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**Implications of Disparate Interpretations of
Participation in Children of the Streets Programs
in Kampala**

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List of Acronyms

ISS	Institute of Social Studies
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
CSR	Rights of the Child
UNHCR	The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development

Abstract

The research aimed at ascertaining why the prevailing interventions aimed at protecting the rights of the children of the streets in Kampala, Uganda, fail—in order to establish a more effective approach. Based on qualitative interviews with a range of actors in the interventions aimed at protecting children of the streets in Kampala, Uganda, I discovered that there are multiple interpretations of children’s participation, which vary among the stakeholders, thus negatively influencing on the participation of children of the streets in the interventions aimed to protect their rights. Most of the actors seem to support/prefer the collaborative participation approach, with the children showing some preference for the child-led approach. However, the law enforcement support/prefer the consultative participation approach. Moreover, according to the participants, socio-economic factors and systemic/institutional weaknesses restrict the integration of children of the streets’ participation in the interventions aimed at helping them, thus impacting the effectiveness of the interventions. Therefore, the government and other stakeholders in the sector should establish ways of reducing these restrictions in order to enhance children participation, and hence improve the effectiveness of the interventions aimed at helping children of the streets in Kampala and similar contexts.

Relevance to Development Studies

The present agenda of development encourages the participation of the actors involved in developmental initiatives including children. Children's right of participation promotes the free expression of personal views by children in matters that impact their lives within the government, institutions, public services, local communities, schools, and families. However, the participation of children is hindered that interpretation of their capacity to engage in decision-making processes. In this vain, this study seeks to ascertain why interventions aimed at protecting the rights of the children of the streets in Kampala fail, and possibly suggest a more effective approach.

Keywords

Participation, children of the streets, rights, interpretation

Chapter one: Setting the context of the study

The ineffectiveness of children of the street's programs in Uganda

There is a shortfall in children's rights in Uganda: as much as they have the right to express themselves, there is still a lack of explicit obligation to incorporate their views in matters that affect them. This is because the policies established by the government to protect their rights have been poorly enforced, especially at the lower government levels (CRCA & Hazizaj, 2011). Dwyer (2016) argues that protection efforts reinforce already existing cultural presuppositions that children are socially incompetent. Consequently, the approaches used to address the issues linked to street children in Uganda have been ineffective. For instance, the roundup and placement of street children in supposed "rehabilitation facilities", seem to restrict the children's rights, and fails to offer the necessary support (Dwyer, 2016). According to Human Rights Watch (2014), this approach has repeatedly failed since the street children often run from such forms of support for fear of ending up in detention facilities and in illegal means of survival.

On the other hand, studies indicate some level of participation of street children in NGO interventions. Cheney (2011) argues that NGOs are guided by international development programs that adopt children's rights frameworks as a basis for designing participatory interventions. But, the children's participation is commonly limited, since it fails to include children at the level of decision-making, by strengthening pre-existing cultural attitudes predominant in Uganda (Cheney, 2011). Some studies also reveal that certain NGOs tend to use the children of the streets to attract financial resources from overseas, as opposed to helping these children (Biggeri, Ballet and Comim, 2011). On a positive note, certain street children tend to trust religious organizations, which seem to encourage children's participation, through allowing voluntary engagement in activities. But, as noted by Biggeri, Ballet and Comim (2011), religious organizations' approaches have been criticised for attracting more children from neighbouring rural areas to Kampala, as they seek to also benefit from the material goods and services unavailable back "home". This is coupled with the context-specific characteristic of African countries in terms of structural weaknesses as a result of instability and poverty (Sloth-Nielsen & Mezmur, 2008), which makes it even more challenging to enforce the necessary interventions. Ager *et al.* (2012) argue that the interventions aimed at rescuing children from the streets, including

putting them in school or with their families, have largely not offered lasting solutions, as they ignore the views of the children and their unique circumstances, leading to the need for a participatory approach in interventions concerning the needs of children of the street. However, there is low participation of children of the streets in the interventions meant to help them in Kampala, Uganda. I therefore set out to ascertain why interventions aimed at protecting the rights of the children of the streets in Kampala fail, and possibly suggest a more effective approach by answering the following research questions:

1. How have the differences in interpretation of children's participation influenced the level of involvement of the children of the streets in interventions aimed at removing them from the street?
2. How do systemic/institutional and socioeconomic factors hinder the participation of children of the streets in interventions to remove them from the streets?
3. What are the outcomes of incorporating the right of participation of children of the street in interventions to remove them from the streets?
4. What is potentially the most effective participation approach that can be adopted in promoting children of the streets' right of participation?

I argue that different interpretations of children's participation by stakeholders have led to low participation of the children. This can be attributed to the context-specific socio-economic and institutional factors, including low resources, and gaps and weakness in legislation/policies, which have constrained participation efforts. However, even with such constraints, their participation is still helpful in enhancing the effectiveness of such interventions, with the collaborative approach to participation being potentially suitable for such contexts.

The study starts with a description of the background of children of the street's participation, and a review of literature related to children's participation. This forms a basis for establishing the research problem and questions, and identifying a suitable methodology, and theoretical concepts for analyzing the research findings. Secondly, the research methodology chapter describes the data collection and sampling processes, and the justifications for the choices made. This is followed by the analysis and discussion of the data collected, which forms a basis for addressing the research questions, and also identifying the most likely effective children's participation approach for Kampala's children of the streets.

Chapter two: Different approaches to children's participation, and their applicability

Concept definition and scope

The most commonly used definition of street children was developed by the Inter-non-governmental in Switzerland back in 1983 (UNICEF 2001). According to the Inter-NGO's definition, a street child (or youth) represents "any boy or girl who has not attained the age of adulthood, for whom the street is/has become his/her source of living and/or place of dwelling , and who is not sufficiently safeguarded, supervised, or under the direction of responsible adults (UNICEF, 2001). Studies categorise the street children population based on two groupings; that is, "children of the street" and "children on the street" (UNICEF, 2001). Firstly, "children of the street" describes children who are homeless, live, and sleep on the streets, especially in urban areas (UNICEF, 2001). Such children normally live completely on their own, with "Homeless Street" adults, or other street children. On the other hand, "Children on the street" describes those children who earn a living (or beg for cash) on streets and have homes to return to. According to UNICEF (2001), such separation is important since unlike "children on the street", the "children of the street" do not have homes and families to go to, and thus tend to lack psychological, emotional, and parental support, which is often present in parenting environments. Cumber and Tsoka-Gwegweni (2015) argue that the homeless lifestyle of most of the children of the street makes them susceptible to health risks and other issues compared to 'ordinary' children living in their homes, since as they roam the streets to look for money, food, and other basic needs, they are exposed to several risks. Based on this distinction, the study focused on the "children of the streets in Kampala, Uganda.

Trends in Children's Participation

Internationally, children's social and legal status is addressed under article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The provisions under this article appreciates that children lack full independence from adults but are still entitled to enjoy the human rights. The first paragraph of the article assures every child (able to form his/her opinion) the right to express them freely in all aspects that affect them.

Azer, Mehanna, Al-Sharmani (2010) claim that the almost undivided ratification of the CRC tends to echo a universal commitment towards child protection. Establishing a right-

based global approach, as envisaged by the CRC, can trigger a great impact on children's life across the world, since it may shift how the concerned parties in children issues perceive and act while dealing with situations concerning children's rights (Dinbabo, 2013). As noted by Dinbabo (2013), international bodies, including the UNICEF, UNHCR, and Save the Children, supports a right-based approach (RBA) in building and strengthening an all-inclusive child protection framework . However, the models of child protection policies tend to vary across countries, thus impacting on their effectiveness; in terms of offering a well-coordinated link between child protection interventions and child welfare (Azer, Mehanna & Al-Sharmani, 2010). This can be attributed to context-specific factors that affect the adoption of CRBA. Therefore, this also influences the difference in the nature of participation of children in programs concerning them across various contexts.

In the Ugandan context, the government has developed multiple policies in the effort to resolve the increasing number of street children and the safeguarding their lives (Weber, 2013). These policies include the Children Statute (Children Act) that offers a legal guide for safeguarding children. Uganda is also a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which falls within the Ugandan Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), as noted by Weber (2013). Child participation is among the chief principles highlighted under article 12 of the CRC, which emphasises that children and youth have the right to express their opinions freely, thus posing an obligation for them to be listened to and facilitating their involvement in all matters that affect them in various contexts (Lansdown, 2011). However, as expressed earlier, there is no single and clear participation approach in the implementation of the interventions aimed at protecting the children of the streets in Uganda. Therefore, this is a potential cause of the ineffectiveness of the children of the street's programs in Uganda, which program seeks to investigate.

