

**KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND LAW**

**FACTORS INFLUENCING THE NUMBER OF STREET CHILDREN IN KIGALI  
CITY:  
A CASE STUDY OF KACYIRU CHILDREN CENTRE (MAISON DE  
LA JEUNESSE)**

**BY**

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**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
FOR THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELORS OF  
SOCIAL WORKS AND SOCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF KAMPALA  
INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

**NOVEMBER 2004**

**DECLARATION**

I Ruberwa Louise, declare that to the best of my knowledge this Research Report is my original work and has never been submitted for award of a degree in any University before.

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**Signature.....**

**Date.....**

## **DEDICATION**

This peace work is dedicated to my late father Mr Ruberwa Amon and my late mother Ruberwa Nikuze Rose, who provided me with the foundation in my education career.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I acknowledge the financial and moral support rendered to me by my uncle; Mr Rwigala Assinapol; I also thank my young sister Ruberwa Monique for providing me with accommodation and financial support too. I'm also indebted to recognize the intellectual and moral advices provided to me by my supervisor Ms Brenda Nabirye. I'm also grateful for the services of the other lecturers who shown me the right academic path during the course of my degree, these includes: Dr Bamwikize Swaib head of department social science, Dr Otanga Rusoke, Mr Kaddu Ronald Ms Nakajugo Amina, Mr Kasaija William and Mr Kibuka Peter. It will also be unfair if I do not thank the following relatives and friend, these are: my uncle Uwamukiza Josias, uncle Onesim, Aunt Seka Martha, my aunt Virginie , and my schoolmate Julius. Finally I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Director of Kacyiru street children centre Charles Byusa for the permission to interview the street children and I'm also indebted to recognize responses from the street children.

## **ABSTRACT**

Street children is one of the most pressing problem faced by Rwanda. It is actually 30,000 street children in Kigali. This number is really worrying and the government of Rwanda is critically handling this issue.

The researcher carried out the study on the factors that influence the number of street children in Kigali (Kacyiru street children centre)./ The objectives of this study were to explore the causes of street children in kacyiru street children centre, assess the implications of these street children on the society they live in and to know more about the challenges, problems and difficulties faced by these street children in the course of their stay on streets.

In the study, a number of research instruments were used, these included; questionnaires which were supplied to administrators of the Kacyiru street children centre.

In depth interviews were also employed in order to probe information out of the street children and finally observation also helped the researcher to know how these children behave more especially at night.

Findings indicated that, genocide is the leading factor responsible for these children's staying on streets. Mistreatment, violation of children's rights and rampant poverty were among other causes. The findings further show that street children are seriously harassed by the public more especially security personnel. The public also discriminate and never

respected these street children. Lack of education, food, shelter to mention but a few were among the other problems.

Finally basing on findings, many respondents viewed street children as good people, who are only corrupted by the environment around them, and unfavourable conditions forces them to apply “jungle law”, others see them as thieves, rude, ruthless, brutal and drug traffickers.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction .....	2
1.1 Background .....	2
1.2 Statement of the problem.....	4
1.3 Purpose of the study.....	5
1.4 Specific objectives of the study.....	5
1.5 Research questions .....	5
1.6 Scope of the study.....	5
1.6.1 Content scope .....	5
1.6.2 Geographical scope .....	5
1.7 Significance of the study.....	6
1.8 Definition of key concepts.....	6

### CHAPTER TWO

2.0 Literature review .....	7
2.1 Introduction .....	7
2.2 Social economic, cultural and political course of street children.....	7
2.3 Challenges, problems and difficult faced by street children.....	10
2.4 Implications of these street children on society.....	14
2.5 The conceptual Framework.....	16
2.5.1 Title: Factors influencing number street children, problems, difficulties and implications caused on society.....	16
2.5.2 Description of the conceptual framework.....	16

**CHAPTER THREE**

3.0 Methodology..... 18

3.1 Introduction..... 18

3.2 Research..... 18

3.3 Areas and population of the study..... 18

3.4 Sample selection and size..... 19

3.5 Data Collection..... 19

3.5.1 Research instruments ..... 19

3.5.2 Procedure..... 20

3.6 Data analysis..... 20

3.6.1 Qualitative data analysis ..... 20

3.6.1 Quantitative data analysis..... 20

3.7 Limitations of the study ..... 20

**CHAPTER FOUR**

4.0 FINDING AND DATA ANALYSIS .....22

4.1 Introduction.....22

4.1.2 Sex of street children..... 23

4.1.3 Age of street children ..... 24

4.1.4 Education level of the street children.....25

4.2 Factors that influence number of street children.....27

4.3 Challenges, problems and difficulties.....30

4.3.1 Future aspirations /hopes of street children..... 31

4.4 Implications of street children on society..... 33

**CHAPTER FIVE**

5.0 Summary of the findings, conclusion and policy.....35

Recommendation

5.1 Introduction.....35



5.2 Summary of the major findings.....	35
5.2.1 Sex .....	35
5.2.2 Age of street children .....	36
5.2.3 Street children’s education level .....	36
5.2.4 Factors that influences the number of street children.....	36
5.2.5 Challenges, problem and difficulties.....	36
5.2.6 Future aspiration/Hopes of street children.....	37
5.2.7 Implication of street children on society.....	37
5.3 Conclusion.....	37
5.4 Recommendations.....	38
5.5 Areas recommended for further research.....	40
Questionnaires and interview schedules questions.....	40
5.6 References.....	44

Appendix

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Title	Page
1	Sex.....	23
2	Age.....	24
3	Education.....	25
4	Causes of street children.....	27
5	Challenges, Problems and difficulties.....	30
6	Future aspirations of the street children.....	31
7	Implications of the street children on the society.....	33

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

**NGOs**            Non Governmental organisation

**UN**                United Nations

**UNICEF**        United Nation's International Children Education Fund

**UPE**             Universal Primary Education

**VTS**             Vocational Training Schools

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This part of the dissertation highlights the background of street children in Kigali, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study and definition of the key concepts.

1.1 Street children are a common sight in many countries in Africa and through out the world. These children and youngsters originate from different social, Economics, political or family background.

**Who are 'street children'?** They are a very wide range of children who are homeless; work on the streets but sleep at home; either do or do not have family contact; work in open-air markets; live on the streets with their families; live in day or night shelters; spend a lot of time in institutions (e.g. prison). The term 'street children' is used because it is short and widely understood. Some say it is negative—that it labels and stigmatizes children. Others say it gives them an identity and a sense of belonging. In reality, street children defy such convenient generalizations because each child is unique.

