

Assessment of Street Children Reintegration on Security in Kicukiro District, Rwanda

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Abstract

Security challenges are one of the major social problems confronting not only Kicukiro District or Rwanda in general, but most of the third world countries and some other parts of the world. The quest to find why and how the number of street children is increasing and how it affects the level of security prompted the researcher to conduct this study. In the course of the research, qualitative and quantitative research techniques were adopted. Focus group discussion and key informant interviews were the methods through which data was gathered. The data was presented in the form of diagrams substantiated with interpretation of the data. Once on the streets, children face infinite challenges, among them violence perpetuated by older boys, members of the public and the police. Street children are known to form gangs which pose a security threat to the city of Kigali hence affecting the economy, tourism, foreign investment and lower productivity of the work-force. Although they are relatively harmless as young children, as they grow into adults they are likely to constitute a major source of crime. Therefore, there is need to find out how the insecurity they pose is likely to affect businesses, property, and also the community. In addition, it is also important to understand the factors that influence street children to commit criminal activities in Kigali. This study submits that street children pose security threat not only while on the street but also after they have been reunited with families and reintegrated community. Hence, there should be a more concerted effort to monitor their behavior after the reintegration by all stakeholders.

Keywords

Street Children, Reintegration and Security

1. Background to the Study

Biologically, a child is generally a human between the stages of birth and puberty.

The legal definition of child generally refers to a minor, otherwise known as a person younger than the age of majority. On the other hand, the United Nations convention on the right of a child (1989), defines a child as a human being below the age of eighteen (18) years, unless under the law applicable to child, majority is attained earlier. Wholly, children of or below the age of eighteen are expected to be in schools and other related training centers to realize and develop their potentials (UNCRC, 1989).

However, certain social problems such as poverty, family breakdown or dysfunction, peer-pressure, hawking and begging make these children to drop out of schools and roam about the streets in their thousands in most cities of many third world countries whereby such children are often referred to as “Street Children”

Street children is a term for children experiencing homelessness who live on the streets of a city. Street children, according to Bretherton et al. (2005), are those children (under the age of eighteen), whose lives and livelihood are primarily understood in terms of their relationship to the streets. Bretherton also argues that they are characterized by loneliness on the street, lack of shelter, loss of parental contact and protection, love and care etc. They are mostly at risk of certain social problems (such as harassment, trafficking, hunger etc.) and also a risk to the societal stability. Indeed, these children look forward for necessary means through which they respond to their needs. These means include; begging, theft, hawking, drug abuse and picking pocket. Therefore, this has serious implications for security of the third world countries, like Rwanda.

1.1. Problem Statement

The street children phenomenon has persisted despite the government initiatives and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These children live unhealthy and often dangerous life styles that leave them deprived of their basic needs for protection, guidance, supervision while exposing them to different forms of exploitation and abuse (UN Annual Report, 2025). Once on the streets, children face infinite challenges, among them violence perpetuated by older boys, members of the public and the police. Besides, most of the programs run by the government and nongovernmental agencies, lack adequate funds and equipment which limit their success. Furthermore, children in institutions close to the city easily walk back to the streets adding to the problem. In other instances, children on the streets use institutions near the city center as drop-in centers. Street children depend on each other to meet their material needs such as food and clothing. They also support each other emotionally and look after one another. Under institutional care, all the basic necessities for the children are provided but strict rules in the institutions can be a hindrance to achieving success in removing street children from the streets. Most of them feel very restricted by the rules in the institutions due to lack of freedom they were previously enjoying in the streets hence returning to the streets.

Street children are known to form gangs which pose a security threat to the city of Kigali hence affecting economy, tourism, foreign investment and lower produc-

tivity of the work-force. Although they are relatively harmless as young children, as they grow into adults, they are likely to constitute a major source of crime. Therefore, there is need to find out how the insecurity they pose is likely to affect businesses, property, investment and also the business community. In addition, it is also important to understand the factors that influence street children to commit criminal activities in Kigali.

Street children frequently resort to petty theft to aid their survival. Contrary to popular assumptions, however, they rarely engage in more serious offenses. Some of the older street children and young adults have committed more serious crimes, including rape. However, international aid workers working with children in prison confirmed that most of the minors in prison on charges of rape were living with their families and were not street children ([Human Rights Watch Interviews 2001](#)). In Kigali, children frequently break into cars to steal reflective triangles, which traffic regulations require all cars to possess, and then sell them back to motorists for 1500 Rwandan francs.

With respectively 431 and 311 street children, the districts of Gasabo and Nyarugenge are on top in terms of the number of enumerated street children. Huye comes in the third place with 293 street children, Bugesera in fourth place with 291, and Kicukiro in the 5th with 200 street children ([National Strategy for Child Care Reform, 2019](#)).

The increase has sparked public apprehension, with some residents raising concerns that if the issue is not checked in time, future societal stability would be compromised as most of these children, especially the veterans in street life, are very brutal and aggressive; at times they steal from unsuspecting passers-by as well as in homes and shops.

It is against this backdrop this research seeks to shed light on the threats that street children constitute and how effective reintegration can help curb the phenomenon of street children.

1.2. Research Question

This study oscillates around the assumption that street children may threaten security as offenders but also, they may be victimized. Therefore, this study posits that effective reintegration may pave a way to remedying the situation. The study will seek to answer the following questions:

What types of violence do these street children commit?

What types of offenses do the public commit towards street children?

To what extent does street children reintegration step in as a remedy to restoring law and order on the street and in community?

1.3. Research Objectives

General Objective

The overall objective of this study is to investigate the role of street children reintegration on ensuring security in Kicukiro district.

Specific Objectives

- 1) To determine the extent to which street children jeopardize the security in Kigali;
- 2) To identify the role of the general public in victimizing;
- 3) To assess how comprehensive reintegration strategy will curb the threats caused by street children on security in Kicukiro district.

1.4. Significance of the Study

In the recent past, street children have become common in Rwanda and as such, have become one of the major social problems, particularly in Kigali. This is despite the fact that the government organs and non-governmental organizations spend huge sums of money and resources in the hope of ensuring that its citizens are secure as they carry out their businesses. The criminal activities that street children commit affect the economic growth of the country which pertain operations of businesses in Kigali, in general and specifically in Kicukiro District and also the challenge they pose to the pedestrians. The findings of the study will be useful to policy makers. The study assessed the factors that have resulted into street children in the country and also the children's relation with the law enforcement agencies.

The findings of this study would provide the government agencies and other stakeholders with valuable information that can be used in the design of effective reintegration strategies to mitigate the prevalence of crime by street children in Kigali.

1.5. Conceptual Definition

As the study draws from different streams, it is required to clarify different key terms used.

Street children

They are defined as Children less than 18, Males or females, who spend all or most of their time on the street, who maintain minimal contact with their families, or have no contact all, and lack supervision, protection or guidance, which makes them vulnerable to a wide range of health and psychological hazards.

If the child collects cigarette ends or other items or things from wastes. If the child has any connection with prostitution, gambling or drugs. If the child has no permanent place to sleep, and usually sleeps on the street. If the child contacts those exposed to delinquency or suspects. If the child is accustomed to escaping from educational or vocational training institutions. If the child has a bad behavior and is delinquent from his guardian. If the child has no means to live and no trusted guardian. If the child is less than seven years of age, and found in any of the previously mentioned cases of exposure to delinquency, or if the child commits one of the previously mentioned offenses. If the child has a mental or a psychological disorder to the extent that he/she might cause harm to himself/herself or to others.

Reintegration

Reintegration is a process through which a child is returned to his or her immediate or extended family and can reintegrate into family and community life (Azia et al., 2013). Children in institutions should be reintegrated into their families, and they should be able to live with their biological parents wherever possible. However, some children are in institutions who do not have any families to return to and, for these, there is a need to find alternative care arrangements (Limbani, 2016). This challenge has also been observed in Ethiopia where, for example, the Jerusalem Association Children's Homes (JACH) reported that incomplete personal information for the institutionalized children makes the process of reintegration quite difficult (JACH, 2002). In countries, such as Rwanda, it was also difficult in some cases to identify families of children in institutions because they were brought in by police or local leaders with no substantial details about their family structures (Lavin & Patel, 2013)

Security

The state of being free from danger or threat; the state of feeling safe, stable and free from fear or anxiety. It is knowing there will be someone there to help you when you need help. Growing up in a close family gave you a sense of security. A condition that results from the establishment and maintenance of protective measures that insure a state of inviolability from hostile acts or influence.

