

**'STREETISM' OR LIVING IN THE STREET, AN EMERGING  
PHENOMENON AS A WAY OF LIFE IN DEVELOPING  
COUNTRIES, A CASE STUDY OF CHILDREN LIVING ON THE  
STREETS OF GHANA.**

by

Christine A. N. Tettegah  
University of Nottingham

Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

February 2012

## **ABSTRACT**

There is an alarming increasing number of children living either partially or permanently on the streets of African countries. This research has been undertaken with children who live their lives more permanently on the streets of Accra the capital city of Ghana. The study is focused on their survival strategies and investigates the detail of their day to day lives on the street. In addition, this thesis illustrates the home experiences of these Street children prior to their coming onto the street. These experiences include poverty, neglect and abuse. On the street, the life of the children is full of the struggle for survival and is characterised by the complexities of the Street Children's vulnerability as well as their resilience. The study reveals interactions and negotiations that go on between Street Children and their community, their peers and other people they come across in their settings, for their mental, emotional and physical wellbeing.

**For my husband Kwadzo Charles Tettegah**

## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, I thank God Almighty for His faithfulness, protection, guidance and providence for my life and through this PhD journey.

I am extremely grateful to my Supervisors -- Professor Olive Stevenson, Dr. Amal Kabesh Treacher and Professor Jill Pascal. In the whole process of doing this research, I have been much in debt to you. Your knowledge and experience was invaluable. I thank you for directing, guiding and supervising me from the beginning to the end. Professor Olive Stevenson, I thank you for your decision to keep supervising me even when you retired from active work. Dr. Amal Kabesh Treacher, I am grateful that you kept in touch, reading through my work and editing it from far away Cairo on Sabbatical. Professor Jill Pascal, thanks so much for agreeing to supervise me. God bless you all.

Thanks to the School of Sociology and Social Policy and also the University of Nottingham for accepting me to do the PhD.

Thank you my Internal Assessor Professor Jill Pascall for your interest in my research which encouraged me after each of our meetings.

Thanks Alison Haigh for being there to answer all my questions and for making it possible for information to reach me.

I thank the Graduate School Building Experience and Skills Travel Scholarships (BESTS) for awarding me a scholarship which provided me



with valuable experience of working with a public sector - Department of Children under the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (DOC/MOWAC) in Ghana. I am very grateful.

A special mention must go to all the Street Children who participated in my research by talking freely to me about their experiences and answering my questions. Thank you Street Children.

Due thanks must also go to officials of the Department of Children under the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (DOC/MOWAC), Department of Social Welfare (DSW), Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS), Street Girl Aid (SGA) and AZUSA for assisting me during my fieldwork and making time out of their busy schedules to answer my questions. I thank you Department of Children, for accepting me to do a placement with you.

To my fellow postgraduates Lynn McCormack, John Durkirk, Yan Li, Abida Malik, Kate Legge, Sarah Buckman, Sue Brown, Melanie Birkhead, James Roe, Pamela Castro Mardones, Melanie Narayanasamy and Blue Joyce thank you all for being my colleague officers and for your support in various ways.

I am thankful to my family and friends both home and abroad for being the source of my inspiration and encouragement during the entire period of this research.

Last but not the least, I thank you so much my husband Kwadzo Charles Tettegah for sponsoring the entire PhD program. I thank you for your all round support. God richly bless you.

Thanks to all who remembered me in your prayers. God bless you.

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page No</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1 Contextual Overview of Ghana since Independence</b>	<b>5</b>
1. 1 Introduction	5
1. 2 Family Systems in Ghana	5
1. 2. 1 Matrilineal Systems	7
1. 2. 2 Patrilineal Systems	8
1. 2. 3 Double descent or double unilineal	11
1. 2. 4 Bilateral system	11
1. 2. 5 Gender issues embedded in the family systems	13
1. 3 Changes in the Ghanaian family	15
1. 4 Education and its effects on Ghanaian families	19
1. 5 The impact of HIV/AIDS epidemic on Ghanaian families	25
1. 6 Livelihood	31
1. 6. 1 Employment/Access to economic livelihoods	31
1. 7 Unemployment in Ghana	35
1. 8 Conclusion	38

<b>Chapter 2 Literature Review: Previous Research and Theory</b>	<b>39</b>
2. 1 Introduction	39
2. 2 The development and survival of children in adverse situations	39
2. 2. 1 Adolescent Sexuality	39
2. 2. 2 Vulnerability and Resilience	45
2. 4. The Context: Studies of Street Children in Ghana	58
2.5. Conclusion	60
<b>Chapter 3 Methodology</b>	<b>61</b>
3. 1 Introduction	61
3. 2 How I came to be interested	61
3. 3 Theoretical approach	68
3. 4 Methodological approach	68
3. 4. 1 Qualitative research	68
3. 5 Research processes	70
3. 5. 1 Access	70
3. 5. 2 Gaining access to the settings of Street Children	70
3. 6 Sampling	72
3. 6. 1 Sampling the settings of Street Children	73
3. 6. 2 Sampling individual children or cases	74
3. 6. 3 Approaching the organisations	77
3. 7 Methods/Techniques	80
3. 7. 1 Observation	81

3. 7. 2 Interviews	88
3. 8 Methods of data Analysis	94
3. 8. 1 Recording and transcribing	94
3. 8. 2 Thematic analysis	98
3. 9 Consent and Confidentiality	104
3. 9. 1 Informed consent	104
3. 9. 2 Confidentiality and Privacy	105
3. 10 Conclusions	107
<b>Chapter 4 Home Circumstances and Accommodation on the street</b>	<b>108</b>
4. 1 Introduction	108
4. 2 Home Circumstances of Street Children	109
4. 2. 1 Poverty or Economic difficulties/hardship	109
4. 2. 2 Neglectful and Abusive Families	115
4. 3 Living places for Street Children	120
4. 3. 1 Accommodation on the street	120
4. 4. Conclusion	133
<b>Chapter 5 Day to Day Life on the Streets</b>	<b>134</b>
5. 1 Introduction	134
5. 2. Poverty and the struggle for survival	134
5. 2. 1 Trying to make money on the street	135
5. 2. 2 Usage of money on the street	148

5. 3. What they say about life on the street	154
5. 4. Conclusion	159
<b>Chapter 6 Vulnerability</b>	<b>160</b>
6. 1 Introduction	160
6. 2 Beatings & Bullying	166
6. 3 Gender and Health Related Vulnerabilities	172
6. 4 Weather	178
6. 5 Theft	184
6. 6 Conclusion	187
<b>Chapter 7 Resilience</b>	<b>190</b>
7. 1 Introduction	190
7. 2 Friendship Networks	193
7. 2. 1 Identifying, associating and negotiations with peer Street Children	193
7. 2. 2 Associating and negotiations with older peers	201
7. 3 The Environment whether It Is Protective or Adverse?	205
7. 3. 1 Interactions and negotiations with adults	205
7. 3. 2 Associating and negotiations with organisations and religious institutions	212
7. 4 Social Competence And Autonomy	217
7. 5 Religious Activities	219

7. 6 Conclusion	222
<b>Chapter 8 Concluding Reflections</b>	<b>226</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>255</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>265</b>

<b>Appendix 1</b>	Interview guide with Street Children	273
<b>Appendix 2</b>	A guide for observation	279
Appendix 3	A guide for organisations	281
<b>Appendix 4a</b>	An introductory letter to the field	282
<b>Appendix 4b</b>	An introductory letter to the field	283
<b>Appendix 5a</b>	Ghana Map Political Regions	284
<b>Appendix 5b</b>	Map of Greater Accra Region	285
<b>Appendix 5c</b>	Map of Study Areas	286

**Abbreviations**

**FW.....Field Work**

**FW1SC2.....Fieldwork one, Street Child two**

**(FW2SC4:10 & 11)..... Fieldwork two, Street Child four  
pages 10 & 11**



## **Introduction**

The overarching research question in my thesis is:

How, and in what ways, do Street Children try to survive and cope with their life on the streets?

Related questions that I will explore include:

1. What earlier family experiences have been factors in bringing Street Children to the streets?
2. What is the nature of their day to day life?
3. What kinds of relationships do they form on the streets as individuals, in groups and within various social structures?
4. What opportunities do their lives offer and what difficulties do they encounter?
5. How do the children perceive their lives on the streets?
6. What are their hopes for the future?

### **Definitions of Street Children**

The problem of Street Children (SC) appears to be getting out of the control of Governments and the general public in African countries, particularly in Ghana. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Ghana and Africa in general, are trying to help these children. Most governments have set up

departments and ministries dealing with children and the young people yet it appears the efforts to deal with the problem are proving ineffective. Estimates, not necessarily reliable, indicate that there may be 25million Street Children in Asia and an estimated 10million in Africa (UNICEF, 1998). Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS) told me in an interview in 2008 that they carried out census of the Street Children in Accra and the number was 22,000.

The term Street Children has been a difficult one to define for several reasons. One of these reasons has to do with the construction of typology. Definitions keep on changing from time to time depending upon the varied and ever changing situations of Street Children and categories into which people place them.

An early consensual definition of Street Children, formulated in 1983 by the Inter-NGO Programme for Street Youth, stated: 'Street Children are those for whom the street (in the widest sense of the word: i. e, unoccupied dwellings, wastelands, etc) more than their family has become their real home, a situation in which there is no protection, supervision, or direction from responsible adults' (Enew, 1994, p. 15; Panter-Brick, 2002). This means every child who has made the street his/her home could be called a Street Child.

Street Children are defined by the United Nations (UN) as children and young people for whom the street has become their home and/or source of livelihood, and who are inadequately protected or supervised by responsible adults (cited in Volpi, 2002). This is a very broad definition. To describe who Street Children are, the UN went on to say that it includes homeless children who live on the street. It also includes children and young people who earn their livelihood by working on the streets. It states, it does not include children who live on the street with their families. I have my reservations about this. If a child is a year old and is on the street with a 15 year old mother and a 17 year old father, is that family (child, mother and father) not street children?

The Council of Europe adopted a definition used by a Danish research team: 'Street Children are Children under eighteen who, for longer or shorter periods, live in a street milieu. They are children who live wandering from place to place and who have their peer groups and contacts in the street. Officially these children may have as their address their parents' home or an institution of social welfare. Most significantly, they have few or no contacts with those adults, parents, school, child welfare institutions, social services, with a duty towards them' (Altanis and Goddard 2004). This definition describes a Street Child in a more advanced world best. Most Street Children in developing countries come from poor parental backgrounds. Their parents do not have their own addresses let alone the children using their parents' addresses.

They are also defined, as those who have no permanent home; abandoned by or having no family alive; moving from friend to friend; or living in abandoned buildings. Some abandoned children may visit their family, and even spend nights with them, but mostly remain on the streets for various reasons including poverty, overcrowding and sexual and/or physical abuse at home (Duyan, 2005).

In fact, it is clear that there remains some uncertainty about the definition of Street Children and that there may have been a tendency to try to make this more uniform than it in fact is. For example, children may spend part of their time with their parents as they spend part in shelters (Altanis and Goddard, 2004).

For the purpose of this study therefore, Street Children may be defined as children less than 18 years who use the street as their permanent home more than their family environment. They are children who are mostly provided for, protected, supervised and directed by themselves and their peers on the streets. They are sometimes supported by some adults and organisations they find in their settings.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Contextual Overview of Ghana since Independence**

#### **1.1. Introduction**

This chapter focuses on providing an overall context of some of the important issues that bear on Ghana following independence. Above all, it outlines the effects of the socio-political and economic changes on Ghanaian family structures.

As stated in the introduction to the thesis, the overarching research question in my thesis is how, and in what ways, Street Children try to survive and cope with their life on the street. It is important however to provide contextual overview of Ghana in order to throw some light on the country's history, family tradition, livelihoods of the Ghanaian and the general socio-politico-economic changes that have taken place since independence. This chapter will therefore provide an overall context and meaning to the issues that bear on Street Children.

#### **1.2. Family Systems in Ghana**

The traditional Ghanaian family is an intimate domestic group made up of persons related to one another by bonds of blood or legal ties. The family is a crowd (Akan proverb). It has been a very resilient social unit that has survived and adapted through time. The patterns of behaviour associated with relatives in a society and/or a family, together with the principles governing

their behaviour are usually referred to as the kinship systems (UNDP, 2007, p. 60). They are also referred to as descent groups or family systems. According to UNDP 2007 report, Ghana has three kinship systems; the matrilineal, the patrilineal and the double descent system (UNDP, 2007, p. 60). The bilateral system is added to the three by UNICEF 2009 report (UNICEF, 2009, p. 2). Matrilineal and the patrilineal family systems are the two major ones. Members of a society and their children belong to one or the other of the above groups. It is worth pointing out that external family relations are deeply rooted and involve each of the above family systems (Takyi & Broughton, 2006). Ghanaian lineages are often extended families, and usually include grandparents and the siblings of the mother or father and their children. The extended family system is a system of shared rights and obligations (Nukunya 1992 p. 47; Wusu & Isiugo-Abanihe, 2003). They are extremely important in the social context and provide each child with a strong sense of identity, confirmed through naming ceremonies for infants (UNICEF, 2009, p. 2). Every member of the family tried his/her best to correct a child (Fortes, 1971). The upbringing and general welfare of the child was the responsibility of every adult (grandparents, aunts, uncles, big sisters, brothers, and cousins) in the family. Any adult of the extended family could reward a child for a good behaviour, correct a child when he/she goes wrong or punish a child for deviating from the norms of the society.