UNICEF defines street children as “children in especially difficult situation” who live in urban zones, have little or no contact with their families, develop strategy and skills for survival on the streets, consider the streets their environment even after short visits or stays in a family or centre and are in danger of loosing the contact of their families.

Rwanda, better known as "the land of a thousand hills" is also known as the home of the famous Mountain gorillas and the breathtaking Virunga volcanoes, located north of this small, landlocked Central African country. But this beautiful nation has gone

through years of war and ethnic conflict that culminated in the 1994 genocide in which nearly one million people were massacred and thousands of others maimed, displaced and bereaved.

In 1980's, the child in Rwandese society occupied a central and key position. The children were always seen as the hope and future of the an elder who filled the questionnaire said, "a child was held in importance and seemed to be the pivot around which the society revolves." Children enjoyed more care and protection from the family and the community at large. This kept many children with their parents and the problem of street children in Kigali was under control by then.

The Rwandese community has been changed adversely by the genocide. The family structures that used to support the child no longer exist. Priorities have also changed and the child has lost the important central place, she enjoyed before the war. Most of the population was left traumatized by the event of 1994, and this is as true of the children as of adults.

The effect of trauma is reflected in the lack of hope for the future often expressed by the children in their response. The number of children living and working on the streets of urban areas particularly Kigali in Rwanda has increased since 1994. Children go to the streets for their own survival or to help their destitute families. Some are also there as a result of unsuccessful family reunification and fostering. Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda inhibits approximately more 400,000 People and it is estimated that 5,000 – 10,000 among the 400,000 inhabitants are street children; most of them live or work in the "commune" of Kacyiru, which is situated 3 km off the commercial centre of Kigali and it. is also heterogeneous: a part of the population are civil servants, as the ministries

are located there. But the main part of the population is poor, with workers and farmers living there.

According to **Rwandan Red Cross** “children are between 5 and 25 years of age. The average of 7.5 years were recorded, the youngest being 1 year and the oldest 18”. Half of 1500 street children are less than 12 years old. A study conducted by the **Ministry of Youth and Associative Movement** showed that nearly half of 160 children (43.7%) sleep and work on the streets during the day and either return to their families or share housing with friends at night. The majority of children were “new” street children having only worked and lived on the streets since 1994. Many of them had lost their parents who either died during the genocide and other parents died of AIDS.

Children living in child headed households (CHH) are among the poorest of the poor in Rwandese society, they want more protection, and they are usually marginalized when it comes the allocation of resources in society.

All in all, the Researchers believe that a combinations pull and push factors are responsible for the ever increasing number of street children in Kigali city particularly Kacyiru commune.

## 1.2 **Statement of the Problem**

Irrespective of the problems that street children faces on streets of Kigali, like lack of family and consequently lack of basic human needs like food, water and shelter, they have continued to live on the streets and even where they have been resettled, more often than not, they have come back to the streets.

This study therefore was aimed at assessing the factors that influence street children in Kigali central.

### 1.3 Purpose of the Study.

To assess the factors that influence street children in Kigali central.

### 1.4 Specific objectives of the Study

- i. To explore the causes of street children in Kacyiru (commune).
- ii. To find out the street children problems and their future aspiration or plans so as to formulate viable options
- iii. To find out the implication of street children on Kigali city.

### 1.5 Research Questions

- i. What is so special in Kacyiru Street children centre, that attracts children there?
- ii. How is the situation back in their rural areas?
- iii. Are these street children a social problem in Kacyiru Commune?

### 1.6 Scope of the study

#### 1.6.1 Content scope

The study will investigate the factors that influence street children in the commune of Kacyiru

#### 1.6.2 Geographical scope

The study covered Kacyiru children centre, Kigali préfecture (district). Street children, children centre's administrators, and religious leaders in the area, both males and females were randomly selected from Kacyiru children centre.

Simple random sampling was used. Fifty key informants were purposively selected. Questionnaires were administered to the sample and the street children were thoroughly interviewed.

### 1.7 The significance of the Study

The researcher is convinced that the study is so significant because of the following reasons.

To avail Literature and information to future researchers and planners /Policy makers to make viable policy options to help and plan for these children.

The researcher seeks to devise ways and means of withdrawing the children of the streets of Kigali and Limit the influx of others to these streets through the suggestions, strategies and recommendations. Also the researcher hopes that through this study Kigali Central and the commune of Kacyiru particularly will be made safer to the urban dwellers themselves and the foreigners (tourists). This can be achieved by taking care of these children by the state and other humanitarian assistances.

The study will also help to analyse sufficiently the causes that force these children to the streets of Kigali Central.

### 1.7 Definition of the key concepts

**Street Children:** People who are 18 years and below, they spend most of their hours of day and night on the street and for whom the street is the major source of socialization and growth.

**Kacyiru:** One of the three commune in Kigali city.

**Commune:** is a French word, meaning a Division.

**Maison de la jeunesse** meaning the home for the guys and also called **RwandaRwandarw'ejo**.meaning the Rwandese for tomorrow.

**Préfecture.** French word meaning a district



## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This Chapter deals with the literature reviewed. It is overwhelming believed by previous writers that, they're number of factors influencing the Street children in city centers, the problems faced by these street children and how they impact on the society. All the above factors can be cited out from all sub-Sahara African countries and from other continents, as the researcher below reviews them.

#### 2.2 Social-Economic, Cultural and Political Factors that influence Street Children into cities

**High AIDS Mortality Increases Street Children.** The increase in street children is due to AIDS mortality among parents and the situation was worsened by poverty and conflicts. Estimates of street children vary from 100 million to 250 million, and increasing rapidly. Girls were less visible because authorities were picking up girls more rapidly or were confined and exploited. These homeless young people were malnourished, with poor health and addicted to drugs. Their lack of security made them susceptible to sexual abuse and HIV infection. AIDS had orphaned at least 13 million children, forecast to double by 2010. 2% in developing countries were orphans before the onset of AIDS, today more than 15% in 10 sub-Saharan African countries. Children were driven into the streets by loss of one or both parents to AIDS or other disease, extreme poverty, violence or abuse in the family, failure at school and lack of opportunity." October 11, 2003 Xinhua General News

Service ■

Although no official statistics have been collated, it is estimated by various NGO's that there are between 5000 and 10000 children who live on the streets in Kigali, Rwanda's

capital. Most of these do not actually sleep on the streets at nighttime, because there is a high risk that they will be killed, or beaten. Many live in underground big pipes, or share a small mud hut with some older street children. YWAM workers estimate that approximately 60% of the children they meet and work with have no choice about their situation. These are those who have no parents, and if they have any relatives they are unwilling or (more typically) unable to help them because of the extra cost involved in feeding another person. About 30% come from districts outside Kigali and were unhappy with family life, so they left home. This choice comes as a result of various reasons: family poverty, domestic violence of one form or another, a desire for the freedom of doing what they want, and when feeling alienated at home – i.e. they fled from home because home no longer feels like

Although parental death (Orphanage) is a leading factor in pushing children into the streets, Research has revealed that economic hardships is the principle reason for the apparent increase in their numbers, **(World Bank, 1993)**. A **UNICEF report (1993)** emphasized the above indicating that international and national social-economic forces create that ultimately push children on streets.