Security is a degree of resistance to, or protection from harm. It applies to any vulnerable and valuable assets, such a person, home, community, nation or organization. As noted by the Institute for security, it provides a form of protection where a separation is created between the assets and the threat.

2. Literature Review

UNICEF estimates that there are approximately 100 million street children worldwide and the number is constantly growing. It is likely that the numbers are increasing as the global population grows as urbanization continues (UNICEF, 2015). There are up to 40 million street children in Latin America, and at least 18 million in India. Many studies have determined that street children are most often boys aged 10 to 14, with increasingly younger children being affected (Amnesty International, 2006). Many girls live on the streets as well, although smaller numbers are reported due to their being more "useful" in the home, taking care of younger siblings and cooking (Beasley, 1999). Girls also have a greater vulnerability to trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation or other forms of child labor.

In Africa, local authorities are increasingly confronted with a rising number of street children and all too often do not quite know how to deal with this growing problem. There are an estimated 10 million children in Africa without families, mostly in towns as street children.

The number of street children in Africa continues to increase as a result of many factors such as comprehensive changes in the social fabric, rapid urbanization, poverty, rapid population growth and increasing differences in wealth. In addi-

tion, in the last two decades, Africa has experienced unprecedented level of crisis ranging from such natural disasters such as famine resulting from drought to ethno-religious wars, wars of attrition and the devastating impacts of HIV/AIDS that have added a quantum increase in the number of street children in Africa estimated currently to be in the range of 40 million. The AIDS epidemic and civil wars in Africa have caused a sudden large increase in the number of street children as a result of the abandonment of AIDS orphans or fatalities due to armed conflict.

In Rwanda, many children, generally referred to as “mayibobo”, are seen wandering on the streets in towns and emerging trading centers across the country. These children partially or completely broke away with their families to become street children. UNICEF describes street children as “boys and girls, aged less than 18 years, for whom the street” including unoccupied dwellings and wasteland has become home and/or their source of livelihood, and who are inadequately protected or supervised. The Rwandan community is concerned about protecting the rights and welfare of street children because they are constantly victims of the inherent dangers of street life, including deprivation, starvation, lack of education, homelessness, lack of medical care, inadequate hygiene, delinquency, prostitution, drug abuse, lack of protection, marginalization, lack of future, etc.

As said previously, Rwanda is a member of the United Nations and has ratified many international human rights conventions. It committed itself to adhere to those internationally recognized human rights standards. These latter are enforced by ad hoc government organs from the national to grassroots level. The implementation of these treaties by government organs goes hand in hand with the implication of family members or other people that have family ties. From very remote times, the child was raised in a family environment whereby he/she was enjoying their full rights. This consolidated care has been fruitful until 1994 when the country tissue was torn by the genocide.

Genocide consequences have negatively impacted relationship within and between Rwandan Families (MIGEPROF, 2005). One of those consequences has been the inability or unwillingness by families to care for the child. It is submitted that the four main reasons for placement of the child covering approximately 81 percent of all cases were deaths of both parents, death of mother, abandonment and poverty.

Since the devastating effects of the 1994 genocide against Tutsi, significant progress has been made towards improving the status of children, including in health, education and protection. The Government of Rwanda accepted Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations to continue applying programs to improve the enjoyment of the rights of women and children. Held after every four years, UPR assesses the state of performance on human rights, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of all UN member states.

In order to fully comply with what is provided in these international norms that are meant to safeguard the care of the child, Rwanda has put in place sound laws and policies, as discussed below. They stipulate that every child has the right to a

family, to be cared for by parents and extended family members. The government will be responsible for supporting families in providing good care for their children. Where children are temporarily or permanently deprived of parents and family environment, the government will be responsible for ensuring alternative care for such children (Abbott & Sapsford, 2012).

In practices, “appropriate alternative care arrangements will be provided for children without parents. The Government will invoke upon and encourage traditional Rwandan culture to care for one another’s children”.

The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda (2003) as amended to date guarantees the right to life (Art. 12), right to health (Art. 41) and right to healthy and satisfying environment (Art. 49) (Constitution as revised, 2015). Again, law N° 59/2008 on the Prevention and Punishment of Gender Based Violence expanded on the provisions for protection of girl children against gender-based violence and law N° 13/2009 on labour, prohibits employment of children under the age of 16.

The MIGEPROF (2005) identified several socio-cultural challenges affecting the family in Rwanda, including, polygamy, forced single parenting by females, prevalence of child-headed households, unaccompanied children, loss of traditional values, street children, and older family members in need of care, juvenile delinquency, domestic violence and disability (MIGEPROF, 2011).

Rwanda has a strong tradition of informal child-care practices. Statistics from 2008 found that registered child-care facilities were only caring for approximately 0.5 percent of all single and double orphans in the country, with the vast majority of orphans growing up in informal care settings (UNICEF, 2015). When there are no residential care facilities nearby, it seems that families find other care options such as kinship or informal foster care. Informal kinship care is the predominant form of alternative care in Rwanda. Although precise numbers of children are not known, in 2010, 22 percent of households nationwide contained children who had been informally ‘fostered’ by grandparents, uncles, aunts and other extended family; of these, 3 percent were double orphans.

The National Strategy for Child Care Reform (2019) is in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda (2003 as amended in 2015) whereby it is stated that the family is the natural base of Rwandan society (article 27); the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (article 20 and 21) as ratified by the Government of Rwanda; the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the child (article 25); and the Integrated Child Rights Policy and the recommendations of the 7th National Children Summit.

Under MIGEPROF, the National Commission for Children (NCC) was established in 2011, mandated to undertake child-rights monitoring and oversight, and to develop and implement child-protection interventions.

A Child Rights Observatory Office also exists within the National Commission for Human Rights with responsibility for child-rights advocacy (Barrett, 2018).

The National Strategy for Child Care Reform aims to reach the objective of a Rwanda with strong Family-based care system. In 2014, MIGEPROF/NCC en-

dorsed the IZ (Friends of Family) concept that encompasses the establishment of community-based para-social work volunteers, as mechanism that should improve the kinship care and children status in the community Barrett (2018).

The National Commission for Children ensures that all children including children with special needs enjoy the right to a family and are protected against all forms of violence with special attention to sexual violence and abuse. Children in informal care are entitled to all rights available to all children within the jurisdiction.

“Tubarere mu muryango”, let us raise them in families. TMM is a framework to restore and promote positive Rwandan social values that encourage all Rwandans and the community to take responsibility and caring for their own and other children. All of these laws and policy demonstrate the good will of the Rwandan government and society to uphold the state of art kinship care. This good will be crosschecked in the data gathered from different informants as discussed below.

Regardless of what form of kinship care is in place, in comparison to other forms of alternative care generally, there are certain benefits as well as challenges associated with kinship care. According to Roby, available evidence on both the benefits and risks associated with kinship care are mixed, as there are factors which in varying contexts, determine such benefits and risks (George & Roby, 2011). For example, a “pivotal factor” which generally determines the quality of care that a child in informal kinship care would receive is the degree of relatedness between the child (and his parents) and the kinship care. Other factors include the financial ability of the kin, the age and sex of the child and caregiver, the prevailing local culture and the circumstances under which the child is brought into the family and many other factors we do not yet know.

2.1. Causes of and Contributing Factors to the Street Children Phenomenon

The literature highlights a wide range of interconnected factors and circumstances that lead children to cut partially or permanently ties with the family. What is striking to notice is that most of these factors are grounded in the family as homes not only where children are born, but also, they are the best places to raise, care, educate and discipline children.

2.1.1. Family Grounded Causes

1) Family low income and poverty

The most decried cause of the street children phenomenon is family deprivation. When families are unable to meet the basic needs for their children, including food, clothing, health care, education, etc., children will flee home, with the hope to get economic opportunities to sustain their own subsistence and/or contribute to family income, (NCC, 2012) possibly with implicit consent of parents. Furthermore, because of poverty, some parents leave their children uncared for in order to move to a place where they can earn income for a long period. Then, for lack of immediate support and supervision, children may, in the meantime, decide

to resort to the street to meet the basic needs.