The state of children of the streets in Uganda

Studies indicate that the number of street children in major Ugandan towns has been increasing over the years (Nangonzi, 2013; Bwambale *et al.*, 2020). According to Nangonzi (2013), at least 16 children end up on the streets each day in Ugandan Capital city, Kampala alone. Bwambale *et al.* (2020) reveals that 66.82 percent of children had moved to Ugandan cities' streets in the past 2 years, with 20 per cent in the last 3 to 5 years, and 13.18 per cent in the last 6 years or more. This raises concerns, since while on the streets, the children are exposed to risks like defilement and rape, lack of proper shelter, physical attack, lack of or inadequate access to health services, illegal arrests and imprisonment, and unhygienic

environment (Weber, 2013; Walakira *et al.*, 2014). Studies also show that children living in the streets of Kampala and other urban centres face discrimination and abuse from local governments' personnel, police, peers, and the communities they dwell and work in (Nyeko 2019). These children are also exposed to other severe conditions, such as drug abuse, hunger, mob justice, and cold (Weber, 2013). These are indications of the ineffectiveness of the prevailing children of street's program in Uganda.

Several factors tend to pull and push the children to the streets. In Uganda, street children are driven to the street by poverty, civil conflicts that lead to loss of parents/guardians, HIV/AIDS, and the general gaps that exist in the national OVC interventions that make the children more vulnerable (Weber, 2013; Dwyer, 2016). As quoted by Biggeri, Ballet and Comin (2011), Young (2004) established that around 90% of street children attributed negative factors (largely related to mistreatment from guardians/parents, death of parents, or poverty), push them to move and live on streets. Moreover, most children of the street in Uganda, especially in the Northern region, have no roots; having been born and grown as internally displaced people due to civil war (Amone & Anenocan, 2014). These children may find their way to big cities, such as Kampala, as they search for a livelihood. According to Amone and Anenocan (2014), these aspects cause a lack of sense of identity and history for the children, which make them more vulnerable, and inform the need to establish effective ways of supporting them. For instance, famine and hardship conditions among the Karamojong community (Anich *et al.*, 2011; Biggeri, Ballet & Comim, 2011), and the civil war among the Iteso community, push children on the streets of Ugandan urban centers, including Kampala (Luwangula, 2017). These factors need to be addressed in order to prevent the increased inflow of the children of the streets in the streets of Kampala (and other urban centers) in Uganda.

On the other hand, Biggeri, Ballet and Comim (2011), identified rising urbanization, dominance of cash, and peer pressure, as some of the pull factors. De Benitez (2011) indicates that children tactically decide to go to the streets, in the effort to either lower the harm they face and/or to enhance the socio-economic situation of themselves and their families. For instance, most street children in Kampala engage in income-generating activities, such as gathering scrap metals, empty bottles or cans; carrying and transporting luggage; selling small commodities; and/or begging (Biggeri, Ballet and Comim, 2011).

Approaches to children's participation, and their implications for child-based programs

Lansdown (2011) established three wide forms of participation for implementing the rights of children, with each offering varying levels of opportunities for children to have an influence on matters impacting on them, and consequently varying levels of empowerment. These approaches formed a basis for this study in assessing the participation of children of the streets in Kampala.

Firstly, the consultative participation involves a case where adults consider the views of children in building knowledge and understanding of the children's lives and experiences (Lansdown, 2011). According to Lansdown (2011), this approach is characterized by aspects such as being adult-led and managed, adult-initiated, and lacks any potential for children to have control over outcomes. In this sense the approach fails to allow the sharing of decision-making with the children themselves (Lansdown, 2011). This seem to align with the paternalism theory, where children are regarded as dependent, becoming (future) citizens, who are, in general, unable to make rational decisions. In this sense, the children rights are, therefore, restricted to the right for protection, (Liebel, 2012). From the perspective of paternalist, children are regarded as dependent, becoming (future) citizens, who are, in general, unable to make rational decisions. In this sense, the children rights are, therefore, restricted to the right for protection (Liebel, 2012). This perspective justifies control over children through the need to offer them protection from themselves and others for their own future interest.

Hanson (2012) says that some paternalists (Butler, 2000; Herman, 2001) argue against CRC since it represents an attack against natural family's rights and would challenge parent's authority. Other paternalists (Veerman & Levine, 2000; Simon, 2000) are not against CRC, but only regard it as a guiding framework on preventing harm against children, which is its core (Hanson, 2012). This is because CRC promotes participation of children, which seems elusive in this school of thought. Simon (2000) holds that safeguarding children against severe harm is not just paternalistic, but can also act contrary to the respect of right to children's independence, which to him is only an insignificant price to pay in the focus on the severest harm that could be imposed upon children. This suggests that even with the likelihood of violating on the rights of children of the streets through the use of this approach, its end results would justify its application/use.

Evidence indicates the dominance of this approach in Africa, including Uganda. For instance, most of the cultures in Uganda believe that children are not supposed to be heard, but instead only take what adults do. Moreover, Ugandan adults hold the perception that children lack the capacity to offer meaningful contribution and/or lack the awareness of what is good for themselves (Cheney, 2011). But studies suggest that this approach is ineffective. For instance, according to Ayub, Kumar and Shora (2016), the strategies meant to resolve their children of the streets' situation are not implemented in effective ways as result of various context-specific issues, especially in developing countries in Africa. This is further stressed by Ager et al. (2012), who note that interventions aimed at rescuing children from the streets and putting them in school or with their families have largely not offered lasting solutions as they ignore the views of the children and their unique circumstances, leading to the need for a participatory approach in investigations concerning the needs of children of the street. This suggests that the end result in applying the consultative approach has (is) been ineffective to even justify the low (no) involvement of children in programs concerning them.

Secondly, the collaborative participation approach offers a higher level of partnership between children and adults, offering opportunities for active participation at any phase of decision, project, initiate, or services. This can be characterized by partnering with children, adult-initiated, empowerment of children in order to challenge or change both outcomes and process and permitting an increasing degree of self-directed children's action over a period of time (Lansdown, 2011). This tends to align with the liberation theory, which regards children as independent real citizens (beings), who are able to make rational decisions (Liebel, 2012). According to Liebel (2012), liberationists hold that children have the right to independence and full participation in issues of the society, just as adults do. Collaborative participation may entail children involvement in development and executing research, development of policies, peer education, or representation in committees or boards (Lansdown, 2011). Therefore, using this approach would appreciate and involve children of the streets in programs concerning them.

Various studies have indicated the effectiveness of this approach. For instance, Cheney (2011) argues that integrating young individuals in research can produce stronger ownership of organizational practices and transform them and their relations with the communities around them. Cheney (2011) argues further that given the challenging and concrete obstacles for satisfaction of the rights of children, forming platforms for them to participate in program development of NGOs and policy making provides huge promise

for enhancing their general situations. Similarly, Dinbabo (2013) argues that a child right-based approach has transformed into a significant and uniting idea for stakeholders from multiple fields that are interested in the protection and well-being of children. Additionally, Dinbabo (2013) indicates that international bodies like UNICEF and UNHCR are advocating for a right-based approach as an effective approach for establishing and reinforcing an all-inclusive child protection program. This suggests the popular support of the collaborative approach from NGOs organizations. However, in the context of Uganda, Cheney (2011) notes that despite the Uganda government recognizing this, the efforts towards implementing them have only remained on paper, thus revealing the more gaps in existing practices. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, the approach is adopted by religious organization, but criticised for attracting more children from neighbouring rural areas to Kampala. This indicates that using a collaborative approach could restrict the full participation of children of the streets, but by involving them, this could still boost the effectiveness of their programs.

Thirdly, the child-led participation involves a case where children are given or claim a space and platform to initiate activities, as well as to advocate for themselves. This is characterized by issues being highlighted by the children themselves, adult offering facilitation as opposed to leading, and children controlling the process. This approach can be used in children choosing their schooling, pushing for the acknowledgement of their rights in via courts, or adopting complaint mechanisms. Moreover, the children can also trigger actions as an entity through formulating and managing their own establishments, aimed at analysis of policies, activism, creating awareness (Lansdown, 2011). This approach tends to align with the emancipation theory, which holds that children are both being and becoming. According to the emancipation perspective, the importance of rights starts with right to participation, then right to provision, and protection, respectively.

