

**Resettlement of Children Living on the Streets in Kampala during  
Covid-19 Pandemic**


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A dissertation submitted to the department of social work and social administration in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
Bachelor of social work and social administration of  
Makerere university

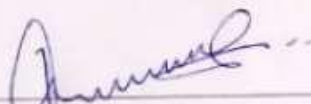
**DECEMBER 2022**

### DECLARATION

I, Lokong Gabriel, hereby declare that to the best of my knowledge, this dissertation is truly my original work. It has never been submitted to any other University or Institution for any award of degree or any other qualification.

Signature:  Date: 21<sup>st</sup> Dec, 2022.

Lokong Gabriel

Signature:  Date: 21/12/2022

Laban Musinguzi Kashaija, PhD

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved parents and entire family members. Thanks for all the support you have given me throughout my academic career. Thank you for your genuine care, patience, inspirational advice, spiritual and financial support. I say, trust in God for academic victory.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I thank the Almighty God for giving me the grace; guidance and strength throughout the whole study period because without Him I would not have been successful. I am forever indebted to Him. I am very grateful to my parents and beloved wife for their enduring love, care, effort, support and financial aid throughout to this level of my education. May they live to see the outcomes of their sweat and hard work.

Heartfelt gratitude to the management and staff of Department of Social Work and Social Administration, Makerere University; but above all, especially to my Supervisor, Laban Musinguzi Kashaija, PhD for the great job done of equipping me with practical skills, guidance in research. Thank you for the academic guidance during my stay at Makerere University. I acknowledge my friends and classmates for the help rendered to me during the research period. I dearly appreciate the support so much. Really, thank you for the pieces of advice given to me during my course of the study.

I am grateful to my sisters and brothers for their inspiration and encouragement to finish this course. Finally, special tributes go to all those who provided all the required information (data) during my research. May the Almighty God bless you all.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>ACRONYMS</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background to the Study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	3
1.3 Objectives of the Study.....	4
1.4 Research Questions.....	4
1.5 Scope of the Study.....	4
1.6 Significance of the study.....	5
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	<b>6</b>
2.0 Introduction.....	6
2.1 The Concept of Street-connected children.....	6
2.2 The Outbreak of COVID-19 Pandemic.....	6
2.3 The principle of non-discrimination.....	7
2.4 The right to access to information and health education.....	8
2.5 Abuse and torture of street children.....	9
2.6 Police Violence.....	10
2.7 The right to adequate food.....	11
2.8 Support of the Streets.....	13
2.9 Challenges faced by Organizations in Resettling Street Children .....	18
2.10 Drop-in centres and shelters.....	21
<b>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>23</b>
3.0 Introduction.....	23
3.1 Study Design.....	23
3.2 Study Approach.....	23
3.3 Study Population.....	23
3.4 Methods of Data Collection.....	24
3.5 Data Processing, Analysis and Interpretation.....	25
3.6 Ethical Consideration.....	25
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS</b> .....	<b>26</b>
4.0 Introduction.....	26

4.1 Roles played by dwelling places in Resettling Street Children during COVID-19 pandemic -----	26
4.3 Challenges faced by Different Organizations in Resettling Street Children during COVID-19-----	33
<b>CHAPTER FIVE -----</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS -----</b>	<b>35</b>
5.0 Introduction.....	35
5.1 Discussions.....	35
5.2 Challenges faced by dwelling places in resettling children in the street during COVID-19 -----	36
5.3 Conclusions.....	37
5.4 Recommendations.....	37
5.4 Areas of Further Research.....	37
<b>APPENCICES-----</b>	<b>43</b>
Appendix I: Interview Guide.....	43

## **ACRONYMS**

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
CSC	Consortium for Street Children
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DV	Dependent Variable
IV	Independent Variable
HVF	Host Voluntary Families
KCCA	Kampala Capital City Authority
MoGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
WHO	World Health Organizations

## **Abstract**

The study examined the role played by different organisations in resettlement of children living on the street in Kampala during COVID19. The study achieved its purpose through two objectives i.e., to examine the role played by organizations in resettlement of children from the street of Kampala City and secondly, to assess the challenges faced by organizations during resettlement of children on the street of Kampala during COVID19. The study used a cross-section design, sampled comprised of staff of employees of World Vision, Abana, AVSI, KCC etc. The methods of data collection used were interview guides and observations. Data were processed through the interpretations of the questionnaires. The result of the study findings revealed that children on the street of Kampala were provided with food, accommodation, safety security and also noted limited financial resources, restricted movement during COVID-19 and negative attitudes on children living on the street of Kampala. The study therefore, concludes that there was provision of food, accommodation/housing, publicity/sensitizing refugees on COVID-19 pandemic, COVID tests, COVID immunization, provision of free masks and sterilizers, controlling their movements, and protecting them from law enforcement officers during total local down and curfew period; these are the roles played by different organizations in resettling street children during COVID-19 in Kampala Central Division. The study therefore recommends that; it is recommended that there is need to increase on donors and government funding to local organizations involved in resettling street children, that organizations involved in helping and supporting street children should always be given permission to continue helping the needy street children, that there is clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities, so as to avoid future clashes between politicians and organization managers



## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I present background to the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, research questionnaires, conceptual framework, scope of the study, and significance of the study.

### 1.1 Background to the Study

COVID-19 pandemic, also known as the coronavirus pandemic, is an ongoing pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. On the other hand, Kawala *et al.*, (2020) argued that street children are defined as those who depend on the street with a substantial link to public places for livelihood and work. This population of children and youths is quite dynamic and exact numbers are difficult to establish. It is, therefore, challenging for governments and organizations to plan for them. These children have unique stories as to why they choose to join the streets for livelihood whereby most report mistreatment, poverty, death of parents and guardians that makes them finding livelihood complicated in their homes thereby joining the streets (Jacob *et al.*, 2014).

World-over, the World Health Organization declared the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern in January 2020 and a pandemic in March 2020 (Gupta & Jawanda, 2020). As of 13 November 2020, more than 52.6 million cases have been confirmed in world with more than 1.29 million deaths attributed to COVID-19; for Africa 1,930,482 cases and 46,357 deaths have been confirmed, then East Africa 88638 confirmed cases and 1408 deaths and finally Uganda has registered 14,704 cases with 133 deaths so far (You *et al.*, 2020). It was 8pm Monday evening 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020 when, the Government of Uganda announced strict lockdown measures in an attempt to prevent a mass outbreak of COVID-19 in a country (Kawala *et al.*, 2020). In measures to contain the rapid spread of the disease, public gatherings including places of worship, schools all, trading, food outlets and markets, pubs, weddings, music shows, rallies and cultural meetings among others were all suspended (Development Initiatives, 2020). Since all food markets and outlets were closed, street children living in Kampala's poorest settlements, life became perilous. Not only do they faced starvation, but also the increased risk of police violence and beatings, every time they returned to the streets in order to find scraps of food.

Despite the fact that Uganda has grown economically and politically, it does not meet the street children's welfare owing to a lack of government support in the form of budgetary allocations. According to a survey conducted in the districts of Kampala, Jinja, Iganga and Mbale indicated that there are over 30, 000 street children with Kampala having over 15000 of the total number. It was common to find these groups of street children sitting on verandahs around most parts of the city waiting for traffic to stop vehicles and they start begging. Some just stayed around looking at passers-by hoping that they will give them something to eat. For some, they survive through searching in garbage bins for food while others survive by pick-pocketing unsuspecting persons. Some trade in illegal drugs and steal valuables from people's houses; among other life-threatening means. However, with the country now having Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19), a new virus that causes respiratory illness in people and can spread from person-to-person through sneezing and coughing droplets, several measures were taken by the government to avoid the spread. This has affected many Ugandans irrespective of their status or races including street children.

But some street children were likely to avoid incarceration during lockdown enforcement and as they avoid being jailed, they also either spread the disease or increase their own risk of morbidity (Development Initiatives, 2020). Additionally, while it is clear that the WHO and Uganda in particular mitigation strategies such as staying at home and personal distancing and hygiene are crucial for COVID-19 prevention, this is impractical for street children given the harsh realities they face. Another way in which lockdowns due to COVID-19 has affected street children is to deprive them of their income (Gupta & Jawanda, 2020). Their main economic activity was begging and with lockdowns in place, they risked dying of hunger rather than Coronavirus since the people from whom they beg were all under lockdown and off the streets. Also the unpalatable conditions on the street during COVID-19 lockdown with nothing to eat could force them to go back to their abusive families from which they escaped. This may expose them to repeated bouts of violence as this was reported to be one of the factors that made them to escape from their families (United Nations, 2019).