Many children have been driven to the streets because of failure to cope up with their families. Some parents actually send their children to the streets to beg as a World Bank report (1993) indicated that: ‘Children (6-10 years old) are sent from city slums to cities....’ Such actions arise from parent’s failure to charge of their children and hence pushing them on the streets to beg. **(The Monitor, 8<sup>th</sup> August, 1997, home lessons from Street Saga, Ted Nannozi (pg. 14)**. About two third of the street children are in regular contact with at least one parent, especially the mother, and only 37% are completely on their own and sleep on the streets **(World Bank report 1993)**.

Further more, in Africa, including Rwanda, the position of the children is at a very low status. They're treated as a second – hand citizens. When it comes to domestic work, the children are treated like machines. The parents tend to assign much more work to their children than to their fellow Adults. If money is tight the parents will generally attend to their needs only leaving the children helpless and desperate (**Barton and Wamai 1994**). On the side of the girl's child, the situation is worse. They're seen as sex machines or child producing factories such that even if they go to school, they will soon drop out because they are easily lured into sex and consequently get pregnant. Such an attitude demoralizes many girls, such that they view themselves as worthless and hence less motivated for achievement, as the result of the above factors, children end up seeking refuge in urban centers, where they often find their way on the streets.

The previous researchers continued by saying that, third world countries especially in Africa, are always in some kind political turmoil that often disrupts the lives of their people. Displaced children end up on streets of urban centers in search of survival (**World Bank report, 1993**). Insecurity and civil strife often lead to family disintegration and may lead children to the streets especially where there are no relatives to help them. This problem of street children has grossly been increased by the civil wars that have rocked this nation (Rwanda) for example in early 1990s, specifically from 1994 the number of street children emerged in Kigali the capital city of Rwanda in big numbers. Who along with their parents fled rural areas that were the battle area for the genocide. (**Monitor 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1997**), **UPE Nightmare to street kids Wossita Samuel, pg.5**) also reported that many people stormed the streets of Kampala because of the unfavorable conditions in northern Uganda brought about by the Kony insurgency. Most of the children do not even speak the common language spoken in

Kampala (Luganda), which made their survival even more difficult because language barrier could not allow them to express themselves while begging.

The CRC sets out a framework for protection that emphasises the family and community as having the main responsibility for caring for children [Art. 5, 18]. The role of the state is to support and enable families and communities to fulfill this role. In many cases families and communities are not—or cannot be—protective or nurturing, and children end up living on the streets. In these cases, the state then takes on a greater responsibility. Article 20 of the CRC states, “A child temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment... shall be entitled to special protection and assistance provided by the State.”

### **2.3 Challenges, Difficulties and future hopes of the Street Children**

The Children face various problems: family reunification and social reintegration. To deal with them, the Rwandan Government has set up a national commission on children in difficult circumstances. The commission's task is apparently being facilitated by the ongoing traumatism rehabilitation programme. In its August 1996 report on children in difficult circumstances, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MINITRASO) states that the programme had trained 8,000 persons to work with street children, of whom more than 2,000 had been provided with assistance. This assistance is particularly important for the commission, which has the heavy responsibility of caring not only for unaccompanied children in centres, but also street children, child soldiers and child prisoners.

A special assistance programme for street children has been set up by the Ministries for Planning and Youth and community groups. This programme is part of a larger project entitled: "Support for the social integration of young people in difficult circumstances".

The project covers a number of development activities, including: functional literacy, educational reintegration, vocational training, involvement of young people in micro-enterprises, recreational and cultural activities and socio-economic reintegration.

A survey carried out by Mith Samlanh Friends (2001) on the profile of street children listed the following reasons, in order of importance, for leaving their homes:

- Problems within or breakdown of the family
- Poverty
- Becoming orphaned.

All these factors have led to an increase of the urban migration and, therefore, to an increase in the population of street children and their families. **(street Children in Cambodia (2001)**

The main problem the Street Kids Ministry currently faces is a desperate need for a couple to take care of the street children who will be selected for a live-in vocational/skills training course within the VTS buildings that are now completed. Most street children sniff solvents &/or drink alcohol, but despite the Christian witness and input YWAM is giving to these children, and the determination of the children themselves to overcome their bad habits, their environment is not changing. The peer pressure and temptation to conform to the street-culture is for some too great to resist, and YWAM therefore believes that the best way out of the cycle that they are caught up in is to provide them with accommodation away from this environment. With the help of a trust in Europe, buildings are currently being built to address this issue. It is envisaged that at the current rate of progress, accommodation can be provided for street children sometime in 2005, staff permitting.

**(JEAN-PAUL'S TESTIMONY)**

Serieux and Etienne continue to build relationships, based on trust, and this has in-turn helped the street children express themselves more freely. As the children learn how to pray, and open up to what's going on in their lives, they appear to grow in maturity, and find more freedom in their lives, despite their current situation. Serieux has noted over the past few months that a number of the street children have grown stronger in their ability to resist the temptation to drink alcohol and take drugs, and this has obviously had a very positive impact on their lives. Some of the children Etienne and Serieux work with became tired of being on the streets, and were keen to develop their education. These are some of the children the Vocational Training School (VTS) are able to help.

**Sexual abuse** “I have been a street girl since my father made a ‘woman’ of me. I carry on in the world but I am really dead” (17-year-old girl in Thailand). In general there are fewer girls than boys living on the streets—between 3% and 30% depending on the country. This is for several reasons. In many cultures, there is much greater pressure for girls to stay at home than boys. Research shows that girls will put up with abuse at home for longer than boys but that once girls make the decision to leave home, the rupture is more permanent. Girls are also less visible on the streets as they are often forced or lured into brothels. They are also extremely vulnerable to human rights abuses both on the street and when they are arrested. Street boys are also at risk of sexual abuse and exploitation.

Ironically, street children are often at greatest risk of violence from those that are responsible to protect them—the police and other authorities. Police often beat, harass, sexually assault and even torture street children. They may beat children for their money or demand payment for protection, to avoid false charges, or for release from custody. They may seek out girls to demand sex. For many street children, assaults and thefts by the police are a routine part of their lives. Some are even killed by police. Very rarely are those responsible brought to justice.