In regard to children's competence, emancipationists shift and place the burden of proof to parties that would deny children of the opportunity to exercise their own rights. In this sense, children are considered competent unless it is proved that they are not. As expressed by Liebel (2012), the emancipation perspective is largely adopted by working children's organizations, especially on debates concerning child labor. For instance, while addressing modern thinking of children's work, Nieuwenhhuys (2010) argues that the understanding of children's work has always been surrounded with moral considerations, with three major viewpoints towards this issue has been approached; that is legal, neoclassical, and demographical. The legal approach emerged in the 19th century in

Europe in reaction to increasing concerns over needed control of the disruptive impact of children's employment in factory setups. But, even with its high appreciation of children involvement, the perception of children as equals to adults (even in employment), could arouse other issue, such as labor relations.

Moreover, wide activities not directly linked with factory work were left unattended to by the legal approach, including housekeeping, helping adults for no pay, domestic services, and street-selling (Nieuwenhhuys, 2010). As expressed by Nieuwenhhuys (2010), these were considered necessary for livelihood and stayed morally unchallenged and is common with child labor in third world countries. This is also revealed by Dinbabo (2013), while quoting statistics from the International Labor Organization (2010), indicated that worldwide, a child in every 6 children engage in work, with 126 million working in conditions that are hazardous, and the highest percentage of child labourers being in Sub-Saharan Africa. For instance, in their study in Uganda Muhangi and Ngutuku (2011) revealed that a clear understanding existed among key stakeholders who perceived child labor as a necessity for children from poor backgrounds in the context of shocks in livelihoods and general household vulnerabilities. The research also established mixed outcome between the level of awareness on child labor and the action assumed to curb child labor, and resource-constraints being a challenge of curbing it.

Evidence suggests the relevance of this approach in the context of children of the street. For instance, O'Kane (2003) reveals and supports the adoption of the emancipation participation approach to street and working children's participation in designing programs for their rights in her study in Delhi India. She argues that by empowering street and working children to focus on their experiences, express their opinions, plan appropriate programs and promote their own rights, these allow them to challenge the status quo in relation to their power and position in the society. This is applicable for street children who also engage in income generating activities (Lansdown, 2011). This will be empowering for them since studies indicate how children of the streets in sub-Saharan Africa are exposed to burdens connected to poverty, lack of support from families and chronic and infectious diseases (Chigunta, 2002; Swahn *et al.*, 2012). This leaves them desperate to the extent of resorting to various coping and survival strategies, with some resorting to suicidal conducts and ideation (Swahn *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, even with the highest appreciation of children's participation, its treatment of children as equal to adult may make it ineffective in certain perspective, and lead in the violation of the children's rights.

Chapter three: Research methodology

Introduction

The study adopted the research onion model (as shown in Figure 1) established by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007) to guide the research process. The research adopted the interpretivism philosophy, which informed the use of the inductive design, and qualitative semi-structured interviews, in order to gain deep insight from the participants on children of the streets' participation.

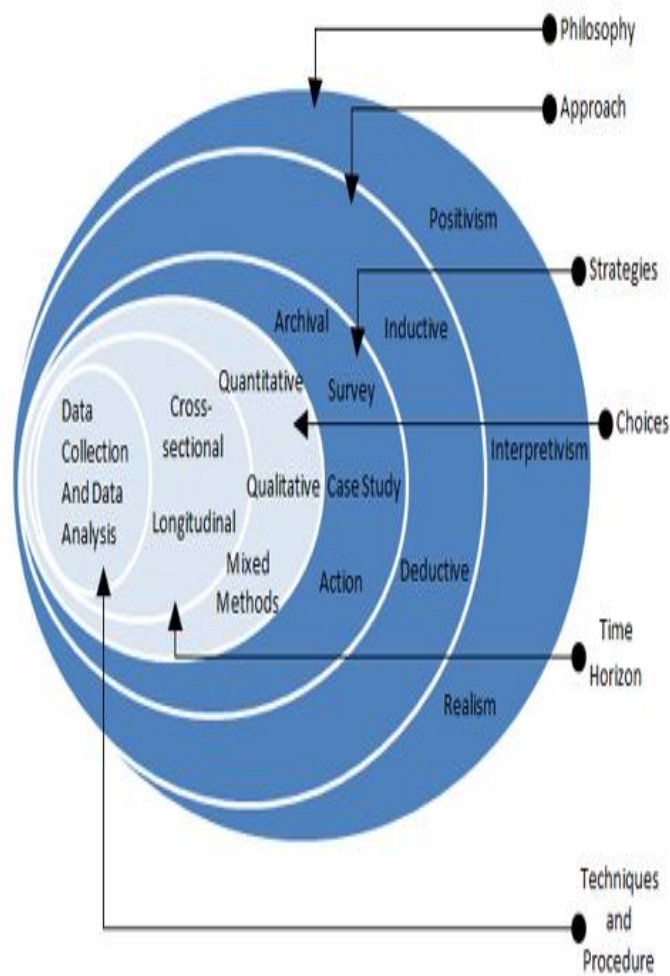


Figure 1: Research Onion

Source: Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007)

Interpretivism Philosophy

This research adopted the interpretivism philosophy that emphasises on the independence of people from the physical phenomena, as they develop meanings (Saunders *et al.*, 2015). Saunders *et al.* (2015) argue that the purpose of the interpretivism-based study is to formulate new, and deeper understandings, and interpretations of the social world and contexts. Moreover, Pham (2018) argues that under the interpretive perspective, a concept may hold multiple interpretations, rather than forming reality on the basis of a process that is only measurable. This made the approach more appropriate for the study since, as revealed from the literature review, there are multiple perspectives/schools of thoughts of children's participation. This is also coupled by the fact that different actors in fields related to children of the streets (such as police offices, rehabilitation facilities, local authorities, NGOs and religious organizations, among others) tend to support different perspectives/schools of thoughts of children's participation. This made the interpretivism philosophy more suitable for addressing the research questions, including establishing how the differences in interpretation of children's participation have influenced the level of involvement of the children of the streets in interventions aimed at removing them from the streets.

Inductive Research Design

According to Bryman (2012), the inductive design permits the researcher to establish a theory as opposed to applying an already existing theory. Under this design, the data for the research is gathered, and then a theory is developed on the basis of the results derived from the analysis of such data. I settled on the inductive design, by collecting data from the participants, who involved the various stakeholders in interventions aimed at helping the children of the streets in Kampala, Uganda. This was followed by analysis of the data to establish the most effective participation approach for these children.

Why Interviews were suitable for this study?

Interviews carry potential bias errors due to variations in the level of competences of the interviewee (Phellas, Bloch and Seal, 2011). However, Phellas, Bloch and Seal (2011) state that interviews offer more flexibility compared to questionnaires, particularly when effectively used for collecting in-depth data/information. Moreover, interviews tend to be sensitive to the variations in contextual meanings in studies (Phellas, Bloch and Seal, 2011).

They argue further that interviews create the opportunity for participants to offer deeper explanations or/and clarity over the aspect (s) being investigated. Therefore, based on this assessment, I found interviews suitable, especially given the different views required from various actors in intervention connected to children of the streets. Semi-structured interviews were used, which were performed online and via phones, to collect data from participants based in Kampala, Uganda.

Suitability of Qualitative methodology

I decided to apply the qualitative methodology. This decision was informed by the need to source individual's (that is the respondents') views/experiences relating to the participation of children of the streets. Such aspect may not be adequately captured by the quantitative methodology, because of its nature, as expressed earlier. For example, in the quantitative methodology, the participants may have offered random answers, as opposed to true responses, or may be restricted by the little flexibility in the quantitative methodology, which may have negatively influenced on the ability to address the research questions. On the other hand, the qualitative methodology involves collection and measurement of data that is mostly non-numeric, and highly descriptive in nature (Lindlof and Taylor, 2017). The descriptive nature offers the methodology a higher ability to derive deeper insight into the topic being investigated in a specific study.

Cross-sectional Time horizon for collecting data

Time horizon represents the choice of the time frame for undertaking a research, which may either be cross-sectional or longitudinal (Melnikovas, 2018). The longitudinal framework involves the collection of data in a repetitive manner over a lengthy period, with the researcher focusing on comparing the data sets during such periods. Contrarily, the cross-sectional frame involves the collection of data within a given point in time (Melnikovas, 2018). I used the cross-sectional time frame since it was undertaken within an established time limit. This is because it was not necessary to engage in repeated collection of data in order to collect and compare data from the participants in order to address the research questions.

