

PROFORMA FOR SUBMISSION OF MSW PROJECT PROPOSAL FOR
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**Title of the project: Assessment on Major Causes and Psychosocial
Challenges of Children on the Streets: the Case of Children on Streets in
Maseru, Lesotho**

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1.1 Background of the study

Children are the most precious wealth of a nation. Children are the most crucial period in a person's life because growth and development attain maximum level during this period (IGNOU, P34). For every nation or country, the future is in the hands of children and the governments have to work hard to keep the foundations solid. The foundation is in the children and street children are another part of the foundation that the governments should invest a lot in. Researches suggests that there are a multitude of complex factors which causes children to leave their homes; including poverty, unemployment, physical and sexual violence and broken families (Tufali, 2006).

This study is important as it will high light reasons why children leave their homes and live in the streets. It will bring light to the society and the government to accept the children and treat them as vulnerable members of the society that need help. The children on the streets face social problems such as poverty and literacy, discrimination and lack of accessible resources and violent environment. (Lesotho National Conference on Vulnerable Children 2014)

Children on the streets have a right to grow up being children without worry, distress and depression, living healthy lives in healthy environment. In the streets they are exposed to a lot of stress, depression and too much trauma from bullies in the streets. Some of these children experience physical, emotional abuse in the streets or even from their home and sexual exploitation. (UN, Committee on the Rights of the Child. 2003)

This study will be an eye opener to government during yearly budget for the country to take into consideration catering for the street children. The government can have a national strategy for the street children. Having a national strategy means street children become priority for a government and

that should result in budget being allocated to supporting street children and realising their rights. (International Day for Street Children,2015).

In Maseru however, some of the children do not choose to be on the streets but get abandoned to die on the streets. This is due to the HIV/AIDS having left these children as orphans. For instance in Nazareth Hapholoane and other districts of Lesotho very young adults are being abandoned on the streets. Relatives are either incapable of looking after the children or do not want to be overburdened by someone's HIV-positive child who is going to die anyway (Makoa, 2006).

Lesotho has one of the highest HIV/AIDS infected rates in the world at about 30 to 35 percent. As many as 14, 000 children have been orphaned by the disease. The orphans must then provide for themselves and younger siblings. These children often turn to the streets where they are vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking (The Protection Project – Lesotho 2009).

Moreover,there are many reasons why children in Lesotho leave their homes and be on the streets, such reasons include the push and pull factors. These include the lack of supervision in the households, poor relationship between children and their caregivers, family chaos, boredom and abuse (Sepheo, 2015). Children in Maseru are on the streets to earn money for themselves and support their families, to find shelter and to escape from family problems including rejection (Pokane, 2015).

Street children is any boy or girl to whom the street in any broad sense of the word is or has become his or her habitual abode or source of livelihood and who is inadequately protected, supervised or directed by responsible adults (United Nations, 2008). UNICEF categorises such children in two ways, firstly, children on the streets are those engaged in some kind of activity during the day but return to their family home at night (UNICEF, 2008). The children of the street

actually survive entirely on the street, or outside of the normal family life. These children are below the ages of 18 according to the United Nations definition. In Maseru there are such children who are of the streets or whom the streets is their home and the children who are on the streets and return home at evening time.

According to the passage of time the concepts of childhood has altered a lot. It is believed that a child should not have any worries, should not have any compulsion to work, and should be a mixture of happiness, wonder, angst and resilience. It is generally the time of enjoying, playing, learning, socializing, exploring and worrying in a world without much adult interference, aside from parents (Child, Wikipedia, 2012). But this definition of childhood is not universally followed, hence emerging various problems. Lesotho as one of the countries highly infected by the HIV/AIDS, there is no time for child headed families to enjoy, play and learn like other children as they have to take care of their siblings and end up on the streets to support their family.

Street children are faced with a lot of problems in the streets and such problems affect them emotionally and psychologically. One of the problems they are faced with is physical and sexual abuse in the form of abduction, beatings, rape, sodomy and murder (Hyder, 2007). Some of the children choose to become commercial sex workers due to the need for necessities such as food, clothing and accommodation while others are forced into trade after being kidnapped, (Muhmmad and Zafar, 2006). This is clearly seen on the streets of Maseru in the evenings as young girls flock the streets to make money as sex workers to earn a living.