There are many causes of poverty, including limited employment opportunities, lack of education, limited access to means of production, illnesses and chronic diseases and physical handicaps. Also, natural disasters, wars and conflicts destroy the infrastructure and production and livelihood means, provoking poverty for many families. Likewise, family poverty has many aspects or indicators, including access to employment, homelessness or ownership of a house, access to health care, food accessibility in the family.

Based on the 2013/2014 survey of the household living conditions, EICV4, 39.1% of the Rwandan population was classified as poor at that time. This number included the population whose total annual consumption was below the total poverty line (RWF 159,375 in January 2014 prices) and was not capable of affording to buy a basic basket of food and non-food goods. On the other hand, 16.3% of the population as estimated to live in extreme poverty. The number included the population whose total annual consumption (food and non-food) was below food poverty line (RWF 105,064 in January 2014 prices) was estimated at 16.3% (*Statistical Year Book*, 2015). Given the idea that poverty is a significant major factor in children's decision to lead street life, it remains to be established whether most street children belong to the population groups that are most hit by poverty (EICV 4, 2019).

2) Divorce or separation of parents

Divorce or separation of parents erodes and weakens family capacity and readiness to act together to nurture and raise children. Minimal parental support, care, attention and supervision toward children are common consequences of parents' divorce or separation. Children of divorced/separated parents are reported to be shaken by self-doubt, uncertainty and confusion as they lack support and care in the home, or have difficulties in the new home, at the hands of stepparents, and as a consequence they easily can run away from home, show poor school performance, exhibit depression and/or have problems with the law. Poor communication, marital infidelity, heavy drinking, domestic violence, ill-preparation for marriage and financial issues are some to the most common causes for divorce and separation between parents.

3) Death of parents

Losing a father or mother to death following sickness, accident or war is another traumatic life experience that stays highly detrimental to the future of children, and push some to the street (UNCRC, 2019). When it is about the father death, children lack the principal breadwinner and source of income in the family. If it is an already economically struggling family, the consequences may be disastrous as poverty comes to settle in the family. How poverty is an underlying factor that triggers children's street life was discussed earlier.

The father gone; children stay with the mother. However, one recurrent facet of poverty remains the fact that women are at higher risk than men to suffer from poverty (Wikigender, 2017). This implies that children of women-headed house-

holds run a greater risk of ending up in the streets. Many spouses remarry after the death of their loved ones, but this does not necessarily help out with the children. Indeed, for various personal, family and social reasons, children don't get along with the step-parents and vice versa, and maltreatment of children by the stepfathers or step-mothers was often reported as an important factor that leads children to choose street life (UNICEF, 2015).

Furthermore, it used to be that orphans were taken by members of extended families, but given that very few today isn't capable and/or willing to take on the additional burden of more children, NCC initiated the Tubarerere mu Muryango (TMM) program to encourage foster families to take and raise orphans. In any case, orphan children are more likely to end up living on the street than children whose parents are alive and live together.

4) Neglect and/or maltreatment by parents

Children retreat to the street as a consequence maltreatment or neglect by careless, irresponsible, addicted or alcoholic parents (UNICEF, 2015). Other children cannot stand domestic violence even when it is not directed at themselves, but against one of the parents (Volpi, 2002). Child maltreatment by parents may be caused by alcohol abuse, stressful social experiences such as unemployment and financial difficulties. Also, it is pointed out that not all parents possess resourceful parenting skills. Indeed, some parents don't communicate effectively with their children as they may use harsh language and/or practice excessive criticism towards them, demean them, don't show interest in their needs, or overload them with work. Lack of respect and consideration vis-à-vis his/her children may make them feel hated and scared to go home. In such a case, the street may become a safer place than home for a concerned child.

5) Large family size

Studies found a relationship between large family size and the likelihood for children to end up on the street. For example, in the Philippines most street children were found to come from large families with an average size of 6 to 10 members (Supra note 44). In Egypt, the average family size of the sample was 5.94 persons per family for most street children (ODCCP, 2005). Indeed, a single child will receive less material and economic comfort in large families, at least in poor families, because the competition over household resources is more intense among children. Similarly, in a large family a single child will get less time, care, attention and affection, when compared to small size families (Volpi, 2002).

6) Dropping-out of school

Dropping out of school is another relevant issue in the literature on street children as research suggests the existence of linkage between dropping out of school and turning into street children. In Egypt, a study of street children found out that 70% were school drop-outs, while 30% of them had never been to school (Abbott & Sapsford, 2012). Likewise, a study in Brazil suggested that 57% of street children had dropped out of school before going to streets, 25% dropped out of school while being out in the streets and 12% did so after finding final refuge in the street.

MINEDUC (2015) reports indicate that the number of primary school drop-outs was 139,690 (the rate of 5.7% for a total of 2,450,705 pupils); the number of lower secondary drop-out was 21,868.73 (the rate of 6.5% for a total of 336,442 pupils); the number of upper secondary school drop-outs was 5187.35 (the rate of 2.5 for a total of 207,494 pupils (Statistic year book, 2015)). Moreover, the 2012 study on street children found out that 92.7% of enumerated children were school drop-outs. The main reasons reported to explain these drop-outs were family poverty and lack of school fees and materials. In any case, school keeps children busy, but when they drop out, some of them may resort to the street. What seems certain is that efficient schemes against school dropping-out will keep children out of the street.

7) Juvenile delinquency

In the 2012 study on street children, 12% of children pointed to juvenile delinquency as the main driving factor behind their street involvement. For many reasons some children adopt disagreeable attitudes, and when such a child goes to the street, you may easily be tempted to blame the child's inherent delinquency. But, if you dig deep into his/her background, you may find out that his/her misconduct primarily stemmed from unhealthy parents-child relations, lack of proper parental supervision, ongoing conflict in his/her family, neglect and/or abuse, etc.

2.1.2. Non-Family-Based Causes

1) War and natural disasters

Wars and natural disasters destroy infrastructure, kill people and disperse families, provoking numerous unaccompanied and homeless children. However, if this was certainly the case in Rwanda in the years following the 1994 genocide and war, it is not anymore as those children have grown-up and are adults today. On the other hand, in Rwanda during the rainy seasons and in areas where landscape is steep, torrential rains sometimes result into floods and landslides that kill people, destroy homes and land. Such was the case in October 2013 in the District of Nyabihu, and in July 2016 in the District of Gakenke. However, following such disasters, social protection mechanisms are usually activated in a way that family, community members and government institutions come to the rescue of affected households.

2) Peer pressure

In Egypt, 36% of street children interviewed indicated that they joined the street as a result of peer pressure. They just followed or emulated other kids who provided valuable induction on life in the street (Volpi, 2002)

3) Freedom and/or sensation seeking

Some children may stay in the street to get some freedom from family routine jobs and social constraints. Street life may be attractive to children because they enjoy city comforts and conveniences such as going to a movie or playing games.

Having widely discussed various causes of children being on the street time is ripe for depicting below, some of the risks generally associated with street life.

2.2. Consequences of Street Life to the Welfare of Children

Children face hardship in the street and their living conditions are appalling. They make a living begging, barely doing domestic work, collecting scrap that is sold against money, collecting food leftovers from garbage bins, loading/unloading trucks, washing and guarding cars and motorcycles, fetching and selling water, etc. Their living remains appalling and their basic rights denied: lack of education, inadequate hygiene, starvation, lack of health care and hygiene, homelessness, violence by the adults, drugs use, lack of protection, risk of exploitation and abuse. Furthermore, and more regrettably, street children are subject of negative perceptions in community based on stereotypes. Street children develop aggressiveness, disrespectful, duplicity, dishonesty, self-centered and mistrustful manners, often seen as self-defensive and protective mechanisms in a hostile and ruthless environment. Following those antisocial behaviors, children are subject to suspicions, stigmatization, ostracism and resentment from community members who see them as a potential dangerous and criminal group.

Street children face a number of risks while being on the street. They are most often regarded as offenders or source of harm to the community but they are in fact victims of the situation of living in the streets. Hence, reintegrating them paves a way to curb the insecurity that may cause to the society and protect them from consequences of criminal activities.