Some children depend more on their father's family, (patrilineal) while others are tied to their mother's (matrilineal) for their welfare. This has implications

for the lives of children in such diverse area as inheritance rights, nutrition and upbringing (UNICEF, 2009, p. 2).

In modern times, conflicts and marginalization have resulted from the operation of these systems of inheritance, especially in situations where strict adherence deprives other siblings of claiming part of the property of deceased parents (UNDP, 2007, p. 60).

#### 1.2.1. Matrilineal Systems

The matrilineal family system is found among the Akan; Asante, Akyem, Akwapim, Kwahu, Ahanta and Fante in Ghana (UNICEF, 2009, p. 2). Children in this system owe their main allegiance to their mother's brothers (UNICEF, 2009, p. 4). The children may live either with their biological parents in a patrilocal residence or with their mother and her siblings in a matrilineal residence (UNICEF, 2009, p. 4).

Succession and inheritance pass through the female line; tracing descent, inheriting wealth or taking up office in the traditional authority structure, must be done through the mother's lineage (UNDP, 2007 p. 60; UNICEF, 2009 p. 2). A mother's brother has legal rights over the child and an Akan child is traditionally expected to inherit from his mother's brother in recognition of this role (UNICEF, 2009, p. 4). However, as stated in UNDP 2007 report, 'matrilineal succession to property has been the cause of much disunity and

litigation. Extended family members, in many instances, exclude the spouses and children from benefiting from the property of the deceased. Among the matrilineal Akan, for example, it is quite common for relatives of a deceased man to deprive the widow of all the property that they jointly acquired while the man was alive. It is often presumed that property and other assets of a nuclear family are acquired exclusively by the man and should, therefore, be given to his nephews and other relatives of his extended family. Women may therefore be deprived of such property and may even be driven away from their matrimonial homes by relatives of their deceased husbands, thus contributing further to the impoverishment of such women in the communities' (UNDP, 2007, p. 64).

### 1.2.2. Patrilineal Systems

The Patrilineal is essentially the opposite of the matrilineal. This is found among tribes in the northern parts of Ghana including the Mole-Dagbani, Tallensi, and among the Ga, Ewe, Ga-Adangbes, Krobos and the Lartehs in the southern part of Ghana (UNICEF, 2009, p. 2).

Children belong to their father's descent. They are named after their grandfathers and are inducted into a long line of patrilineal relationships during a naming or what is called 'outdooring' ceremony (UNICEF, 2009, p. 2). The child's well-being and welfare are governed by rules dictated by the father's family that determine where the child will reside and with whom, how



he or she will be socialised, and subsequent issues of puberty, marriage, inheritance, succession, and even death and burial (UNICEF, 2009, p. 2). In some patrilineal households for example among the Dangme, Ewe and Tallensi, children generally reside with both parents, often in extended family households (UNICEF, 2009, p. 3). Also among the Kassena-Nankana of Upper East Region, children and parents and several generations of kin live together in compounds walled by interconnecting huts. Children are therefore guaranteed meals and contact with both parents, and have many adults or older siblings to look after them (Awedoba, 2002; UNICEF 2009 p. 3).

Arrangements are made in other patrilineal households for the welfare of the child. Children born into the duo-local residential system live with their mother until the age of 6. Boys are then transferred to their father's residence where they undergo socialisation to prepare them for their future occupation usually fishing, farming, carpentry or any occupation of the father (UNICEF, 2009, p. 3). This implies that the girls are left with their mothers. When boys move, the regularity of meals that characterised life in their mother's home is disrupted because most fathers are fishermen. They leave their homes early and return late at night, often leaving their sons hungry. In some cases, girls also have little or no contact with their fathers creating some parental vacuum (UNICEF, 2009, p. 3).

Succession and inheritance pass through the male line and entitlement to property and social position is claimed through the lineage of one's biological

father (UNDP, 2007 p. 118, UNICEF, 2009 p. 2). Chiefly authority is generally ascribed to a patriarchal lineage and thus control over use and land rights is exercised by men (UNDP, 2007 p. 118). The son (usually the first) is an automatic heir to his father's property and is first in line to assume his father's political office in his society (UNDP, 2007, p. 60). This arrangement is characteristic mainly of Ewe speaking peoples of southern Ghana and the ethnic groups in the western and northern parts of Ghana (UNDP, 2007, p. 60). There are however some variations among various patrilineal systems. For instance while both succession and inheritance pass from father to sons among the Dangme, among the Anlo Ewe of Volta Region, male and female children inherit their father's property and can succeed to any office, sons taking precedence over daughters (UNICEF, 2009, p. 3). In some patrilineal cultures for example among the Krobos, if the deceased was a monogamist, his eldest son inherits the property. In doing so, he accepts responsibility for his younger brothers, who will benefit from use of the land or other property. If the deceased was in a polygynous union, the property is shared equally among the eldest sons of all the wives (UNICEF, 2009, p. 3). In some patrilineal societies, both status and property go first to the brothers of the deceased, and then to the children after the brother's death (UNICEF, 2009, p. 3). In others, girls are excluded from inheriting their father's property (UNICEF, 2009, p. 3).

The above variations in relation to succession and inheritances in the context of Ghana's traditional system mean that some children are left without adequate care and resources when their father dies. Such children must begin

to work early to support their mothers, siblings or themselves, and often migrate to cities or neighbouring countries in search of work (UNICEF, 2009, p. 3).

#### 1.2.3. Double descent or double unilineal

The double descent or double unilineal is practiced by the Fanti-speaking peoples in the Central Region, the Efutu, Lo-Da-gaaba and Mo (UNDP, 2007 p. 60, UNICEF, 2009 p. 2). A child belongs simultaneously to the mother's matrilineal descent group and the father's patrilineal descent group (UNICEF, 2009, p. 4). Children receive affection and support primarily from the maternal kin but look to their father's lineage for property and investments for development (UNICEF, 2009, p. 4). A child can inherit property from both lineages of his parents (UNDP, 2007, p. 60). Movable property is transmitted matrilineally, while immovable property (land, houses and farms) is transmitted through the patrilineage (UNICEF, 2009, p. 4).

#### 1.2.4. Bilateral system

With the Bilateral system, genealogical connection form the basis of the descent group and individuals choose their descent system rather than being born into a predetermined system; found among the Gonja, Dagomba and Mamprusi (UNICEF, 2009, p. 2). A child's ties are not limited to maternal or paternal relations. They have numerous possibilities of kinship on both the maternal and the paternal side (UNICEF, 2009, p. 4). Residence can either be

with paternal or maternal kin (UNICEF, 2009, p. 4). Succession and inheritance can therefore come from both sides (UNICEF, 2009, p. 4).

The above family systems and the kinship ties are sustained by marriage. When a couple is joined in marriage, their respective lineages and families become affinal relatives and the children of the union are kin to all relatives from both sides of his/her parental background (Nukunya, 2003, p. 41). Both monogamous (a man marrying one woman) and polygamous (a man marrying more than one wife) exist in Ghana. 'Polygamy is perceived as attesting to the wealth and power of men who can acquire more than one wife. In such marriages, some of the wives are usually neglected and are, therefore, unable to support their children's formal education. Lack of quality formal education usually results in missed opportunities to participate meaningfully in social life' (UNDP, 2007, p. 64).

Certain customary requirements were needed for one to enter into a marriage; puberty rites where applicable, ability to pursue adult economic activities to support a family etc (Nukunya, 2003, p. 41). 'In some ethnic groups, such as the Frafra and Mamprusi, in northern Ghana, cultural practices such as child betrothal, forced marriages and the abduction of girls contribute to inequitable opportunities including the deprivation of access to meaningful livelihoods opportunities. This situation contributes to social exclusion' (UNDP, 2007, p. 64).

Forced marriage - - 'is a system of marriage under which the decision as to whom to marry is determined by others - usually older family members who do not consult nor seek the consent of the girl being married. This practice often causes rift and cleavages in families and sometimes leads to the girls running away from home, thereby becoming excluded from essential parental care and from education. Child betrothal - - is when an under-age female child is given in for marriage to a much older man without her consent and/or knowledge. In many cases, the girls refuse to marry the men and subsequently run away from home, thereby being excluded from essential and parental care necessary for preparing them for a productive and functional life in their societies' (UNDP, 2007, p. 64).

#### 1.2.5. Gender issues embedded in the above family systems

Under the customary law system the rights of access of women to productive resources are to a large extent regulated by and dependent on men (UNDP, 2007, p. 118). Traditional gender patterns in the division of labour place land clearance in the hands of men, thus giving them priority in the original possession and acquisition of land (UNDP, 2007, p. 119). This fundamental role played by men in the acquisition and control of land under customary law, therefore, gives them great pre-eminence over land ownership in Ghana (UNDP, 2007, p. 118).

Takyi & Broughton (2006) observe that non-matrilineal (patrilineal) women tend to rely more on their husbands and families for support and destiny, (Takyi & Broughton 2006 p. 119 ). But even under the matrilineal kinship

system where traditionally women are presumed to be the heads of families, in practice men are made to play this role to the exclusion of the women from whom the lineage is traced (UNDP, 2007, p. 118).

Also, discrimination on the basis of sex may deny women access to land, even in matrilineal societies since it is male family-heads that control lands. Some segments of society may be excluded from livelihood sources because of biases in favour of male children. The social system readily favours transfer of property to men (UNDP, 2007, p. 81). Even though in principle, all subjects of the stool or lineage, regardless of sex, have an inherent right to access to the lands held by the stool or family head in trust, in practice, women do not enjoy equal access to and control over stool or family land (UNDP, 2007, p. 119).

In a traditional Ghanaian household it is common to have two or more generations living together in one compound or under one roof. Korboe (2000) indicates that 'traditionally, the lineage resided together in a compact homestead and operated as an economic unit.' (Korboe, 2000, p. 3). The elderly persons took care of their children and relatives during their youthful days, and they expected the young ones to reciprocate by caring for them during their old age (UNDP, 2007, p. 74). The elderly in Ghana also perform numerous social and religious duties and take part in community deliberation on behalf of members of the household. These reciprocal relations between the elderly and the children reinforce family solidarity (Fortes 1971; Apt

1997). All these promote family member inclusiveness (UNDP, 2007, p. 74). 'It takes a village to raise a child'. For instance among the Ewes, an undisciplined child is considered to be a disgrace to the kin group (Badasu, 2004, p. 26; UNICEF 2009 p. 5).

### **1.3. Changes in the Ghanaian family**

At the present time, the extended family system and traditional welfare system have been weakened as a result of migration, urbanization, nucleation of families, demographic changes, the modern capitalist economy and the accompanying changes in the value system of many Ghanaians (Korboe, 2000 p. 3, Van der Geest, 2002; UNDP, 2007 p. 74, UNICEF, 2009 p. 6).

Changes have occurred in inheritance patterns. For example, the practice where women may be deprived of the properties of their deceased husbands and may even be driven away from their matrimonial homes by relatives of their deceased husbands as stated above is declining as there is conflict of loyalties. Korboe submits that 'there is now tension as obligations and expectations begin to be reappraised. The contemporary Ghanaian man not only has responsibilities as husband and father to his conjugal family on the one hand, but also obligations as son, brother and uncle' (Korboe, 2000, p. 3).

The government has passed a number of laws that seek to restructure the traditions of inheritances. The laws recognize the nuclear family as the prime economic unit and thus seek to cater more adequately for the otherwise excluded spouse and children (UNDP, 2007, p. 64). These laws include; Intestate Succession Act, 1985 (PNDC Law 111) which applies automatically in cases where people die leaving assets without a will, the Customary Marriage and Divorce (Registration Law), the Administration of Estate (Amendment) Law, and the Head of family (Accountability) Law (UNDP, 2007, p. 64). Some fathers in the matrilineal family systems have learnt, with the help of these laws and legal arrangements, to will substantial part of their properties to their children before they die. Any misunderstanding over a will needs to be addressed in the formal law courts rather than the traditional courts presided over by tribal chiefs and clan/lineage heads. However, as Korboe posits, due to expensive legal costs and the delays in dealing with court cases in Ghana, all except the most determined litigants are deterred from seeking redress in these formal courtrooms. Most people would seek justice through the traditional domestic level, leaving only few cases reaching statutory law courts, therefore, it is customary law that takes precedence in this instances (Korboe, 2000, p. 10).

There are also changes in the relationship of the youth and their aged relatives. According to the UNDP 2007 report, increasing migration of the youth to the towns has negative social impact on the elderly. The elderly can no longer perform their social roles that they traditionally performed and have



increasingly become isolated. They have as a result lost their sense of self-worth. The younger generation is no longer able economically to care for their elderly relatives and parents, even if they want to due to rising cost of living. The strong bonds existing among extended family members have become extremely weakened as a result of the spatial separation of family members due to migration (Apt, 1991; UNDP, 2007 p. 74).

A positive aspect of the change is that traditional barriers to women's acquisition of land are slowly beginning to break down (UNDP, 2007, p. 118). The commoditization of land and labour has created opportunities for women to purchase private assets without having to depend on their lineage positions (UNDP, 2007, p. 118). This is however possible for women who have jobs and have the means.

