This final step involved putting together, developing, and editing the whole analytic work and locating it within the overall report. The report was expected to capture the objectives, literature (both empirical and theoretical), the main findings, and their emergent conclusion. The main output was the findings from the data analysis which included quotes and their commentaries.

Ethics

Consent was sought from the gatekeepers of the street-involved children. These include the Ministry of Labour, Public Services and Social Welfare, the Harare City Council and drop-in centre officials. Informed consent from the participants was obtained. The participants were assured of the purpose and importance of the study. They were also allowed to withdraw from the interview at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity were spelt out and adhered to.

Findings

This section, presents the findings that emerged from the data. As indicated by Braun et al. (2015), the findings were developed from the themes. These themes were developed through the interpretation of the patterns and relationships that emerged after fully engagement with the data in trying to answer the research objectives.

Adverse childhood experiences involving schooling

The data reveal that after divorce or orphanhood, the remarriage of the remaining parent sometimes created problems for the children who left for the streets. This suggests that children whose parents remarry do not tolerate remarriages, and consequently face abuse from their new stepparents. A male street-involved child, whose father remarried, said:

> My stepmother was troublesome. She was after my father's money and home. She forgot that the place was ours. She acted as if the place was hers. She burned my national identity card, denied me food and wanted to poison me.

According to the child, his stepmother was so abusive that he left for the streets. In the response below, the child felt neglected by her aunt, who had inherited her mother's property, which she had undertaken to look after her, especially regarding schooling. A female street-involved child said:

> My challenges started after my mother's death. I stayed with my aunt, who did not even attend my mother's funeral as she was on her way to South Africa. She was given my mother's property to sell to raise money for my fees. It pained me that our property was given to her. She sold it, sent me to collect the money but did not pay for my fees

According to this quote, the child was pained by the fact that her aunt, who inherited her deceased mother's property, did not pay for her fees. This shows that children

experienced differential treatment from their non-biological parents regarding their education support.

Material poverty

Material poverty has been reported to lead to schooling challenges and eventually to street childhood among some children. Thus, step grandmother can lead to street childhood. In the next response, a female street-involved child left for the streets after her grandmother took her to the streets due to hardships at home. She said:

> My step-grandmother loves me, but she is too poor. She is the one who brought me to the streets.

Indeed, poverty was found to be a strong factor in street childhood. It was evident in the lack of capacity to finance the children's schooling, with the result that the children dropped out of school. Food vulnerability was also an indicator of poverty among the participants. The response below by a female street-involved child shows that, as a result of poverty, sometimes whole families moved to the streets. Poverty was also at times related to the old age of the guardian and the absence of supportive, younger breadwinners. One female street-involved child reported:

> We came to the streets with my grandmother because of poverty. We did not have money for food, clothes, rentals, school fees and anyone to take care of us.

In the above-mentioned quotation, the child who was under the care of her grandmother revealed that she could not continue with her studies due to poverty. Her grandmother could not fund her studies. Thus, poverty led to challenges at home, including failure to pay school fees. In the next statement, a female street-involved child reported that she got to the streets to earn money for school fees.

> I came to the streets with my mother. She was a vendor while I was begging. This happened after my father died and our home was destroyed by the government of Mugabe in the Airport area for being illegal. I wanted to beg for money for my school fees.

The child revealed that their home was destroyed by the government while her father had died and that their mother went with her to the streets to vend to raise school fees.

Differential Treatment

Some children who were orphans reported that they experienced differential treatment involving being forced to drop out of school while the biological children of their guardians were in school. Thus, the children felt that they were not getting adequate support from their guardians and decided to leave for the streets. The participants in the study decried having to be made to drop out of school to do the menial jobs in and around the home. This occurrence appears to have estranged the children from their homes and families. The following response illustrates:

> I was made to herd cattle and stay with my grandparents while not being in school, while my uncles and aunties who wanted me to look after their

> parents and cattle did not bother to send me to school or to have me stay with them and their children in the city.

The child revealed that he was made to tend cattle by her uncles and aunts while their own biological children were in school. In the next response, a male street-involved child reveals that his grandmother asked him to go to the streets to vend for his sustenance. He stated:

> I stayed with my grandmother, who did not pay my school fees or buy me clothes. She then gave me capital to start vending on the streets, but her children started demanding my own new possessions, such as watches, video games and clothes.

Thus, the child felt that his mother was betraying him by seeking to please her husband over him and her biological child.