In order to tackle the problem of keeping this huge number of street children safe in this global emergency, the government of Uganda through MoGLSD is working with network members, human rights activists and NGOs with the influence and resources to urgently respond. With COVID-19 in Uganda, street children cannot access clean water, food and have no money to buy soap or sanitizers. Different organizations such as KCCA among others have established

resettlement centres including Nakivubo Blue Primary School where street children have been provided with services like shelter, food and drinks, counseling and free COVID-19 testing to know the status of the children especially those who were going to be reintegrated with their families (Kawala et al., 2020). Through psycho-socio support and counseling, children have come to terms with the authorities to unite with their families and others have chosen to join vocational training. The living conditions of street children and the government restriction to contain the spread of corona virus seemed to put street children on different risks of either starvation or contraction of the disease that made the government and NGOs to respond immediately. In view of this inconclusive information, it was from such information gap that the researcher felt a need to assess how different organizations have responded towards the resettlement of street children during COVID-19 in Kampala Central Division.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Although some work has been done by the government in resettling children living in the streets of Kampala and other parts of the country in providing services such as introducing universal primary education for all for the education sector and starting rehabilitation centres Ultimately , however donor agencies and NGOs have also played a great part in mind set change provision of basic needs such as clothing, accommodation, empowerment skills through vocational training, families and individuals have provided food, and money to children living in the streets. The problem of street children is universally an increasing problem in many settings, wondering in the street and are identified in what they do to survive such as Rag pickers, vendors, shoe shiners and porters used to describe them as Gaps in parenting and public participation still exist (Sauro 2010). However, as children living in the streets exist in Uganda, the root cause of resettling children living in the street is not clear. Therefore, this study aimed at assessing how different organizations responded to the resettlement of children living in the street during covid 19 pandemic by identifying the roles played and the challenges faced by the different organizations in resettling children living in the street during covid 19 in Kampala central division.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.3.1 General Objective**

To examine the role played by organizations as a response towards the resettlement of street children during COVID-19 pandemic in Kampala Central Division.

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of this study were: -

1. To examine the roles played by different organizations in resettling street children during COVID-19 in Kampala Central Division.
2. To identify the challenges faced by different organizations in resettling street children during COVID-19 in Kampala Central Division.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions: -

1. What roles have been played by different organizations in resettling street children during COVID-19 in Kampala Central Division?
2. How are organizations and government been challenged in the struggle to resettle street children during COVID-19 in Kampala Central Division?

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

The study cope is always divided into three sections and these were content, geographical and time scopes.

The study concentrated on the resettlement of children living on the streets in Kampala during COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the study was limited towards identifying the roles played by different organizations in resettling street children during COVID-19 pandemic, and identifying the challenges faced by different organizations in resettling street children during COVID-19 pandemic.

The study covered Kampala Central Division while visiting the possible resettlement centers until saturation. The study covered key stakeholders who were the source of information and street children for this study. The study shall cover the roles provided by government with specific focus on MoGLSD and KCCA, NGOs including Dwelling places and Red Track in

resettling children. Also the services these organizations have provided to street children at resettlement centers were explored including the challenges faced.

### **1.6 Significance of the study**

The results of the study would be of value to the following:

The study shall inform the government on what are the underlying causes of street children in Kampala and therefore the government can follow up to solve this social problem. The knowledge obtained shall help the government most especially local government and KCCA to reflect and make evaluation on the desire to resettle street children; thus able to formulate programmes and to advise stakeholders accordingly.

Through successful interventions provided by the organizations, the livelihood of street children shall be achieved which coincides with the humanitarian concerns of the organizations.

The anti-social behaviors and criminal acts posed by these street children such as robbery, pick pocketing, prostitution shall be averted once this strategy becomes applicable.

The study shall attract other researchers to pick interest in the subject or resettling of street children other than having use taken for granted. This shall lead to better provision of settlement facilities for street children in the country.

Like any other research the findings shall be used as a reference as far as further studies are concerned and spark off further research in the resettlement of street children during Covid-19 in Kampala Central Division.

To library users: The findings shall also be a source of reference for other researchers intending to study on the resettlement of street children during Covid-19 in Kampala Central Division.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, I present the literature review of the resettlement of street children during Covid-19 in Kampala Central Division; and summarization of appraisal of literature to show research gaps. It presents literature relevant to the study giving reference to the study objectives, sub-divided into three sections: the roles played by different organizations in resettling street children during COVID-19, and the challenges faced by different organizations in resettling street children during COVID-19.

### **2.1 The Concept of Street-connected children**

Street-connected children is a term to describe all groups of children and youth who have a meaningful relationship with the street: some live on the street; some work on the street, some maintain relationships with their family, whereas others break all contact; some are on the streets currently and some are off the streets but could be easily drawn back there (Mugenyi, 2021). All of them have a strong connection on the street. The Consortium for Street Children typically uses the term ‘street-connected children’. In General Comment No. 21 (2017) on Children in Street Situations, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child uses the phrase “children in street situations”, which it defines as: children who depend on the streets to live and/or work, whether alone, with peers or with family; and children who have formed strong connections with public spaces and for whom the street plays a vital role in their everyday lives and identities. The terms ‘street-connected children’, ‘children in street situations’ and ‘street children’ are used interchangeably throughout this submission.

### **2.2 The Outbreak of COVID-19 Pandemic**

The global COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the way we live and work, but most critically it amplified the vulnerabilities of children and inequities that are inherent within our communities. The government imposed strict prevention measures impacted the livelihoods of many working people, hindered access to essential services like healthcare and education. Over 15 million children in Uganda were out of school without the protection net that schools provide, and some of them ended up on streets. The COVID-19 emergency is affecting street-connected children in many ways. The general principles of the African Charter (Articles 3 and 26, 4 and 5) are violated as a result of States’ responses to the pandemic, particularly regarding the right to non-discrimination of street children, their right to life, survival and development, as well as their right to be heard.

In Kampala central division efforts were made and still being made to resettle overwhelming number of street children like tracking providing psychosocial support re integration guidance and counselling apprenticeship and entrepreneurial skills training resettlement package provision of health care surveillance on high way (KCC development project 2005)

### **2.3 The principle of non-discrimination**

The principle of non-discrimination (Articles 3 and 26 of the ACRWC and Article 2 CRC) requires governments to respect and ensure the rights recognized by the Charter for every child within their jurisdiction without discrimination. In its General Comment No. 21 (2017), the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has clarified that the principle of non-discrimination extends to all cases of discrimination against a child on the grounds of the street situation of the child or of their family members, as a form of discrimination based on “other status”, and as such this is prohibited both by the African Charter and the CRC. Moreover, in its General Comment No. 5 (2018) on States Parties’ Obligations, the African Committee has underlined that the principle of non-discrimination also requires States to actively eliminate inequalities suffered by children in the enjoyment of all rights, and to prioritize interventions that address the needs of the most vulnerable children, a category that, following the Committee's previous remarks, also includes street children.

Notwithstanding the efforts that governments have made over the years to align with the above principles, and there is systemic discrimination of which street children are victims in normal circumstances is causing much more harm during the present emergency resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak. Violations of the right to non-discrimination of street children take many forms: social stigmatization continues to be a major issue, with children in Uganda being moved away from washing stations because of their ‘dirtiness’ and children in Tanzania, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo being denied assistance after experiencing sexual violence out of fear that the children were a source of infection (Mugenyi, 2021). Children also face other kinds of discrimination, for instance in accessing essential services due to inequalities related to their inability to prove their identity, lack of a permanent address or absence of a legal status in the country where they reside.

Many street-connected children have become a collective target of policing interventions simply on the grounds of their connection with the streets. These measures are often unnecessary and disproportionate, as well as discriminatory. For example, cases of mass

repatriations of Almajiri children to their States of origin across Nigeria for public health reasons have been reported by the local newspapers throughout the pandemic.