Changes have occurred in relation to the roles of couples especially in respect to the role of women. Women in the past were considered merely fit to be housewives and not producers. In contemporary Ghana, however, women work and earn their own income, similar to men. Economic survey of Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) 'shows that 8.9 million out of the estimated 12.3 million people aged 15-64 years were economically active in 2006. Of this number, 51.7 percent were females' (GSS, 2010, p. 47). Women now assume the role of providing income as well as other resources for their households and notably for their children. Women now feature prominently not only

within the family, but also on the national scene. Even though sometimes the number of women among their male counterparts is negligible. For example unpublished document of the list of Ministers of state in Ghana from the Ministry of information in April, 2011 show that out of 28 Ministers of state, 7 are females and out of the 30 deputy Ministers of state, 4 are females. Out of 10 Regional Ministers, we have 1 as female and 3 females are deputies.

To maintain their homes, they have to work hard. In Ghana, women dominate the distributive system, as they both collect and convey most of the food stuff and other necessities for the household (Robertson, 1984). With the advent of education, general educational levels of women are rising and expectations are changing (Assimeng, 1999). Yet still women lag behind in literacy. 'A little over 6 out of every 10 men, but only 4 out of every 10 women are literate' (GLSS, 2008, p. iv). My understanding is that more women than before are undertaking training and are in skilled jobs and earn money for themselves and the family. However, only a handful of women find themselves in skilled jobs which can earn them adequate salary similar to their male counterparts (Network for Women's Right in Ghana (NETRIGHT, 2009). Average hourly earnings in main job, by occupation and sex of employed population 15 years or older, 2005/2006 shows that female Legislators/managers earn GH¢1.12 hourly while their male counterparts earn GH¢1.98 hourly. Female professionals earn GH¢ 0.99 hourly while males earn GH¢1.52 hourly. With Technicians and associate professionals females earn GH¢ 0.67 hourly while the male earn GH¢ 0.88 hourly. In the following occupations, females earn

more than their male counterparts; clerks – females GH¢0.75, and males GH¢0.58, craft and related trades – females GH¢0.70, males GH¢0.59 and security personnel females GH¢1.21 and males GH¢0.46 (GSS, 2010, p. 49). Frequently, there is little choice but to gain work that is of low quality (low-skilled jobs with no security or protection), or to work in the market place, or part-time, or work that is home-based; or indeed, all of the above. Nevertheless, the participation of women in wage earning jobs outside their homes has its own consequences on caring for and bringing up children. No longer are grandmothers around to take care of children while the mothers go to work.

#### **1.4. Education and its effects on Ghanaian families**

Education has brought changes to the lifestyle of Ghanaians. The way of life of some of the new Ghanaian elite is quite different from the traditional way of Ghanaians. Caldwell, in the 1960s argued that the world of these elite families was an urban one characterized by some of the fathers working in offices in urban centres and their children frequently aspire to work in offices as well (Caldwell, 1968, p. 52). In contemporary Ghana, UNDP (2007) report, Ghana, indicates that a higher proportion of people who have higher levels of formal education or skills relocate into urban areas to enhance their chances of employment since public and private employers locate enterprises in urban areas (UNDP, 2007, p. 89).

In the wake of the shifts in the economy, migration and modernization arose the new desire for educational attainment (Assimeng, 1999). The children who were once treated as labourers on farms and in fishing ventures were now to be sent to school 'when educational explosion of the literate kind, began more seriously in 1951' (Assimeng, 1999, p. 128). School fees are high and parents have to search for money to pay school fees and buy educational materials. As observed by Assimeng, 'the extended family system is becoming increasingly costly and incongruous with economic demands of the day and families have to invest in the educational and skill acquisition of their children' (Assimeng, 1999, p. 97).

From the earliest period of the country's independence, a high premium has been placed upon the possession of formal education for effective access into the 'emergent' modern component of the social and economic structure. Secondary schools probably constituted the most crucial selecting and sorting agency for new-type occupational roles in Ghana in the early years of self-government and independence. Through the doors of these secondary schools has passed an overwhelming proportion of the potential Ghanaian elite. Foster (1965), stated that the expansion of secondary schools system has involved not only an overall growth in the number of schools but also led to the internal differentiation of the system -- of secondary schools. Foster observed that this differentiation has created a dichotomy in the system with the principal consequence being that a minority of secondary schools within the system operate increasingly as feeder institutions to higher education through

the medium of the sixth forms, while a larger number of schools serve as an end point to formal education for their pupils (Foster, 1965).

This differentiation has excluded some children from attaining higher education. This started before the birth of Ghana and continued into independence leading to the creation of the class structure in Ghana. Foster rightly suggested in the 1960s that formal education has been a contributing factor, though not the only factor, leading to the emergence of 'nascent' class structures in West Africa. The class structure is no more an emerging one in Ghana as Foster viewed in the 1960s but is now fully apparent. Students from particular secondary schools gain admission into sixth forms more easily than others. A large scale empirical survey of Ghanaian secondary schools which was carried out in 1961 showed that Government and assisted schools which were designated as high-status institutions were far larger than schools of other types and they provided the greatest number of candidates for the West African General School Certificate Examination (WAGSCE) given at the end of the five-year secondary course.

The plight of students who found themselves in the low-status schools is obvious. A satisfactory pass in the WAGSCE was and is still overwhelmingly important to an individual student's educational and occupational future. Most of these schools have up to now maintained their status. Today's parents who were students in the high-status schools try as much as they can to link their children to these schools. So the cycle continues. Some parents are aware of

this and this may be among the reasons why some of them may like to migrate to the urban areas to work to allow their children gain their education in the cities. It takes great effort for a child who does not have any of his/her parents or relations to find his/her way into such high status secondary schools. This is not to say merit does not count. A child who studies very hard and qualifies does gain admission to good schools. The Computerised School Selection and Placement System (CSSPS) is now being used. Other factors however affect a child's studies. It is just not enough to say that children are admitted on merits. Factors that help them to qualify are also important.

Foster speculated in the 1960s that schools can reinforce class boundaries, and increase differentiation within an educational system, which may become part of the indirect process of class formation. There are differential rates of ethnic access into Ghanaian schools (Foster, 1965). Inequalities in ethnic access to education in Ghana have been historically very marked and politically significant. This is especially true of the Northern parts of the country where historical factors tended to provide distinctively less favourable opportunities. The development of facilities for, and the growth of interest in, education has been uneven and the story has been one of slow penetration northwards from the seaboard (Foster, 1965). (The use of 'tribe' describes distinctive groups within Ghana. Ghanaian society is made up of a complex mixture of different tribes, coming from different parts of the country. The word 'ethnic', widely used in the West, is not generally used in Ghana to

describe Ghanaians. But in Ghana different tribes may have very different traditions and customs).

In contemporary Ghana disparities still exist between the northern and the southern sectors of the country and between the rural and the urban areas. The national average for access to secondary school is 43.3 percent, but it is worse for the northern regions which average 15.5 percent (UNDP, 2007, p. 29). Apart from the north-south disparities, there exist differences between rural and urban areas. Access to secondary education is higher in urban areas (62.6%) than in rural areas (28.8%). Moreover, the quality of education in rural areas is poorer (UNDP, 2007, p. 29). Factors contributing to this include poor infrastructure and poverty, coupled with the tendency for more qualified secondary teachers to refuse posting to rural areas (UNDP, 2007, p. 29-30). Children who attend under-resourced Junior High Schools (JHS) are forced to end their formal education at the age of 14 or 15. Thus hundreds of thousands of adolescents have no option but to seek unskilled employment in the informal sector or work in family enterprises (UNICEF, 2009, p. 88-89). Thus, with respect to education and related personal self-fulfilment and advancement, northern Ghana in particular and also the remote rural areas are increasingly excluded from the mainstream (UNDP, 2007, p. 30).

As part of Government's effort to retain children in schools in the entire country, people in the Northern sector of the country were offered free education in order to catch up with people in the southern sector. In addition,

the constitutional requirement of free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) allow every child in Ghana benefit from the most appropriate system of formal basic education, but the Ghana Living Standard Survey 5 (GLSS 5) shows that Ghana has not attained the 100% gross enrolment rate envisaged from the fCUBE (GSS, 2005) (UNDP, 2007, p. 93). The Capitation Grant was also launched in 2004 starting with 53 deprived districts. This scheme removed levies which have hitherto inhibited access and retention in schools, and in 2006 the Government also introduced the School Feeding Programme to promote access, retention and quality of education. Many children returned to school and remained in school (UNDP, 2007, p. 93).

However, quite a number of children in Ghana are still not in school. Even though primary school net enrolment rose over the years: from 52 per cent in 1990 to 55.6 in 2003, 59.1 per cent in 2004/05, 68.8 per cent in 2005/06 to 78.6 per cent in 2006/07, about 777,000 children between the ages of 6 and 11 were out of school (UNICEF 2009 p. 86). Of the estimated 3.7 million children in Ghana aged between 6 and 11 years, about 800,000 of them (or almost 22 percent), are not in school, and some of these children not in school are engaged in hazardous forms of labour that threaten their health and well being (UNICEF, 2009, p. xvii).

After six years primary education, pupils enter the Junior High School (JHS). At the end of three years in the JHS, students take the BECE (Basic Education Certificate Examination). Results since the late 1990s indicate that less than



two thirds of the candidates pass the test nationwide. According to the country programme action plan of Unicef, Ghana, 'in 2003/04, only 61 per cent of entrants attained an aggregate grade that qualified them to enter second cycle education' (UNICEF, 2006-2010). These results are very important to a child's future. BECE scores determine whether or not a student will progress to Senior High School (SHS). The transition between JHS and SHS is a major bottleneck in the education system. In general, only about 35 per cent – 40 per cent of students completing JHS go on to secondary school, due in part to the reduced number of places available, and in part to the fact that the policy of free education does not extend beyond the first nine years of basic education (UNICEF, 2009, p. 89). Some of the children who are not able to continue their education may find themselves on the streets looking for money. UNICEF (2009) Ghana report indicates that most Street Children have never attended, or have dropped out of school and many come from broken homes in which parents have divorced or a parent has died (UNICEF, 2009, p. 119). GSS, (2003) show that over 70% of today's Street Children are also illiterate (GSS, 2003, UNICEF, 2009, p. 11)).

### **1.5. The impact of HIV/AIDS epidemic on Ghanaian families**

Even though Ghana's HIV prevalence is low compared to other African countries, it has nevertheless disturbed family life. Changes have also occurred in many Ghanaian families as a result of the HIV/AIDS epidemic which, was first identified in the country in March 1986 (UNDP, 2007, p. 38). According to the 2010 HIV Sentinel Survey (HSS) Report, the estimated

number of persons living with HIV and AIDS in Ghana in 2009 was 267,069, made up of 154,612 females and 112,457 males, giving a female: male ratio at 1.4:1. In the same year, there were 25,666 children living with HIV and an estimated 3,354 were newly infected and annual AIDS deaths were 20,313 (NACP,GHS, 2011, p. 13). Median prevalence of the disease from 2000 – 2010 has been that of increasing and decreasing trend. First the prevalence of the disease has increased steadily from 2000-2003 and then decreased in 2004. The median prevalence of the disease in 2000 was 2.3%, 2.9% in 2001, 3.4% in 2002 and 3.6% in 2003 and then decreased to 3.1% in 2004 and 2.7% in 2005. It increased again to 3.2% in 2006 and thereafter declined for two consecutive years recording 2.6% in 2007 and 2.2% in 2008. There is an increase in the median prevalence of the disease again in 2009; 2.9%. 'This has become a major health, social and economic issue in accounting for over 40 percent of outpatient visits, 12 percent of all deaths and resulting in about 140,000 children orphaned' (UNDP, 2007, p. 38). The year 2010 records the lowest prevalence figure of 2.0% (NACP,GHS, 2011, p. 31).

Differences exist in HIV prevalence between urban and rural areas, and between the age groups. Ghana's epidemic has been characterised by a relatively higher prevalence in urban sites compared to rural sites (NACP,GHS, 2011, p. 11). For example, it was found in the year 2006 that urban areas recorded higher prevalence rate than the rural areas, (UNDP, 2007, p. 38). Again in the year 2010, the median HIV prevalence was still higher in the urban areas than in the rural areas; 2.4% and 1.6% respectively but the gap

between them however narrowed from about 39% in 2009 to 33% in 2010 (NACP,GHS, 2011, p. 11 & 31). With the variations in the different age groups of the population, the 30-34 and 35-39 year groups recorded the highest prevalence levels (2.8 percent), followed by the 45-49 year group (2.7 percent). According to HIV Sentinel Survey (HSS) 2010 report, 'age group prevalence in the urban areas was higher than in rural areas for all age groups but for the 15-19 (1.1%) and 25-29 (2.8%) age groups, just the same as in the urban areas. These younger generations have a higher tendency to migrate to urban areas, increasing their concentration in those areas (UNDP, 2007, p. 38). Conversely, the rural areas have higher HIV/AIDS prevalence in the older age groups. (39 – 49 years) (UNDP, 2007, p. 38). The 45-49 age group recorded the highest urban prevalence of 5.9 percent. This high prevalence among the older age groups may be because more interventions are targeted at the younger reproductive and sexual age groups with almost 30% reduction in the prevalence in the young population (NACP,GHS, 2011, p. 51). The lowest prevalence of 1.1 percent for urban sites was in the 15-19 age group and the highest rural prevalence of 2.8 percent was in the age group 25-29. Prevalence for the age group 15-24, a proxy for new infections were 1.1 percent and 1.9 percent in rural and urban sites respectively' (NACP,GHS, 2011, p. 29).