Truancy

Without doubt, dropping out of school was a precursor to coming to the streets. The children felt neglected and unloved in that the guardians did not accord them the opportunity to be in school. The response below illustrates this:

> My stepmother was the one paying my fees but told me that she would do so only when I was dancing according to her tune. She stopped paying the school fees on allegations that I was being truant. That I was not in school made me more delinquent. I realised that I was no longer comfortable at home that I left for the streets.

Thus, the child revealed that his delinquency drove him to the streets. Her stepmother who was responsible for paying his school fees had stopped because of his delinquency. Similarly, another male street-involved child revealed that stealing drove him to the streets. He said:

> I was delinquent. I was given school fees to pay at school. My friends asked me to retrieve $5. They then did not give me the money and I left for the streets.

The child found that she had taken money meant for school fees and used it to buy drugs. It is clear that the lives of street-involved children are marked by substance use. When they reunite with their families, drug addiction seems to affect their adjustment. According to the current study, street-involved children who had reunified with their families and were at school also faced challenges with drug addiction. One female street-involved child said:

> At Young Africa, I had a problem. I wanted to return to the streets. The staff here had to come and talk to me. It was in the first week. When I saw someone smoking, I was yearning for my cigar. I wanted to use drugs.

In this quote, the child revealed that she was craving drugs even at school. That craving for drugs affected her studies and the reintegration system lacked drug rehabilitation for children who had developed drug addiction.

Peer influence

Children's behaviour was significantly influenced by peer influence, leading to their migration to the streets and subsequent delinquency. Some of the children openly acknowledged having left home due to peer influence. One female street-involved child said:

> I met some Ndebele girls who were part of a drama club. Remember, I was fluent in Ndebele, having been bred in Bulawayo. Ndakaita thathekile navo (I followed them). Their group included a school mate of mine I once played with in Bulawayo.

Thus, the child went into the streets due to peer influence. That child left school to follow her peers who were staying on the streets. One street-involved child said that he got into a violent conflict with his stepmother after being influenced by his peers. He said:

> My peers pressured me to throw a stone at my stepmother in revenge after she had beaten me. I fled home after that incident. I became delinquent due to frustration in not being at school.

The data in this section show that the street-involved children attributed their street childhood to influence from their peers, who urged them to commit delinquent behaviours at home such as stealing money meant for their school fees and other acts of delinquency. In the next section, the researcher discusses delinquency and how it influenced the children's decision to leave for the streets.

Stigma in School

The data reveal that schooling is a critical indicator of post-reunification adjustment. As children, it was expected that they were in school, and being on the streets disrupted their schooling to the extent that on getting back home, they were sent back to school. Nonetheless, several street kids had their previous schools reject them. One male street-involved child said:

> My aunt instructed me to apply to my former school. She asked me to tell the teachers the truth. The teachers asked me either to pay the balance for the time I had been away or get a transfer letter. I then transferred to a private school.

The child could not register at his former school because the school wanted him to pay the balance for the time he was away. He transferred to another school. Some of the schooling challenges included deciding to leave the schools for the streets. One male street-involved child who was older than his classmates said:

> I was the oldest pupil in my class. Again, I once felt street-sick. I had exhausted all my food reserves. I decided to leave the school. I dodged the authorities and went to Masvingo town. I decided to look for money and travel to Harare. Then, from nowhere, I decided to go back to school.

The child who was at a good boarding school would skip school and get to the streets. He revealed that he just decided to go back to the school, having pondered the idea of returning to the streets of Harare. This same street-involved child was in serious disciplinary trouble for being caught smoking marijuana. He remarked:

> One day we were caught smoking marijuana and entering girls' dormitories. They asked us to bring our parents. Two students were expelled. I appealed to them to pardon me. They then gave me some hard punishment after a severe beating.

The child was caught smoking marijuana and entering girls' dormitories, but was luckily pardoned after some beatings. Two of his peers were expelled for the same offence. Yet another street-involved child complained of being abused by the new guardian, whom she alleged told her that she was not academically bright. Added to that, the female child also felt awkward at school as she was way older than her classmates. She said:

> I was reunified with my mother's cousin, who shouted at me, saying I was dumb at school. I also had the problem of being too old for my classmates. I decided to leave and stay with my mother's sister, who, however, is now retrenched and poor.

The child was staying with an aunt who was stigmatising her for not being intelligent. Stigmatisation occasionally has an impact on street-involved children's education. One female street-involved child said:

> The problem is that at school, I am blamed for many offences. They say I am a bully, untidy and truant. The problem is that sometimes I travel to meet my mother against the will of the school authorities. And I also don't want fellow school children saying bad things about me and using the street kid tag on me. The last time it was said I had messed up the toilet, it was not me. I feel like beating them and I say what I want to them.