The right to life, survival and development of the child (Article 5 ACRWC and 6 CRC) requires governments to ensure to the maximum extent possible, that, beyond mere survival, every child and especially particularly vulnerable children enjoy the minimum conditions for a life with dignity. As highlighted by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the right to life generates a positive obligation to prevent and protect individuals and groups from immediate threats of any kind, including infectious diseases, but also entails a positive duty to address chronic and permanent risks to life, by implementing health systems and eliminating inequalities that may exist in accessing healthcare. In its General Comment No. 21 (2017), the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has highlighted that street children are among the most at risk in this regard, due to poverty and continued exposure to violence, exploitation and precarious health and living conditions. Because of its strong correlation with the concept of dignity, the right to life strongly relates to the economic, social and cultural rights of children, particularly the right to the highest attainable standard of health (Article 14 ACRWC), which also includes the right to water and sanitation, the right to an adequate nutrition and the right to adequate housing. In the context of the present pandemic, the right to life, survival, and development of street children is threatened in several ways. Poor health and living conditions expose children to an increased vulnerability to the infection and its most tragic consequences. The loss of livelihoods in Uganda is forcing many children to engage in survival behaviours that put them at increased risk, such as going out in search of food and instead being violently persecuted by the police.

#### **2.4 The right to access to information and health education**

Article 11(h) of the African Charter guarantees the 'promotion of the child's understanding of primary healthcare' as a core component of their right to education and in its COVID-19 appeal, the Committee has reminded States of their obligations to promote COVID-19-related information appropriate to the age, maturity, language, gender and culture of every child. As a population traditionally excluded from digital and traditional means of communication due to economic, cultural and educational boundaries, street-connected children are particularly affected by a lack of information. In line with the ACHPR Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa, States Parties should promote information that is pluralistic, diverse and inclusive of marginalized groups, linguistic and



cultural minorities, poor and rural communities, also through the use of local and African languages, content and voices in media and public affairs. In the context of the COVID-19 emergency, street children are at increased risk due to the lack of information or the inadequacy of the information made available to them on the existence of the virus, how to protect themselves and what to do if they start to have symptoms. Where governments are sharing such information publicly, it may remain inaccessible to street children due to lack of access to the necessary technology, inability to read or a lack of understanding of the language used. Studies on the Ebola epidemic in West Africa demonstrate that greater access to information and health education, is linked to increased uptake of health protective behaviours (Mugenyi, 2021). However, due to lockdown measures, awareness-raising campaigns carried out by social workers have also been limited. Social workers who normally spread information to street children directly during outreach work have currently had to stop their activities, leaving children dependent on watching television in shops to access information about the pandemic and how to protect themselves. However, after many shops had to close due to the lockdown measures in several countries, the already limited access to such sources of information has been further restricted.

## **2.5 Abuse and torture of street children**

In accordance with the provisions contained in the Charter and the CRC, governments should ensure that every child is always free from violence (Article 16 ACRWC, Articles 19 and 39 CRC). The purpose of Article 16 of the Charter is to provide the widest possible protection to a child's dignity, bodily and mental integrity. States Parties must take positive measures to prevent, monitor and support children at risk of physical, mental and sexual abuse or torture, including neglect, maltreatment or corporal punishment, but also to effectively intervene when abuse or torture occurs. The Committee has highlighted that it falls within the scope of a government's obligation under Article 16(2) to "*identify vulnerable groups prone to child abuse and neglect and take special measures to prevent them from such kind of abuse*". In this regard, the UN Committee on the rights of the Child has acknowledged that while physical, emotional and sexual violence has a devastating long-term impact on the life of any child, street children are particularly vulnerable: as a fundamental cause and consequence of their connection with the street, violence is a permanent feature of a street child's life. Due to their specific vulnerability, street children are entitled to special protection measures, which should proactively reach out and support

these children in the process of reporting violence, and include mechanisms for holding perpetrators accountable.

As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, street children are more exposed to violence because of the pandemic: if forced to self-isolate or take similar measures, their possibility to escape from domestic violence is dramatically reduced; on the streets, they may fall victims to police enforcement of said measures; they may face neglect and refusal from their families and communities because of fear of infection; and finally, the climate of insecurity caused by the disease may increase violence among children themselves. In many cases, children returning to family homes are seen to be at risk of violence (Mugenyi, 2021). On the other hand, children are harder to reach as a result of the pandemic, provided that in most countries, containment measures do not provide exceptions for outreach and home-visiting by social workers. This means that the opportunities for children to report violence, and for social workers and authorities to identify, monitor and intervene on violence are also reduced.

## **2.6 Police Violence**

In Cameroon and other developing countries, a partner of Apprentis d'Auteuil and FAAI, members of CSC Network, reports an increase in the violence faced by street children from law enforcement officers, due to a rise in the number of police interventions during the lockdown. The association specifies that this violence mainly occurs when children refuse to give identity information, within the framework of the governmental emergency schemes. The association also reports that some children who refused to give identity details have been brought to the police station. Some law enforcement officers have also contacted local associations to try to obtain this information, putting them in an uncomfortable situation regarding the trust children place in them. Because of such violence, children have dispersed in different places, often isolating themselves from the other children in order to escape from emergency program officers. They are now more difficult to reach, in comparison with the situation before Covid-19, when children used to spend their time together, in well-known public sites. Indeed, there is an increase in violence against street children due to the violent enforcement of lockdown policies, and some include acts that could be qualified as cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. In Kenya, for instance, during the strictest phase of the lockdowns, children were being chased in the street by paramilitary officers prior to the pandemic and this situation has worsened since the pandemic began. Street children are

being beaten by military and police when they go out onto the streets to find food. Likewise, a CSC Network Member in Uganda, who prefers to remain anonymous, reports that the Uganda People's Defence Forces and Local Defence Units are enforcing distancing policies by using physical force such as beatings, including against street children. To date there is no quantifiable data on the total number of victims of such abuses, however CSC partner Dwelling Places has reported that five boys walked over 20 kilometers to seek protection and assistance at their centre. Local media also point to the police brutality that has in some cases resulted in the killing of street children, which compelled children themselves to publicly protest to seek justice.

## **2.7 The right to adequate food**

In line with children's rights to survival and health, and the right to an adequate standard of living (Articles 5, 14 and 20(2)(b)), States must take measures to ensure the provision of adequate nutrition and to combat disease and malnutrition. Following the recommendations of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, in situations of protracted crisis, conflicts and natural disasters governments must adopt targeted responses to protect and realize the right to food and nutrition of vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalized groups including street children. States must always ensure that food is available, accessible and affordable for everyone in enough quality and quantity to survive. Street children are at particular risk of dying from hunger during the COVID-19 emergency and are in need of urgent attention. In many different countries, children were struggling to find food to eat as a result.

Many street children and their families depend on money earned from activities conducted in the streets daily, meaning their already meagre incomes are reduced to dangerously low levels when most people are indoors. As an example, a partner of CSC Network Members Apprentis d'Auteuil and FAAI, REEJER, in Democratic Republic of Congo, reported that lockdown measures have resulted in the closure of food access points and places where street children used to obtain money and other resources such as markets, restaurants and bars, leaving children unable to afford basic necessities such as food. As a consequence, street children have repeatedly requested help from associations who host children but the latter were, most of the time, unable to host them in existing centres due to the lack of hosting capacity, as well as their meagre financial resources. Mugenyi (2021) described how a lack of adequate provision meant that hunger was in many ways a more pressing concern than

COVID-19. The difficulty in accessing food has been made worse by the fact that many non-governmental services are being forced to shut their doors, stop outreach work on the streets, or reduce their hours to comply with restrictions and protect their staff and users.

According to Dwelling Places, the government in Uganda initially allocated budget to provide food packages to the most vulnerable families during the total lockdown. However, not many families could benefit from it, as the resources were very limited, and the programme did not last as long as it was expected to. As a result, this measure did not provide a lasting solution to the families in need, including the initial beneficiaries, with all families now suffering extreme food shortages. Other support systems have also been cut off. For example, CSC partners in Tanzania have reported that school closures have determined the temporary suspension of nutrition programmes, on which some street children relied. In some cases, private businesses that previously donated food have abruptly come to a halt.

According to CSC Network Member Street Invest, for example, in Mombasa, Kenya, a daily meal service for children on the street, provided by a local business, has been suspended without warning, leaving children hungry and with no other option for food. In Cameroon, a partner of CSC Network Members Apprentis d'Auteuil and FAAL, reported a similar observation: due to their limited budget, the association had to reduce the daily rations provided to each child in order to give food to as many children as possible. Furthermore, the association also reported that during the lockdown, their work was made more complicated due to the restrictions on movement, from which social workers were not guaranteed any exemption in order to undertake their essential work. Some social workers have been arrested and brought to the police station then released without charge while working in the streets.