The impact on households, families and the nation is devastating. It has huge repercussions for development in the whole of Africa. HIV/AIDS in Ghana is

not just a health issue but crucially is also a social developmental and economic issue. The very fabric of Ghanaian society can be destroyed because of the intense burden of suffering among the families affected. In cases of prolonged illness, livelihood is lost and all family members have to bear the burden of caring and providing for the individuals involved. Businesses and schools suffer when the most productive sector of society aged between fifteen and forty- nine are lost to HIV/AIDS related illnesses.

In the rural areas of Africa such as rural Ghana, lack of knowledge about the mode of transmission of the HIV/AIDS and inadequate health facilities are contributing to the speed with which the disease is spreading. Needy young people who are not educated or who drop out of school (and are therefore ignorant of STDs and the mechanics of HIV/AIDS infection) very often engage in unprotected sex to make a living. UNICEF Ghana country report 2009 indicate that over the years, widespread poverty, rural-urban migration, rapid population growth and HIV/AIDS have undermined traditional family life and placed more and more children at risk (UNICEF, 2009, p. xvii). In relation to other African countries, research conducted by Evans in Tanzania suggested that poverty, HIV/AIDS, gender inequalities and barriers to education, are all interlinked and severely constrain the ability of young people from poor communities to mitigate the risks and impact of HIV/AIDS (Evans, 2002). Drawing from the above research, it is clear that factors such as barriers to education may be a hindrance to the prevention of the disease by sections of the population of Ghana. The Ghana Living Standards Survey Report of the Fifth Round (2008) shows that in Ghana, nearly four percent of people have

not heard of HIV/AIDS, sixteen percent of the Ghanaian population do not know that a healthy looking person can have the HIV virus that causes AIDS (GLSS, 2008, p. 30). The 2008 GDHS (Ghana Demographic and Health Survey) indicate that only one in four women (25 percent) and one in three men (33 percent) in Ghana have comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS prevention and transmission (GSS, 2009, p. 240). Comprehensive knowledge about AIDS is slightly higher among young people. Results from GDHS 2008, show that 28 percent of young women and 34 percent of young men have comprehensive knowledge of AIDS (GSS, 2009, p. 263). In addition, some people claim HIV is a spiritual problem caused by wizards and witches, or that it is an ancient disease and so they seek help from traditional healers and spiritual leaders who abound in the rural areas. As noted in GDHS 2008, education and wealth status are directly related to common misconceptions about AIDS and comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS prevention and transmission (GSS, 2009, p. 243).

Before the HIV/AIDS pandemic, it was not a common thing for the aged and little children to care for the sick, as traditionally, the aged are cared for by their adult children, and little ones are cared for by their parents. However, during the era of HIV/AIDS, the aged, especially old women who themselves need care are caring for their middle aged children who are affected by the disease. Apart from the fact that these old people do not have the strength to care for sick people, they are also not economically active and savings are used. Those who were already poor may become poorer. The thought of their

children being affected by this deadly disease, the stigmatization, coupled with lack of money to care for their sick children, kill some of these old people even before their sick children die. Putting it in the African context, Evan's research in Tanzania shows that the epidemic is exacerbating the chronic poverty, social marginalization, and gender inequalities experienced by poor households (Evans, 2005). Life is difficult and grim for all involved in this epidemic.

As stated above many children have also become carers because their parents are affected by HIV/AIDS. Children in affected areas are caring for their sick parents and their younger siblings without adequate support perhaps due to the stigmatization associated with it. As stated in Ghana Demographic Health Survey Report, stigma and discrimination against persons living with HIV is quite high, coupled with misconceptions about the disease (GDHS, 2008 p. 237). In support of the above, UNDP (2007) also reports that 'in Ghana, the disease is associated with stigma, repression, discrimination and exclusion, as individuals affected (or believed to be affected) by HIV have been rejected by their families, their loved ones and their communities' (UNDP, 2007, p. 132). It therefore makes it difficult for a family member to care for the affected relatives. Children may have no other choice than to take care of their affected parents with all the associated difficulties. Evans' study in Tanzania relates to and supports the above situation in Ghana. Evans (2005) states that children from AIDS-affected households are considered particularly "at risk" since they must cope with the AIDS stigma, the prolonged terminal

illness of one or both parents, siblings, and other relatives bereavement and meeting their own survival needs as orphans (Evans, 2005).

## **1.6. Livelihood**

In indigenous rural areas families were predominantly living in a subsistence economy. 'The role of the family was to obtain means of subsistence from farming, fishing, or redistributive trading' (Assimeng, 1999, p. 96). Most families were only able to sustain themselves with food and some basic necessities of life. There was communal living where family members helped each other. 'Subsistence economies provide clarity for status and roles in the family: the father is the breadwinner, the mother a housewife who nevertheless had specific role in the economic activity of the family. Children were the major source of labour' and parents often had more children in order to ensure labour power (Assimeng, 1999, p. 96-97). Assimeng (1999) observed that collectively, it was assumed that the family was a production and consumption unit. The traditional family structures were inseparable from the economic system and both were subject to rapid change.

### **1.6.1. Employment/Access to economic livelihoods**

Livelihood opportunities in Ghana are found in both the public and private sectors. Food crop farming offers the largest livelihood opportunities to the poor (UNDP, 2007, p. 89). Ghana has 50.3 percent of its economically active population engaged in farming and about 75 percent are small holders at subsistence level (GSS, 2005). Twenty five (25) percent are directly involved

in the production of cash (industrial) crops mainly for exports. These include cocoa, cotton, coffee, oil palm, tobacco leaves, cola, rubber and cashew (UNDP, 2007, p. 99-100). Many economically active people access livelihood through informal livelihoods activities including petty trading of various items such as of fruits, vegetables, hawking of food items, dressmaking, hairdressing, batik making and agriculture (UNDP, 2007, p. 89).

The public and private formal sectors employ a lower percentage of the labour force, with the bulk of their labour being highly skilled and urban-based because the public and private employers locate enterprises in urban areas. A higher proportion of people who have higher levels of formal education or skills relocate into urban areas to enhance their chances of employment. High level manpower in rural and deprived areas becomes excluded in accessing desired livelihoods (UNDP, 2007, p. 89). The public and the private formal sectors employ about 7.1 percent and 6.9 percent respectively while as much as 43.0 are in the informal sector, mainly agriculture. Non agricultural livelihoods engage 26. 2 percent (UNDP, 2007, p. 89).

The informal sector has more women because a greater number of women are self-employed due to their relative low level of education and skills and lack of economic resources. Women porters (Kayayee) who migrate mostly from northern Ghana to Accra are a case in point. Most of the young girls and women come to Accra and engage in petty trading for their livelihood. They thus exclude themselves from further formal education, traditional skill



training such as (basket weaving) and agro-based (such as shea butter processing) industry in which they may have to engage if they had stayed in the north (UNDP, 2007, p. 89). There is a continual increase in the urban population on account of rural-urban migration mostly by children and young people selling and hawking on streets and unauthorized places. These economically active groups are totally excluded from skilled enterprises as they do not have any vocational or technical skills. In recent times the livelihoods of such people have been affected by the authorities prohibiting them from hawking and selling at unapproved areas, thus further excluding them from accessing their usual economic livelihoods (UNDP, 2007, p. 89). Those who have acquired some skills own their private enterprises such as saloons, dressmaking shops etc. About 80 percent of enterprises are individually owned. Many of the activities of these individual enterprises are self-financed. Meanwhile, they lack credit support. This prevailing situation is largely responsible for entrepreneurs' inability to expand. In the event of long absence due to several factors such as childbirth and sickness, these enterprises tend to lack credit support and are bound to collapse (UNDP, 2007, p. 91). When businesses of parents collapse, children may be affected and may be forced by circumstances to go out and work for money, thus some may end up on the streets doing all kinds of jobs. According to the 2000 Population and Housing Census, 9.0 percent of children between the ages of 7-14 are in the labour force (GSS, 2005). These children play key roles in the economic lives of their families. They are right from the beginning excluded

from all the opportunities of training and skills development (UNDP, 2007, p. 91).

In the Northern Region of Ghana, the informal economy employs 91.4 percent of all employed persons aged 15 years and older. With the exception of the Greater Accra Regions which employs 71.0 percent, the sector employs over 80 percent of all employed persons (UNDP, 2007, p. 28). The dominance of the informal economy in especially the three northern regions could be a result of the dominance of private informal agricultural employment (including animal husbandry) as the main livelihood activity in these areas. Private and public formal employment is also low within these regions of the country, limiting people mainly to the informal economy for subsistence (UNDP, 2007, p. 28).

Most livelihoods opportunities available to the economically active groups within the socially excluded consist mainly of menial jobs which are casual and seasonal unlike the livelihood opportunities that are available to those who are not socially excluded. Most Ghanaians in both rural and urban settings adapt to change and respond to crises or opportunities by changing their means of making a living and by practising a number of different livelihood options at the same time. Individuals in rural areas, urban slums, deprived communities, especially women, children and the physically challenged, frequently have multiple sources of livelihoods. The seasonality of

their livelihoods does not allow for regular savings, job security, or insurance for their future, which results in increasing poverty, vulnerability and exclusion. The situation is more serious in northern Ghana, where there is only a single rainy season for cropping activities. This tends to exclude people from livelihood accessibility for almost 5 months within the year (UNDP, 2004, UNDP, 2007, p. 90, UNICEF, 2009 P. 24). The geographical location of these vulnerable groups can be a further handicap to their ability to obtain secure livelihoods. Thus, even though overall poverty levels have fallen considerably, inequality appears to have increased, along with persistent regional disparities (UNICEF, 2009, p. 24).

### **1.7. Unemployment in Ghana**

A serious consequence of massive increases in the number of people from primary and middle schools has been the dramatic growth in unemployment among primary and middle school-leavers. The change from subsistence agriculture to clerical jobs has been accompanied by massive unemployment (Foster, 1965). Since 1951, the situation has been exacerbated and has become a crucial problem for the present Government. There have been a number of educational reforms and Ghana now has a school system made up of nine year basic school (Primary 1 through Primary 6 to Junior High School (JHS) 1 to 3, then Senior High School (SHS) form 1 to 3), and then to either the University, Polytechnic or to other professional Training Colleges and Vocational Training Institutes. This educational Reform Programme eliminates many children at two key transitional points (JHS and SHS) creating a pool of

unemployed and mostly semi-literate young people with limited skills. These large numbers of unemployed young people represent the potential human capital, future labour force population and future leaders of the country. Most of these unemployed young people are found waiting on the streets of cities.

In April 1961, a survey (Office of the Government Statistician and the Ministry of Labour) reported that there were over 31,000 unemployed individuals within the Accra Municipality of whom a majority were recent middle-school-leavers. This represented almost 10 percent of the total population of Accra and a far higher proportion of the actual available labour force (Foster, 1965, p. 202).

Unemployment figures given by Ghanaian Labour Market in Key Trends and Major Policy Issues, showed adult unemployment rate standing at 10.4 percent in the year 2000. The age group mostly affected is 15-24 years. According to the Ghana Country Report on Unemployment (2002), unemployment rate for the 15-24 year group was 15.9 percent. There is an increase in unemployment among University and Polytechnic graduates who fall within this age group. Unemployment in Ghana has been described as a phenomenon affecting young people (Ghana Country Report on Unemployment, 2002). UNICEF's report in 2009 show that agriculture employs 55 percent of the labour force, serving as the driving force of Ghana's domestic economy, contributing over a third (35.8%) to gross domestic product (GDP). It also serves as the bedrock of food security and

nutrition in Ghana (UNICEF, 2009, p. 19). 'The GLSS 4 puts the unemployment rate for the youth aged 15 – 24 years at the same percentage: 15.9 in 2004 compared to 7.4 percent for 25 – 44 and 4.7 percent for 45 – 64 year groups, respectively' (UNDP, 2007 p. 27, UNICEF, 2009, p. 24). The rapidly increasing population growth rate at an average of 2.7 percent, per annum over the past two decades puts pressure on the social and economic amenities and on the labour force. This has been identified as the main reason for the high incidence of youth unemployment in Ghana (UNDP, 2007, p. 27).

Generally, unemployment rates are lower for men than women in Ghana, though participation rates for females have increased considerably in recent years. Female-to-male unemployment ratio in 1992 was 1.46:1, 1998 = 1.16:1, 2000=1.06:1 but increased marginally to 1.09:1 in 2003 (UNDP, 2007, p. 27). The GSS (2005) estimated unemployment at 10.4 percent for males aged between 20 and 24 years and 10.9 percent for females in the same age group (UNDP, 2007, p. 27).

The urban unemployment rate was 11.3 percent in 1991/92, increased to 13.4 in 1998/99 and declined to 10.6% in 2003, while the rural areas were 1.7% in 1991/92, 5.5%, in 1998/99 and 4.9% in 2003. The relatively high incidence of unemployment in the urban areas can be mainly attributed to rural-urban migration resulting from deteriorating social and economic conditions as well as the limited opportunities or prospects in the rural areas.

The situation is further compounded by the limited job expansion in the urban areas (UNDP, 2007, p. 27). Unemployed urban dwellers with little or no income and no skills to seek employment in a shrinking employment market may resort to living on the streets or in slums, and risk falling into extreme poverty (UNICEF, 2009, p. 25).

### **1. 8. Conclusion**

This overview of Ghanaian history and modernization has discussed: traditional family structures, including the role of women; the increase in family breakdown; the impact of HIV AIDS; the shift from 'community living' to a more individualistic model; the drive for education; livelihoods; and widespread unemployment.