2.2.1. Street Children as Victims of Violence

While children should not be forcibly removed from the only home they know and detained for “their own good”, leaving children exposed to danger with no protection or recourse to justice is also not acceptable. Many street-connected children are harmed on a daily basis by adults, including government officials and the police, other children, and even their own families. They are also denied access to education and healthcare, which is their right. If national laws criminalize begging or loitering, they can face jail just for trying to survive.

1) Street children suffer violence

Children who are already vulnerable due to not being registered, not having an adult being in a position to advocate for them, or not having appropriate shelter can leave them vulnerable to abuse by those who know they have no protection from family or the law, and no recourse to justice. Children are often robbed, beaten or otherwise targeted even by law enforcement or government officials in some cases (Herrera, John, & Thomas, 2009).

2) Street children are targeted by abusers

Street-connected children are vulnerable to exploitation by abusers who may sexually assault them, forcibly recruit them into criminal activities, traffic them and send them out into the streets to beg and steal (Aptekar & Stoecklin, 2014).

3) Street children can get recruited into gangs

For many street children street gangs can act as “surrogate families” which can protect them from outsider violence or harassment and offering support, however it draws children into violent criminal activities and drug use (Beazley, 2003).

4) Street children may become addicted to drugs

While the image of all street children being addicted to drugs is inaccurate, some street-connected children do engage in substance use to cope with the realities of living on the streets, trauma, illness, hunger, stigmatization and discrimination (Bourdillon, 2006). Long term use at the age when children are still physically and mentally developing can cause long term problems in adulthood.

5) Street children can suffer from mental health issues

Although many street children show incredible resilience in the face of unspeakable hardships, many studies show their sense of well-being to be generally low. Street-connected children often suffer from depression, anxiety and trauma, which then may lead to substance abuse and a risk of suicide (Jones & Herrera, 2007).

The stigma and social exclusion faced by street-connected children has a negative impact on their mental well-being. This may also vary from country to country. For example, one study showed street children in Morocco presented as ‘poetic’ daydreamers surrounded but not corrupted by violence, while research from Nepal found that children internalize strong negative images of themselves, mirroring society’s view of them as delinquents (Thomas de Benitez, 2003).

6) Street children get punished by a legal system that has a discriminatory effect on being homeless or not registered at birth

Various researches demonstrate that the vast majority of street-connected children processed through justice systems were either children in perceived (rather than actual) conflict with the law (arrested for begging, vagrancy, commercial sexual exploitation, truancy or running away from home) or children in need of care detained “for their own protection” and not on suspicion of committing a criminal activity (UNICEF, 2015).

In many countries, street-connected children are criminalized for so called “status offences”, *i.e.* a noncriminal act that is considered a law violation only because of a youth’s status as a minor. For example, children may be arrested just for being on the street under a loitering charge.

2.2.2. Street Children as Perpetrators of Violence

While much literature on street children presents them as victims in need of rescuing, another strand of thinking regards street children themselves as perpetrators of violence. Much of this literature focuses on older children, using different language to convey the threats they pose. For example, articles will refer to street children as gang members, delinquents, or criminals instead of as children or will talk about the potential risk that children in the street face to become criminals (Aufseeser, 2014).

Ursine discusses how at some point; children transition from being seen as victims who need help to instead being seen as threats. Street children are very aware of the different discourses regarding their presence in the street, which can further their feelings of anger and exclusion (Ursine, 2011). In one study of street children

in Brazil, Butler found that adolescents' constant exposure to those who assumed they were criminals led to shame and sometimes "an acute experience of exclusion, discrimination and violence." In such regards, understandings of childhood constitute a form of symbolic violence that has material effects on children's well-being (Butler 2009).

Symbolic violence "refers to assaults on human dignity, sense of worth, and one's existential groundedness in the world" (Scheper-Hughes, 2004). In this case, as older children face more limited opportunities to earn money through informal vending or begging, they may be drawn to more criminal activities, such as robbing or assaulting, an assertion backed up by multiple studies of street children. While street children may in fact engage in violent or criminal acts, state responses to them are often disproportionately violent. Children are frequently incarcerated or detained by police, despite posing no real danger to society (Aufseeser, 2014).

In many regards, views of street children as perpetrators of violence directly contrast with discourses of street children as victims. What these two strands of thinking have in common, however, is that they construct the street as a site of violence from which young people should be removed. Programs tend to view street children as a social problem, rather than addressing the larger challenges that they face in their daily lives. While a tendency in policy circles to view children as either victims or threats remains strong, research indicates that such a dichotomy bears little resemblance to street children's actual lived experiences and own identities.

3. Research Methodology

This chapter portrays types of population that this research hinged on in collecting data. The data collection techniques as well as research procedures are discussed. Those data have been collected in order to be analyzed, hence this chapter also embodies methods that have been applied in analyzing those data.

3.1. Research Design

According to Grinnell William (1990), research design is a careful systematic study or investigation in some field of knowledge, undertaken to establish some facts or principles. Larry b. Christensen, defines research design as the outline plan or strategy specifying the procedures to be used in seeking an answer to research questions (Christensen, 1991). He goes on to say that research design is a specific framework for controlling data collection. If one decided that primary data are necessary, one must develop a research design. Basically, in this research a descriptive design was the preferred choice using the qualitative method of data collection. Since the focus will be the effectiveness of street children reintegration and its impact on security, the data collection will be restricted to professionals, government and district officials that are involved in the reintegration process. This case study was confined to the Kicukiro District.

3.2. Population and Sampling Techniques

3.2.1. Study Population

The researcher tendered questionnaires to:

7 local leaders (4 executive secretaries of cells in Gitaraga and Cyimo, 2 village leaders of Nyakagunga and Bwiza village and one sector executive secretary in Masaka sector, in Kicukiro district);

4 psychologists working in Gikondo transit and rehabilitation centers and other institutions hosting former street children (CECYDAR);

4 security organs officers comprising 1 Dasso (from Masaka sector), 1 police officer (from Masaka police station) and 2 Reserve force members (Inkeragutabara) from Masaka cells;

4 social workers from Gikondo transit centre and CECYDAR;

5 street children;

7 reintegrated children;

5 parents raising the reintegrated children; and

4 teachers educating the reintegrated children who reinstated school at Group Scolaire Masaka located in Cyimo cell.

These are people who are involved in the whole process of reintegrating street children. The police, Dasso and reserve force play a vital role in mitigating insecurity related ills that are caused by street children once they are still on the street and they continue monitoring any ill-behaviors of those children after reintegration. Social workers and psychologists accompany street children on daily basis while they are in transit and rehabilitation centers or in other institutions that cater for those children. They also accompany them after their reintegration into biological and non-biological families. Needless to say, it is the paramount involvement of these parents we have just mentioned, who are the epicenter of the whole process. One cannot sideline street children, both on the street and in families. These children are the ones who are likely to enlighten the researcher on how their reintegration impacts on security. Last but not least, teachers who spend most of the time with reinstated children possess many clues to share with the researcher. Thus, all of these contingents were worth being contacted while gathering data.

3.2.2. Sample Size

Sample size is part of the population that one who conducts research decides to use in his/her study as a representation of the total population. This sample was determined using Krejcie & Morgan (1970)'s table which shows appropriate sample size for a given population as it is shown below (Table 1).

3.2.3. Sampling Technique

Sampling techniques provide a range of methods that enable to reduce the amount of data that are to be collected by considering only data from a sub group rather than the whole population. In a focus group, for example, one may seek out respondents at both ends of a spectrum to ensure that all different views are

Table 1. Sample size of respondents.