REEJER, in Democratic Republic of Congo, a partner of Apprentis d'Auteuil and FAAL, reported that some meals were initially distributed in public sites, where street children live, but these distributions had to be suspended as a result of the organization's lack of financial resources. In addition to the lack of financial resources and, therefore, food, the difficulty in accessing food is also related to the crisis itself. REEJER, in Democratic Republic of Congo reports that the scarcity of essential products coming from within the country or imported from overseas has made poor children and families even more vulnerable. At the same time, where possible, organizations, at times in collaboration with government authorities, have

stepped up provision of food relief. Elsewhere, problems accessing food could be prevented if cash transfers designed to support the vulnerable reached the poorest people. This indicates a need for government mechanisms to proactively reach out to socially excluded communities and vulnerable sections of society, especially street children, recognizing that even in normal circumstances they have no documentation to prove identity or a permanent address, they often are off the formal financial grid, and therefore have little to no access to government welfare and social security measures or emergency relief support. In practice, in many places emergency relief support is linked to addresses or official identity documents which those living on the streets often do not have, or to enrolment in existing government schemes.

## **2.8 Support of the Streets**

The essential outreach work that many organizations undertake to find and support children while they are on the street has been particularly affected by measures to curtail the pandemic. For instance, two CSC Network Members in Malawi and Zimbabwe have been forced to restrict outreach activities, while one CSC Network Member in Nigeria, the Education for Purpose Initiative, reports being unable to find children in their usual settings and meeting places. The COVID-19 pandemic is making the work of these organizations more difficult or, in some cases, impossible, leaving many street children at increased risk. Others are still able to conduct outreach and are trying to increase these services. In Tanzania, partners are working with ‘street champions’ such as small shop owners to provide hand-washing stations to children on the streets. CSC Network Members in different countries are also using vans with loudspeakers to make information on services and how to stay safe accessible to street children. Small, frontline NGOs are stepping in to fill the gap, both providing food rations and health supplies directly and distributing government relief provisions to those who would otherwise not be reached through mainstream channels.

Pausing outreach activities also means that it is not possible to know exactly how many children remain on the streets, or even knowing whether there is an increase or decrease in numbers. Some NGOs have lost contact with children they usually support which may have lasting repercussions. A partner of Apprentis d'Auteuil and FAAI in Cameroon, for example, reports that children feel ‘abandoned’ despite the organization’s best attempts to maintain contact while outreach activities are suspended. The organization worries that it will not be possible to reconnect with these children when activities are resumed. In the absence of a

government's intervention, it will be hard to contain the long-term impact that such a disengagement from the activities and services provided by organizations will have on the lives of street children. In some countries, street outreach workers are recognized as essential workers; for example, in Mombasa, Kenya, CSC Network Member Glad's House has successfully negotiated with local government officials to get authority to continue street outreach work. They have also made recommendations to the local government, sharing information directly gathered from children in street situations themselves on the issues that these children anticipate they will face due to the curfews and the lockdown.

According to SASCU (2021), children in street situations' right to housing are routinely violated, frequently as a result of housing discrimination. This discrimination often consequently results in spatial segregation, which further perpetuates rights violations against children in street situations. This is grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment no. 21 on children in street situations, notably paragraph 50 which addresses the issue of adequate housing. The study took one method research design (quantitative), data was collected by use of questionnaires. Data was analyzed by percentages, mean scores, standard deviation and tables, unlike this study, that used qualitative approach.

According to UNICEF (2020), violations of the right to non-discrimination for children in street situations are frequent and widespread, and commonly include discrimination in accessing their right to housing. Discrimination and street-connectedness significantly intersect: discrimination can cause the homelessness that results in children becoming street-connected, and those who are street-connected frequently then face increased discrimination, including in accessing housing (Consortium for Street Children, 2020a). Social stigma is encountered by children in street situations around the world, and heavily impacts their access to housing. This stigma can lead to children being criminalized for their relationship with the street, rather than supported to access housing. This is the case in Uganda, where many children who SASCU work with encounter discrimination based on the fact that they live and/or work on the streets (United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, 2020).

Measures taken by governments to address the spread of the Coronavirus have had a disproportionate impact upon children in street situations, as highlighted in several reports

and submissions produced by CSC (Osborn, 2020). As many children in street situations do not have a home to go to, they are unable to conform to government regulations about staying indoors, and in some cases are being harshly punished for this instead of supported by their government. Discrimination, including housing discrimination, has worsened in many cases, with street connected children being stigmatized as ‘dirty’ and as potential carriers of the virus. Because of their perceived ‘dirtiness’, CSC (Consortium for street children) network members have noted an increase in children being moved away from shelter or sanitation facilities (Consortium for Street Children, 2020a).

According to Consortium for Street Children (2020), in Mali, Caritas Segou reported a similar dramatic increase in the number of children being accommodated in shelters, and an associated lack of space for any new children. They reported some cases of children in Segou running away to another city, Bamako, in search for a bed in a shelter. Elsewhere, the serious overcrowding has had devastating consequences: in Guatemala, CSC network member CONACMI report “In a home 80 children were kept in a space meant for 40. Girls were locked in and tried to break the windows to get out. A fire started and 56 girls died.” The lack of accommodation available, and severe overcrowding elsewhere, constitutes a housing crisis for children in street situations during the pandemic, and reflects a failure by governments to provide sufficient, suitable accommodation for all children.

SASCU has undertaken a number of holistic, rights-based interventions with children in street situations in Uganda in order to tackle the issues of housing discrimination, and spatial segregation (Tinson & Clair, 2020). They are working with District Local Governments in Lira and Mbale, Kampala and other places to secure land and housing as a medium- to long-term intervention where children in street situations shall be rehabilitated, skilled, and thereafter - where it is in their best interest - resettled with their families, caregivers and communities. This enabled the state to sustainably provide children in street situations who have no access to housing or shelter with adequate, safe accommodation that meets their basic needs, such as water and sanitation, health care and food (UNICEF, 2020).

According to SASCU (2021) During the COVID-19 pandemic, SASCU, supported by CSC, conducted a rapid needs assessment on the rights of children in street situations in Lira City. The findings of this assessment were presented to the local leaders, who constituted a Technical Working Committee composed of the District Leaders, the Private Sector, Police,

and CSOs as well Cultural and Religious Leaders to ensure comprehensive service provision for children in street situations. The committee has drafted a three-year action plan that shall, among others, leverage the national street children management information system to collectively and systemically address factors that pull and push children to live on the streets including discrimination and lack of accommodation. The committee shall also address discrimination and accommodation challenges that children living on the streets are grappling with. This demonstrates the importance of authorities consulting directly with child focused CSOs and street-connected children in their decision-making processes.

In light of article 42 (a) (iii) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child ('the Charter' or 'the ACRWC') regarding cooperation between the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child ('the Committee' or 'the ACERWC') and organizations concerned with the promotion and protection of the rights and welfare of the child, the information in the succeeding paragraphs indicate the services offered by different organizations to street children (Gupta & Jawanda, 2020)

In Kampala, Uganda, child-focused civil society organizations connected to the CSC Network have successfully cooperated with city authorities to identify and quarantine some street connected children to protect them from COVID-19 and facilitate their rehabilitation in their communities (Diallo et al., 2021). In the quarantine centers, children are engaged to actively participate in self-development programmes designed to enhance their self-esteem and foster meaningful relationships with their peers. The Government of Uganda has also provided relief food to registered children's homes across the country during the lockdown. However, more food is required, and not all shelters providing support to street-connected children are being reached by this relief effort.

Organizations have embarked on forming well-functioning systems of child protection paying particular attention to developing and fostering cooperation, coordination, and collaboration among all levels of stakeholders, from community level upwards (Thembekele et al., 2020). Such cooperation has taken place through the identification and sharing of successful right-based practices, research, policies, monitoring and capacity-building among national and international stakeholders. The organizations noted that it is important to remind governments that they should cooperate with civil society organizations locally and nationally to protect street-connected children during the COVID-19 emergency.