The majority of articles in the CRC apply to street children because of their extreme poverty and particular vulnerability to the following: violence [Art. 19], disease [Art. 24], discrimination [Art. 2], sexual abuse and exploitation [Art. 34, 32], substance abuse [Art. 33], emotional deprivation [Art. 19, 31], exploitative and harmful child labour [Art. 32], denial of rights within the juvenile justice system [Art. 37, 40], arbitrary execution [Art. 6], torture [Art. 37], lack of access to education [Art. 28, 29] and healthcare [Art. 24] and lack of identity documents [Art. 7].

Last but not least, rape, has given rise to serious psychological and social problems. This diagnosis presented in the preceding report (E/CN.4/1996/68) was confirmed in a recent in-depth survey by three international human rights organizations: Human Rights Watch/Africa, Human Rights Watch Women's Rights Project and the International Federation of Human Rights Leagues. The report published following this survey shows that raped women are ostracized and isolated. They are too embarrassed or ashamed to seek medical assistance. This has led to the widespread practice of illegal abortion. In the circumstances, it is difficult to determine accurately the number of women raped and infected with the AIDS virus. Girl Street child is among the victims of rape.

At the end of October 1996, the number of child prisoners stood at 1,353. Some of them are in prison with their relatives, who are accused of participating in the genocide. Other children are themselves accused of having committed acts of genocide. This group includes children less than 14 years old, some of whom now aged 9, were 7 years old at the time when the acts were committed. Most of those who were less than 14 years old when they participated in the genocide have been transferred to the Gitagata re-education and production centre in Bugesera (Rural Kigali prefecture). They numbered almost 200 on 7

December 1996. This number is expected to increase to 440 shortly, when the construction of dormitories, refectories and classrooms has been completed. The aim of the Centre, which is currently staffed by 14 social workers, is the re-education and social reintegration of these children. Many of them now attend normal classes with children from neighbouring villages. The intention is to return these children to their respective families on completion of the re-education process. However, the Government and other non-governmental organizations involved in aid to child victims of the genocide lack the resources to carry out all their projects.

## **2.4 Social hazards caused by street children**

(Barton and Wamai, 1994) went a head to say that Economic hardships (**Low levels of earnings**) also cause other problems like the failure to send children to school create idleness, which in turn leads to Indiscipline, delinquency and crimes. As for the girls, this can cause child prostitution, early pregnancies and early marriage with unforeseen difficulties like polygamy and wife battery can lead them on the streets.

It's very difficult for them to survive on the streets. They have to be in a group for them to survive. And when they are in a group, they learn tactics like begging. At the same time, they take different kinds of drugs that take away the shyness to beg. So the drugs really helps them to survive on the streets (**News Hour Orphaned by Aids.. May 9, 2002**)

Children have equal status with adults as members of the human family. Children are neither the possessions of parents nor of the state, nor are they mere people-in-the-



making. Governments are morally obliged to recognize the full spectrum of human rights for all children. Using the Convention's definition of children as all human beings being below the age of 18, a large portion indeed of the world's population must be considered. **(UN convention on rights of child).**

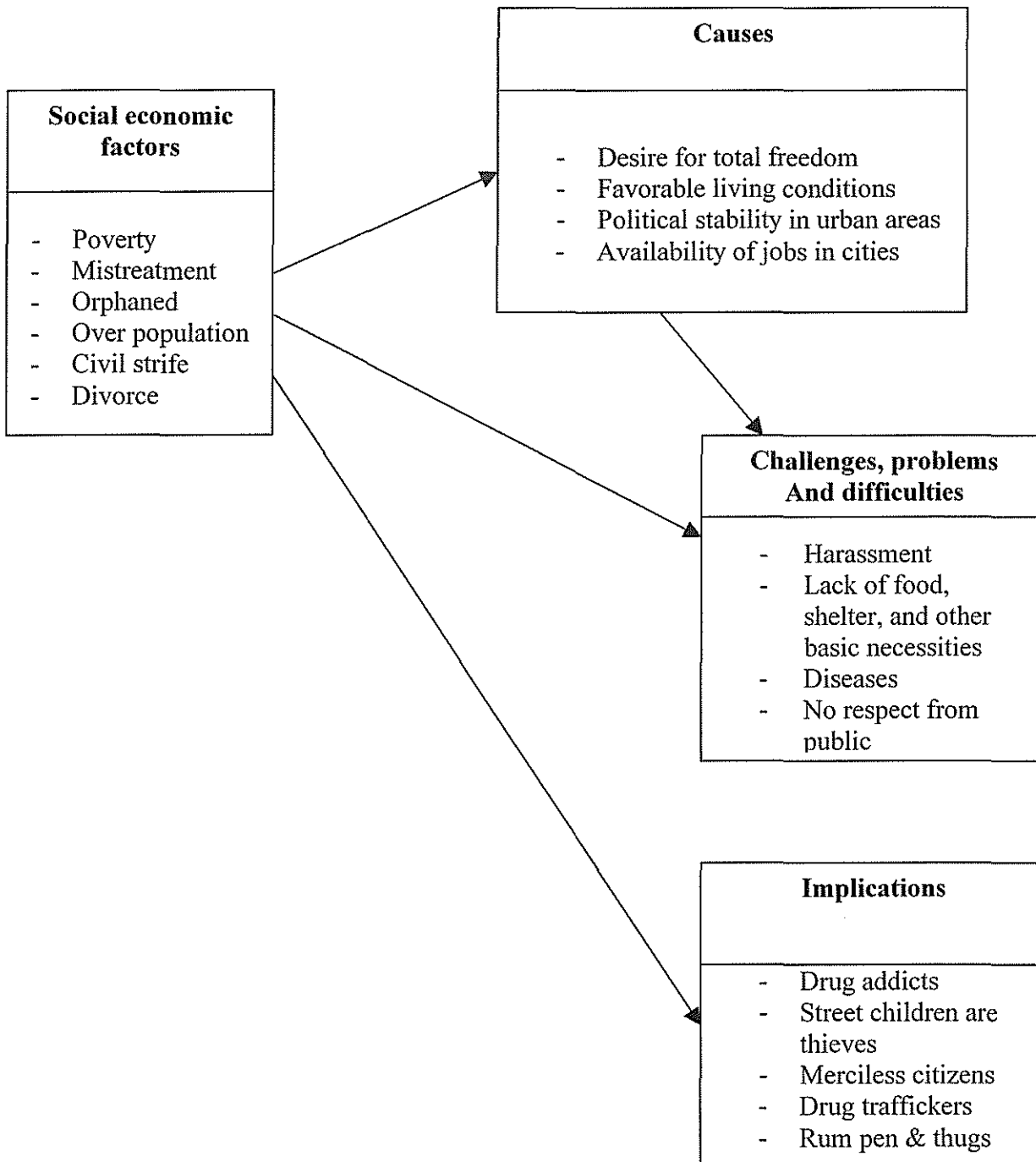
“They think every child who lives or makes a living in the streets is a bad child. I wish that our community and government would love us and guide us and not be ashamed of us.” **[Street child in the Philippines]**