Street children are also often beaten by policemen, arrested and harassed, children are therefore always at risk from the police (Amal, 2004). The street children are also faced by health problems and lack of medical care as they do

not have any one to take care of when they are on the streets, for example KICK4LIFE took upon itself to take one boy for HIV/AIDS treatment after discovering that he was very ill from the disease but they not have any one to take care of.

1.2 Statement of the problem

For a child to end up on the streets there might be several open and hidden causes from individual to the societal. I have found that there is no research on context specific to causes and psychosocial challenges faced by streets children at the study area. So my focus of doing this research is to carry out the context specific causes and psychosocial challenges faced by the street children in Maseru, Lesotho. When a child reaches in the street, he has to face several problems being what to eat, where to live, whom to live with, what to wear etc. These children when they are in the streets they suffer from psychological challenges such as emotional pain from abuse, rejection from the society, discrimination, behavioural and educational (Pokane 2014). In this research all these factors will be brought out so that it will be easy for counsellors, social workers and policy makers to control existing problems.

1.3 Objectives of the study

1.3.1 The general objective of this study

1.3.1.1 The general objective of the study is to identify the major causes and psychosocial challenges of street children on the streets to suggest means of reduction of the causes and challenges.

1.3.2 The specific objectives of the study

1.3.2.1 To identify the socio-economic causes behind being on the street to strategically tackle these challenges of the children.

1.3.2.2 To identify the psychosocial challenges such as emotional abuse, shelter, food and clothes the street children face in the streets to reduce these challenges.

1.3.2.3 To generate recommendations for the governmental, non-governmental and community based organizations as well as the family to pay attention to reduce the children suffering on the streets.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions are the purpose of the study and they are as follows;

1.4.1 What are the major causes of children being on the streets of Maseru?

1.4.2 What are the psychological challenges that are faced by street children of Maseru?

1.4.3 What are major social challenges that the children face in the streets?

1.4.4 What are the means of reduction of the major causes and challenges of street children at the study area?

1.5 Significance of the study

The importance of this research is to inform the government about the challenges the street children are faced within the streets and what causes them to be on the streets. This will help the government to see where it needs to work things well to improve and what things need to be changed for the betterment of the children's lives.

Furthermore, findings from this research will be useful to the local NGOs, policy makers and community in providing information about the increasing challenges the street children are faced within the streets of Maseru.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the study

The study will be focused on the psychosocial challenges the street children are faced with in Maseru Lesotho. Street children are common in almost all urban areas of Ethiopia and there a number projects working on helping street children. Due to time and resources the researcher focuses on the street children in the capital city of Lesotho being Maseru. The researcher's aim is to be with the boys in the organisation called KICK4LIFE football club where street children meet every Thursday of the week for motivational classes and football game. The researcher will spent time with them engaging in the different activities that the KICK4LIFE football club offers. For this research the study centre is very near to the work place of the researcher which will make it easy for observation and being with the boys most of the time.

1.6 Research Design and methodology

1.6.1 Study Design

The study will be conducted in the capital city of Lesotho being Maseru at Pitso ground bus station and KICK4LIFE football club as the easy way of getting more children. These areas are chosen mainly because they are places where more street children can be found as they gather for their different activities. Another reason for choosing these areas is that, they are in the busy areas where street children work to earn a living, therefore both time and money will be saved.

1.6.2 Study Area Description



Maseru's geography

Maseru is the capital of Lesotho and has a population of about 228,000. It is the administrative centre as well as the transportation hub of the country. The Sotho language is the official language here although English is also quite prevalent, (Census, 2006)

Maseru lies on the left bank of the River Caledon along the Northwest border of the country. It is connected to the South African town of Ladybrand by a bridge across the river. The city spreads over an area of 138sq km and is at the height of 1,600m. Maseru is located at the foothills of Maloti Mountains in a shallow valley shadowed by the Hlabeng-Sa-Likhama.