The essential outreach work that many organizations undertake to find and support children while they are on the street has been particularly affected by measures to curtail the pandemic for instance, two CSC Network Members in Malawi and Zimbabwe have been forced to restrict outreach activities, while one CSC Network Member in Nigeria, the Education for Purpose Initiative, reports being unable to find children in their usual settings and meeting places. The COVID-19 pandemic is making the work of these organizations more difficult or, in some cases, impossible, leaving many street-connected children at increased risk. The study by Consortium for Street Children took descriptive, analytical and normative approaches to explore the practices of a representative sample of street children while identifying a number of distinctive challenges and intervention strategies which are only limited by existing theoretical models, however, this study to be conducted in Kampala Central Division applied qualitative approach.

Others are still able to conduct outreach and are trying to increase these services. In Tanzania, partners are working with ‘street champions’ such as small shop owners to provide hand washing stations to children on the streets (Kawala et al., 2020). CSC Network Members in different countries are also using vans with loudspeakers to make information on services and how to stay safe accessible to street connected children. Small, frontline NGOs are stepping in to fill the gap, both providing food rations and health supplies directly and distributing government relief provisions to those who would otherwise not be reached through mainstream channels (United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees, 2020).

Pausing outreach activities also means that it is not possible to know exactly how many children remain on the streets, or even knowing whether there is an increase or decrease in numbers. Some NGOs have lost contact with children they usually support which may have lasting repercussions (Coren & Martin, 2014). A partner of Apprentice d'Auteuil and FAAI in Cameroon, for example, reports that children feel ‘abandoned’ despite the organization’s best attempts to maintain contact while outreach activities are suspended. The organizations worries that it will not be possible to reconnect with these children when activities are resumed. In the absence of a government’s intervention, it will be hard to contain the long-term impact that such a disengagement from the activities and services provided by organizations shall have on the lives of street-connected children (Alliance & Action, 2020).

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, REEJER, a partner of CSC Network Members Apprentis d'Auteuil and FAAI, has been drawing on its experiences gained from previous political crises in Kinshasa to put into action a plan to raise awareness and protect children during the lockdown. Community leaders (including religious actors and neighborhood leaders) were selected for 17 sites where children are located, and during the crisis these leaders have taken up responsibility for raising awareness among their community, alerting relevant stakeholders when a child is in danger and protecting children. Two hundred and seventy street-connected children have been invited by these leaders to join shelters, water points or families. Community leaders are also involved in implementing a door-to-door awareness-raising campaign (respecting distancing measures) within their communities (ILO, 2020). REEJER also reported that all identified cases of Covid-19, including among street-connected children, were taken in charge thanks to the collaboration between government and local and international health associations.

As previously highlighted, street children need special support when it comes to the possibility to self-isolate and adhere to distancing measures to keep themselves and other children safe (USWG, 2019). It is our view that cooperation, in terms of resource allocation, partnerships and capacity building between governments and civil society organizations as well as between civil society organizations themselves, is crucial to ensure access to adequate housing and shelter during and in the recovery from the pandemic. The findings and suggestions of the studies above are varied but were carried from outside Uganda and are not education based in nature. This constitutes a gap of a similar study in Uganda which is education based, thus a justification for this study to close this gap.

## **2.9 Challenges faced by Organizations in Resettling Street Children**

Due to public health restrictions, many organizations have had to stop their outreach activities with street-connected children including awareness-raising campaigns about the health situation and measures (Mugenyi, 2021). This has prevented street children from accessing vital information about health education. More so, despite being at risk of contracting the virus and other serious illnesses due to their poor living conditions and already compromised immune systems, most street children continue to be deprived of access to healthcare due to lack of capacity in the national systems. Another key concern relates to the impact of the pandemic on street children's mental health, with a potential risk of more children turning to substance use to cope with stress and anxiety.

Additionally, access to water and sanitation has been a crucial issue for street children, mostly because of the lack of public planning to aid such vulnerable populations during the emergency; some network members have reported cases in which children were deliberately denied access to sanitation facilities by community members due to social stigma. It is important to remind States to promote equal access to safe drinking water and sanitation services for street children, ensuring that this is available and accessible to every child in order to help prevent disease. There has been an increase in street children experiencing hunger and malnutrition, mainly due to the loss of income from informal and occasional work, but also due to the closure of schools, drop-in centres and residential institutions which previously provided free meals. The situation has been exacerbated by the unequal distribution of State emergency relief packages, which in many cases remains out of reach of unregistered/undocumented populations. Governments should prioritize, in their emergency policies, food and economic interventions to relieve street children from hunger and realize their right to adequate nutrition.

Many organizations have struggled to secure a safe space for children to self-isolate over the pandemic due to the high mobility of the children and the limited capacity of drop-in centres and shelters, aggravated by some cases of discrimination within the community against homeless children for fear of infection (Mugenyi, 2021). While in some isolated cases governments have intervened to provide safe accommodations to street-connected children, these initiatives have been limited in scale and duration due to the lack of resources. It is important to ensure that governments take urgent action to stop forced evictions of poor households and provide safe spaces for street children with access to water and sanitation facilities to realise the right to adequate housing.

In terms of family environment and care, despite the increase in demand for care and assistance, many children without a family environment have been left unattended because of the cessation of outreach services resulting from the lockdown and the limited capacity for drop-in centres and shelters to admit new children due to the enforcement of social distancing. Family reunification operations have also completely halted in many settings due to restrictions on travelling. Governments should take into account the essential role played by civil societies in the provision of care for children deprived of a family environment and cooperate with civil society organizations to support street children who are deprived of a family environment to reunite with their family or voluntarily reintegrate with foster families.

One of the greatest challenges that NGOs Network Members face during the emergency is to keep ensuring that street-connected children can safely reunite with their families. Public health restrictions on travelling, inability to visit families physically, combined with lack of funding to provide telephones or internet for family workers and children to communicate with their family members all hinder this process (Coren & Martin, 2014). CSC Network Members have expressed their concern that if they are unable to follow-up when children reunite with their families, the problems that resulted in the child leaving the home, such as domestic violence, may persist. The study by Coren & Martin (2014) took descriptive, analytical and normative approaches to explore the practices of a representative sample of street children while identifying a number of distinctive challenges and intervention strategies which are only limited by existing theoretical models, however, this study to be conducted in Kampala Central Division applied qualitative approach.

Physical distancing measures have prevented social workers from pursuing their preliminary investigations, their mediation work or follow-up activities of reunified families, and some of their outreach activities (United Nations, 2019). Consequently, this has compromised the success of ongoing family reunifications and has increased the number of children in need of accommodation. Except for a few emergency reunifications initiated by the organization, the lockdown and the difficulty to obtain authorization to move through the streets have generally prevented social workers from both preparing and undertaking reunifications. However, the fore going study was carried from outside Uganda, not fully urban based and carried out almost two years ago. These constitute gaps namely of conducting a similar study in Uganda, thus a reason for this study.

The implementation of lockdown measures has obliged many children to return to their family, since they had to leave the streets (Martinsson, 2017). However, in such instances, the lack of follow up and mediation activities carried out by associations, also due to the lockdown, has resulted in children soon fleeing their family households, and returning to the streets. Even where the government has been supportive of CSOs efforts to ensure the continuation of family reunification process, the economic crisis brought about by the pandemic emergency have hindered the process, nonetheless. The findings and suggestions of the studies above are varied but were carried from outside Uganda and are not education based in nature. This constitutes a gap of a similar study in Uganda which is education based, thus a justification for this study to close this gap.

It is worth noting that despite the valuable steps taken by some governments to facilitate family reunification and thus reduce the number of street-connected children, an overwhelming majority of street-connected children are homeless, and without safe family connections, and face difficulties in finding foster families due to long and complex bureaucratic processes (Consortium for Street Children, 2020b). To this extent, governments should cooperate with local, national and international organizations to design and implement effective policies that facilitate the reintegration of these children within safe and healthy family environments.

### **2.10 Drop-in centres and shelters**

Street children need special support when it comes to the possibility to self-isolate and adhere to distancing measures to keep themselves and other children safe. It is our view that cooperation, in terms of resource allocation, partnerships and capacity building between governments and civil society organizations as well as between civil society organizations themselves, is crucial to ensure access to adequate housing and shelter during and in the recovery from the pandemic. There are several examples where such cooperation has increased access to shelter for street children. For instance, REIPER, a partner of CSC Network Members Apprentis d'Auteuil and FAAI, working with street children in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo, has received support from the government to secure all drop-in centres with food and hand-washing installations for children. The organization also reported that collaboration between civil society actors and the Ministry of Social Affairs during the pandemic has made it possible to track and monitor children whose rights have been violated, and to rehome these children to existing drop-in centres or shelters. A CSC Network Member who works in Uganda reports that they received permission from the local authorities to open an emergency centre for children who are still on the streets, but the process of providing this urgent service was slowed down by bureaucratic requirements.