<i>Total</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Sample</i>
10 →	10	220 →	140	1200 →	291
15 →	14	230 →	144	1300 →	297
20 →	19	240 →	148	1400 →	302
25 →	24	250 →	152	1500 →	306
30 →	28	260 →	155	1600 →	310
35 →	32	270 →	159	1700 →	313
40 →	36	280 →	162	1800 →	317
45 →	40	290 →	165	1900 →	320
50 →	44	300 →	169	2000 →	322
55 →	48	320 →	175	2200 →	327
60 →	52	340 →	181	2400 →	331
65 →	56	360 →	186	2600 →	335
70 →	59	380 →	191	2800 →	338
75 →	63	400 →	196	3000 →	341
80 →	66	420 →	201	3500 →	346
85 →	70	440 →	205	4000 →	351
90 →	73	460 →	210	4500 →	354
95 →	76	480 →	214	5000 →	357
100 →	80	500 →	217	6000 →	361
110 →	86	550 →	226	7000 →	364
120 →	92	600 →	234	8000 →	367
130 →	97	650 →	242	9000 →	368
140 →	103	700 →	248	10000 →	370
150 →	108	750 →	254	15000 →	375
160 →	113	800 →	260	20000 →	377
170 →	118	850 →	265	30000 →	379
180 →	123	900 →	269	40000 →	380
190 →	127	950 →	274	50000 →	381
200 →	132	1000 →	278	75000 →	382
210 →	136	1100 →	285	100000 →	384

Source: Field survey, November 2020-March, 2021. For the purpose of this study, the sample size is 36 respondents.

catered for. For the purpose of this research, census sampling has been appealed to because the number of selected respondents is small.

3.3. Data Collection Instruments

According to Babbie & Mouton (2008), data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on targeted variables in an established systematic fashion, which then enables one to answer relevant questions and evaluate outcomes and comes up with sound conclusions. The researcher has used questionnaires as the main instruments for data collection.

3.3.1. Interview

In order to fully grasp the phenomenon of street children and their impact on security, the researcher held some face-to-face interviews with street children in Masaka area. This technique was used to let children feel confident and able to release as much information as they can. It should be recalled that this is the best method that could be applied with this particular group of respondents as most of them do not know how to write. Again, those street children do not have enough time to stay with the researcher and fill the questionnaire, for those who are illiterate as they keep moving from place to place seeking survival.

3.3.2. Questionnaire

The researcher has used open-ended questionnaires and Normal Scales Questionnaires (Yes, No) in order to collect the needed information. As indicated above, the questionnaire constitutes the main research instrument because it helps obtain data in a very systematic and ordered fashion and the respondents answer the questions freely and in their moods without being under the coercion of whom-ever many researchers agree that a questionnaire has many assets. For example, when one uses a questionnaire, there is low cost even when the universe is large and is widespread geographically; it is free from the bias of the interviewer; respondents have enough time to give well thought out answers; respondents, who cannot be directly interviewed, can also be reached conveniently; large samples can be made and therefore, the results can be made more dependable and reliable.

3.3.3. Documentary Review

The researcher also called upon empirical review that was obtained from different stakeholders. These latter are involved ensuring security and safety and catering for children's needs. This literature also includes theories on street children reintegration as well as other books about the subject matter. The documentary review was opted for because of it is vital in providing background information and facts about risk management methods.

3.4. Research Procedure and Data Processing

Cooper & Schindler (2006) maintain that data processing is the conversion of data into usable and desired form. They went on to hold that this conversion or processing is carried out using a predefined sequence of operations either manually or automatically. Throughout this research, quantitative statistical analysis for questionnaire has been done by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences

(SPSS). Again, qualitative analysis techniques complemented with some statistics, mainly obtained from the secondary data, has been collected through documentary analysis from the case study organization. Editing and coding have been done and finally, graphical presentations have been used to present data in form of frequency and percentages.

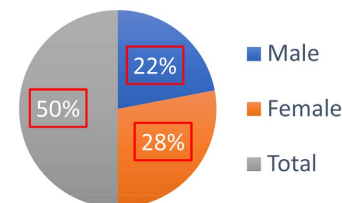
4. Discussion of Findings

This chapter portrays information on the key informants. The demographics of our respondents in Part A are shown in order to help the readership understand views that they would give in the following section. In Part B, the researcher embodies main push and pull factors that make children go to street, their daily lives and how their presence affect security. This section goes on submitting that reintegrating these children is probably one of the efficient remedies of ensuring security in community. However, this may not go unhindered once all stakeholders are not fully involved on daily basis.

This chart reads 56% of the respondents were female whereas the remaining 44% account for male. **Figure 1** shows that both genders were almost equally represented in this study.

The findings show that 67% of the respondents have the age ranging from 25 onwards whereas 33% have the age situated between 16 and 18 years (see **Figure 2**). The researcher chose these age groups because the questionnaires were first tendered to street children who are relatively mature and who can give sound or rational responses.

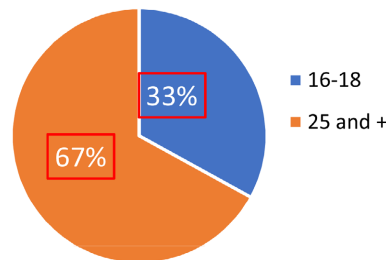
Gender distribution



Source: Field survey, November 2020-March, 2021.

Figure 1. Biographical data.

Age groups intervals



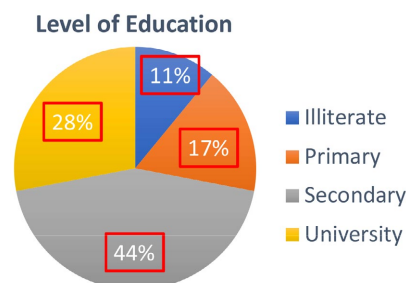
Source: Field survey, November 2020-March, 2021.

Figure 2. Age groups intervals.

The choice was also motivated by the Rwandan penal code which stipulates that a child who is aged above 14 years old can be sued before courts for criminal conducts, convicted, if found guilty and sentenced to various jail terms. Again, as some of our questionnaires had issues relating to labour, the age of 16 was not chosen randomly because under the Rwandan labour law, a child who is aged above 16 is allowed to do light work.

With regard to the age of 25 and above, this choice was made bearing in mind the fact that in Rwanda, a student who pursued his/her studies in right course, finishes secondary school at the age of 18, which is the age of majority under Rwandan law. In case he/she continues with tertiary education, he/she is likely to graduate at the age of 22 or 23. We presume that he/she may secure job at or after 25 years old. These are the types of persons that we find in the categories of our sample or target population (social workers, security officers, local leaders, psychologists, etc.).

Moreover, the same law stipulates that every person can get married at the age of 21. It was therefore proposed that this age group is mature enough as it bears a number of responsibilities, be at work or at home. Hence, they could come up with strong views on the subject matter (see **Figure 3**).



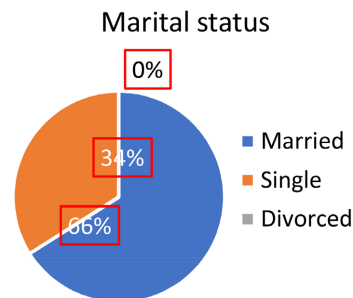
Source: Field survey, November 2020-March, 2021.

Figure 3. Level of education.

It can be read from the table and chart above, that, most of the respondents know how to read and write (89%). We can deduct from those findings that they were able to grasp the content of our questionnaires and produce sound ideas. As it is indicated in question 5 below, save for the street children, 72% of the respondents are civil servants and as of the date, in Rwanda, no one can be recruited in the positions mentioned if he/she does not justify an education background ranging from secondary school onwards. For the purposes of our research, street children may be the best candidates to tell you about their lived experience of why they are on the street and why they engage in criminal behaviour.

From **Figure 4**, we read that the respondents who are married represent the portion of 66% whereas the remaining contingent is made up of unmarried persons. It should be stressed out that among the unmarried, we count 5 street children whose age ranges between 16 and 18 years. Again, this portion of married people was likely to give rich information as they have experience in what goes on in families before, during or after the street children reintegration process. The

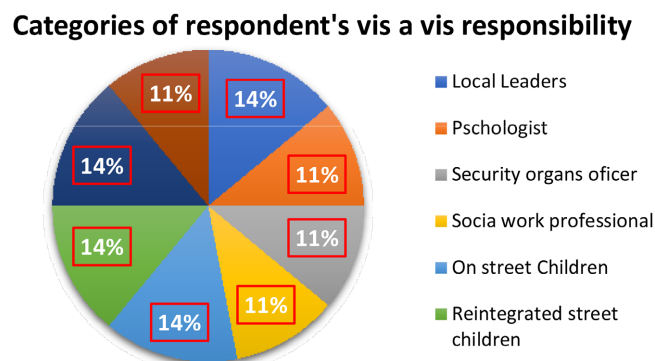
66% percentage of respondents is in a position to be biological fathers and mothers to the street children or may be as well foster parents to the children.