1.7 Universe of the study

The study will be focused on the major causes and psychosocial challenges of the street children are faced within the Maseru streets. Street children are common in almost all urban areas of Lesotho and there are a number of projects working on helping street children. Due to time and resources the researcher will focus on the children living in the streets of Maseru. Maseru in 2013 had about 120 street children (Sepheo, 2015).

1.8 Sampling and sampling methods

In this research the population has an equal chance of being part of the sample. Simple random sampling is the purest and the most straightforward probability sampling strategy; it is also the most popular method for choosing a sample among population for a wide range of purposes. (Gravetter et al, 2011, p.146) In simple random sampling each member of population is equally likely to be chosen as part of the sample. Children between the ages of 10 and 18 are the only ones to be included in the sample.

According to Babbie (2001), the population for a study is usually a group of people from whom the researcher wants to draw conclusions. The population of this study is a sample of 30 children staying in the streets of Maseru. The composition of the study population both female and male migrants from different backgrounds. Snowball sampling is used to identify the respondents. Snowball sampling is a sampling procedure whereby one respondent is identified and he will tell an interviewer who else should be asked.

1.9 Data Collection : Tools and Procedures

Various tools of data collection will be employed for the study since social reality is always complex and multi-faceted. Interview schedule/ Questionnaire, Observation guide, group discussion and document analysis will be used.

1.9.1 Interview Schedule /Questionnaire

The questionnaire will be prepared to collect information from the respondents in the streets, where the questions will be clearly outlined in order and clarity. This will be done in a form of an interview. Qualitative interview is a type of framework in which the practices and standards be not only recorded but also achieved, challenged and as well as reinforced (Oakley, 1998).

1.9.2 Observation Guide

Observation as the way of collecting primary data can be defined as a purposeful, systematic and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction or phenomenon as it takes place (Babbie, 2004). Here, in this research, the researcher will work as a participant observer where she will be involved in the activities as active observer watching and listening to the activities from which she will be drawing the conclusion.

1.9.2 Focus group discussion

Focus group discussion will allow the researcher to study people in a more natural conversation pattern than typically occurs in a one to one interview. At the collective level focus group discussion can reveal shared understanding or common views, (Harding, 2013). This will be done through bringing about 10 of the street children together in a group and be asked questions as a group. The participants will be the children between the ages of 10 to 18 so as to get as much information as possible from different age experiences.

1.9.4 Case study

Case study is one of the major strategies to collect data and information for the study. According to) a case study is about a person, a group, or situation that has been studied over time. In this case the case study will study the behaviour of the group not the behaviour of an individual in the group, (Baskarada, 2014). Data that are relevant to the case will be gathered and organized in terms of the case which aims at providing an opportunity for the intensive analysis of many specific details that are often overlooked by other methods.

1.9.5 Document Analysis

Document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning around an assessment

topic. Analysing documents incorporates coding content into themes similar to how focus group or interview transcripts are analysed.

1.10 Data Analysis

The data that will be collected from the study site will be analyzed accordingly. Different forms of tabulation like pie chart, bar diagram, line chart etc, are to be used for the clarification of the data collected. Likewise statistical tool percentage will be used for the processing of qualitative data into tables and percentage so as to make the interpretation systematic. Also, to make the study more comprehensive, descriptive qualitative research design will be used. Data will be collected according to the interview guide, then it will be tabulated and according to these tabulations, explanation of all variants will be drawn. The data collected will be analyzed through the use of discourse analysis.

Discourse analysis is an important development in qualitative research, starting as it does from the assumption that discourse at all levels, including people's accounts are an important resources. Discourse analysis is an approach that looks at the language and read beyond what has been communicated. That is, it is the way of viewing the issues based on one's own knowledge. It is concerned with the interrelationship between language and society and dialogue properties of everyday. Discourse analysis has overwhelmingly been done using interview data, particularly that strand of discourse work that developed within (Potter, 2012).

1.11 Chapterization

The study will comprise of five chapters. Chapter one shall deal with Background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitation of the study. Chapter two shall focus on review of related literature. Chapter three shall comprise of

study design and methodology. Chapter four shall present the data interpretation and analysis. The last chapter five shall focus on Conclusions and Suggestions.

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