In Kampala, Uganda, child-focused civil society organizations connected to the CSC Network have successfully cooperated with city authorities to identify and quarantine some street children to protect them from COVID-19 and facilitate their rehabilitation in their communities. In the quarantine centres, children are engaged to actively participate in self-development programmes designed to enhance their self-esteem and foster meaningful relationships with their peers. The Government of Uganda has also provided relief food to registered children's homes across the country during the lockdown. However, more food

is required, and not all shelters providing support to street-connected children are being reached by this relief effort.

In other countries, organizations had to close their centres due to the public health restrictions. For example, according to a CSC Network Member in Nigeria, Lagosian authorities have imposed a total lockdown, including day centres, so not only are street children who are daily wagers left without earnings during the emergency, but they are also without a safe space to find material and emotional support. Those who have had to close drop-in centres and other temporary accommodation are also concerned about how to re-open shelters safely in the near future. Governments should identify and engage with organizations facing these and other types of difficulties and provide adequate support to meet their needs

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the study design, study approach, target population, sample size determination and sampling technique, in addition to data collection methods and instruments, procedures of data collection, data analysis and finally ethical consideration.

### **3.1 Study Design**

This study adopted a cross sectional design; this involved collecting information from the respondents at one point in a time. In this study, a qualitative approach was employed..

According to Creswell (2012), a research design is the basic plan which guides the data collection and analysis phase of the research project. The research design consists: research approach, research strategy, research duration and research classifications. For the purpose of this study, The study utilizes a cross-sectional research study design. A cross-sectional research design is preferred because it is an ideal methodology when collecting data from a sample population that tests attitudes and preferences. Yin, (2014) defines Cross-sectional design as a study based on observations made at one point in time especially survey research. Cross-sectional studies enable the researcher to have a critical analysis and evaluation of the subject under study. Also because of limited time and resources, it is appropriate to select a particular case to investigate as this gives a picture of similar cases

### **3.2 Study Approach**

The study used qualitative approach in that the use of open-ended questions and probing questions gives participants the opportunity to response in their own words rather than forcing them to choose from the fixed responses. Qualitative approach allowed me in the flexibility to probe initial participants responses that is to ask why and how effective the resettlement centres of Buloba resettlement home was effective in the care and management of the resettled children

### **3.3 Study Population**

The study population comprised of 20 respondents in the categories of employees from the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development, street children, Kampala Capital City Authority staff (KCCA), Non-governmental organization that are carrying out humanitarian

activities within Kampala such as World Vision, Abana ministries AVSI, Amari and dwelling places we're selected for interviews.

In interviews, five officials from KCCA in the department of gender, community services, production, legal affairs and education and social services we're selected purposely for interviews.( KCCA 2022) responsible for the operations of the capital city of Kampala and sensitization programmed through workshops to spearhead gender mainstreaming and work towards ensuring that all KCCA sectors incorporate it in their plans and programmes. The community service directorate analyses departmental work plans to identify gender gaps, orient staff and stakeholders on gender budgeting and development of gender action plans. Five officials from dwelling places, non profit organizations' in charge of operations, restoration, rebuild, communication and impact manager, education and sponsorship were interviewed

Applying the Fischer's formula to determine the appropriate sample size, five officials in the department of gender and women affairs responsible in the formulation and review of policies and legislation on gender and women empowerment, training and capacity building of sectors and local governments to mainstream gender and address women's concerns, create awareness among communities and the publi.

Five officials basically the field monitors in charge of advocacy campaigns feom world Vision, water and sanitation, HIV & AIDS, food security who provided psycho social support and peace about children living on the streets and street connected children we're also selected for interviews.

### **3.4 Methods of Data Collection**

#### **3.4.1 Interview**

An interview was conducted with the staff of KCCA, MoGLSD and others staff of NGOs to seek their opinions about the street children in Kampala during COVID19.

#### **3.4.2 Observation**

This is where the researchers observes the ways on how the street children behaves in the respective sample study areas within Kampala City



### **3.5 Data Processing, Analysis and Interpretation**

KCCA staff, MoGLSD staff, NGOs members and Street children's views were analyzed qualitatively. In qualitative data analysis, analysis begins with the coding process to generate descriptions of settings or people as well as categories of themes for analysis and make interpretations of the meanings of the data. In this study, the data collected through interviews were categorized under the study main themes or objectives, and then content analysis was done. The data was coded, analyzed and interpreted according to the respective themes. Respondents' views were quoted verbatim to give their actual feeling about the issues that was raised. Qualitative data was analyzed by content after transcribing and developing themes. At the end of each day, field notes were transcribed. Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis. The participants' views were quoted verbatim to give their actual feeling about the issues that was raised.

### **3.6 Ethical Consideration**

**Informed consent:** The researcher shall explain himself and the motivation for the study to the study respondents in a bigger context of the investigation. In doing so, the investigator will be honest and frank around research purpose and the expected benefits and risks to specific contributor that is the Kampala residents and local leaders

**Confidentiality:** The researcher also assured the members that what they say shall be kept in confidence in so as to earn their faith and thus for producing good facts. At the same time, the researcher protected the participants' privacy by not revealing individual physiognomies that could allow others to guess the identities of people who played a role in the investigation.

**Anonymity:** This shall be incorporated into the research and this means that there is no way for anyone to get respondents but only respondents shall participate voluntarily.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter deals with the presentation, interpretation and analysis of the findings collected from the field in an attempt to assess the resettlement of street children during COVID-19 in Kampala Central Division. The findings are presented according to the research questions namely; the roles played by different organizations in resettling street children during COVID-19, and the challenges faced by different organizations in resettling street children during COVID-19. They are presented in thematic manner.

#### **4.1 Roles played by dwelling places in Resettling Street Children during COVID-19 pandemic**

The question was posed to identify the roles played by different organizations in resettling street children during COVID-19 in Kampala Central Division. These were included as stated below.

##### **Feeding of street children**

From the field findings, it was found that to a moderate extent with the statements in establishment that different organizations were involved in feeding the street children during COVID-19 era. One of the interviewed participants had these to say;

Organizations and well-wishers have provided free food stuff to street children who were gazetted in specific areas. Free foods especially posho, milk, beans and others have been free given to them during this rough COVID-19 pandemic period (KCCA staff, 2022).

This means that street children have been able to access free meals as a result of the free foods distributed to them by various organizations, having in mind that those street children depend on begging the public; however, there was total lockdown of the economy and movement of people to urban centers were restricted, so there was no way for them to survive without such help from various organizations. The Government of Uganda has also provided relief food to registered children's homes across the country during the

lockdown. However, more food is required, and not all shelters providing support to street-connected children are being reached by this relief effort.

The participants noted that the organizations have been able to feed a good number of starving street children. One of the interviewed participants had these to say;

Organizations have been able to give adequate feeding or food to the street children in Kampala. Foods like beans and posho have been donated by organizations, individuals and well-wishers to cater for the rising number of street children in gazetted places (Officials from NGOs, 2022)

This implies that organizations achieved the helping street children from getting starved, malnourished and dying on the streets of Kampala because of hunger. They could not manage to have a daily meal since their way total lockdown and curfew, and peace no longer allowed to move to urban centers, yet such street children always depend on begging.

### **Accommodation**

The participants reported that KCCA provided different places especially schools to accommodate street children. As many children in street situations do not have a home to go to, they are unable to conform to government regulations about staying indoors during COVID-19 pandemic, and in some cases are being harshly punished for this instead of supported by their government. One of the interviewed participants had these to say;

Organizations decided to persuade street children to specific locations especially schools where they were easily monitored and accommodated during COVID-19 pandemic period in order to avoid harsh mistreatment from law enforcement officers. Organizations provided mattresses and bedding for those street children accepted to be housed at various schools until the situation got well. (NGOs staff, 2022)

This implies that those street children who accepted to stay in specific gazetted areas in Kampala Central Division, were fully accommodated and looked after in-terms of feeding and treatment. This enabled the organizations to sustainably provide children in street situations who have no access to housing or shelter with adequate, safe accommodation that meets their basic needs, such as water and sanitation, health care and food. Organizations have been involved in providing access to safe shelter for street-connected children without a home in collaboration with NGOs already offering shelter and alternative accommodation for street connected children.