From the above overview, it is clear that these socio-economic changes have had major consequences for the well-being of children. The factors discussed, especially the weakening of the extended family and the traditional welfare system, contribute to the phenomenon of Street Children. The impact of this is particularly harsh because of the failure of the State to develop the economy and protect rural areas from extreme poverty. Large numbers of people including young people and children rush to the urban areas to seek employment. Most of these urban areas do not have accommodation for these children leading to some of them ending up on the streets.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review: Previous Research and Theory**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter discussed some crucial aspects of post-independent Ghana which, have had direct impact on child raising. It also gives us some indications on the rising numbers of Street Children in Ghana. This chapter examines some concepts/theories and knowledge which underpin our understanding of this phenomenon. It is in two parts: the first section focuses on children's needs and capacities and the second on studies undertaken with Street Children in Ghana.

#### **Part A**

#### **2. 2. The development and survival of children in adverse situations**

This section deals with the following aspects of children's development and sexuality that are of particular significance to street children: Adolescence sexuality, vulnerability and resilience.

##### **2. 2. 1. Adolescent Sexuality**

The years from adolescence to early adulthood are recognized as critical in achieving a core sense of identity and also are times of massive biological, emotional, social and sexual changes as 'adolescents change rapidly in so many ways that they can hardly recognize themselves, in the mirror or in their minds' (Siegler, 2002, p. 336). There are dramatic physical changes and also the emergence of strong sexual urges accompanied by new social

pressures, plus the need to make educational and occupational decisions during puberty (Siegler, 2002, p. 336). Adolescents usually get caught up between their past identity as a child and the numerous options and uncertainties of their future; they have to resolve the issues of who they really are or live in confusion about what roles they should play as adults (Siegler, 2002, p. 336). Wilson et al, observe that peer groups and outgroups and models of leadership form the radius of significant relations important to young people who are at this stage of life (Wilson, 2008, p. 131).

Some of the Street Children whom I saw were adolescents and hence coping with this stage of their lives without the usual interaction with important parent figures. The extent to which their earlier years were developmentally successful plays an important part in helping them deal with the challenges on the streets and in their relationships with adults. The data analysis will illustrate such matters.

Sexuality is a central aspect of human life and encompasses sexual activity, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction (WHO, 2002). Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. Sexuality is often broadly defined as the social construction of a biological drive (WHO, 2002), which often deals with issues such as whom one has sex with, in what ways, why, under what circumstances and with what outcomes? (WHO, 2002). Thus as Ajuwon observes, 'sexuality pertains to the totality of being human - female or male -



and this suggests a multidimensional perspective of the concept of sexuality which is shaped by biological, psychological, economic, political, social cultural and religious factors operating within a particular culture in each society' (Ajuwon, 2005).

Ghanaian society had a system of preparing and training young children for every aspect of future life, including sexual life. The training was given by traditionally recognized instructors, usually the elders, (including parents). Most of the sexuality training, however, had to do with sex roles more than with the anatomy and biological changes. As observed by Ankomah (2001), 'the early socialization process is modelled along distinct sex roles. Every Ghanaian grows up with the knowledge that it is the woman who cooks, does the washing up and the laundry, and indeed is responsible for all household chores' (Ankomah, 2001).

Calling the sexual organs by their real names in our languages is not common and sex related matters are a taboo and is forbidden to children in some areas of the country. At the time I write this thesis, it is still uncommon. Other descriptive native names are given to the sexual organs by which they are called. Children have a clear sense of the basic anatomical distinctions between the sexes and they have a natural curiosity about their bodies. Unfortunately this need is not met for a Ghanaian child. Evidence of this unmet need is reflected in research that confirms that some young people have poor understanding of the reproductive process; while others harbour misconceptions such as the belief that pregnancy cannot occur during first

sexual episode, and that use of contraceptives can cause infertility (Ajuwon, 2005).

However, when a child develops at home under the protection and guidance of the parents, the implications of this ignorance may not be so serious. The parents may be able to guide their children and protect them from experimentation that will harm them. When they get to puberty, they are prepared for marriage. The case of Street Children is different as they may develop outside the home and school without any sexual education and parental guidance and may not have much knowledge about sexual matters. Therefore in sexual matters, anything could happen to them before they are mature enough to reason for themselves. Adolescents reach sexual maturity before they develop the mental, emotional maturity and the social skills needed to appreciate the consequences of their sexual activity (Fee, 1993; Ajuwon, 2005). They may engage in unprotected sex with different sexual partners. In their study of street youth in Ghana, Anarfi & Antwi (1995) noted that some of the street children were sexually active and had multiple sexual partners: some were involved in sex for survival, among whom a number had contracted Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) at least once. Some get infected with HIV/AIDS. A similar observation was made among migrant adolescent women from the Upper West Region to Accra and Kumasi (Awusabo-Asare, 2004). Anarfi (1997) confirmed that Street Children are a vulnerable group of young people whose life styles place them at high risk for the contraction and transmission of HIV and other STDs (Anarfi, 1997). They

are exposed to elements of the physical and social environment that may adversely affect their health. They are among the known high-risk groups for the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Children in Ghanaian rural homes and some homes in the urban areas shared daily living before they got to puberty. The International Encyclopaedia of Sexuality: Ghana 2007, recorded that before puberty, most siblings in many Ghanaian homes did almost everything together including bathing and sleeping in one room. After puberty the situation changes dramatically as parents then try to ensure that the boys sleep in a separate room from the girls. Relatives start teaching about sexuality, particularly sexual roles. Ankomah (2007) noted that, in most Ghanaian societies, the initiation or puberty rites were occasions where guidelines and instructions were provided (Ankomah, 2007). The sexual transition from infancy to adulthood was not only a physiological phenomenon, such as onset of the menarche, but also social. Adolescence as a phase, where a person is neither a child nor an adult, did not exist. Puberty in girls is a sign of approaching womanhood and special rites for girls are performed after the first menstruation in some parts of Africa including Ghana. An example is the 'dipo' rites among the Krobos in Ghana. The sociological function of initiation rites and ceremonies is to usher the child into adulthood without the period now called adolescence. During the initiation period, 'sex education' lessons were provided by recognized older women who served as custodians of instructions on motherhood. The sexual instructions given included: how to "sleep" with the husband, menstrual taboos, how to recognize pregnancy, and personal hygiene -- especially of the

genitals. Most Street Children leave their homes before this initiation. They therefore do not have any of the sexual instruction outlined above. Consequently, they learn from each other whatever information they have, right or wrong. A number of Street teenage mothers fall into the category of teenage mothers who are uninformed about contraception and pregnancy. Adolescent pregnancy and motherhood is the result of a complex interplay of social, cultural, economic, family, and biological factors (Austin & Sciarra, 2010, p. 321). A typology of adolescent pregnancy is offered by MacFarlane, where three categories of adolescent pregnancy are distinguished: intentional, accidental, and uninformed (Austin & Sciarra, 2010, p. 321). Most street teenage mothers seem likely to fall into the uninformed category. They may not have become pregnant if they had knowledge about their sexual development, proper contraceptive information and knowledge about how to conduct themselves sexually.

Other street teenage mothers may, however, fall into the intentional pregnancy category. Some adolescent girls leave home because they become pregnant, depending upon the values and norms of their families, societies and cultures. Adolescents in the intentional group actually want to become pregnant. There are two sub-types within this group: one whose culture accepts and even rewards early pregnancy; the other whose psychological needs are fulfilled through having a baby (Austin & Sciarra, 2010, p. 321). Anecdotal reports show that some girls intentionally become pregnant as a means of rebelling against parental authority. This happens when a girl falls in love with a man, wants to marry this man but her parents dislike the man and

oppose her marriage to him. In some cultures in Ghana, parents, particularly fathers force men they like on their girl child for marriage. In these cultures, girls can be seized and marriage rites performed. Some young women become pregnant intentionally to stop this kind of unwanted marriage and in addition, to compound their difficulties, they will have to run away from home to avoid the wrath of their fathers.

Street teenagers, like any other teenager, may equate sex with intimacy and instead of developing intimacy and then becoming sexually active, teenagers may have the understanding that sexual involvement creates emotional intimacy. Teenagers often believe that having a baby will create more intimacy with their sexual partner. Likewise adolescent girls may feel that their children will help meet their needs for intimacy (Austin & Sciarra, 2010, p. 322). This is exactly what happens in the case of some street girls. They get involved in sexual activities, give birth and feel that their intimate relationship with their children will recompense them for any love they did not get from their parents or from other relationships and give them sense of purpose in life.

### **2. 2. 2. Vulnerability and Resilience**

It has long been recognised that individuals experiencing various stresses are affected differently. There has been particular interest in the outcomes for children who have been taken into care following difficult family lives (Gilligan, 2007; Schofield, 2001; Schofield & Beek, 2009). This has led to discussion of

the related concepts of vulnerability and resilience. Daniel et al have proposed that: 'the individual has their own level of vulnerability and resilience to stressful life events developed partly as a result of the quality of attachments and other factors like individual temperament' (Daniel, 1999, p. 11). Street Children, as with any other children, react differently to fairly similar living situations on the street.

My research data provides some insight into factors that brought the children to the street. Also, a fair amount is known about the kind of family circumstances which are likely to have contributed to children living on the street (Plummer, 2007; Rudolph, 2003; Apt, Blavo and Opoku, 1991, Korboe, 1997; Ampofo et al, 2007; UNICEF, 2009; UNDP, 2007; Kwankye and Tagoe, 2009; Anarfi, 2009). As shown in the later chapters, some of the Street Children see their lives as being in danger, getting spoilt or deteriorating since they came to live on the street. It may be said that they see themselves 'vulnerable', while other Street Children see theirs as improving despite the risks they face. They may be said to have what De-Graft Aikins & Ofori-Atta call 'psychological strength'- - resilience in the face of adversity, (De-Graft Aikins & Ofori-Atta, 2007, p. 773). It is clear that there is considerable variation in the way they see their lives on the street. There is also considerable variation in their earlier lives, especially in relation to the quality of their relationships with their parents as shown in the stories they narrated about their previous lives. Thus, it can be seen that these concepts of resilience and vulnerability are important to this study to examine how Street

Children make meaning of their lives and how well they manage this challenging environment. In a sense vulnerability and resilience are two sides of the same coin. The challenge for practitioners 'is first to identify the degree of vulnerability and the nature of adverse circumstances in order to focus on how resilience may be developed or promoted, and protective factors introduced into the environment to support the most vulnerable children' (Daniel, 1999, p. 60 & 62). Ideas of vulnerability & resilience enhance my understanding of the life situations of the Street Children; that not all situations are as devastating as one may perceive it. This is when a few of the children think life on the street is better than their previous lives in various dimensions including getting food, money, and as Liborio & Ungar (2010) observe viewing potential positive outcomes of children's work through the lens of resilience can help to explain why children continue to participate in economic activities (Liborio & Ungar, 2010). Boyden & Mann (2005) argue that there is an emerging evidence that children do not share the same understanding of risk and adversity as do adults (Boyden & Mann, 2005, p. 11).

### **Vulnerability**

The term vulnerability in general usage includes any condition of exposure to hazards, risks and stresses. Children are inherently vulnerable because of their physical immaturity and their relative lack of experience, which increases their dependence on adults (Mudaly, 2006). Thus, children living their lives on the streets may be perceived to be vulnerable due to the hazards, risks and

the stresses they are exposed to as children but it is increasingly clear that many notions of childhood and of childhood vulnerability, development, and well-being are contextually constructed (Ungar, 2004; Boyden & Mann, 2005 p. 4), and the classification of certain experiences or circumstances as "risky" or "dangerous" is not a straightforward, universally given (Boyden & Mann, 2005 p. 5). What is termed dangerous or risky in one context/society may be normal in a different context/society and within the same context/society people may interpret some practices and circumstances differently.

Vulnerability is also defined as 'those innate characteristics of the child, or those imposed by their family circle and wider community which might threaten or challenge healthy development' (Daniel, 1999, p.73). Vulnerable children are susceptible to negative development outcomes after exposure to serious risk factors, such as difficulties in finding places to sleep and wash or exposure to violence (Wenner, 1993).

Children depend for their very survival on adults through the structure of the family. Some of them grow up in a serene family atmosphere with perhaps both parents present, in loving, peaceful, caring and economically sound homes. Others grow up in communities and families where they go through hardships and stressful experiences both physically and emotionally. Some of these stressful events can be traumatic and, as I have already discussed, children are adversely affected by all manner of harmful circumstances, economic, social and familial. Some children who suffer these adverse life situations may develop difficulties. Adverse life experiences and/traumatic



experiences can affect children's functioning in a variety of ways summarized by Cohen et al (2006) by the acronym CRAFTS (for problem domains):

- Cognitive problems: Maladaptive patterns of thinking about self, others, and situations, including distortions or inaccurate thoughts (for example self-blame for traumatic events) and unhelpful thoughts (for example, dwelling on the worst possibilities).
  - Relationship problems: Difficulties getting along with peers, poor problem-solving or social skills, hyper sensitivity in interpersonal interactions, maladaptive strategies for making friends, impaired inter personal trust.
  - Affective problems: Sadness, anxiety, fear, anger, poor ability to tolerate or regulate negative affective states, inability to self-soothe.
  - Family problems: Parenting skill deficits, poor parent-child communication, disturbances in parent-child bonding, disruption in family function/relationships due to familial abuse or violence.
  - Traumatic behaviour problems: Avoidance of trauma reminders; trauma-related, sexualized, aggressive, or oppositional behaviours; unsafe behaviours.
  - Somatic problems: Sleep difficulties, physiological hyper arousal and hyper vigilance towards possible trauma cues, physical tension, somatic symptoms (headaches, stomach aches, etc.)
-

Source: *Treating Trauma and Traumatic Grief in Children and Adolescents* (p. 23) by Judith A. Cohen, Anthony P. Mannarino, and Esther Deblinger 2006, The Guilford Press.