Source: Field survey, November 2020-March, 2021.

Figure 4. Marital status.

The major concern of the research is to establish a correlation between street children reintegration and security. Therefore, it was of paramount importance to bring into play different stakeholders that dealt with the phenomenon of street children phenomenon and issues related to security. In this regard, our sample size included local leaders, psychologists, security organs officers, social work professionals, children living on the street reintegrated street children, parents and teachers. Statistics show that local leaders were 14%, psychologists 11%, security organs officers 11%, social work professional 11%, children living on the street 14%, reintegrated street children 14%, parents 14% and teachers were 11% (see **Figure 5**).



Source: Field survey, November 2020-March, 2021.

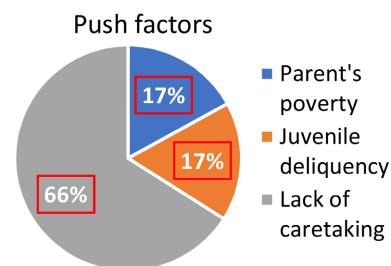
Figure 5. Categories of respondent's vis à vis responsibility.

4.1. Findings on Street Children Reintegration and Security

4.1.1. Factors Giving Rise to the Street Children Phenomenon (Push and Pull Factors) (See Figure 6 and Figure 7)

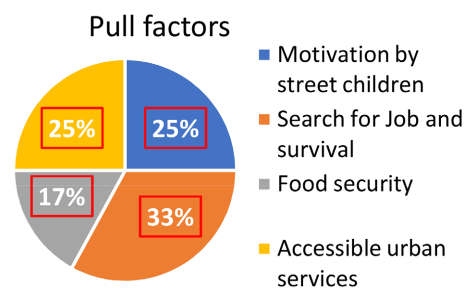
Our findings show that the highest percentage of 66% of the respondents is of the view that lack of care-taking is the main cause that pushes children to street life (see **Figure 6**). Caretaking is much wider as it encompasses death of parents, separations of parents, mistreatment by parents and parents' irresponsibility. Juvenile

delinquency and parents' poverty stand ex-aequo in sending children to street life as they account for 17% each. These figures show that parents' carelessness is the one to blame as other factors play an infinitesimal role in the push factors of the street children phenomenon. According to the researcher desk review experience from the institutions that host former street children, once parents of the street were summoned to meet their children in the institution, professionals were asking parents why their children ran away from family containment. The answer that was at every parent's lips was that the child was difficult to raise, was unbearable and vagrant. After some sessions organized by psychologists with both parents and children within the center, parents were reminded about their responsibilities and this session was referred to as guilt session. Towards, the end of this session, the same question (why do children go to street) was put to the same parents and almost all parents concurred that the ball is within their ground. All of them acquiesce that not being financially comfortable can account for the presence of their children on the street, for all children coming from poor families do not dwell on the street.



Source: Field survey, November 2020-March, 2021.

Figure 6. Push factors.



Source: Field survey, November 2020-March, 2021.

Figure 7. Pull factors.

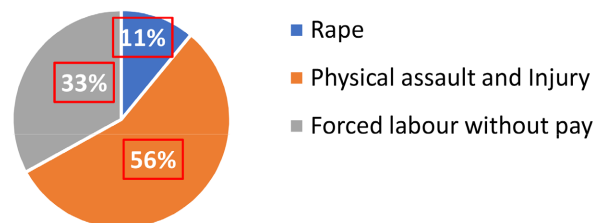
The results indicate that 33% of the respondents believe that children go to street for search of survival. 25% of the respondents argue that children go to street upon motivation of other street children and the same percentage of 25% of respondents maintain that children leave their homes for the street lured by good urban services like health facilities, transport and leisure facilities. Only 6% of the respondent's state that children leave the home environment in search of food security. As indicated above, children run away from families due to lack of care-

taking. This means that they live in dysfunctional families whereby even a grown-up person would not wish to live. This is why children would seek alternative solutions to the unbearable life at home (see **Figure 7**).

The charts above show that 56% of the respondents revealed that children are likely to be victims of physical assaults resulting in injuries (see **Figure 8**). Street children are sometimes assaulted by the police during the round up process, passersby or their peer street children. 33% of the respondents hold that street children are likely to be exploited by being assigned to forced labour without pay. 11% maintain that street children undergo rape. It is believed that street children do not find themselves in any protective framework. Therefore, any one would feel free to abuse them as there is no voice for the voiceless. It has been observed that among children that are on the street, females are in small number. Those young ladies are the ones that are likely to be raped. This matches the respondents' view that few children are engaged in forced sexual intercourse by either peers or passers-by.

The researcher suggested a number of dangerous activities that children may be involved in. 41% of the respondents revealed that street children are likely to be involved in breaking into houses. 25% of the respondents maintain that street children engage in drugs sales. 17% of the respondents contend that children commit murder and another 17% of the respondents posit that street children engage in sexual assaults (see **Figure 9**). The four heinous activities done by street children cause insecurity in the neighborhood and this concern needs to

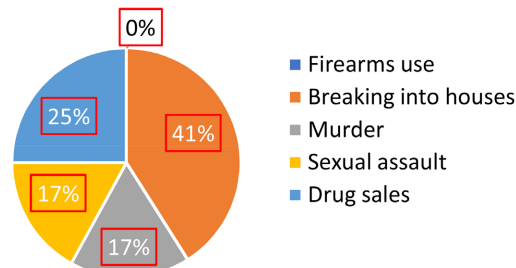
Offenses committed by community against street children



Source: Field survey, November 2020-March, 2021.

Figure 8. Street children as victims.

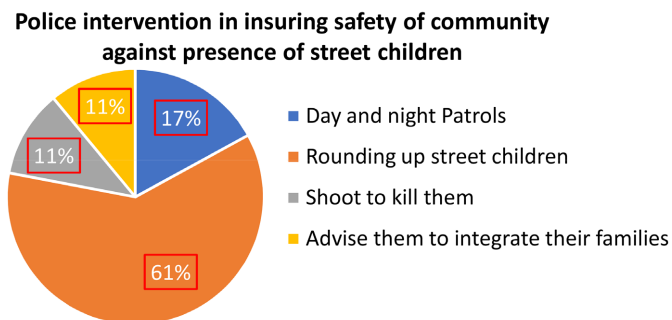
Chart Heinous activities street children are involved in



Source: Field survey, November 2020-March, 2021.

Figure 9. Heinous activities street children are involved in.

be accordingly addressed. Hence, strategies to cope with this situation need to be discussed immediately below. The figures above show that 61% of the respondents table rounding up street children as the best way to address the insecurity caused by street children on the wide community (see **Figure 10**). 17% of the respondents suggest that security organs should conduct day and nights patrols to deter the children from causing insecurity. 11% of the respondents think that it is the role of the police to sensitize the children to re-join their families. 11% of the respondents argue that shooting the street children would be an answer to curbing the insecurity posed by street children. It came out from our study that most of the police officers and District administrative security support organ (Dasso) we have tendered the questionnaire to are of the view that shooting to kill the street children is the best way to remove them from the street. As it is pointed out under heading 10 of the section, psychologists have a more lenient stand with street children and suggest that street children should continue to undergo psychological rehabilitation. It can be observed that each category is defending its area of expertise.



Source: Field survey, November 2020-March, 2021.

Figure 10. Police intervention in ensuring safety of community against presence of street children.

4.1.2. Addiction to Drugs

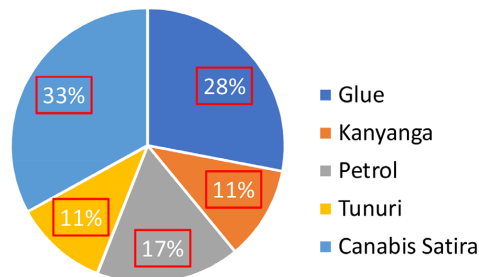
The results above show that street children abuse a number of drugs (see **Figure 11**). 33% of the respondent say that street children inhale cannabis sativa; 28% reveal that street children sniff glue; 17% say that street children drink petrol whereas two contingents of respondents admit that the children drink Tunuri (illicit brew) and Kanyanga (illicit brew). The abuse of these drugs has serious repercussions for the children and on society as well.