However the previous research could not stop the researcher from continuing with her work because; the geographic location where previous research was conducted from is totally different, and the social, economic, cultural and political prevailing factors are different. Secondly the previous research studies were conducted longtime ago, for instance many UN publications were issued. In 1990s.thefore it is believed by the researcher that, those articles are currently outdated. Thirdly most the studies we are referring to, were conducted outside Rwanda, therefore a new research is required to basically focus on Rwanda.

## 2.5 The conceptual Framework

### 2.5.1 Title: Factors influencing number of street children, challenge, problems,

Difficulties and implications caused on the society.



### 2.5.2 Description of the conceptual framework

The social-economic factors, that exist in areas outside Kigali City, that forces children out of those area are: Rampant poverty, mistreatment, violation of child's rights, increasing number of orphaned children, over population, and civil strives. All the above are push factors. On the receiving end, they're number of factors that pulls these children to get attracted into cities particularly Kigali. These factors include a monger others: Desire for total freedom, favorable living conditions more especially conditions in Maison de la jeunesse, political stability in cities (Kigali), and the availability of employment opportunities in Kigali.

During their stay in on streets, they face a number of problems ranging from social, cultural and economic difficulties. Harassment, lack of food and proper shelter, being disrespected and also being viewed as distresses and woeful people in the society plus diseases are some of the serious problems they face.

The conditions, these street children live in, forces them to behave contrary to the society wants to see them behaving. Many people see them as rum pens thugs, drug addicts, and thieves and fonder of practicing illegal activities like drug trafficking. However, the small groups of people (minority in society) see these street children as good citizens who just lack care, love and protection, from their parents.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction:

This study is both qualitative and quantitative. This very chapter shows how and where the study was conducted from, the population of the study area, sample selection techniques Data collection analysis, problems encountered and solutions.

#### 3.2 Research design:

The research basically focused on the factors that influence number of street children in Kigali city. The problem faced by these street children in their “*maison de la jeunesse*” and the social implication of these “*Rwandarw.ejos*” (Street children on the community at large.)

#### 3.3 The area and population of the study.

The study was conducted in Kigali city the capital of Rwanda, as shown in the map at the back. Kacyiru commune specifically Kacyiru street children center was taken as the cosmopolitan city of Rwanda, there many street children of both sexes although the boys as in other countries greatly out number the girls, Kacyiru orphanage centre or (*maison de la jeunesse*) houses both pre-adolescent with varied backgrounds. The study itself based on street children of every nature. Whether pre-adolescent, boys and girls. Kacyiru itself is located in the Northern part of Kigali City. In fact it's 3kms off Kigali City. It's also in Kigali Prefecture and borders Nyarugenge and Kicukiro communes.

### **3.4 Sample Selection and size**

Kacyiru street children centre was purposely selected.

Simple random sampling was employed to select this very area of Kacyiru drop- in (maison de le jeunesse). Sampling frame consisted of administrators within Kacyiru street children centre, religious leaders and street children themselves or the “guys”, as they prefer to be called.

The following samples were selected purposively, Twenty from the administrators within the “Maison de la jeunesse”, Fifteen from different religious leaders and another fifteen from the guys (street children). The above categories were based on simply because, they were absolutely and potentially knowledgeable about these street children (guys).

### **3.5 Data Collection**

#### **3.5.1 Research Instruments**

The researcher used unstructured methods to collect the data. In depth interviews were conducted with the help of interview guides. This was supplemented by observation especially at night, group discussion that included various religious leaders and street children themselves, (Rwandarw’ejo). Questionnaires were also administered to administration of (maison de la jeunesse) particularly members of the Red Cross Rwanda. Questions were mixed up, that is to say those questions related to causes, problems they meet on those streets and how the public views them. The reason for mixing was not to let the key informant know the researcher’s intention; otherwise they would have withheld some information.

### **3.5.2 Procedure**

The researcher got an introductory letter from Kampala international University. She photocopied and presented a copy to the local authorities of Kacyiru commune where the research was carried out. Local Administrators Later gave the researcher a go ahead with her research. Interview and deliverance of questionnaires, were done by the researcher herself with assistance from Research assistants who were hired from Kigali city.

### **3.5.3 Data analysis**

#### **3.5.4 Qualitative data analysis**

Data was analyzed before, during and after data collection. Tentative themes were identified. The themes are factors influencing the number of street children in Kacyiru street children centre (maison de la jeunesse), problems, challenges and difficulties encountered by these “*Rwandar’ ejo*” (Rwandese of the future) and the implications or hazards these street children (guys) cause to the society they live in . Tentative themes and codes categories were confirmed during data collection. After data collection information of the same codes and categories were assembled together and a report was prepared.

#### **3.5.5 Quantitative data analysis**

The data was edited, coded and tabulated before, during and after leaving the respondents manually to check for uniformity, accuracy, legibility and comprehensibility, frequency tables and percentages were used for easy data analysis.

### **3.7 Limitations of the study**

- i. Dialect was a problem; since the area of study is composed of people of various languages, background and different levels of education. Due to that problem the

researcher hired some research assistants who worked along side her to interpret most of the questions to the respondents.