## **Resilience**

However, even after experiencing traumatic events, some children are resilient and do not develop enduring trauma symptoms. Several factors, including developmental level before the traumatic events, inherent or learned resilience, learned coping mechanisms and external sources of physical, emotional, and social support, may influence which children will develop difficulties. Even stressors that would universally be considered traumatic (for example, witnessing multiple murders or being the victim of rape, victim of abject poverty, sudden disappearance of a parent from home) are experienced as being less traumatic by some children than by others (Cohen, 2006).

Resilience can be seen to consist of qualities that can cushion a vulnerable child from the worst effects of adversity and may help the child cope, survive and even flourish in the face of great hurt and disadvantages. Rutter (1987) reminds us that if we want to help vulnerable young people, we need to focus especially on the protective processes that bring about changes in life trajectories from risk to adaptation (Rutter, 1987; Wenner, 1993). Previous life experiences, cognitive capacity to make sense of these events, the age, developmental levels and gender of children who are living their lives on the

street are very important for their survival (Garmezy, 1988, p. 18). Similarly, there are some stresses a street boy may be able to face which a Street girl may find very difficult.

Coping mechanisms include an individual's attempts directly to alter the threatening conditions themselves, and the attempts to change only their appraisal of them so that they need not feel threatened. That is, coping must have the dual function of problem-solving and a regulation of emotional distress. Street Children have come to the street with some individual characteristics and experiences which help them to survive but they may also seize opportunities on the street for their survival. They adopt various strategies and have diverse ways by which they try to increase their resilience and decrease their vulnerability to cope with difficulties they face on the street.

"Early conceptualization of resilience identified mostly individual, or individually mediated factors, that were associated with positive outcomes (Anthony, 1987; Kaplan, 1999; Ungar, 2007, p. 287). A healthful temperament, psychological well-being, and a safe and nurturing family environment were all found to predict individual success following exposure to acute and chronic adversity such as abuse, violence, parental mental illness, poverty or war (Garmezy, 1988; Quinton, Rutter, & Gulliver, 1990; Wermer, 1982; Ungar, 2007). A second "wave" of resilience research focused on protective factors and processes, emphasizing the temporal and relational

aspects of positive development under stress (Rutter, 1987; Zimmerman, Ramirez-Valles & Maton, 1999; Ungar, 2007, p. 287). Another conceptualization of resilience has introduced a more ecological interpretation of resilience (Lerner, & Benson 2003; Luthar, 2003; Rutter, 2005; Author, 2004; Ungar, 2007, p. 287-288), resilience being both an outcome of interactions between individuals and their environments, and the processes which contribute to these outcomes" (Ungar, 2007, p. 288). The above studies have helped to identify generic resilience-promoting processes such as the development of self-esteem, attachments to caregivers (Liborio, 2010, p. 327). Ungar, (2008) however argues that, resilience is not a condition of individuals alone, but also exists as a trait of a child's social and political setting (Ungar, 2008, p. 220), and whatever is outside the child is going to have to support resilience if the child is to experience well-being (Ungar, 2008, p. 221).

There is growing recognition of the need to account for contextually relevant factors like experiences of economic activity influential to children's positive development (Boyden, 2005; Ungar, 2008; Liborio, 2010, p. 328). Ungar et al, (2007) have demonstrated that the impact of risk factors such as war and violence on young people's opportunities for survival depends on the culture and context in which these risks are experienced (Ungar, 2007, p. 306). They conclude that outcomes associated with resilience, and the processes which mitigate risk and contribute to well-being, are dependent upon individual, relational, community, cultural, and contextual factors and that these factors

themselves contribute to perceptions of what is and is not healthy functioning among a particular at-risk population (Ungar, 2007, p. 307).

Ungar (2004) argues that defining resilience as health despite adversity is within an ecological paradigm and that such ecological interpretations of resilience are plagued by cultural hegemony (Ungar, 2004, p. 342). Ungar is of the view that the ecological model is based on positivist modes of enquiry (where one must of necessity choose arbitrary distinctions of what are to be accepted as evidences of healthy functioning) and emphasizing causal linkages and predetermination of health outcomes which are unable to accommodate the plurality of meanings individuals negotiate in their self construction as resilient (Ungar, 2004, p. 342 & 345). He observes some problems with an ecological model of resilience: The study of resilience is complicated by a number of measurement and sampling issues. Factors related to resilience may be relevant only to specific developmental stages, and the use of some measures but not others (Ungar, 2004, p. 350). As risk and resilience are two sides of the same coin, with resilience present only when there is substantial exposure to risk, the problem of definitional ambiguity of risk factors further complicates researchers' understanding of resilience (Ungar, 2004, p. 351). Resilience is tied to the normative judgments relating to particular outcomes. It is possible that the socially defined desirable outcome may be subjectively defined as undesirable while the socially defined undesirable outcome may be subjectively defined as desirable. From the subjective point of view, the individual may be

manifesting resilience, while from the social point of view the individual may be manifesting vulnerability. Thus, most Ghanaians see Street Children as children at risk of problems due to hazardous experiences and vulnerabilities. They see undesirable or negative developmental outcomes of the children's life on the street. However, individual parents/families and/or individual Street Children may have different views as 'working children can find through their working experiences positive sources of efficacy and cohesion, strong identity, feelings of well-being, positive relationships, and access to material and social capital' (Liborio & Ungar, 2010, p. 334). According to Ungar (2004), there is ambiguity in the message children receive in regard to appropriate choices: Some families encourage their children to join paramilitary groups, live on the street and others define successful coping as a child staying in school (Ungar, 2004, p. 350-351). Some parents may find it a desirable or positive development when their children work on the streets and send money home to them while others may wish their children would be off the street and in school.

Constructionist approach to resilience defines resilience as the outcome from negotiations between individuals and their environments for the resources to define themselves as healthy amidst conditions collectively viewed as adverse (Ungar, 2004, p. 342). It reflects a postmodern interpretation of the construct (postmodernism explains social realities as constructed through interaction and highly dependent on the language we have to describe our experiences) (Ungar, 2004, p. 342). It is successful negotiation by individuals for health

resources, with success depending for its definition on the reciprocity individuals experience between themselves and the social constructions of well-being that shape their interpretations of their health status (Ungar, 2004, p. 352). The social world of the Street Child for example is made up of his/her street peers but he/she belongs to the wider Ghanaian society. Social construction of well-being may come from either his/her peers or from the wider society. The interpretation/definition of success/well-being may become difficult if there is disagreement between the individual's interpretation and the social (either peers or the wider society's) constructions of well-being. Ungar (2008) makes it clearer that in the context of exposure to significant adversity, whether psychological, environmental, or both, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to health-sustaining resources, including opportunities to experience feelings of well-being, and a condition of the individual's family, community and culture to provide these health resources and experiences in culturally meaningful ways (Ungar, 2008, p. 225).

Locating the use of the term resilience in Ghana in this field is not a straight forward adventure. But aspects of healthy functioning such as self-efficacy, hopefulness, participation, and ethnic identity are all relevant to Street Children in Ghana. The relative importance of each is far from consistent in the literature when contextual, temporal and cultural variation is taken into account. Many survival processes are idiosyncratic (Ungar, 2008, p. 222). Concepts such as self-efficacy, secure attachments, social support, social

justice, and economic development, though exports to non-western settings are relevant to both minority and majority world cultures, even if the words used to describe these aspects of children's lives are not indigenous to the cultures in which the terms are used (Ungar, 2008, p. 222), and there is evidence of the seven tensions (access to material resources, relationships, identity, power and control, cultural adherence, social justice, cohesion (Ungar, 2008, p. 231) at play in the lives of Street Children. They try to resolve these tensions in various ways as they experience them. They select from the health resources they have available (the principle of navigation). They choose health resources from those that are available and most likely to influence positively mental and physical health-related outcomes as determined by their culture and context (the principle of negotiation) and the fit between the solutions they try and how well these solutions resolve the challenges posed by each tension, within the norms of each community, contribute to their experiences of resilience (Ungar, 2008, p. 231).

The pathways to resilience that youth navigate depend upon the social locations in which culture-based negotiations and contextually specific constructions of health take place (Ungar 2007 p. 304). Developmental challenges, such as whether a young person stays in school, involves not only the value that the young person places on education but also his/her families' attitudes and beliefs (notably different attitudes toward the education of boys and girls), accessibility to educational resources, that mediate the type of schooling pursued and the length of time the young person remains engaged



(Ungar 2007 p. 304). Specific characteristics and processes at-risk youth employ to survive reflect the culture and context in which they live (Ungar 2007 p. 305). A problem with the application of resilience in different cultures is that, what is conceived as normal functioning or a good outcome in one culture may not be seen as such in another culture/context. Ungar (2004), state that negative troubling behaviours are signs of health in specific context (Ungar, 2004, p. 356).

Categorizing resilience as an end-state, a place where youth "arrive" and never book back (Ungar, 2007, p. 301) may be problematic/complex issue in the Ghanaian context. One reason is that Ghana is still a developing country and access to resources for example cannot be guaranteed. State welfare systems are not well developed and are not enough to monitor and take care of a youth who is trying to come out of adversity/risky situation. A young person may overcome hunger today or temporarily, but cannot be guaranteed that he/she will stay at this level for ever. Rather, as narratives in Ungar's study suggest, resilience should be conceived as a dynamic state of tension between and among individuals, families, communities, and their culture (Ungar, 2007, p. 301). Resilience is not a permanent state of being, but a condition of becoming better (Ungar, 2007, p. 301).

## **Part B.**

### **2. 4. The Context: Studies of Street Children in Ghana**

Previous studies of Street Children in Ghana investigated the reasons why children are on the streets, their basic characteristics, their activities and the problems they face on the street (Apt, Blavo & Opoku, 1991; Apt, & Grieco 1997; Ampofo, 2007). The studies have shown some of the difficulties children faced in their various homes prior to coming onto the street which necessitated their decision to come and live on the streets. These studies revealed that some of the children came from broken homes, some were neglected by their parents (Apt, Blavo and Opoku, 1991; Korboe, 1997), some came from poverty stricken backgrounds which render families vulnerable to physical and emotional stress, not conducive to the social well-being of children (Agarwal et al 1997; Korboe 1997; De-Graf Aikins & Ofori-Atta, 2007, p. 771). These studies shaped my understanding of the factors leading children to the street and to a larger extent the situation of their parental background.

The studies also show how at risk/vulnerable the children are on the street. Ampofo et al, (2007) observe that once children are on the street particular hazards and events can predispose them to exploitation (Ampofo, 2007, p. 68). Apt et al (1991) have shown that a child living and working in the streets is vulnerable to environmental and occupational hazards; they expend too much physical energy and wear themselves out in strenuous work for relatively little reward (Apt, Blavo and Opoku, 1991, p. 39 & 61). Mizen &

Ofosu-Kusi (2010) see Street Children as being 'under conditions of great adversity and an ever-present threat of violence, and without immediate support of state or family' (Mizen & Ofosu-Kusi, 2010, p. 442).

Earlier studies were either with girls (Apt & Grieco, 1997), or looking at a particular area of their lives (Agarwal et al, 1997; Ampofo, 2007). This study investigates the everyday life of both street girls and boys. My study is designed to explore how the children themselves perceive their lives on the streets. Investigating their everyday life has brought up findings which add up to the risks in the literature.

The earlier studies were exploratory. Some investigated one type of the children's jobs on the street. My study goes beyond others by revealing many more activities they engage in to get money including engaging in illegal activities. Earlier studies are not as deeply rooted in children's accounts, qualitative interviews, with children and adults and observing children's life at different times and observing interactions that go on between them and the people they come across in the environments in which they find themselves.

Previous studies of Street Children in Ghana showed some of the children's difficulties and vulnerabilities. But in addition to their vulnerabilities, this study investigates and analyses why the children continue to live on the street, despite all the difficulties they face. Reading the literature about

resilience, and applying the knowledge to the data in this study reveals negotiations for resources and pathways to well-being by the Street Children. It is important to analyse these as a counterpart to understanding their vulnerability.

## **2. 5. Conclusion**

This chapter examines some concepts/theories and knowledge which underpin our understanding of the life of Street Children. My exploration addresses complex issues of vulnerability and resilience raising difficult questions about definition, the implications of using vulnerability and resilience in a developing country like Ghana. The chapter also reviews previous studies with Street Children in Ghana. This exploration of vulnerability and resilience plus previous works done with the children will guide me in forthcoming chapters, in making sense of the data and in understanding better the way they negotiate their way in the context and situations in which they find themselves for survival.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

#### **3. 1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the general approach and strategies employed in the selection of respondents, the collection and analysis of the data. Silverman (2005) defines methodology as 'a general approach to studying research topics' (Silverman, 2005, p. 109). In this chapter, I will be engaged in a methodological discussion in which I will explain the course of decisions I made prior, during and to the end of the study.