Techniques and procedures for collecting data

Sources of data

I used primary data to address the research questions. Bryman (2016) states that primary data consists of data that is attained directly from its original source and state. I found this data was effective in addressing the research questions, especially by having a more enhanced ability to get a clearer picture and views from the participants, on their used/preferred children participation approaches. This also helped to determine the most likely effective approach to be adopted in the Kampala's children of the street's context. The collection of the data was based on online/phone interviews; that is WhatsApp and phone calls. The main reason for adopting the online/and phone interviews was due to the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic, which has triggered restrictions on social contact and movements. Therefore, it was not necessary for the researcher to be physically present or travel in order to undertake the interview in Kampala, Uganda. This equally made the study cost-effective, by saving on the costs of travelling.

Sampling technique and sample size

The choice of a sample size and sampling technique are very important since they influence on the reliability of the study (Acharya *et al.*, 2013). According to Acharya *et al.* (2013), probability sampling methods are more suitable in offering generalisability of the research's findings to the target population. However, based on the context and prevailing conditions while undertaking this research (as expressed earlier), including the COVID-19 situation, the convenience and purposive sampling technique was deemed effective. In using this technique, the respondents are selected since they were at the appropriate place at an appropriate time (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim, 2016).

Additionally, the participants were purposely (rather deliberately) picked since they had qualities that were relevant for the study (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim, 2016). In this case, the selected participants had experience/expertise working in interventions aimed at supporting the children of the streets, especially in Kampala. This helped to capture different interpretations of children's participations by the relevant actors (stakeholders). Therefore, the research's target population included individuals who work in organisations and institutions that engage in activities and interventions that offer support to children of the streets in Kampala, Uganda. The total number of participants was 14 (as shown in

appendix 2). The children interviewed were from both genders, with a range of ages below 16 years.

Ethical Considerations

Josselson (2007) argues that participants only engage in studies that they are sure safeguard their privacy and safety. This informed the need for ethical consideration, which also enhanced the integrity of the study. Therefore, the following ethical considerations were made;

- The measures of ethical considerations were guided by the ISS guidelines in order to enhance trust, ensure privacy, and the safety of participants, especially in relation to the risks associated with COVID-19 and data privacy. This also helped to increase the response rate.

- Before the interviews, consent was gained from the involved individuals, and permission from the involved organizations/institutions was also sought.

- Moreover, due to the vulnerable nature of children, social workers in the facilities were involved, but only to facilitate the interview with the children, based on the institutional guidelines, and with consideration of their safety, including observing the COVID-19 prevention recommendations

Thematic Data analysis

The data sourced from interviews' responses were edited and adopted for use in establishing main patterns and trends, based on the themes aimed at addressing the research questions. This involved patterns and trends in the main forms of interpretation of children's participation by the stakeholders, the systematic and socio-economic factors that hinder their participation, and the outcomes of incorporating the children participation. This formed the basis for discussion to reach suitable conclusions that later formed a good basis for offering useful recommendations

Chapter four: Effect of interpretations of participation and socio-economic factors on children of the street's programs

Influence of different Interpretations of children's participation on their level of participation

According to the responses, a majority of participants adopted/ preferred the collaborative approach, followed by the consultative and lastly the child-led approach. The results showed a popular use of the consultative participation approach among the public sector's participants). This was especially common among the legal enforcers; that is, police officers and local authority's personnel). In general, a majority of the participants from the public sector (that is, law enforcement units and the public rehabilitation centers) tend to be more inclined towards the consultative approach, with only the MGLSD's participant showing some inclination towards the collaboration approach (as shown in Figure 4). The consultative approach is characterized by an adult-led, managed, and adult-initiated process, which lacks any likelihood of involving children in the decision making or to take charge of the outcomes (Lansdown, 2011). As supported by the paternalism scholars, this approach perceives children as incapable of making rational decisions, and thus dependent on "adults", with their right largely limited to the right to their protection (Liebel, 2012).

On the other hand, all the participants from the private sector (that is, NGOs and the activist) showed preference for the collaborative approach. The collaborative approach acknowledges the fact that children can make rational decisions, and need opportunities for active participation (Lansdown, 2011). This is supported by liberationist who argue children also hold a right to independence and full participation to the issues of the society, just as adults do (Liebel, 2012), in this case in interventions aimed at protecting their rights.

Firstly, the local authority personal (respondent R1) and the police officer (respondent R2) indicated that they commonly follow the consultative approach. These findings seem to agree with Cheney (2011) revelation that Ugandan adults hold the perception that children lack the capacity to offer meaningful contribution and lack awareness of what is fit for themselves. The legal enforcement units are justified in their approach to limit children's participation in interventions, by only restricting it to the right to protection, as proposed by to the paternalism perspective (Liebel, 2012). This was expressed by their indication that

they follow the legally established protocols in their approaches, since it is their job to implement the laws and regulations. For instance, R2 stated,

“As a police officer I am trained and charged with the responsibility to enforce the law, which aims towards maintaining law and order”. Therefore, that is what I always try to focus on while engaging in various related activities including those connected to the children of the streets” (R1)

Secondly, representing part of the public sector, the response from the social workers from the public rehabilitation facilities, showed a mixed approach to participation; with some elements of the consultative and the collaborative approaches. The respondents from the public rehabilitation facility (KNRC) showed inclination towards the consultative approach, similar to the law enforcing units, by indicating that they engage in most of the activities in the facilities and in relation to the children on the streets based on established government policies, and as guided by the code of conduct of their respective professional body. However, this approach, as adopted by the public entities (and mainly law enforcing units) was not effective, as expressed by some of the response from the activists, such as R6;

“The systems and structures established for helping the children of the streets need to do exactly that, and not oppress them; either directly (through actions such as beating them, and putting them in cells) or indirectly (by not giving them the opportunity to take part in the decisions and solutions aimed towards helping them).It is sad that this is not the case, since if the systems and structure were working, we could not be hearing of the suffering these children go through” R6

This is ineffective because as argued by Simon (2000), paternalism may act against the right of children’s independence, but this is justifiable as it is a small price to pay in the focus to prevent the severest harm that could be imposed to the children. Therefore, according to Paternalism, a positive outcome of restricting children’s right to participation would justifies the approach, which in this case failed to prevent harm to children.

However, unlike the law enforcing units, the respondents from public rehabilitation facility also indicated that there are moments that require their personal judgement, where decisions may need application of experience and knowledge derived from training. This consultative approach is focused on offering cost-effective interventions, based on existing guidelines. This approach by public rehabilitation respondents would seem appropriate according to paternalist scholars, since they argue that the core of the perspective is to

serve as a guiding framework for preventing harm against children (Hanson, 2012). This was expressed by the respondents from KNRC who stated;

“We have the prescribed set of guidelines that we follow in our general working in the facilities, and in relation to our intervention towards helping to improve the lives of the former children of the streets. But I believe this are not permanent because there are scenarios we experience, and instincts would call for adoption of certain cause of action in the attempt to get suitable outcome” R4”.

Lastly, a majority of the former children of the streets preferred the collaborative approach, with the remaining showing preference for the child-led approach). The child-led approach is characterised by children given space to initiate activities, and adult offering facilitation, as opposed to leading (Lansdown, 2011).

Collaborative approach

A comparison of the results from all respondents from the private sector (including the NGOs and the activist) to the public sector, shows more inclination towards a collaborative approach to participation in the former. Firstly, the respondent from the private rehabilitation centers (UCC) had an inclination towards a more collaborative participation approach, by stating that;

“Our approach is wide and focused on giving the most effective outcome for the concerned children”. This is because, through our multiple programs we offer different solutions based on the uniqueness of every case, and with the interest of the child at the heart of the solution. For example, some of the children are taken in through referrals from other entities (such as the police) some are through our normal street outreach program. From all these channels, some of the children are taken into our facilities for fear of going back to their families, some prefer to be rejoined with their families, and all these is factor in our solutions” R5

Therefore, unlike the respondent from the public rehabilitation facility, who were in favor of a more consultative approach, their private counterpart showed inclination towards a more collaborative participation approach, where there is a higher level of partnerships between the children and the adults working in the rehabilitation facilities. In this case, the children tend to have a more active role in the stages of decisions connected to them.