The child complained that she faced a lot of stigma at school where she was being accused of being a bully, being untied and truant, and where the street-kid label was used on her. Thus, the child felt traumatised and did not tolerate that. According to the data from the current study, other emergent challenges involved drug addiction and the sex craving. One female street-involved child said:

> Life became so unbearable at the college and I resorted to visiting my boyfriend during weekends. I missed him, sex and marijuana at school.

The child thus revealed that she was missing her boyfriend, sex and marijuana and would skip school to meet her boyfriend. The data show that schooling is an important measure of the success of family reunification. The indications from the schools show

that the children are adjusting well to life after leaving the streets to stay with their families.

Schooling reunification kits

Reunification kits are the material and/or financial support the children are given on their return home. The kits are mostly comprised of groceries, establishment funds and school support. The findings show that reunification kits are critical for successful family reunification. In the company of an NGO employee, a male street-involved child stated:

> The female NGO staffer bought me a uniform, shoes, a tie, a hat, socks, a school jersey and pushes. We went there using a kombi. At the school, my mother was called. We went back home.

Thus, the NGO provided her with school fees. Another female street-involved child revealed that she was provided with educational and medical support by the NGO that supported her. She said:

> I am very thankful to the NGO for having paid my fees. I never lacked anything during my school days. If I was ill, the officials at Young Africa would phone the NGO and make arrangements to have me attended to.

The child thus revealed that the NGO that supported her paid her school fees and would even provide medical assistance whenever she was ill. Similarly, a male street-involved child revealed that the NGO that supported him had secured a sponsor and a place at a boarding school for him. He said:

> The sponsor, the NGO, had arranged that they were going to pay for my fees and even arranged that I learn at a boarding school. They paid all my fees.

The child revealed that the NGO that supported him paid his fees and sent him to a boarding school. Nonetheless, there were cases where the children who received no reunification kits desperately needed them due to family poverty. The reunification of such children was difficult. The data show that in many cases, reunification kits are given to help the children adjust at home. In many cases, the reunification kits are inadequate or non-existent. The key components of the reunification kits are reported to be school fees and food.

Putting personal efforts in schooling

Street-involved children also use education as a means of improving their circumstances. Data from the current study shows that some of the children attend informal lessons and workshops sponsored by NGOs, while others go to formal schools and colleges where they engage in primary, secondary and vocational education. This enables them to be integrated   into society and helps them secure employment. A male street-involved child who was in school said:

> I had resolved to advance my education and have a professional footing in my life. I understood what led me into the streets, even my behaviours.

> I decided to do anything that it took to be back in school. I realised that
> with education, I could go places.

The child revealed that he made up his mind and decided to mend his behaviours and pursue education. Thus, some such street-involved children viewed schooling as critical in their personal development. Some of the children engaged in academic schooling, yet others ventured to vocational schooling. A female street-involved child who engaged into vocational training said:

> I returned home in 2016 and went back to school. I was happy because I
> was able to concentrate on schooling and score better grades and show
> my grandmother that I was thinking about school. I left school in Form 1.
> I started vocational training in sewing. Sewing also makes me happy.

The child revealed that she was happy to be pursuing her education and that she switched to learning sewing at a vocational college. It also emerged from the data that some children engaged in some extra-mural activities at school. Those activities helped the children grapple with the boredom and other challenges associated with schooling. The activities included sporting activities, becoming prefects, music and appropriating leadership over fellow schoolchildren. These activities made schooling enjoyable for the children. A reunified female former street-involved child, aged 17 years, reunified with her grandparents and enrolled at a school in the city, said:

> Interestingly, I was made a class monitor at the school. I was given the
> duties of a prefect for all the school activities by the school authorities.

The child revealed that she was surprised but happy to have been appointed a prefect. A male former street-involved child who reunified with his uncle but thereafter stayed on his own in one of the suburbs of Harare and enrolled at a school in the city said:

> I was surprised that when I got into Form 4, I was made a prefect. I am
> aware that no one selected me, but the deputy headmaster unexpectedly
> appointed me to the prefect position. I was really surprised. I was never
> known for any mischief and I only engaged myself in soccer. I was a very
> talented footballer who was popular at the school.