- ii. Many respondents were suspicious about the intention of the researcher some of them more especially the “guy” thought that, may be the researcher wanted to return them back, where they came from. However the researcher had to work tirelessly day and night to convince the respondents that, this kind of study is academic and also that it is going to help them, the “guys” to improve on their living conditions, because people outside there were able and willing to help the “guys” live a better life but, they lacked sufficient information regarding you “guys”.
- iii. The administrators delayed with the questionnaires, and excuses like we don’t have enough time for your questionnaires were given. However, the researcher showed the patience of the highest order and granted the respondents enough time to accomplish the work of filling the questionnaires successfully and convincingly.
- iv. Transport was another problem, first of all the researcher had to travel all the way from Kampala to Kigali, and then from Kigali Central to Kacyiru street children centre (*maison de la jeunesse*) which is 3 km North of Kigali city. Many visitings were made to that respective destination. However the researcher had to risk her life and use the informed means of transport, like motorbikes, bicycle to reach where she wanted to obtain the information from.
- v. The whole project was too costly to the researcher. The researcher being a student had insufficient resources in terms of money and on top of that some respondents demanded for something (money) in order to feed her with information without wasting her time. However the researcher managed to borrow and even solicit resources from her relatives in order to meet people’s demands and even to be in position to compile this work and actually look as it is now.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This study sets out to assess the factors that influencing number street children in the Prefecture of Kigali, conducted in the commune of Kacyiru (*maison de la jeunesse*) north of Kigali city. The objectives were:

- To explore the causes of street children in the commune of Kacyiru. (*Maison de la jeunesse*).
- To find out the problems, difficulties and challenges faced by these “guy” (street children)
- To know more about the implications or hazards, the “guy” (street children) socially cause to the society they live in and even to the surrounding communities.

The presentation of the findings opens up with a detailed description of social demographic profile of the respondents and thereafter-specific objectives will follow as indicated below.

The social demographic profile of the respondents appears to have some connections with street children, particularly in the commune of Kacyiru Kigali Prefecture. These include sex, age, Education and occupation.



#### 4.1.2 Table 1

**Sex**                      **n = 50**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Male	40	80
Female	10	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

According to the data collected, respondents were both males and females. It was realized that male children dominated the streets and their percentage was 80% while their female counterparts were only 20%. This clearly indicates that conditions in rural areas in Rwanda are worse to the male child than females.

However, the conditions that force children to migrate to cities vary from sex to sex.

For example one of the male street child interviewed said that

*“I joined the (maison de la jeunesse) because I was the only male child at home, the rest are young girls and our parents died in 1994. It is mandatory that a male child cares for the sisters, because they are weak and many people in towns never wanted to give them jobs. So, that is the reason why I ended up on the streets of Kigali. Whatever, I get, I take a proportion of it to my sisters in our village. I do not want them to come in town because our neighbours will steal the land I inherited from my father and in the long run, we shall be landless like the majority of the street children (guys) in this maison de la jeunesse”.*

#### 4.1.3 Table 2

Age		n = 50
Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 5 years	4	8
6 – 14 years	35	70
15 – 25 years	11	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Basing on the information obtained from the “maison de la jeunesse’s administrators, the majority of the “Rwandarw’ejo” (street children) were between 6-14 years of age. Explanation of this could be the fact that, children between 6-14 years are in both puberty and adolescent stages, who feel that they need more of the freedom, than what is granted to them by their parents. As a result of the above factor, they storm streets of Kigali in search for absolute freedom and independence. 22% of the “guys” were between 15-25 years of age. One of the street child aged 19 years of age said

*“I became a “Rwandarw’ejo” on streets of Kigali in 1998, when I was 13 years of age. By then this place was so interesting, in fact I thought that I could be here for the whole of my life. But when I turned 17, I started to feel uncomfortable with this maison de la jeunesse, regarding myself as a grown up person who no longer fits street life more especially at night. To date because of economic difficulties, I spend my daytime on the streets looking for means of survival and sleep at my parent’s home at night. I’m expecting to get a permanent job in future, and that is*

*the time when I will completely leave the maison de la jeunesse, either to stay with my parents or to rent a small house anyway. If God answers my prayers and if everything goes as planned. That period will be a turning point in my life”.*

Those who were between 1 – 5 years were the least in the house (maison de la jeunesse) with only 8%. This is the case because of the total political stability and reunification process, which is already in place, these days very few children who are between 1 – 5 years of age join “maison de la jeunesse” because there is care and love any child, would expect from their parents.

#### 4.1.4 Table 3

Education levels		n = 50
Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No Education at all	28	56
Primary Lower Classes	4	8
Primary upper classes 6 & 7	2	4
Secondary level drop-outs	3	6
Senior 4 graduates	-	
Secondary level 55- 56	-	
Diploma/Certificates	13	
Degree holders	-	
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 shows the Education levels of the street children “guy” housed in maison de la jeunesse in Kacyiru commune. Most of the Rwandarw’ejo as they call themselves had never in life seen a chalkboard before joining this drop- in.

It is expressed in the table above that 56% of these “guys” were absolutely illiterate. 8% had dropped out of school in lower primary classes; only 4% had managed to reach primary six and seven. 6% of them reported that they dropped out in lower secondary school classes specifically senior one and two. 26% of these children had attained Certificates in different skills. One of the religious leaders (Pastor Bazirema Jonathan), in the interviewed, he said that

*“On behalf of the religious leaders, I would like to express my happiness and also thank the Government of Rwanda with assistance from a number of NGOs both homes based and international ones; for the great job they have done and their still doing of educating and equipping future Rwandese with different skills. He continued to say that unlike other African countries Rwanda is acting exemplary to show other countries that street children are not a distress to the society and if educated, cared for and properly protected, they can be developed into future important citizens who will help in the development process of our country. Therefore education is really good for those “Rwandarw’ ejo”. He went a head to say that ‘train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from you. Proverbs 22:6”*

The researcher was not surprised to see that non of thee children had completed senior four, six and non of them had a degree but basing on the researchers observation, seems the government of Rwanda is handling this Education issue among street children seriously and it is hoped that in future even Universities will be put in place purposely for these “Rwandarw’ ejo”.

#### 4.2 Cause of street children into Kacyiru children centre.

**Table 4 Factors influential for the coming of these street children**

n=50

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Genocide	25	50
Poverty	6	12
Mistreatment	9	18
Orphaned	8	16
Good conditions in drop-in centres	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

The highest number/percentage of children who come to the streets of Kigali are victims of Genocide of 1994, which left many children neglected, miserable and helpless. Hence opting to come on the streets of Kigali. This is witnessed by 50% basin on the analyzed data. One of the street children I managed to talk with said that,

*“The war started when I was young, I actually don’t know the years I had by then and since then I never seen my parents any more. I do not know whether they died or they sought refuge else where outside Rwanda. Though conditions are not bad here, I miss my family a lot more especially my older brother I used to play with”*

Mistreatment of children at home was another crucial factor here, 18% of the children reported that, they left their parents' homes because of domestic violence and abuse of child rights more especially by the step mothers and sons of those so called stepmothers.

One street girl aged 14 years said that

*“I used to get serious beatings from my step mother, I would have been staying with my parents. I remember one day, a tragedy happened to me”* (the researcher asked what tragedy it was) she said that, *“I was raped by my step mother’s old son. And when I reported that case to my daddy, he did not take any action towards the rapist, may be because he feared to annoy his wife! That is the time when I left home for fear of being raped every time, this boy would feel like. It was really very painful and I will never forget that pain in my lifetime”*.