Secondly, representing the private sector, the respondents from activist groups and NGOs showed almost similar responses (see Figure 3), by supporting the collaborative approach. The high adoption of the collaborative approach by NGOs can be explained by

Dinbabo (2013), who argues that NGOs advocate for the child right-based approach that has transformed into a uniting concept, which include stakeholder from different fields, and focused on protection and well-being of the children. Dinbabo (2013) indicates that the NGOs find this approach effective for establishing and reinforcing an all-inclusive child protection program. For instance, one of the respondents (a manager at one of the NGOs) stated;

“The systems and structures established for helping the children of the streets need to do exactly that, and not oppress them; either directly (through actions such as beating them, and putting them in cells) or indirectly (by not giving them the opportunity to take part in the decisions and solutions aimed towards helping them).It is sad that this is not the case, since if the systems and structure were working, we could not be hearing of the suffering these children go through” R6

Similarly, advocating for almost the same approach, a respondent from the activist organization indicated the importance of engaging all players, and encouraging the participation of the children themselves in order to make the interventions effective. Activist group tends work towards the protection of the rights of the children, by advocating for a multi-stakeholder’s approach, as the one that is effective since it offers an all-inclusive solution to the issues affecting the children. R7 indicated;

“We work to promote effective intervention towards protecting the rights of children of the streets, just like any other individuals. And we advocate for a multi-stakeholder’s approach in order to offer inclusive solutions, since it is evident that some of the entities meant safeguard the rights of these street children, in fact, participate in violating the very rights. This is coupled with other gaps in the enforcement of policies, which only seem good on paper” R7.

Thirdly, some public sector respondents also showed support for a collaborative approach to children’s participation. For instance, the ministry respondent seemed to highlight the vision of the ministry and government’s policies towards the development and the implementation of interventions aimed towards uplifting the welfare of children, and how they intended to improve on them, stating,

“The approach by the ministry is clearly stated in the National Strategic Programme Plan of Intervention for Orphans and other Vulnerable Children, drawn from the 2004 policy (that is, the National Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children Policy of 2004). This is aimed at guiding and monitoring the support offered to vulnerable children, which children of the streets

form part of'. Such efforts are made effective through collaboration and partnerships with other actors in the issues related to the children. (R3)

The ministry's stand, as expressed by R3 is also highlighted through government developed multiple policies in the effort to resolve the increasing number of street children and the safeguarding their lives, which include the Children Statute (Children Act) that supports the participation of children (Weber, 2013). The ministry respondent showed high value for the collaborative approach, which is displayed through partnership with other stakeholders. His statement reflects Kalibala and Elson's (2010) argument that no single entity owns the legal authority, manpower, or/and financial to address all the needs of the children, and proposed partnership, collaborations, and integration strategies as a likely solution.

Child-led approach

This was the least adopted/preferred approach according to the findings, with the perspectives from the children of the streets creating an impression that this would be preferable for them since they would have a chance to participate. They showed mixed reactions, with indication of their low participation in various activities/ and interventions, and a preference for a collaborative approach, followed closely by the child-led approach. This was expressed by a majority indicating how their inputs seem/ed "irrelevant". Nyeko (2019) says the children living on the streets of Kampala and other urban centres face discrimination and abuse from local governments' personnel, police, peers, and the communities they dwell and work in. For instance, one of the children (R10) indicated how he had gone through harsh times while still living on the streets, and sadly some of these harsh moments came from the very people meant to protect them, including the police officers and Kampala local authority's personnel.

"I faced a range of challenges while still living in the streets. Some of these challenges came from the normal hustle of trying to survive, but sadly there were extreme cases where we were mistreated (such as being chased, or whipped) by the law enforcing agencies, including the Kampala local authority's personals and the police officers. This was especially common in occasions where there were "cleaning" up the streets for upcoming major national events."(R9)

Another one (R11) indicates how he was treated like a criminal, having to stay in a police cell before being handed over to the rehabilitation center. He stated;

“During the processes of bringing me to this rehabilitation facility, I had to sleep in police cell as I waited to be transferred here. This was not pleasing since the cells are normally filled with criminals, although I was not mixed with the ‘bad’ ones”. Moreover, during the whole process, I was not asked anything in relation to my background and possibly what could have been done to address my case”. (R11)

In another case of a female former child of the street, respondent (R12) gave a brief story of how she had suffered in, before, and during the life in the streets, especially in the hands of men, including her own family. This also included mistreatment from the local authority staff. She indicated;

“My life leading to the rehabilitation facility had cases of mistreatment (such as insults). I also experienced cases of mistreatment before going to the streets, including physical and sexual abuse from men (some fellow street children, family, and the public). On the other hand, while on the streets, cases of mistreatment came when the local authority staff treated us unfairly, including moments where we were rounded up, and released for being a nuisance on the streets. (R12)

Therefore, in their opinions, the children of the streets are hardly involved in most of the decision meant to help them. This supported by the emancipation perspective, which argues that the importance The children expressed their lack of preference for the approach that failed to consider their input (similar to the consultative approach), while showing preference for a more participative approach. Probably they preferred at least the collaborative approach in the least scenario, or highly participative (child-led approach), which of rights starts with the right to participation, and regards children as competent, unless proven otherwise (Liebel, 2012). For instance, R10 said;

“I believe that having an approach that increases the level of our participation will derive more benefits for us from the range of programs focused on us, since they would be somehow more specific in addressing our needs.” (R10)

This was also expressed by R11, indicating;

“My background information and relevant inquiries were only made while at the rehabilitation facility. This included which level of education I was lastly, before I ended in the streets, and my passion, which largely helped in selecting the set of skills that I am currently learning.” (R 11)

Similarly, R 12 expressed gratitude on her current home in the rehabilitation center, indicating how going back to her adopted family was not an option.

According to her, although she was not treated well by local authorities, she felt like her views were deemed relevant in most (if not all) of the interventions meant to help her within the rehabilitation center. She stated;

“Given what I have experienced in my adopted family, and the streets, I would not wish to go back home, and the streets. I am grateful and feel like the treatment in the rehabilitation facility is much better, since I have been involved in several decisions, including the skill to train in, the sporting activities to engage in, among others. This has helped me in deriving happiness and building on my passion.” (R12)

She was based in the private, Christian-based rehabilitation facility, which suggests an inclination toward a more collaborative participation approach by the NGOs operating in Kampala, Uganda, and could explain the positivity expressed by the children toward the NGOs, especially religious ones. As noted by Biggeri, Ballet and Comim (2011), certain street children tend to trust religious organizations, which seem to encourage children’s participation, through allowing voluntary engagement in activities.

The systemic/Institutional and Socio-economic factors that hinder the participation of children of the streets

The respondents were asked to offer their views on the systemic/institutional and socio-economic factors that hinder their efforts towards achieving the intended success in children of streets-based programs. From the responses, all of the participants from the public sector (represented MGLSD, police, local authority, and KNRC) and also all from the private (represented by the activist, the private rehabilitation center, and NGOs) indicated socio-economic factors as the contributing factor towards the low participation of children of the streets (as shown in Figure 5). Moreover, none of the participants from the public sector mentioned systemic factors as key contributors to children’s low participation. But a significant number of the private sector (an NGO and the activist) found it to be a contributor (as shown in Figure 5). Therefore, these responses indicated that both socio-economic and systemic factors were linked to the low participation of children of the streets, but a majority of the participants highly linked the low participation to socio-economic factors (as illustrated in Figure 6).

Systemic factors

The systematic factors were largely highlighted by respondents in the private sector). Firstly, the respondent from the activist groups expressed the negative effect of systemic

weaknesses on various actors' reluctance to effectively integrate children's input into decisions connected to the intervention aimed to protect them. For example, R7 indicated;

“The current practices of intervention aimed at helping children of the streets are unsustainable in the long-term, since it is not enough to resettle and rehabilitate these children without resolving the issues that did send them there in the first place. From my experience in the field, such issues can be summed up into systematic and socio-economic factors, which includes poverty, domestic violence, and war and conflict back in some of these children's original homes.”(R7)

When asked to establish any link between such factors and participation of children, R7 linked the systematic factors to low children participation, by saying;

“Lack of proper systems may result to low/poor adoption of existing good practice, which seems to be highly linked with collaboration, and participation of children. For instance, the government regulations and policy guidelines may require that children are to be engaged in a manner that considers their input, and wellbeing, but the departments (and individuals) responsible enforcing such regulations/guidelines may fail to do so due to poor systems of supporting the implementation, or ensuring that in charge have fulfilled their responsibility in doing so. This could explain why we have several cases of abuse and mistreatment of children of the streets by law enforcers.”(R7)

The views from a section of the NGOs also pointed at systematic and institutional weaknesses and gaps, which were hindering the effectiveness of the interventions aimed at protecting the rights of children of the streets in Kampala, and their involvement in such aspects. For instance, one of the respondents from the NGOs indicated;

“The level of achievement in our efforts towards helping children, by also encouraging their participation have been not be adequate enough. This is because the provisions, policies, and regulations that are designed to safeguard street children, tends to be enforced in ways that curtail the efforts of local NGOs to offer help, such as education, supplies, and rehabilitation services for the children of the streets. This can be attributed to the many gaps in the existing government guidelines and services” (R6)

When asked to establish any link of these factors to the participation of children of the streets, R6 said;

“The systematic factors hinder the level of participation of the children since (for instance), we have policies that declare (and require) the right of children participation (such as the

Children Act), but the existing gaps in government guidelines and services, create reluctance and lack of accountability among those who are in charge of implementing them.” (R6)

These responses indicate the level at which systematic factors have constrained the participation of children of the streets in Kampala. This included corruption, and gaps and weaknesses in the regulations and guidelines, which contributes to the low participation of children and the effectiveness of interventions, by influencing poor/lack, and negligence in implementing policies and services that supports children participation. Evidence suggest the existence of multiple policies developed by the Ugandan government for addressing the increasing number of street children and protecting them (Weber, 2013), but as expressed by the result of this study, they have not been adequate, which can be attached to gaps/weaknesses in their implementation. As Cheney (2011) notes, despite the Ugandan government recognizing the importance of a more collaborative approach, the efforts towards implementing them only remain on paper, and thus highlighting the systematic gaps.