Again, this male child revealed having been appointed a prefect at the school and that he was not mischievous and was talented in soccer. Thus, some reunified children engaged in extra-mural activities at school to deal with challenges. The data also reveal that former street-involved children, now reunified, find a significant resilience pathway for their schooling through sourcing for and securing personal sponsors. Furthermore, the study shows that most of the children who were back in school had personal sponsors who helped them through organisations that helped street-involved children. Accordingly, it appears that children were living on the streets who failed to get back to school because there was no financial support for their schooling. An 18-year-old male former street-involved child who reunified with his uncle but thereafter stayed on his own in one of the suburbs of Harare and enrolled at a school in the city said:

My schooling has progressed, and indeed, my general life, because I managed to secure a sponsor who has helped meet all my necessities. The sponsor buys me clothes, pays our rentals, pays my school fees and even meets my health costs.

The child revealed that his schooling progressed satisfactorily and that he secured a sponsor who helped him secure accommodation and provided him with clothes, school fees and medical assistance. The study shows that some reunified street-involved children now in school have strong relations with various types of people and organisations and use these networks for their own ends. In other words, having a sponsor can be a key factor in the process of getting back to school and even for the reunification itself. The sponsors provide different kinds of support, including buying school uniforms, paying school fees, buying stationery, providing food and sometimes even insisting on family reunification.

Discussion

The street-involved children reported challenges with schooling that forced them to leave their homes. The school-related challenges they faced at home included a lack of money for fees, being withdrawn from school and having guardians who differentially treated them by withdrawing them from school while the biological children of those guardians remained in school. Some of the children reported having committed petty offenses, such as diverting money meant for their fees. What also emerged from the findings is that most of the children were orphaned.

The findings also show that schooling was linked to resilience and was considered a resilience node. The findings suggest schooling was used as a strategy for getting out of the streets. Though the children faced challenges in adjusting to school life having been on the streets, it emerged that children who had resolve and a purpose in life surmounted those challenges in getting an education. Vandemoortele and Delamonica (2000) described education as a social vaccine regarding its effectiveness in helping reduce infectivity among people, especially young girls, while Theron and Malindi (2010) showed that street-involved children used education as a resilience node.

The data from the current study also showed that street-involved children faced school challenges. These children lacked financial support, faced differential treatment, were more likely to drop out of school and faced disciplinary challenges at school. The lack of support for schooling was considered a key experience, which showed that the caregivers prioritised their children who continued in school while they were made domestic servants. The children also complained of being denied food. Furthermore, the current data showed that even the grandparents were not different from other caregivers in terms of prioritising their biological children over their orphaned grandchildren. Additionally, the grandparents were reported to even physically abuse the orphaned children, or in some cases, not handle cases properly when the orphaned children were sexually abused. The findings of this study resonate with those of researchers Ungar (2013) and Malindi and Theron (2010) that children

exhibit atypical or hidden resilience through behaviours such as drug and substance use which show resilience though that may affect their social and psychological functioning.

Conclusion and recommendations

The researcher concludes that street-involved children face educational challenges on their way into the streets and out of the streets. The findings suggest that some of the street-involved children leave home to stay on the streets on the backdrop of challenges in schooling. These challenges include differential treatment regarding schooling support, adverse experiences, stigma, truancy and peer influence. These findings relate with the observations by Masten et al. (2015), Ferguson et al. (2014) and Morton et al. (2018) that street-involved youths are at significantly elevated risk levels regarding schooling leading to challenges regarding their enrollment and success in school. The children also show that they may use schooling as a resilience pathway as some NGOs use schooling support as reunification kits while some of the children show determination and personal efforts in getting educated. In that regard, education seems like a revolving door for getting out of home into the streets and also as a pathway for community reintegration.

The study recommends that the government increase efforts to provide educational support to children facing financial and emotional hardships. Indeed, the government should strengthen families facing poverty, especially those families that cater to orphaned children and also train the same caregivers on positive parenting.

The government should provide education to street-involved children, which should include training in life skills and vocational training. This imparts skills like decision-making, interpersonal skills, stress and coping with it, health literacy and emotional intelligence. Regarding vocational skills, individual street-involved children and former street-involved children should be free to select the courses they want. The government should provide funding for such an education. Perhaps more important, the government should provide rehabilitation and therapeutic services to street-involved children to help them deal with adverse psychological and emotional experiences both at home and in the streets. Parents, families and communities should also be trained in the provision of care and positive parenting for children, which should help them prevent, mitigate and detect the cases of street childhood. The author recommends that future studies be quantitative and comparative to determine the prevalence of schooling among these street-involved children and also show causality, or at least relationships, amongst the key variables such as homelessness, family dynamics and key educational outcomes.

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