Findings show that 33% of the respondents are of the view that the abuse of drugs by former street children increases the number of crimes at home once the children are reunited with their families. 28% of the respondents reveal that the reintegrated children are incarcerated due to drug-induced crimes. 22% of the respondents believe that the government is likely to spend more money on catering for the children in correctional services whereas 17% think that other funds are used in curing the victims of drug-induced crimes (see **Figure 12**). Financial healthcare burden related to the chronic brain damage these kids are incurring due to huffing (sniffing glue). We may read from these data that the community

in general suffers heavy losses in human, material and non-material assets due to drugs abused by street children once they were still on the street. The drug abuse has other negative ramifications as it is shown below.

The more children stay on the street, the more they abuse drugs and these latter have negative impact on the community as discussed above (see **Figure 13**). Not only does the drugs abuse affect people in the families that have reintegrated those street children, but drug abuse also affects former street children psychologically. Hence, parts from damages that are caused by former street in families, the former street children are themselves psychological victims of drug abuse. In this regard, the figures in the chart above indicate that 33% of the respondents argue that the

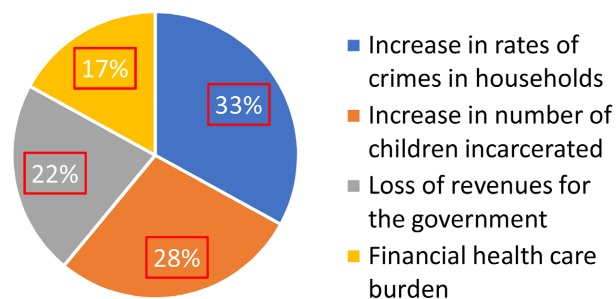
Drugs taken by streets Children



Source: Field survey, November 2020-March, 2021.

Figure 11. Drugs taken by street children.

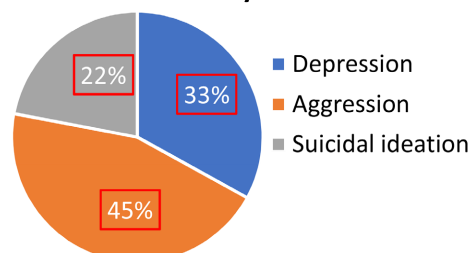
Consequences of inhalation of drugs



Source: Field survey, November 2020-March, 2021.

Figure 12. Negative consequences of inhalation of drugs has on the community in the selected district after re-integration.

Mental illness suffered by former street children



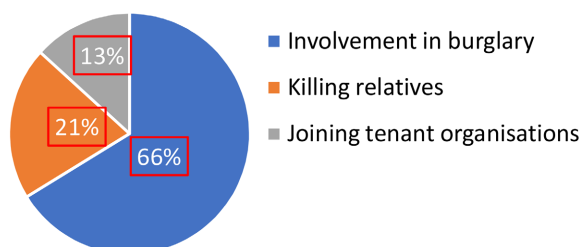
Source: Field survey, November 2020-March, 2021.

Figure 13. Mental illness suffered by former street children and their impact on security.

reintegrated street children suffer from depression due to overuse of drugs; 45% of the respondents maintain that former street children living in families tend to be aggressive whereas 22% submit that the reintegrated children may plunge into suicidal ideation. As these children tend to spend a protracted time on the street, they adopt some of the ill behaviors like huffing. It is this malpractice that leads them to suffer from psychological disorders as enlisted above, these mental disorders haunt them after reintegration.

It is obvious that someone who is immersed into depression, suicidal ideation and aggression is potentially a dangerous person vis a vis the surroundings. A depressed child or a child haunted by suicidal ideation is no longer controlling his/her impulses and no longer master of his/her deeds, thus may lead to lose their lives by committing suicide. Former street children who are haunted by these psychological problems are likely to commit crimes after the reintegration. The figures above show that 55% of the respondents posit that the reintegrated children engage themselves in burglary; two contingents of 17% of respondents reveal that former street children either join criminal gangs and/or engage in murder of relatives whereas 11% of the respondents hold that they know some case of former street children who joined terrorist organizations (see **Figure 14**).

Joining criminal gangs



Source: Field survey, November 2020-March, 2021.

Figure 14. Post-reintegration crimes.

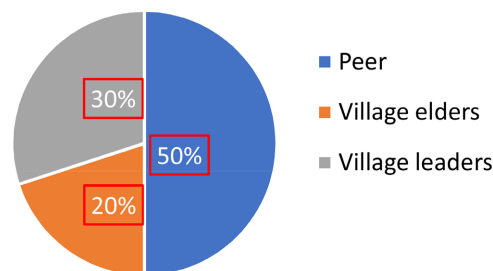
These data indicate that the children reintegration is not a one-off event; it is a process which requires the stern glance of many stakeholders upon the reintegrated children as the next charts suggest.

It is everybody's duty to help redress the former street children who have been reintegrated. As it has been portrayed in the preceding sub-headings, these children had adopted a number of negative behavior while on the street. This is why parents alone cannot cope with those strange behaviors. Therefore, the researcher put the question to respondents intending to know other people who should help the biological families raise the reintegrated children. In this regard, 50% of the respondents reveal that peers should be at the forefront in redressing the former street children; 30% of the respondents hold that village leaders have to play a major role in monitoring the behavior of the children whereas 20% of the respondents emphasized the role of elders in containing the children (see **Figure 15**). These data once again recall that containment of the street children is a matter

that goes beyond the mere family control.

The figures above show that 42% of the respondents think that the reserve force is at the forefront in dealing with insecurity that is caused by the reintegrated street children. 30% of the respondents unveil that the Rwanda National Police intervenes in redressing those children security wise whereas 28% of the respondents attribute this responsibility on DASSO (District Administration Security Support Organ) (see **Figure 16**). As it has been referred to above, a child who have lived on street for periods ranging from six to 2 years have espoused a number of undesirable behavior. They are difficult to raise and all stakeholders have to step in, in order the help families that received them enforce law and order.

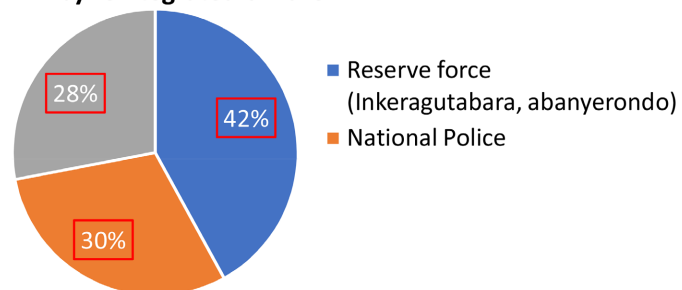
Stakeholders involved in disciplining former street children



Source: Field survey, November 2020-March, 2021.

Figure 15. Stakeholders involved in disciplining former street children.

Security Organs dealing with insecurity caused by reintegrated children



Source: Field survey, November 2020-March, 2021.

Figure 16. Security organs dealing with insecurity caused by reintegrated children.

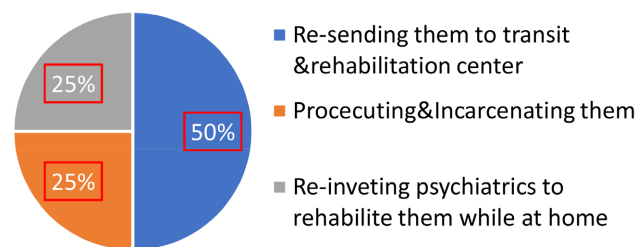
As discussed under sub-heading 7 (post-reintegration crimes), former street children may perpetrate crimes after reintegration. In this regard, the research asked the respondents to give their takes on how to treat children who are unruly and do not want to abide by the community law and order. 50% of the respondents showed a more lenient stand and suggested that these recidivists should be resent to transit and rehabilitation centers. 25% of the respondents argued that the recalcitrant have to be arrested, prosecuted and incarcerated, if convicted. The remaining portion of respondents (25%), avowed that those who are adamant to change, should remain indoors and undergo regular clinical supervision (See **Fig-**

ure 17).