Moreover, respondent from the NGOs groups indicated the need for the government to enhance regulations, as opposed on threatening them, stating;

“Corruption and negligence in institutions meant to address and help children to enjoy their rights should be addressed. This is because the resources meant for children of the street’s programs are misused or swindled, thus influencing the efficiency of such programs to meet their objectives of addressing the needs/rights of the children of the streets. This is coupled with negligence on law enforcer to ensure the children rights (including right of participation) are safeguarded”. (R8)

Socio-economic factors

The law enforcing units linked the low participation of the children to socio-economic factors. The response from the police officer and Kampala local Authority’s personnel, expressed their recognition of low-level achievement in their intervention, and integration of children in their interventions. They suggested that a lack of resources is a big challenge in making higher achievements in such efforts. For example, R2 stated;

“As much as we (as law enforcers) would like to integrate and ensure higher participation of children in the intervention by the Uganda Police Force aimed at protecting their rights, we have (and are) in most case limited by resources to do so. For instance, at times the children have had to share and stay in cells, which are meant for criminals, since there is lack of space specifically designated for them. This is especially worse in cases where the rehabilitation

centers (especially public ones) are also having challenges taking them in or resettling them”.
(R2)

To link this to low participation, R2 argues that;

“Due to the limited resources, as expressed earlier, sometimes we have to make decisions based on what we feel is appropriate for the children in the given context”

Secondly, R1 (police officer) argue that;

“Socio-economic factors, such as inadequate resources limit the participation of children in their programs, and the program’s effectiveness. For instance, there are cases were due to lack or space/ resources, we have had to hold the children at the police stations, as they await further actions (such as being transferred to rehabilitation centers). In such situations I do not involve them. Moreover, I also believe children are not competent enough to make and influence decisions in case of such challenging situations.” (R1)

R1 argument seems to have been influenced by his socio-cultural belief, especially the argument that children are incompetent, which was noted by Cheney (2011) among most Ugandan adults.

Thirdly, the respondent from the MGLSD highlighted the impact of socio-economic factors as a key contributor to low children participation, by stating;

“We acknowledge the importance of children participation in interventions since it is not only their right, but it also helps in formulating more effective intervention strategies to help them and resolve issues concerning them. However, given the scarce resources, it is challenging to fully integrate the children in such efforts. This is also made more complex by the social factors, such family conflicts, and poverty in most of such children’s original homes, which puts more pressure on the already constrained resources” R3

In creating the link between these socio-economic factors and low participation, and effectiveness of children of the street’s program, R3 stated that;

“There are several ways on how the socio-economic factors cause low participation of children of the streets, and low effectiveness of their program. An example is the number of existing policies and regulations that encourage the participation of children. However, there are some law enforcing units/departments which fail to implement such policies/regulations accordingly, due to lack of resources to do so adequately, while some out of individual reasons. For instance, on the lack of resources for adequate implementation, some law enforcers are force to make certain decisions without involving the children, but instead subjecting what they assess as suitable based on available resources.” (R3)

R3 further explained that;

“On the other hand, in the case of individual reasons, we have officers who mistreat children, but we lack the adequate resource to track/monitor the implementation process, to catch, and hold such individuals into account” (R3)

Lastly, both the respondents representing the private and public rehabilitation facilities attributed inadequate resources as the highest contributor towards the efforts in increasing the participation of children in their interventions. For instance, R5 stated;

“We acknowledge the value of integrating children and enhancing their participation at each stage of the interventions since it boosts on the quality of the outcomes. But, in most cases we are restricted by low or poor resources to fully integrate children, and instead apply the most cost-effective option necessary. This is because we are sometime pushed to undertake some decisions without involving the children but based on what we deem effective based on what we have. This includes decisions on which set of skills to teach them, or how many are to share a room during their stay in our facility.”(R5)

Therefore, according to the respondents from the public sector, it is more constraining to fully involve children in the intervention due to the status of the existing socio-economic factors.

However, this does not clearly justify and explain the low participation of children as expressed by most of the private respondents. All of the responses from private sector participants also slightly linked socio-economic factors to low participation of children of the streets, and largely linked them to ineffectiveness of the children programs. According to the private sector’s responses (such as NGOs, activists and private rehabilitation), they tend to focus on offering the most cost-effective outcome, based on the accessible and available resources, which are not adequate. This is characterized by low/poor funding and resources. For example, the activist (R7) linked socio-economic factors to low participation of children of the streets in their programs, and their effectiveness, by stating that;

“The socio-economic factors push or pull the children to the streets, hence increasing the number of children of the streets, and increasing the pressure on already constrained resources, such as the space in police stations, rehabilitation facilities, and the forms of help, such as training facilities/inputs. This may contribute towards low participation of the children since the enforcing units (police and local authority) are more likely to impose approaches based on the available resource as opposed to exploring the options, by engaging the children as well.

This could consequently also lead to ineffectiveness in the children of the street's programs”

R7.

Therefore, as much as there is strong evidence or willingness to involve children, this seems to be limited by context-specific socio-economic factors. These aspects tend to limit the participation of children, whereby their involvement puts more pressure on the already limited resources, as expressed by the respondents. De Benitez (2011) argues that children tactically decide to move to the streets in their effort to either lower the harm they experience or/and enhance their socio-economic situations of their families and themselves. Moreover, studies have established that famine and hardship conditions, and civil war among some communities in Uganda tend to push children on the streets of Ugandan centers (Anich et al., 2011; Biggeri, Ballet and Comim, 2011; Luwangula, 2017). All these factors tend indicate the moderating effect of socio-economic factor on children of the street participation.

However, while recognizing the impact of socio-economic factors on the effectiveness of children programs, the respondents from the NGOs, and the activist argue that this does not justify ignoring children participation. For instance;

R7 argued that;

“As much as socio-economic factors do impact on the effectiveness of children programs, and to some extent, their participation, not involving them may be, in fact, more retrogressive, since the programs may fail to capture well the needs of the children, and thus lead to more wastage of the resources” (R7)

In linking socio-economic factors to ineffectiveness of children programs, and their low participation, an NGO respondent (R8), indicated that;

“We face challenges towards accessing adequate funding to support children of the streets programs. This influences on the effectiveness of these programs, and children participation since at times we fail to offer opportunities for children to participate, by instead applying what we deem may work for them, based on the available resources. These resources include lack of training inputs, which influence on the type of course the children can pursue in our facilities, as we instead opt to choose for them based on what is available.”(R8)

But R8 argues more against not involving children, stating that;

“This does not still justify the denying (rather avoiding) involving children, since their involvement helps in formulating effective programs, as I expressed earlier.”(R8).

R8's (and some other participant's) arguments tend to confirm that indeed a lack of resources, such as low funding does not justify the lack of participation of children, since it may in fact help in designing more effective solutions to the children's issues. The contrary arguments can be attributed to individual-specific participant's factors such as their belief over children incompetence. As noted by Cheney (2011), Ugandan adults hold the perception that children lack the capacity to offer meaningful contribution and/or lack the awareness of what is good for themselves.