### **Safety and Security**

The participants reported that during the lockdown and curfew as a result of COVID-19 pandemic, there was a lot of arrests and torture among the public by security personnel courtesy of implementing the presidential directives. One of the interviewed participants had these to say;

During the COVID-19 period, many street children did not have where to stay (homes). They are used of sleeping on street shades, thus security officers who arrest them, get imprisoned for breaking the presidential directives. This organization helped them by accommodating them, and those who were arrested and taken to courts of law, they were given lawyers to help them seeking for proper and quick justice (Staff of NGO, 2022)

This implies that organizations were involved in protecting the street children from law enforcement officers during total local down and curfew period. Law enforcement officers were found of taking the law in their hands and street children were not spared neither.

### **Reuniting street children with their homes**

The study noted that several organizations are crucial to ensure access to adequate housing and shelter during and in the recovery from the pandemic. Another interviewed participant had these to say;

Civil Society Organizations have been involved in reuniting street-connected children with their family members, if this is deemed to be, in consultation with the child, in his or her best interest and support took the form of financial assistance and permission to continue operating family reunification activities even if a lockdown is in place. (Staff from MoGLSD, 2022)

This implies that the government of Uganda cooperated with Civil Society Organizations to design and implement strategies for facilitating the reintegration of children permanently deprived of a family environment to foster families. This included the initiation or implementation of host voluntary families (HVF) programmes, to allow children entering foster care in a safe family environment.

### **Publicity**

The participants reported that some organizations were involved in publicity. They were more involved in sensitization and making street children getting awareness on the dangers associated with the outbreak COVID-19 pandemic and available SOPs measures. One of the interviewed participants had these to say;

Several organizations have been involved in helping street children with more knowledge and information concerning the spread of COVID-19 pandemic and

its related health consequences. This has helped street children to avoid contaminated spaces, try to maintain social distancing and other SOPs measures. (Staff from MoGLSD 2022)

This implies that several organizations who got in contact with street children greatly helped them to understand Standard of Procedures as forwarded by the Ministry of Health and World Health Organizations. Organizations have been able to extend such relevant health information to street children for their own benefits especially towards controlling the spread of deadly COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Free Counselling and Testing Services**

The participants also noted that several organizations have been involved in providing free counselling and testing services to the street children. One of the interviewed participants had these to say;

Organizations have been involved in providing free counselling services. Some of those street children have been reintegrated with their families after such counselling. Some of the street children with psychological problems like trauma, depression and fatigue have been helped to understand the situation and how to overcome such psychological challenges thus to have a better life. (NGOs staff, 2022)

This implies that street children have been helped to get in touch again with their families after proper counselling. They have been helped to identify their families and get reintegrated afterward.

### **Free testing services**

The study participants also noted that free testing services especially COVID tests have been provided in such street children gazetted in one place by several organizations. One of the interviewed participants had these to say;

Several organizations have been able to provide free testing kits and facilitate health workers in testing street children. This helped them to identify those street children who were already COVID-19 positive thus be able to be isolated or hospitalized to access medical treatment. (Staff of NGOs, 2022)

This implies that several street children were testing for COVID-19 under the support of various organizations. Organizations have been directly responsible for funding such programmes so as to help those street children who are living a difficult life on streets.

The study participants further noted that street children have been equipped with knowledge and information concerning SOPs as the best strategy to avoid the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. One of the interviewed participants had these to say;

Street children have been equipped with knowledge on the measures to control the spread of COVID-19 pandemic like staying at home, social distancing, getting immunized and other hygiene practices like washing hands regularly which are crucial for Covid-19 prevention. (Officials from NGOs, 2022)

This implies that many street children have been immunized and equipped with knowledge on the appropriate measures to control the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. They have adequately taught how to regularly wash their hands, wearing and given free masks.

### **Immunization**

The study participants reported that several organizations have been involved in encouraging street children to get involved in COVID-19 immunization. One of the key participant had these to say;

Organizations have been involved in publicity and encouraging street children to get immunized against COVID-19 pandemic. Street children especially those who have been staying in temporary rehabilitation centers got immunized willingly. (NGOs staff, 2022).

This implies that immunization of every Ugandan has been suggested as the best option to reduce the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. Street children have not been easy to be accessed for immunization join they the government without the help of Non-Government Organizations who have been seriously persuading them to join the immunization programme.

### **Free medical sundries**

The study participants also noted that organizations have been involved in helping the street children with free masks, hands-sterilizers, and free drugs especially vitamin C in order to boost their immunity. One of the key participant had these to say;

Free health sundries like masks, soaps and drugs have been distributed to refugees by various organizations. This has been done aiming at reducing on the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. (Staff of NGOs, 2022)

This implies that several organizations have tried their best by providing SOPs and other essentials like soaps and masks freely to street children during COVID-19 pandemic, and this greatly reduced the spread of the deadly pandemic.

### **Proper stakeholder's conditions**

The study participant also revealed that the organizations noted that it is important to remind governments that they should cooperate with civil society organizations locally and nationally to protect street-connected children during the COVID-19 emergency. One of the key informant had these to say;

In the quarantine centres, children are engaged to actively participate in self-development programmes designed to enhance their self-esteem and foster meaningful relationships with their peers. (Street Child, 2022)

This implies that child-focused civil society organizations have successfully cooperated with city authorities to identify and quarantine some street connected children to protect them from COVID-19 and facilitate their rehabilitation in their communities. This has helped in refraining from forcibly removing children off the street into alternative care where decisions for where a child should live must be made with the involvement and consent of the child.

### **Protected them from getting exposed**

From the field findings, it was accepted to a moderate extent with the statements in establishment that resettling street children have greatly contributed towards the reduction of COVID-19 spread. One of the interviewed participants had these to say;

Organizations involvement in resettling street children either in certain gazetted areas and others in resettlement or rehabilitation homes have greatly helped street children from getting exposed to deadly COVID-19 pandemic. (Street Kid, 2022)

This implies that due to the characteristics of street children lifestyle, they often reside in meager accommodation in groups, with no access to clean water, food or sanitation facilities; and this would have eventually escalated the spread of Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, resettling these street children greatly reduced on the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Humanity**

The study also revealed that resettling of street children during Covid-19 have promoted street children humanity, rights to welfare and against abuses. One of the interviewed participants had these to say;

Resettling street children have shown the sign of humanity and their rights been guaranteed. It has helped street children from being tortured and taken to courts of law due to abuse of presidential directives. Their rights and dignity has been protected. (NGOs staff, 2022)

This implies that organizations demonstrate the commitment by them and government of Uganda to ensure the well-being of all children. It is another big stride in the Country's efforts to uphold children rights and protect them from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence during such pandemic period. Indeed, the government of Uganda recognizes the critical importance of ensuring children's four cardinal rights to survival, development, protection and participation through a well-built and coordinated protection system.

The participants' findings noted that resettling of refugees during Covid-19 pandemic promoted children welfare. One of the interviewed participants had these to say;

Resettled street children were able to have improved welfare. They could amicably get enough food, shelter, medical care and protection. Street children could live in safe, permanent and stable environments that supports their well-being. (Officials of MoGLSD, 2022)

This implies that resettling street children have promoted their survival rights that cover a child's right to life and the needs that are most basic to existence. These include an adequate living standard, shelter, nutrition and access to medical services.

### **Quick Reintegration with their families**

The study also revealed that resettlement of street children has accelerated quick reintegration. One of the interviewed participants had these to say;

Most of those street children who have been resettled during the COVID-19 pandemic period, have been given counselling sessions, before being reintegrated with their families. Some of them have willingly accepted to go back to their families after experiencing harsh street conditions during COVID-19 period. (Officials from NGOs, 2022)

This implies that organizations have greatly helped in the reintegration of street children. A good number of street children have been reintegrated back to their families thus promoting the good urban environment, and reducing on the number of street children in Kampala.



### **4.3 Challenges faced by Different Organizations in Resettling Street Children during COVID-19**

The question was posed to identify the challenges faced by different organizations in resettling street children during COVID-19 in Kampala Central Division. These included the following.

#### **Limited financial resources**

From the field findings, the participants noted that organizations involved in resettling street children during COVID-19 pandemic experienced a challenge of having limited financial resources. One of the interviewed participants had these to say;

Many organizations who tried to resettle street children experienced a challenge of financial crisis. Every country especially donors from developed countries were also facing hardships related to health crisis as a result of COVID-19, therefore, limited financial resources were available to cater for their daily resettlement programs.