#### **3. 2. How I came to be interested**

My decision to study how Street Children survive on the street in Ghana for my PhD arose from my experience with working with children as a Classroom Teacher and a Social Worker, when I worked in an organization called 'Children In Need' in Ghana. My role was to undertake a need assessment of children who came to the organization and assign them to the appropriate sectors of the organization for help. I was also charged with the responsibility of tracking the progress of these children in the various schools in which the organization enrolled them. As part of its operation, the organization ran a drop-in centre where children who were in need came daily for help. As the children came to the drop-in centre I realised that most of them had no homes to go to at the end of the day. I became alarmed. Before I started work with this organization, I used to see children on the streets but I thought

they were going home in the evenings, or at the very least, suspected that many of them were sleeping rough. This revelation conflicted with my previous knowledge as a classroom teacher when I knew some of my pupils were going to the streets to sell ice water, biscuits, anything they could sell for some money but were going back home in the evening to sleep. Thus from my professional and personal observations, I became concerned about the plight and experiences of Street Children.

I decided to go and look at the way children live their lives on the streets of some areas in Accra because I was curious to know if there were some who were really sleeping on the street and if so, how they were able to survive, or not. As part of my preliminary preparation for my PhD programme and in order to gain impressions of how these children live on the streets, I asked a few people (relatives and friends who live in Accra) to tell me where some of these children were sleeping in the city and I was readily told where they sleep. As part of my initial explorations, I decided to undertake observations of the children at various times of the day. For the first observation, I decided to observe late in the evening. At around 10:30 pm, I moved my car to a few of their sleeping places to look for myself how they were retiring to sleep. Some were sleeping on traders' tables, some on pavements in bus stations and some in the corridors of shops. It was a great number and I estimated that there were about 800 children. On another occasion, I observed them at dawn to see how they were getting up and where they were

heading. In addition I observed their movements on the streets during the day time. The following are some of my initial explorations:

## **Lapaz**

Monday, 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2006

I went to sit at the roof top of a restaurant at the centre of an area called Lapaz to observe Street Children from afar. A great number of them lined up at the sides of the street hawking. They were selling different types of goods. Most of the girls were selling ice water, bread and other goods. Some of the boys were selling dog chains, windscreen wipers, watches, handkerchiefs, purses, candies etc. I realized that when traffic ceased a little, they went under the shade of stores, kiosks, or inside abandoned vehicles to rest. Under the shade they were also checking their money. I suppose the money came from the items they were selling. While some checked their money, others bought food and ate it. As soon as vehicles line up they would rush out to the street. Often they followed the vehicles as they moved in the traffic. When a passenger or anyone in any of the vehicles called them to buy an item, they struggled over to serve the customer. The fastest and the strongest managed to get their goods bought.

I spent about two hours in Lapaz and went to a place called Kawukudi junction. It is a big intersection where there are a lot of traffic lights. Vehicles pass through this area to Accra central, 37 military hospital, also in Accra and to the adjoining areas, Accra Newtown, Achimota, Legon and other

destinations. A lot of Street Children are found there and at this big junction they engage in the same activities as those at Lapaz. In addition, some younger children around seven, eight and nine years were begging for money. Occasionally, they rushed under the shade of trees around the junction to rest.

### **Makola**

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2006

This is part of Accra, the capital city of Ghana, and is the city centre where big shopping malls are found. The whole market area is named Makola. Here, I estimate that there are thousands of Street Children. Most of the Street Girls found here engage in portering (Kayayee). (Kayayoo is literally translated as a female who engages in any kind of labouring activity especially carrying wares for money. The plural is Kayayee). Most of the boys are involved in truck pushing. I stood at various vantage points around Makola to observe these Street Children. The girls followed women when they came shopping pleading with them to allow them carry their items for them. They had pans and followed the shoppers and collected the things they were buying to place in their pans. After the person finishes shopping, they carry the items to the bus stations or to the car. For bargains, they either charge the shopper before they follow them or they tell the shoppers that they should just give them whatever they want after they have helped them.



I also went to stand near a place where the Kayayee were resting. I realized that a few of them were coming there to breastfeed their babies. Others were coming to eat. At their resting place, some of the boys were gambling. At a point there was confusion among those gambling. They stopped, argued for sometime and then continued.

### **Tema Station (Metro bus terminal)**

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> July, 2006

On this day I decided to visit one of the sleeping places of the Street Children. Tema station is one of the big bus stations in Accra Central. A number of the Street Children sleep at this bus station. I got there around 11:00 pm. I drove into the station, parked, and walked round as though I was one of them.

Some were asleep, others were now preparing to sleep. At that time of the night, some of the boys were playing football. Some of the girls were in small groups conversing. A few were singing and dancing with happiness. In the station was a corner which appeared to be an improvised cinema hall. About 200 of them were gathered there watching movies. In other corners of the station were some having their bath.

There are no rooms at the bus station. Those who were sleeping slept in the open places on the pavements at the station, on cartons and covered themselves with rubber. I realized there were babies among them. Going round the bus station, I saw that some, especially the boys, had squeezed

themselves on the seats provided for passengers and were sleeping. Others were sleeping on tables. The bus station was a whole township during the night. By the time I left, most of them had retired to their beds on the pavements, tables, seats and everywhere in the station except those watching the movie and a few who were playing music.

### **Kaneshie**

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> July, 2006.

At dawn 29<sup>th</sup> July I decided to visit Kaneshie, another area and sleeping place of some Street Children to see what they do when they get up in the morning. I got there at 3:10am. While some were fast asleep on verandas of shops and in kiosks, some were playing music, dancing and eating. There were some girls selling hot food and others selling ice water and alcoholic drinks around where they were sleeping. I stood by and watched them. I realized that a lot had their belongings with them. They packed their belongings into polythene/carrier bags and used them as pillows.

At some point, the food sellers closed and went home. The water seller slept on a seat and the others retired to bed. I went round and saw some sleeping under the Kaneshie foot bridge which is an open area. Near the foot bridge some of the older boys were gambling and shouting as if it were day time. At another side of the foot bridge some children were watching a movie. Inside the Kaneshie bus station, a number of them were sleeping on the seats

provided for passengers. There I saw a young girl of about 9 or 10 years going to sleep among the boys. She was in a dirty outfit.

They started getting up one after the other around 5:00am. When they got up, some urinated in gutters around, opened their carrier bags, picked up tooth paste and tooth brush, went to the water seller to buy water and brush their teeth. Some also just got up urinated and started loitering around without brushing their teeth. Some visited a public toilet. In fact most of them got up carried their plastic bags and started walking in one direction or another. I cannot tell for sure where they were going.

This exploration has been helpful for my research. Robson notes that 'observation can be used for several purposes in a study. It is commonly used in an *exploratory phase*, typically in an unstructured form, to seek to find out what is going on in a situation as a precursor to subsequent testing out of the insights obtained' (Robson, 2002 , p. 311-312). I knew that there was a problem of Street Children in Ghana but I had no idea of the extent of it. This initial exploration confirmed to me that a great number of children sleep on the streets of Accra and generated further my interest of doing qualitative research with the Street Children and my desire to carry out further observations and interviews with these children, which I will discuss later in the chapter.

### **3. 3. Theoretical approach**

These prior observations inspired me to get closer to these Street Children, listen to them and know the details of why they are on the streets, their strategies for survival, the nature of social groups they develop and the social structures they build. Subsequently, two areas of theory became important to me: hermeneutic and naturalistic or deterministic theories. As argued by philosophical theories of the Hermeneutic School of thought, human life and social action or the social world must be understood from within (Hollis, 1994). I desire to understand these children, to know the meaning they give to a life on the streets as their permanent home instead of their original homes. Human action has meanings. To know why somebody behaves in a particular way, it is essential to understand their perspective. It is also crucial to understand our own world view as it is difficult to understand the actor and their actions from a distance. To understand the world of another human being, you need to get into the person's world and establish rapport with the person, in order to understand their perspective. Thus the hermeneutic theory has been the theoretical frame work which guided me to get nearer the Street Children and endeavour to understand them from within.

### **3. 4. Methodological approach**

#### **3. 4. 1. Qualitative research**

I had therefore already been working with children in their natural environment such as the classroom, their homes or their playground as a teacher and a Social Worker. As a researcher, it seemed best to study

children in their natural setting, in this case "the street". Therefore, I work with a qualitative framework because qualitative methods are most appropriate to study the day-to-day lives of children living on the street. Silverman indicates that the research (problem) question will define the most appropriate method and that the choice of method should not be predetermined but rather chosen in relation to what one is trying to find out (Silverman, 2005, p. 6).

'Qualitative research strives for depth of understanding in natural settings. Unlike the positivist, quantitative tradition it does not focus on a world in which reality is fixed and measurable but one in which the experiences and perspectives of individuals are socially constructed' (Greig, Taylor & Mackay, 2007 p. 136). It is 'a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live' (Greig, Taylor & Mackay, 2007 p. 136).

Qualitative research enables the voice of the participant to be heard and is concerned with unique situations and phenomena. It would describe in detail and interpret with a view to explaining the object of study (Greig, Taylor & Mackay, 2007 p. 57). As emphasised by Silverman, qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry (Silverman, 2005 p. 10).

The fieldwork was done in the street, a setting that is complex and difficult to control. Robson and Greig et al, observe that conducting real world research requires a recognition, that work must be done in a complex, messy, poorly controlled field setting (Greig et al, 2007 p. 139; Robson, 2002).

### **3. 5. Research processes**

#### **3. 5. 1. Access**

There were two aspects to gaining access in this study. The first was devising ways of gaining access to the children to observe and interview. The second was to gain information about the roles played by Government and Non-Governmental organisations in relation to Street Children.

#### **3. 5. 2. Gaining access to the settings of Street Children**

It was very important for me to gain access to the settings of the Street Children and establish good contact with them because the research focussed on them and their co-operation during the fieldwork was essential. I gained access to my first group of Street Children through Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS), a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) that works with Street Children in this first setting.

Using organisations for the full sample would bring a risk of bias in my sample. Therefore, I decided to try and gain access to all the other settings of Street Children directly, which was more difficult than I anticipated. I used the 'hanging around' strategy which 'entails either loitering in an area until you

are noticed or gradually becoming incorporated into or asking to join a group' (Bryman, 2008 p. 407). In my case, I hung around, until I could approach a child in the area or group and converse with the child. I went to my second setting of Street Children in the evening around the time I thought they will be coming back from their day's work or wherever they went to roam. This is a bus terminal, a place they gather to sleep. I tried to dress like them to avoid the situation where I would be quickly noticed as an outsider. I hung around for a long time, as they came to the bus terminal to bath, eat, and make their beds and get ready to sleep. I used various strategies to encourage the first child to agree to talk to me. When the children gathered, some young people came along to sell iced water, food and some other items. I called some of these hawkers and bought some items which I did not really need. I was surprised at how difficult I found it to approach these children I see everyday on the street. I was surprised because I had thought the street was an open/public setting for everyone where I could just approach any Street Child and enquire about anything, but in fact, as Bryman observes 'gaining access to public settings is beset with problems, many of which are similar in nature to access to closed settings' (Bryman, 2008 p. 407).

Eventually, three teenage boys passed by, I gathered some courage, got closer to them and introduced myself to them. I asked them whether I could come back another day to talk with them, which they agreed and this made it easier for me to go back to this setting.

This time, I did not have to go and hang around but went straight to look for these specific teenagers. I was happy that I now had some children among the group who allowed me to come back to them. This made my subsequent visits very easy because they welcomed me among them. There were teenage boys among the group, who were older than a lot of the children who slept at the bus terminal, so once I was able to build rapport with them and they accepted and trusted me, others in this setting did not have problems with me when I approached them. Most of them got to know me and would walk over to me anytime I visited the setting. I used the same hanging around strategy to gain access to other settings of Street Children but some of the children from this setting enabled my access to subsequent settings. For example, one of them led me to the Kokomba market.

### **3. 6. Sampling**

A researcher encounters the issue of sampling at different stages in the research process. With an interview study, it is connected to the decision about which persons to interview, (case sampling) and from which groups the person should come (sampling groups of cases), the decision about which of the interviews should be further transcribed and analysed (material sampling), which parts of the text to select for interpretation (sampling within the material) and then which cases or parts of text are best to demonstrate your findings (presentational sampling) (Flick, 2009 p. 115).



### **3. 6. 1. Sampling the settings of Street Children**

Following my initial observations, I decided to select three major settings of Street Children in Accra, using purposive sampling. These are Kaneshie market, Tema station (Metro bus terminal) and Makorla markets. I purposely selected these settings because, in the first place, Accra is the capital city of the study country Ghana and one of the main cities where Street Children live. Secondly, these Street Children come from different parts of the country and converge in these selected settings. Thirdly, these settings were the best places for me to study how Street Children are able to cope and survive on the streets. Bryman (2008) notes that, 'the goal of purposive sampling is to sample cases/respondents in a strategic way, so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed' (Bryman, 2008 p. 415). Even though I made the decision from the beginning which settings to visit, three other settings emerged in the process of collecting data. These are Agbogbloshie, Kokomba market and Cocoa Marketing Board (CMB). Some of these settings emerged for various reasons. For example during my interview with Street Children in the Metro bus station, I realized that most of them were girls so I asked about the boys and one of the girls led me to the Kokomba market. The final settings of Street Children I worked with are Kaneshie, Tema station (Metro bus terminal), Makola markets, Agbogbloshie, Kokomba and CMB areas.