As our study population shows, the researcher tendered questionnaires to children who are aged between 16 and 18 years old. Normally, children who are in this group age should be attending school. Once these children are removed from street and reunited with their families, the final stage should be reinstating them into schools. Thus, the researcher wanted to know how these children behave at school after reinstatement.

The results from our study show that 47% of the respondents avowed that the interaction between the reinstated children and those that they joined was poor. 31% of the respondents maintained that the atmosphere in classrooms is satisfactory whereas 22% of the respondents ascertain that there is a good understanding between the two groups of children (see Figure 18).

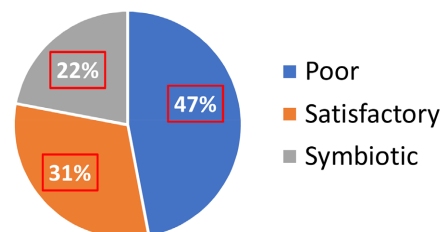
Mesures against recidivists



Source: Field survey, November 2020-March, 2021.

Figure 17. Measures against recidivists.

Level of interaction with other children at school



Source: Field survey, November 2020-March, 2021.

Figure 18. Level of interaction with other children at school.

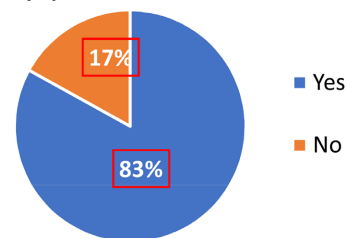
These results show that former street children who reinstated schools are far from being healed of their wounds and ills at a go. This implies that teachers, local leaders, security organs have to continue work hands in hands in the process of redressing former street children. Their intervention should not be confined within family environment, but it should be extended to school environments as well.

Having reviewed how the reinstated children interact with their classmates, the researcher intended to know if there are any quarrel that are reported in those classes. As the answers provided for the preceding question presaged it, 83% of the respondents unsurprisingly said that it is common to see the reinstated chil-

dren in altercation with the early children. These quarrels might sometimes culminate in open fighting. 17% of the respondents revealed that there is a conducive environment in classrooms and no quarrel is reported. These results confirm the hypothesis that former street children had espoused negative behavior while on the street and redressing them is one of the difficult tasks (see **Figure 19**).

In a bid to find a durable solution to the street children phenomenon, the researcher sought to know how some of the root causes of streetism can be addressed. In this regard, 55% of the respondents blamed the phenomenon on poor community's responsibilities. 31% of the respondents attributed streetism to poverty of families and therefore, these families should be economically empowered whereas 14% thought that providing school kits and levies to children could reduce the number of drop outs and help mitigate the street children phenomenon. (see **Figure 20**). As these figures read, streetism should not be regarded in the lenses of poverty but rather in the lack of parental and community care.

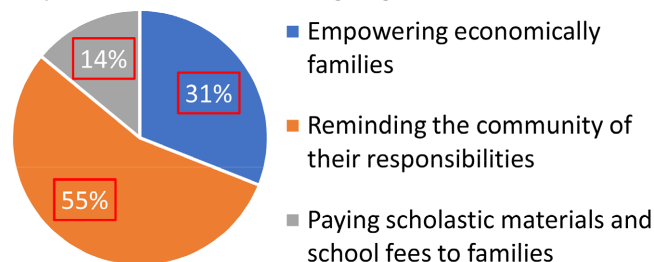
Any quarrels between classmates



Source: Field survey, November 2020-March, 2021.

Figure 19. Any quarrels reported between their classmates.

Attempts to deter children from going to the street



Source: Field survey, November 2020-March, 2021.

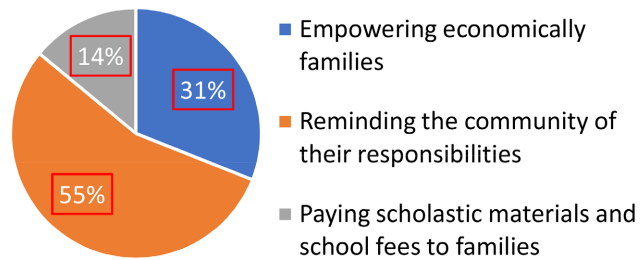
Figure 20. Attempts to deter children from going to the street.

With regard to curbing the phenomenon of street children and enforcing security in Kicukiro district, 67% of our respondents are optimistic and hold that children may be removed from the street altogether whereas 33% of the respondents remain skeptical and avowed that street children are there to stay and will continue to be a n issue of major concern for security (see **Figure 21**).

4.2. Conclusion to Findings

This chapter has posited that the community embodies resources that can guide

Attempts to deter children from going to the street



Source: Field survey, November 2020-March, 2021.

Figure 21. Possibility of removing children from street.

us towards finding solutions to the child's problems. The community has to be re-briefed on its roles and responsibilities in growing up the child. It has a number of people who can invest in the familial system and the community will assist in healing the family's wounds, rebuilding its attachment with children and obviously the community itself needs both psychological and economic support. Parents, children, security organs and the community have to rebuild the family system, have to collaborate as a team and build strong follow-up mechanisms and communication channels in order to retain the child within the system and ensure that every citizen feels secure wherever they are. Local authorities and top government officials, as policy makers will participate in this initiative through existing Child Protection Networks where they can deeply assess families in need, focus on child's rights and take the lead in setting up effective mechanisms to prevent the phenomenon of child abuse and neglect that send children to the streets. It is worth noting that, street children reintegration is not a one-off event and, as mentioned earlier, if all stakeholders are actively involved, it will help mitigate most of the problem relating to security.

5. Summary of Findings and Recommendations

5.1. Summary of Findings

This study posits that, as far as causes of street children phenomenon are concerned, parents' carelessness is the one to blame as other factors play an infinitesimal role. According to the researcher desk review experience from the institutions that host former street children, all of parents acquiesce that not being financially comfortable cannot account for the presence of their children on the street, for all children coming from poor families do not dwell on the street.

In fact, it has been established that children run away from families due to lack of caretaking. This means that they live in dysfunctional families whereby even a grown-up person would not wish to live. This is why children would seek alternative solutions to the unbearable life at home and they may be motivated by other children living on the street.

While on the street, it is believed that street children do not find themselves in any protective framework. Therefore, any one would feel free to abuse them as there is no voice for the voiceless. Our data suggest that street children engage in

sexual assaults, commit murders and engage in drugs sales. These heinous activities done by street children cause insecurity in the neighborhood and this concern needs to be accordingly addressed. After reintegration, former street children engage in a number of crimes like killing relatives or adhering to criminal gangs, which disrupts security. These data indicate that the children reintegration is not a one-off event; it is a process which requires the stern glance of many stakeholders upon the reintegrated children. Data have shown that former street children, even after reinstatement in schools, continue to harass and upset peers and teachers, hence the intervention of security organs and local leaders is worthy in order to ensure law and order. Once the same children continue to be unruly, these various partners work hand in hand to in seeking alternative ways of remedying the situation like prosecuting them or resending them into rehabilitation centers.

5.2. Recommendations

Street children raise security concerns while they are on the street or after their reintegration. They may be offenders or victims once they are on the street or when they have been rehabilitated and reintegrated in community. This is why a lot has to be done in order to ensure security and safety for street children and the community. To this end, we recommend the following:

Increase the number of psychological sessions that are meant to remind the community about their responsibilities vis à vis their children. These sessions should also be held with street children to counsel them about the harmfulness of drugs abuse.

Provide financial or logistical support to street children who return to their families as this support will refrain children from returning to the street.

Authorities should ensure that street children in transit centers are properly screened and either transferred to rehabilitation centers, prosecuted, or released, without exceeding the timeframe required by Rwandan law, designed to reintegrate people accused of exhibiting “deviant behaviors”, including children living on the streets, as part of its strategy to “eradicate delinquency.”

Encourage the government to take measures to fight against ill-treatment of street children and support them through social protection schemes, psychosocial support, education, and reliable vocational training.

Security organs and local leaders have to buttress parents who have welcomed those children and teachers who teach the former street children in order to deter any plunge into behaviors that are subversive.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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