The respondent from the religious-based NGO, represented by the Child Restoration Outreach organization (R9), also highlighted how they are overwhelmed by the number of children of the street children in need for help, which influence on the quality of the services and level at which the input of the children are incorporated in various decisions aimed at supporting them. R9 stated that;

“We are focused on harnessing community demands and needs, together with offering direct support to the less privileged, including the children of the streets, but our resources are often overstretched, thus limiting the nature and quality of our interventions” R9

R9 mentioned social factors such as poverty, and domestic violence and conflicts, which pushes more children on the streets, and some ending and putting pressure on the fewer resources in their facilities. On linking the socio-economic factors to low participations, R 9 indicated that although there was a link it was not that significant, and should not justify not involving children, by arguing that;

“I think that as much as inadequate resources may negatively impact on the effectiveness of the children programs, this does not significantly impact on the participation of children. This is because in my opinion, the involvement of children may actually help to save resource by forming opportunities for designing more cost-effective solutions” (R9)

.Therefore, based on these respondents (R7, R8, and R9), the socio-economic factors do impact on the effectiveness of the children program, but not that significantly on the participation of the children, since in fact, involving children may help in saving the cost of such programs.

The potential outcomes of involving the children of the streets in interventions

There were mixed results from the respondents on the outcomes of incorporating the right of children of the streets in the interventions aimed at protecting their rights. The

participants from the public sector highly indicated the negative effectiveness, while all of the private sector and the children themselves, highlighting the positive effects.

Positive implications

A significant number of participants from the public sector indicated positive effects of incorporating children, with a majority indicating negative effects of the same. Secondly, all of the respondents from the private sector highlighted positive effects of incorporating children, with only a few of them highlighting the negative effects of the same. Lastly, all of the children of the streets argued that incorporating them had a positive effect.)

Firstly, the children of the streets, showed a positive effect of their participation in interventions. They felt that this would make the various programs and interventions more effective. For instance, while appreciating that as children they may not be fully capable of offering opinions that are always relevant in all contexts, R12 indicated that the right for their input, and to be heard is very important since it would enhance how effective various child-based programs would be, through the incorporation of their shared individual-specific aspects in formulating the programs/activities. She also argued that this would also empower them as individuals. She stated;

“Our participation in programs and activities focus on helping and protecting our rights will help in enhancing the effectiveness of such programs since it will offer an opportunity for use to share our needs, desires, passions, abilities, and other individual-specific aspects that can be used to design the programs/activities” (R 12)

However, the two rehabilitation facility respondents suggested that children’s involvement had a significant positive impact on the outcome. For instance, R5 indicated that;

“We have developed various programs centered towards empowering the children of the streets, as a long-term strategy, and the success of such programs and their sustainability has been based on personalizing them to fit the needs of the individual child as much as possible. The personalization has been informed by factoring in their needs, passion, and abilities, among other individual-centered aspects” R5

The activist group respondent also held a similar perspective that incorporating children of the streets had positive impact on interventions. This was based on reasons, such as the participation being their rights. Child participation is among the chief principles of article 12 of the CRC, which require that children and youth be offered the right to

express their opinions freely, thus informing their involvement in all matters that affect them in various contexts (Lansdown, 2011). This is indicated by R7;

“We do not expect the children to always offer relevant inputs all the time, but through listening we get to filter what can work and what cannot. Moreover, it is their legal right to be heard and participate just like other individuals” R7

Fourthly, the ministry respondent (R3) indicated that incorporating children participation had some negative implications on intervention, by introducing some pressure on the resources. The slight contradicting view can be explained by the influence of other factors (individual), such as social (cultural) beliefs. This is because, most of the cultures in Uganda believe that children are not supposed to be heard, but instead only take what adults do. Additionally, Ugandan adults believe that children lack the capacity to offer logical contribution and/or lack the awareness of what is good for themselves (Cheney, 2011). It could be also a defense/excuse for failure for his area of responsibility (the ministry), for not adequately ensuring children participation.

However, they also indicated that the participation of children had a positive impact on interventions. According to them, collaboration with every party, including children would enhance the intervention and make them more cost-effective, as stated by R3;

“We also appreciate that it is in their legal right for the children to be heard and participate, but various socio-economic challenges (as mentioned earlier) tend to limit efforts towards encouraging their participation. But, their inputs also help in designing effective strategies, although for all of such input to be considered it would put a lot of pressure on various institutions and resources since there are many needy cases in the country.”

The link of socio-economic factors to low participation was earlier expressed by R3, mentioning lack of resources to track negligent officers, and the lack of resources for such officers/units to enforce the participatory regulations/policies.

The views by the ministry respondent, which supports the efficiency of collaboration, was supported by Kalibala and Elson (2010). This expresses the positive effect of the participation of all actors/stakeholders, including children, in their interventions.

Lastly, the NGOs expressed the positive effect of children participation in interventions. Similar to the ministry, the NGOs support the view that collaboration of different stakeholders enhances the quality of the outcomes. For instance, R8 indicated that;

“Involving all stakeholders reduced gaps, and ensures each of them fulfils their mandate in regard to protecting the children of the streets rights”

This shows the value that NGOs attach to children’s participation. As noted by Dinbabo (2013), the international bodies are advocating for a right-based approach since it is effective for establishing and reinforcing an all-inclusive child protection program.

Negative implications

The legal enforcement respondents (the police and local authority) highlighted the negative implications of involving children in interventions. They indicated the pressure that comes with increasing children participation in the various respective interventions. For instance, R1 argued that;

“The level of pressure on resources and other facilities is already overwhelming, and any attempt to integrate the views of the children of the streets would only worsen the situation, and thus negatively affect the outcomes” (R1)

This explanation by R1 is based on his earlier link between socio-economic factors and low participation; where he indicated that inadequate resource pushed the law enforcers to make decisions (such as holding children of the street at the police stations) without necessary involving them This can also be attributed to his belief (as expressed earlier as well) that children are incompetent.

Chapter five: Disparate Interpretation of Children's participation

Implications of disparate Interpretation of Children's participation

The interpretations of children's participation tend to differ across the actors (stakeholders) in charge of implementing the interventions meant to protect the rights of the children of the streets. These approaches include the consultative, collaborative, and child-led approaches. The adoption/preference of the approaches tends to differ between the private and public stakeholders; with the public stakeholders (including law enforcing units) largely adopting the consultative approach, while the private ones the collaborative approach. But the collaboration approach is also adopted by some of the public sector actors, including the ministry. On the other hand, the children of the streets themselves, show preference for the approach that recognizes and involves them in intervention; that is, at least the collaborative or the child-led approaches.

According to the findings, the adoption and preference for these approaches to children participation are influenced by socio-economic and systemic/institutional factors, which are context specific. As revealed by the findings, the socio-economic factors are the most dominant, and include poverty; inadequate resources and funding; and domestic violence, and conflict and war in the original homes of the children. On the other hand, the systemic/institutional factors include gaps and weakness in regulations and guidelines, and corruption. As established by the findings, these factors hinder the participation of children in interventions, and influence on the nature of participation approach applied by various actors. For instance, some of the respondents argue that social economic factors, such as inadequate resources, could limit the participation of children, whereby their involvement puts more pressure in already limited resources. However, this does not still inform and justify the lack of involvement of the children since as the findings suggest, in fact, the participation of children of the streets can help in saving the resources by formulating effective programs that address their specific needs. Therefore, such arguments seem to be largely influenced by aspects such as the participants beliefs on the necessity and competence of children's participation.

On the other hand, the systemic/institutional factors were highly highlighted by private sector respondents. This includes the multiple policies focused on encouraging

children participation in Uganda, but these seem to be only on paper, as they are hardly implemented or implemented with gaps that hinders the effectiveness of children of the streets programs, and their participation. This also includes corruption that also limits the effective implementation of these programs and their effectiveness. Therefore, it is important for policy makers and all the actors associated with children of the streets to formulate strategies that encourage the establishment, access, and availability of sustainable socio-economic and institutional factors. This will help to promote the participation of children in the interventions aimed at protecting them and enhance their outcomes.

The findings also indicate the mixed outcome of incorporating children in interventions. A majority of the responses show positive effects of children participation, with a significant number from the public sector (that is, law enforcement units) indicating the negative effects. The responses link the negative effects to the context-specific factors, especially socio-economic factors that will be affected and thus hindering on the effectiveness of the interventions. This involves the fact that involving children may only add pressure on the already constrained resources. However, according to this is not the case for the majority of the responses, since children participation has positive effects on their programs. This is because children's participation offers an enhanced ability to have an all-inclusive solution and having more personalized solutions for the children. Without an inclusive approach, it would be challenging to effectively address the issues revolving around the children of the streets. For instance, the push and pull factors that influenced the movement of the children to streets tends to be unique to a child/children, and hence requires more personalized solutions that can be well-designed by involving them. This informs the need for an inclusive approach to children interventions.