This implies that different organizations did not have adequate financial resources to fully fulfil their commitment of resettling street children. They met a very hardship in full-filling their obligation like daily feeding those street children.

#### **Restricted movement**

The study participants also revealed that restricted movement of employees for those organizations involved in resettling street children was a big challenge. One of the interviewed participants had these to say;

Public means of transport was banned under presidential directive. Even, private means of transport was also stopped. Few available means of transport was for security cars and permitted cars for essential workers. Organizations were allowed only to first seek permission from RCCs to travel and resettle street children which was not only hectic but time wasting.

This implies that restricting movement of private means of transport and not considering such organization staff as essential work to be allowed to travel and resettle street children greatly undermined their daily operations.

#### **Political Interference**

Additionally, political interference was another challenge experienced by organizations involved in resettling street children. One of the interviewed participants noted that;

There was a lot of political interference during resettling of street children. Such programme was political interfered with by politicians since it was towards presidential and parliamentary elections. Some politicians used it as a way to gain popularity and others criticized it since there were against their opponents.

This implies that political interference in the Good Samaritan work of helping street children were a big challenge and unnecessary. Public health restrictions on travelling, inability to visit families physically, combined with lack of funding to provide telephones or internet for family workers and children to communicate with their family members all hinder this process.

### **Negative attitude**

Lastly, organizations also experienced a challenge of street children negative attitude. One of the key informants had these to say;

Street children developed negative attitude towards organizations. They feared that organizations would want to take them in remand homes or take them for prosecution in courts of laws. Such mixed reactions and feelings by the street children created an environment characterized by fear, mistrust and street children not fully cooperating.

This implies that inferiority complex and negative attitude towards organizations roles and responsibility coupled by fear among street children limited their involvement and participation in resettlement of refugee children in Kampala during COVID-19 period. More so, the study findings revealed that physical distancing measures have prevented social workers from pursuing their preliminary investigations, their mediation work or follow-up activities of reunified families, and some of their outreach activities.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter therefore contains the discussions, conclusion of findings and recommendations of the study as presented in chapter four in order to establish whether the objectives of the study were achieved, to answer the research questions. These follow the sequence of research questions as developed from the research objectives. The chapter further presents discussions, conclusions and recommendations from the research study; and areas of further research were suggested.

#### 5.1 Discussions

##### 5.1.1 Roles Played by Dwelling places in Resettling children in the street during Covid-19 pandemic

###### Provision of food

The study finding noted that NGOs were providing food to street children in Kampala and specifically milk, posho during lunch in the resettlement home in Buloba to minimize on unnecessary death due to hunger and starvation during COVID-19. This finding is supported by the response from one of the staff of NGOs who confirmed that “ *Organizations have been able to give adequate feeding or food to the street children in Kampala. Foods like beans and posho have been donated by organizations, individuals and well-wishers to cater for the rising number of street children in gazetted places’ (Officials from NGOs, 2022)’*”

###### Accommodation

The findings noted that the participants reported that KCCA provided different places especially schools to accommodate street children. As many children in street situations do not have a home to go to, they are unable to conform to government regulations about staying indoors during COVID-19 pandemic, and in some cases are being harshly punished for this instead of supported by their government. This implies that those street children who accepted to stay in specific gazetted areas in Kampala Central Division, were fully accommodated and looked after in-terms of feeding and treatment. This enabled the organizations to sustainably provide children in street situations who have no access to housing or shelter with adequate, safe accommodation that meets their basic needs, such as

water and sanitation, health care and food. Organizations have been involved in providing access to safe shelter for street-connected children without a home in collaboration with NGOs already offering shelter and alternative accommodation for street connected children and the study is supported with the findings from an inclusive interview with the participant where they say.

Organizations decided to persuade street children to specific locations especially schools where they were easily monitored and accommodated during COVID-19 pandemic period in order to avoid harsh mistreatment from law enforcement officers. Organizations provided mattresses and bedding for those street children accepted to be housed at various schools until the situation got well. (NGOs staff, 2022)

## **5.2 Challenges faced by dwelling places in resettling children in the street during COVID-19**

**Limited financial resources** the study revealed that since covid-19 pandemic was uncalled for organizations working with children in the street especially dwelling places lost resources like money in attempt to rescue rehabilitate reconcile and re-integrate children with their families the Country director Dwelling places in an interview reported that in attempt to achieve the overall vision of “A world where every child has a place to call home and is empowered to reach their final full potential within a safe family and community setting “ They strive to use enough resources to the resettlement centres of Buloba Iriiri and Kobulin youth training skills centre in Napak district Karamoja sub region

### **Restricted movement**

From the findings since it was found that since all public means of transport was only limited to a few government officials with permission from KCCA the cars which were meant to transport children to their homes and resettlement centres were limited as children and their resettlement package was blocked

### **Negative attitude**

From the findings it was reported that street children themselves had fear to be resettled or taken back to their families During an interview with the manager youth and children affairs it was reported that some organizations working with the children in the street do give false cases in tracking children thus compromising a quality of cases and information to traced

for street children during the resettlement process in fear to down fall their organization benefit

### **5.3 Conclusions**

Basing on the study findings, it is concluded that provide food, accommodation/housing, publicity/sensitizing refugees on COVID-19 pandemic, COVID tests, COVID immunization, provision of free masks and sterilizers, controlling their movements, and protecting them from law enforcement officers during total local down and curfew period; these are the roles played by different organizations in resettling street children during COVID-19 in Kampala Central Division. Finally, it is concluded that limited financial resources, political interference, restricted movement and street children attitude and fear to be taken to remand homes; these are the major challenges faced by different organizations in resettling street children during COVID-19 in Kampala Central Division.

### **5.4 Recommendations**

Following the analysis of the study, the researcher came up with the following recommendations.

It is recommended that there is need to increase on donors and government funding to local organizations involved in resettling street children.

The study recommends that organizations involved in helping and supporting street children should always be given permission to continue helping the needy street children.

The study recommends that there is clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities, so as to avoid future clashes between politicians and organization managers.

### **5.4 Areas of Further Research**

The researcher carried this study in order to examine the “Assessment of Resettlement of Street Children during Covid-19 in Kampala Central Division”; but the study was not exhaustive owing to constraints in terms of scope, time and finance. Further research is therefore needed in areas such as: -

1. The challenges of experienced by street children in controlling Covid19 pandemic in Uganda.

2. The government policy towards promotion of resettlement of street children in Uganda.
3. The consequences of resettling street children during COvid-19 across the Country-Uganda.

In conclusion, more research should be done about the Assessment of Resettlement of Street Children during Covid-19 in Uganda so as to compare with result got from Kampala Central Division; so as to draw a ground for recommendations.

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5. What roles have been played by different organizations in resettling street children during COVID-19 in Kampala Central Division?

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**Section B: The achievements of resettling street children during COVID-19 pandemic in Kampala Central Division.**

1. Do you think organisations have achieved anything in resettling street children during COVID-19 pandemic?

Yes ( ) No ( )

2. If yes, what are the community achievements of resettling street children during COVID-19 pandemic?

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3. How has street children themselves benefited from being resettled during COVID-19 pandemic?

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4. Do you think the spread of COVID-19 spread reduced with organizations in resettling street children during COVID-19 pandemic?

Yes ( ) No ( )

5. Do you think street children have been successful resettled or integrated to their families?

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## Appendix ii: Introductory Letter



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2022.

KCCA OFFICIALS.

Mo. G. H. S.

NGO MEMBERS & STREET CHILDREN.

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: Undergraduate Research**

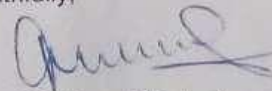
Topic ASSESSMENT OF RESETTLEMENT OF  
STREET CHILDREN DURING COVID-19  
IN KAMPALA CENTRAL DIVISION.

This is to introduce Mr./Miss/Mrs. LOKONG GABRIEL.  
Who would like to carry out research in your area as part of the requirements  
of the Social Work and Social Administration course.

I am requesting you to give him/her the necessary assistance to enable  
him/her accomplish his/her research.

Your cooperation in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

  
Dr. Laban Musinguzi Kashajja,  
Lecturer in-charge of  
Research and Dissertation.