Another boy called RAMZANI ZIGAMA aged 13 years of age said that

*“My parents broke up and my father died. The other children and I went to live with my uncle, but he treated us badly he used to shout and beat us. A friend told me that it was better living on the street, because there you could beg for money and food. At night we slept in a drainage ditch. I don’t think about going home. I’m better off here”*.

However, the 16% goes to the orphaned, one of the administrators told me that, *“Many of our goods boys and girls do not have parents. Some even don’t know how their parents used to look like and very few of*

*them ever met with close relatives, that is the life some of these children live in and I'm sure they are now used to the situation and responding very well to our different development programmes. ”*

Nsengayere Assáel, who works with computer department, told the researcher

*“We are street children. We are victims and orphans of HIV/AIDS”.*

The study continued to show that, 12% of these children left their homes because of rampant poverty levels in rural areas. And 4% of them came to the maison de la jeunesse, simply because they wanted to live easy life and conditions in there are more favorable.

*“Once in a while, I go back and visit my parents, they understood my argument, that I joined this place because, it was the only alternative to get me educated and acquire skills to become someone in future. I'm currently learning carpentry and my parents are happy too, because they could not afford to educate me ”*

(Muvunyi Olivia aged 20 years).

**Table 5**

**4.2.1 Challenges, difficulties and problems faced by these children.**

**n=50**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Harassment	15	30
Diseases	10	20
Absence of decent meals	12	24
No family members to help	7	14
Slow learners	2	4
Technical schools not enough	4	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

As Table 5 shows, the majority of the street children together with their administrators approved different forms of harassment as the major problem faced by these street children, this was evidenced by 30%.

One of the children (Twagirinshuti) aged 15 years as I was interviewing him, he said that

*“Our number one enemy is the security personnel, they beat us, confiscate our belongings and on top of that, they usually rape our girl friends I therefore appeal to our government to sensitize these security people, that we are also human beings like them who need care and love rather than beatings.”*

Further more the table continues to reveal out that 24% of the respondents supported the problem of lack of adequate descent meals in the camp of these children.



20% of the respondents, according to tables indicated that diseases seriously affect these street children. The researcher observed that, though there is a big hospital in Kacyiru drop-in, it was not adequate stocked with drugs.

More to the above, 14 % of the street children admitted that, the immediate problem to them is the lack of family members to help them during the times of trouble.

8% of our key informants went a head to see that, Technical schools for street children are not enough to cater for the ever-increasing number of street children in this place. The least number of respondents, that is to say 4 % according to table 5 supported the problem of being slow learners.

The researcher observed that, because many of these children use drugs and other intoxications. Their brains are now damaged, hence making them academic failures.

**Table 6**

**4.2.2 Future aspirations/hopes of these children**

**n=50**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Not sure	17	34
Sportsman/ Woman	5	10
Social worker	11	22
Red cross officer	7	14
Instructor in technical schools	4	8
Farmer	2	4
Business person	1	2
Future will tell	3	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

When the study was done, it found out that, there is a significant link between street children and the future of Rwanda. 34% of the street children were not sure of what they will be in the future.

It was also said by some children, that, they wanted to be social workers like those who are looking after them. The percentage that supported the above future aspiration was 22%.

10% of the children in Kacyiru home of the street children wanted to be sports men and sports women in the future. 14% of them wanted to be Red Cross officers. And the Researcher thinks that, what inspired these children to choose the above option, was the fact that Red Cross Rwanda officers live a better life in this very place and they are also very fundamental in assisting these children's camp.

More to the above, 8 % of the street children desired to be instructors of the technical schools. 4% of them eagerly wanted to become farmers in the future. 2 % wanted to be business people and 6 % of them left careers to be determined by the future.

The research managed to interview the Director of Kacyiru drop-in Mr. Charles Byusa and he said that

*“Children, when they come here, they are exposed to Education, and it is up to these kids to decide what they want to do and what they think is good. A good number of them are in Education, and some of them are learning how to build and others learn various skills”.*

4:2:3 Table 7

**Implications of street children on the society**

n=50

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
Prostitution	2	4
Cocaine smokers	10	20
Rude brutal and ruthless	3	6
Good people like other citizens	28	56
Criminals	3	6
Beggars	4	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

According to the data collected in table 7, shows that both street children and heir administrators expressed their views, that street children are good people like any other citizens, who puts up off the streets by 56%. When the researcher interviewed one of the religious leaders in this Maison de la jeunesse, called pastor Nyamaswa Ephron. He said that

*“It appears, that street children are not, as generally assumed, an controlled and uncontrollable bunch of children roaming the streets without objectives and targets. Their actually organised and operating in groups that ensures them a certain amount of protection and security. Their income is being shared among themselves (group) and they develop the sense of freedom and*

*liberty, that gives them a certain confidence within their milieu and environment ”.*

Further more, table 7 continues to show that 20% of the respondents both street children, administrators and religious leaders, agreed that, street children are cocaine smokers and they are really a threat to the society. 8% supported the fact that street children are beggars. A casual work in this very place, said that *“a country with many beggars on streets cannot be self sustained and in long run such a country cannot develop. Therefore to me these beggars are a very serious stumbling block to our countries development”*

6%of the street children and their administrators agreed with the researcher that, these children are rude, ruthless and brutal. However this was like, it is the harsh Environment that forces us to behave the way, we do. The above concept tied up with those thought that, these kids are criminals by the same percentage as shown above.

Lastly as far as table 7 is concerned the least percentage of 4% supported the fact that, street children practice prostitution, which under minds the reputation of our country.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter shows the summary of the findings, conclusions and policy recommendations to be adopted by the Government of Rwanda and NGOs, if they're to control street children problem. Basing on realities collected from the street children, suggested areas for further research are also indicated in this chapter.

#### 5.2 Summary of the findings

The study was carried out to investigate the factors that influence the number street children in Kigali city, implication of these street children to the society and the challenges, problems or difficulties faced by these street children. Data was collected from 50 (fifty) respondents in Kacyiru commune. The prefecture (district) of Kigali. The prefecture of Kigali is in central Rwanda.

In this chapter, the researcher summarizes and makes conclusions of the findings with particular attention to the sub sections under which data was analysed in chapter four.

##### 5.2.1 Sex

The overwhelming majority of the respondents reported that, male street children migrated more to cities than their female counterparts.

### **5.2.2 Age**

70% of the street children are between 6-14 years of age. Followed by those who are between 15-25 years were the least in this children centre.