Thirdly findings also revealed that there was low preference/adoption of the consultative approach, which is supported by the paternalism perspective, and involves low/passive participation of children. Most of the support comes from the law enforcers. But, based on the responses, this approach would lead to ineffectiveness of the children-based interventions since it sees them as incompetent, and thus passively involve them. Secondly, although the child-led approach supports high participation and control of children in activities/programs, there was a very slight support for it. This can be attributed to context-specific socio-economic and institutional factors highlighted earlier, which makes it challenging to adopt it. For instance, based on the emancipation perspective, the child-led approach proposes that children should initiate their activities, and adults should only offer facilitation, but given the constraints expressed by the

findings, it would be challenging to achieve this in Kampala. Therefore, as showed by the findings, the collaborative participation is the most preferred approach among the stakeholders, and most potentially effective. Based on the liberation perspective, the collaboration approach regards children as independent beings, and having the ability to engage in and make rational decisions. This approach encourages partnership between adults and children, and hence seems most effective for offering all-inclusive interventions strategies to safeguard the rights and help the children of the streets in Kampala and similar contexts. This has implications on various actors (such as policy makers), by stressing the need to design all-inclusive interventions, which despite being led by adults, recognizes and incorporates the views of all stakeholders, even children themselves in all the activities of their interventions.

Suitability of An Inclusive approach for the children of the streets in Kampala

Scholars support the all-inclusive approach as the most effective (Kalibala and Elson, 2010; Dinbabo, 2013). Kalibala and Elson (2010) argue that no single entity owns the legal authority, manpower, or/and financial to address all the needs of the children. The all-inclusive approach should involve the children themselves, since according to Cheney (2011), the existing presuppositions of the social incompetence of the children influence negatively on the outcome of achieving participatory goals. This is because the push and pull factors that influenced the movement of the children to streets tend to be complex and unique to a specific child/children, and hence the solutions need their involvement. For instance, De Benitez (2011) indicates that children tactically move to the streets, in order to either lower the harm they experience and/or to help in enhancing their socio-economic situation or/and their families. Ager *et al.* (2012), also highlights how the interventions aimed at rescuing children from the streets and putting them in school or with their families are not long-lasting since they ignore the views of the children and their unique circumstances. Similarly, Azer, Mehanna, Al-Sharmani (2010) reveal that model of right-based child policies in Egypt failed to connect child protection and child rights, hence making them inadequate in offering cohesive and accessible services that can satisfy the needs of the children. Therefore, an all-inclusive approach, including the children themselves, is the most effective.

However, despite the child-led approach offering higher participation and control to the children than the collaborative approach (Lansdown, 2011), it may be challenging to

adopt, since it proposes that children should have space to initiate activities, with adults offering facilitation as opposed to leading them. This is especially challenging due to the expressed context-specific socio-economic and systematic factors, as seen in the responses. Therefore, generally, the collaborative approach seems to be the most potentially effective participation approach for intervention for the children of the streets in Kampala.

The collaborative approach offers higher level of partnership between children and adults, and opportunities for their active participation across the phases of decision-making (Lansdown, 2011). It is aligned with the liberation perspective, which regards children as independent beings, with the ability to make rational decisions (Liebel, 2012). Biggeri, Ballet and Comim (2011), indicate that certain street children tend to trust religious organizations, which seem to encourage children's participation. Therefore, through gaining their "buy-in", it is much easier to engage with them, unlike in cases where they are less considered, such as in the consultative approach, which is largely adopted by the law enforcers. For instance, as noted by the Human Rights Watch (2014), this approach has repeatedly failed, since the street children often run from such forms of support for fear of ending up in detention facilities and end up in illegal means of survival. This informs the need for a more inclusive approach; with the collaborative approach being the most potentially effective for Kampala's children of the street.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview questions for parties working in areas related to protecting the rights of children of the streets

Investigating The Application Of Children Of The Street's Right Of Participation In Interventions That Aim To Protect Their Rights In Kampala, Uganda

This study is part of a Student research project supported by International Institute of Social Studies, a branch of Erasmus University Rotterdam. This study aims to conduct the collection of primary data for the purposes of partial fulfilment of the requirements for obtaining the degree of master of Arts in Developmental studies in the Institute. This will help in addressing the following research questions;

-How the differences in interpretation of children's participation have influenced on the level of involvement of the children of the streets in interventions aimed at promoting their rights in Kampala?

-How systematic and socioeconomic factors hinder the participation of children of the streets in interventions aimed at promoting their rights in Kampala?

-what are the outcomes of incorporating the right of participation of children of the street in interventions aimed at promoting their rights in Kampala?

-what is potentially the most effective participation approach that can be adopted in promoting the rights of children of the streets in Kampala.

kindly respond to the interview questions to help in providing insight into the above research topic. Before you proceed, please make sure you go through the ethical consideration provided below in order to make sure that you have an informed consent for participating. This serves as declaration that this study has made the necessary ethical consideration relating to your confidentiality and anonymity, as expressed therein.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION STATEMENT

The researcher has made consideration that all necessary arrangements needed for informing participants (or/and those who legally responsible for the participants) of any health-related (or/and any other) issues formerly unrecognized by the participants. This is mainly useful in making sure that there are no risks on the well-being of participants. Moreover, the researcher has also made considerations that the participants can provide information associated to the study individually. The researcher is also acquainted with the professional guidelines of the related bodies to the study.

The researcher is also cognisant of the fact that any personal data gathered during the study, such as those on the Consent Form, needs data protection. In this respect, the researcher will make sure that the data remains protected, is anonymously coded if/and where possible, as well as remains only accessible to those linked to the research team. All these aspects have gone through the university's approval.

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your profession?
4. What is your current position (role)?
5. What is your level of experience in the field?
6. What approach (including activities) do you support and/or have you implemented towards promoting the rights of the children of the streets?
7. a.) Do you (and how) involve these children in decisions for these interventions (activities)?

b.) Are you/have you (and how have you) been involved in the decisions for the interventions aimed at protecting your rights? (*Applicable only for street children*)
8. What has been your level of success and achievements in such efforts (as an individual/organization)? (*only applicable to adult participants*)

9. What factors (systematic and socioeconomic) hinders your efforts as an individual (and as an organization) in your efforts towards promoting your efforts? (*only applicable to adult participants*)
10. Have (and how) the socio-economic factors mentioned influenced on the level of participation of children of the streets in their programs? (*only applicable to adult participants*)
11. What has been (likely to be) the outcome of your incorporation of the right of participation of children of the streets in the respective intervention aimed at protecting their rights
12. In you own opinion what is potentially the most effective participation approach that can be adopted in promoting the rights of children of the streets in Kampala, and why?

Appendix 2: List of respondents

Organization/Institution/Individual	Description	Datacollection method	Participants position
Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development	The ministry is in charge of mobilizing and empowering communities in order to boost their potential, while safeguarding the rights of the vulnerable population groups in Uganda (MGLSD, 2020)	Phone/Online interview	Probation and Social Welfare Officer under the ministry, at the district level in Kampala
Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA)	Enforcement of child care and protection policies (Human Rights Watch, 2014; Nyeko, 2019)	Phone/online interview	-officer from the station
Kampala Metropolitan Police	Enforcing the law/policies (Human Rights Watch, 2014; Nyeko, 2019)	Phone/online interview	-officer in the unit connected to the children section
Uganda Child Rights NGO Network (UCRNN)	A coalition of various (150) child-oriented organization, locally, national, and internationally NGOs focused on promoting the welfare and rights of children in Uganda. - collaborated with MGLSD created a child participation framework for guiding NGOs operating in the country in 2008 (Cheney, 2011)	Phone/online interview	Manager/personnel based in Uganda
UNICEF Uganda	Working towards keeping children (especially the poorest) alive, safe, and educated. - collaborated with MGLSD created a child participation framework for guiding NGOs operating in the country in 2008 (Cheney, 2011)	Phone/online interview	Manager/personnel based in Kampala

Child Restoration Outreach organization (CROUG)	Christian-based NGO focused towards rebuilding the lives of former street children	Online phone interview	Manager/personnel based in Uganda
Kamparingisa National Rehabilitation Center (KNRC)	Operates under the Ugandan MGLSD, for detaining, retraining, rehabilitating, and integrating back into the community children (12 years to 18 aged) taken to the centre	Online/phone interview	-Manager/social worker in the facility
-Former children of the streets in Kampala,	-former children of the streets (in the rehabilitation and children-based intervention projects)	Online/phone interviews	- 5 Former street children
Uganda Children's Centre (UCC)	A charitable civil society focused on offering direct services to children and young individual who are disadvantaged and out-of-school across urban areas in Uganda	-Phone/site-chat interview	-Manager/social worker at the facility