### **5.2.3 Street children's Education levels**

It was revealed that the majority of the street children of about 56% were not educated at all. 26% of them had certificates from various skill acquired from this very Maison de la jeunesse. 6% had dropped out in lower classes of secondary school, while 4% had completed primary seven.

### **5.2.4 Factors that influence the number of street children on streets**

On the factor of causes, it was revealed that, most of the street children were separated from their parents by the genocide of 1994. While 18% of the children left their parent's homes because of mistreatment and violation of child rights. 16% of them were on streets because, they're orphaned, and their parent's lives were claimed away by HIV/AIDS virus. And 12% of the street children could not tolerate the rampant poverty, which characterized their families. Lastly 4% were attracted by the good living conditions in the children centre.

### **5.2.5 Challenges, problems and difficulties**

3% of the respondents (children) inclusive admitted that harassment of various types leads the list problems for these street children. 24% said that inability to have decent meals is a serious problem for these kids. While 20% viewed diseases as a challenge to these street children. 14% revealed that not having family members at all makes them

live a difficult life without any body to rescue them during times of danger. 8% wanted technical schools for street children to be increased in number and only 4% had a problem of forgetting easily what, they have learnt.

#### **5.2.6 Future aspirations/hopes of these street children**

34% of the children, the majority were not sure of what they would wish to be in future. 22% admired to be social workers, 14% were dying to be officers of the Red Cross. 10% preferred to be sports men and women, while 8% dreamed to become technical school instructors.6% submitted their lives to future to determine on their behalf, 4% wanted to be farmers and only 2% ever liked to become business personnel.

#### **Implications of the street children on the society**

56% revealed that street children are good people, very organized and their sense human also strong .20% of the respondents, reported that, street children are good at smoking cocaine and their capable of doing anything, because cocaine makes them more determined and more ready for anything. Let it be good or bad. 8% admitted that these children are beggars while two aspects tied up at 6 %. And only 4% said that street children engineer prostitution.

#### **5.3 Conclusions.**

Right from the beginning of this study, the researcher was interested in knowing the factors that influences the number of street children in Kigali center. Several objectives and research questions were formulated and later on tested and conclusions, which could be derived from the study, are hence presented.

The study revealed out that the majority of the street children were attracted into Kigali, because of the genocide that took place in 1994, many of these children's parents were killed and others went in exile.

Domestic violence and violation of child rights plus the rampant poverty levels in rural families forces children to leave their families.

A number of problems faced by these street children were also realized, with harassment topping the very long list of problems.

Here a lot is to be done to stop the public particularly security people from beating, raping and forcing these street children to offer them forced labor. In other words the public because of their status should not exploit street children.

Lastly, street children are of no harm to this country though many people see them as thieves, drug smokers rude and brutal, that is the only way for them to survive, if they are to avoid attacks from public, they must be rude and brutal. And again if they are to contain their emotions and psychological torture, they opt for drugs in order to be relieved from all the above.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Planning for street children would be or includes making a multiple of choices or options available for action to help in tackling the problem of street children in Kigali.

Therefore, the recommendations are the options/alternatives that the researcher feels are viable in solving the problem of street children.



The first option is that of prevention of street children from coming to Kigali. This can be done through improving the lives of rural people.

Also, prevention can be attained through traditionally extended family bounds, which have been broken, can be renewed through sensitization of these families to show them how important these bounds are to the children who have lost their parents/guardians in particular and the communities in general.

Furthermore, the government of Rwanda should educate people about the dangers of domestic violence and violation of child rights. To enable children stay at their parents places peacefully without them, complaining about mistreatment subjected to them by their so called stepmothers.

Security personnel and other factions of people should be advised not to torture / harass these street children. And even the public should be informed that, these children are not woeful or distress in society, as they are viewed.

There is also the need for massive sensitization of both the communities and the policy makers to change their negative perceptions towards street children. It is high time, to realize that these are children who need love, comfort, care and support.

The problems they face which force them to change their behaviors for survival, are not of their own making but just beyond their control. It is high time the professionals and the community stop looking at these persons as just useless and dangerous, which is totally wrong. These are very useful persons if helped can develop into important people.

The government is also advised to increase on the number of street children centres, schools, recreational facilities and vocational skill training centres. This will help many street children to acquire various skill, which will enable them contribute to our country's development process.

People of Rwanda should be urged to abstain or adopt the so-called safe sex, in order to reduce on the number of those who die of AIDS and leave behind children who later on become street children. Our research has revealed that being orphaned is one of the factors that drive kids to join street life

## **5.5 AREAS RECOMMENDED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

This research was carried out in the commune Kacyiru, Kigali préfecture (district).

Therefore the similar research needs to be carried out in other communes..

To see whether street children there, are also influenced by the same factors as they are revealed in the current research.

Areas recommended for further research include: Nyarugenge and Kicukiro communes respectively.

All the mentioned areas are urban based and it is very important to find out whether there is a co-relation between different communes. This can only be realized by carrying out a fresh research in those respective areas.

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STREET CHILDREN**

1. Sex .....
2. Age .....
3. Education .....
4. Religion .....
- 5 Home préfecture (district).....

**Courses**

1. Are your parents alive?

a) Yes    b) No

b) If No who is looking after you?

.....

2. What do your parents do?

.....

3. Where do your parents live? Were you staying with them before?

.....

4. Then how comes you deserted your parents and resorted to staying on the streets

.....

5. Do you have any sisters or brothers?

i) Yes.....

ii) No.....

6. If yes, did you live with them in the same house?

.....

7. When did you come to the streets?

.....

.....

**Challenges, differences and hazards faced by these children**

8. What problems do you or your companions face on the streets?

.....

9. Have you ever slept with a man or a woman before?

1) Yes..... 2) .....

10. If yes, were you forced or you did it willingly?

.....  
.....

11. What do you hope to do in future?

.....

12. Who protects you in times of trouble?

What are some of the most difficult times you ever faced during your stay on streets of Kigali? .....

.....

13. What have been some of your happiest moments in this place?

.....

**B) Questions for administration, the key informants**

1. For how long have you been working with street children?

.....

2. How do you find them?

.....

3. What attracts these “Rwandarw’ejo” as you call them here?

.....

4. What do you think are the implications of these street children?

.....

5. Are they a social hazard to the rest of the good citizens in the area?

i) Yes .....

ii) No .....

6. What do you recommend, should these street children be forcefully pushed off the streets of Kigali.

Yes ..... No .....

7. If No, what should be done to them? Should the government put in place a policy of killing them at night, as it was the case in Brazil one time?

.....

.....

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