### **3. 6. 2. Sampling individual children or cases**

My system for selecting individual Street Children in the settings can best be described as snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a method where the researcher identifies one or more individuals from the population or group of interest (Robson, 2002). I often went to the settings and spent a lot of time in the settings and in order to establish some rapport I introduced some conversation. I then asked them whether they would like me to come back for a detailed conversation, and at a later date I looked for those individual children who had agreed to be interviewed. Until a Street Child agrees to be interviewed, and until the interview was actually carried out, I did not count a child as part of the sample, for as is to be expected Street Children move about a lot. There were occasions some children agreed to be interviewed but I went to the settings to look for them a number of times before finding them and sometimes I could not locate them. My continuous presence in their settings enabled them get close to me and enabled me to form a relationship with them. They introduced me to other children who live completely on the street. They will often say to me 'this is another person who sleeps here' because I told them I wanted to interview the children who did not go home at the end of the day but sleep on the street. However, some of those who spent the day time on the street and went home to sleep also came to me to tell me their stories. I interviewed these as well, taking some field notes, but did not record my interview with them because I wanted to focus only on those who lived completely on the street. Some directed me to other settings I did not know existed. Even though I approached most of the children

myself, the snowball method also helped because there are a lot of children on the street which made it difficult to know which go home to sleep and which sleep on the street, on my initial visits to the settings. I approached the children in any setting I went, engaged them in conversation and when I realised that they slept on the street and were willing to be involved in the study, with the help of the child I looked round in the setting for a convenient place for the interview. The interview time is discussed and scheduled between the two of us for either that same day or some other day. The final sample is made up of twenty five Street Children who sleep on the street. They are eleven boys and fourteen girls. The original target age-group of the study was ten to seventeen (10 – 17) years but there were two girls included who fall below ten years. These 2 girls do babysitting for the older Street mothers.

A table on the biographical data of the children

Below is a table showing the number of children who were involved in this study from the various settings. It shows total number of boys, girls, and their religious background.

SETTING	BOYS	GIRLS	Total	Christians	Moslem
KANESHIE	7	4	11	9	2
TEMA STATION	-	7	7	-	7
AGBOGBLOSHIE	-	3	3	2	1
KOKOMBA	3	-	3	-	3
COCOA	1	-	1	1	-

MARKETING BOARD					
TOTAL	11	14	25	12	13

Table 1

The table above shows the composition of the 25 children/young people who live and do everything on the street. They are 11 boys and 14 girls, and consist of 12 Christians and 13 Moslems. Seven boys and four girls from the Kaneshie setting were interviewed and observed, making 11. Out of this 11, nine are Christians and two Moslems. Seven girls from Tema Station were involved in the study and they are all Moslems. All these girls in Tema Station do similar jobs. They are mostly Kayayee. Interviews and observations were carried out with three girls in Agbogbloshie, two of them Christians and one Moslem. Three boys are also involved in the study from the Kokomba Market, all Moslems. Even though I had conversations with a number of children in Cocoa Marketing Board (CMB) area, I used only one interview, conducted with a Moslem boy from there because I was getting similar answers from the respondents. For example, nearly all the children I talked with in the setting in CMB area were involved in what they referred to as 'blind people business.' - - which means serving as a guide for a blind person to beg for alms. Even though the Moslems in this sample outnumber the Christians by only one, this calls for attention since Christianity is dominant with over two-thirds (68.8) of the Ghanaian population claiming affiliation with the Christian faith and 15.9% Moslem (GSS, 2002).

Most of the children involved in this study fall between the ages of 12 and 17. They come from all over the country and settle in the various settings in Accra, but particularly, they come from the Central Region and the Northern parts of the country. Eight of the children from the Kaneshie setting come from the Kasoa, Mankesim, and Saltpond areas, all in the Central Region. Two of them are from Kumasi in the Ashanti Region and one from Koforidua in the Eastern Region. The children interviewed in Tema Station are from the Northern part of the country. Two of the children interviewed in Agbogbloshie moved from their homes in Accra onto the streets of Accra. The length or duration of time the children are living on the street at the time of the study range between one week and five years. Most of the children are school drop-outs but a few did not have any form of formal/classroom education.

### **3. 6. 3. Approaching the organisations**

I had prior knowledge of the existence of some of the organisations involved in my interviews, particularly government organisations, and I got to know more about some of the NGOs during my interviews with the Street Children.

Even though the government organisations are public ones, they are 'closed' settings where I had to ask permission from the receptionist's/secretary's office to gain access to the central figure's office. At the Department of Social Welfare, I approached the Director through his secretary to make an appointment and the Director later introduced and handed me over to the officer in charge of Street Children issues. This took time. As Flick (2009)

observes, 'once you have gained access to the field or the institution in general, you will face the problem of how to reach those persons within it who are the most interesting participants' (Flick, 2009 p. 109).

In the second government organisation, The Department of Children under the Ministry of Women and Children, I again approached the Director through his secretary. The Director directed me to one of his programme managers who is in charge of programmes for children. This department was very helpful. During interviews with some of the officials, they informed me of some of the help they had given to Street Children through their programmes and of some of their programmes with the Street Children which failed. They directed me to some of the Street Children they organize programmes for. I had real moral support from this department because they see the issue of children making the street their homes as a big problem and they perceived me as one they would like to work with in dealing with some of the problems of Street Children. After my interviews with them, I was encouraged and motivated to carry on with the research. I kept in touch with them throughout my fieldwork and later went back to do a placement with them.

Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS) is one of the non-governmental organisations, and the first organisation I visited. I visited their office premises when I went to Ghana. I was sent to one of the workers who took me to the Deputy Director. After introducing myself to the Deputy Director, explaining the reason for my visit and giving him information about my

research and an introductory letter from my Supervisors, he booked an appointment with me to come back to see the Director. The first impression I got from my first meeting with the Deputy Director was that he was interested in my study and willing to help. His interest in the research facilitated my access in this organisation. He introduced me to the Director who agreed and allowed me to enter their premises any time I wished to. This was a major breakthrough for me but not the end of access.

My main reason for seeing this NGO first was to use them to gain access to the children they work with. I also interviewed them concerning their work with the children and the ways by which they help the children to cope with life on the street. I negotiated with the Deputy Director to allow me to follow their field workers to the setting of Street Children for an introduction to the leader(s) of the Street Children in the area. He introduced me to three field workers. I now had a more direct relationship with the field workers and I went to the field with two of them. They introduced me to the 'leader' of the Street Children in the setting and told him not to harass me when I come to the area to interview Street Children. Indeed this NGO, particularly their field workers played the role of gatekeepers for me. This introduction made my access to Street Children in this setting easy. From this point, I went to this setting on my own without the help of the field workers, but I kept contact with them. They also introduced me to some of the children they work with. I visited the organisation frequently and later had an interview with the Deputy Director concerning their work with Street Children.

I gained access to two other non-governmental organisations - Street Girl Aid and Azusa - through the Street Children. During my interview with the children, they mentioned these two organisations very often as helping them survive in various ways on the street. The children directed me to these organisations.

With the two governmental organisations and one of the non-governmental organisations (CAS), I used purposive sampling for their inclusion in the study but the Street Children introduced me to the other two non-governmental organisations when I started the fieldwork as stated above. Sampling of individuals to interview in the organisations was not difficult once I had access in the organisations. I was allocated to the appropriate personnel who worked in the field of Street Children. In all, eight officials were interviewed in the five organisations. Data from the interviews with these organisations complement the children's accounts and my observations.

I also interviewed five market traders whom the children introduced to me. The children work with some of these traders by helping in arranging their wares every morning and packing them back at the end of the day among other tasks.

### **3. 7. Methods/Techniques**

Observations and interviews are the research methods I found most appropriate within this qualitative methodology study. 'Research methods are techniques which take on a specific meaning according to the methodology in



which they are used' (Silverman, 2005 p.110). As I mentioned above, I used these to gather data and develop a fuller picture of the living situations or the survival strategies of Street Children. I also undertook the three observations described above, in order to give an understanding of the processes of living on the street.

### **3. 7. 1. Observation**

After my initial explorations in the street, I carried out other observations in the settings of Street Children during my fieldwork periods to capture their social meanings and ordinary activities. The first one was between 17<sup>th</sup> of April, 2008 and 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2008 and the second between 13<sup>th</sup> November 2008 and 8<sup>th</sup> March 2009. These periods were used for both observations and interviews.

'Observation enables the researcher to find out how something factually works or occurs' (Flick, 2009 p. 222). I wanted to understand what the Street Children actually do on the street to survive. Patton suggests that observational data should enable the researcher to enter and understand the situation that is being described (Cohen et al, 2000). I went to the settings of the Street Children and observed them at different times. I informed the children involved in the study that I would come to their settings at certain periods of the day or evening to observe how they go about their lives. I visited their settings and most of the time stayed in the settings for many hours. Even though I did not sleep on the street with the children, I spent

long hours among them from morning to late evening. I was an observer-as-participant. 'Someone who takes no part in the activity but whose status as a researcher is known to the participants' (Robson, 2002 p. 319).

Participant observer roles can be arrayed on a continuum of degrees of involvement with and detachment from members of the social setting (Bryman, 2008, p. 410). These roles include: complete participation - a fully functioning member of the social setting and his or her true identity is not known to members, and he is a covert observer; participant-as-observer, where the role is the same as that of a complete observer except that members of the social setting are aware of the researcher's status as a researcher; observer-as-participant, in which the researcher is mainly an interviewer. At the other end of the spectrum is the complete observer, in which role the researcher does not interact with people and people do not have to take the researcher into account (Bryman, 2008, p. 410-411). Using the observer-as-participant role enabled me concentrate on gathering naturally occurring data of the children's everyday life on the street, since I did not have to get involved too much in their activities. I however faced more challenges over whether to participate or not in helping them out in some difficulties I saw them in.

On some occasions I went to the settings at dawn before they started waking up just to observe some of the first things they do when they wake up, and on other occasions I went to the settings in the evening and stayed late, until most of them slept. I did this to observe where they sleep, on what they

sleep, how they cover themselves, and if there were babies how their mothers took care of them and enabled the baby to sleep. I also took the weather into consideration during my observations. I saw what they did when it was raining, for example. In the day time, I stayed long hours among the street children to observe the relationship that exist between the Street Children of all ages, the relationships between the Street Children and non-Street Children, the gendered relations among Street Children, their relationship with adults who offer them work, and the activities they undertake for money. One thing that emerged strongly through my observations is how the Street Children copy family lives in that they try to live like families on the streets. There were times I stood a little bit afar and watched them, and on these occasions, they still knew I would come for observation because I had told them, while at other times I sat with them in their resting places which depend upon the setting and the time of the day, sometimes under trees, under the shade at bus and train terminals. At one of the settings, their resting place was the corridors of classrooms at weekends and during school vacation times. I sat with them there, conversed with them and observed them. I tried as much as I could to dress to look more like them. This was mostly very helpful, because I think my style of dressing enabled the Street Children to come close to me and relate easily to me.

It was very important for me to put down things I observed quickly because a lot of things were taking place in the field which were of interest to me and there was the risk of forgetting important observations. Bryman states that

'because of the frailties of human memory, ethnographers have to take notes based on their observations' (Bryman, 2008 p. 417), and bearing this in mind I kept a field journal and recorded my observations in it. In the settings, I made a short record of the things I observed on the spot in a small pocket notebook. I recorded what I saw them do. For example I recorded how they worked, the specific means or strategies they used, how they spoke about their understanding of the events. The writings during the observations in the settings were brief and condensed records which reminded me of what happened and what I saw. They helped me during the writing up of detailed notes/descriptions. I then made a more expanded note in my field journal. At the top of each record in the journal, I wrote the date, the time and the setting followed by what I observed briefly. Later in the day, I expanded it by writing a full field note that included the people and situations involved, what the main issues were, which research question did the contact bear most centrally on and also my reflections in the journal. I further compiled these detailed description of the things I observed in the field plus my reflections in a Word document on my computer.

The observations proved to be the most appropriate technique for getting at the 'real life' situations of Street Children. Staying in their settings for hours in a day enabled me to see how they actually try to survive in everyday life. For example, how they actually do some of the jobs they said they do for money. The processes they employ in doing these jobs were observed. The observations usefully complement my interviews. I gathered some important

information which gave me evidence to back up the children's narratives. I thought my presence might affect their behaviour and normal routines, but when I stayed either close to them or moved among them my presence did not seem to affect their behaviour, nor did it seem to affect their normally routine activities. They quarrelled, fought, hit and ran after each other. Sometimes I wondered whether they had forgotten that I was there. Occasionally one child would come to me and say something about another child to me. Perhaps being female helped, as most children may not bother much, as previously they would have done all sorts of things before their mothers and sisters. I am not sure whether they would have behaved in the same way if I had been a male researcher. My presence did not make them stop their jobs. Those who were rushing after vehicles for loads to carry were still doing it in my presence.

Robson (2002) emphasizes that observation is neither an easy nor a trouble-free option. Using the observation technique was so helpful that I do not regret using it, but I faced some difficulties as well. My most difficult issues had to do with the risks which the Street Children faced in their lives, and the dilemmas I faced as a result. The dilemma that I faced frequently was whether to remain as a neutral researcher or participate by helping them out of some difficulties which confronted them. I was in a dilemma as to the degree to which I should be or could be an active or a passive participant. Bryman observes that 'there may be contexts in which either participation is unavoidable or a compulsion to join in a limited way may be felt' (Bryman,

2008 p. 413). Many of the difficulties and dilemmas which I encountered took place during the observational phase of my work and concerned the emotional impact which the observations and the Street Children had on me, especially when I felt powerless to protect the children or doubtful whether I should take action or not.

Even though transcripts of my interviews with the participants provide good records, the non-verbalised and situational details gathered from my observations have given me insight into the life styles of these Street Children. I agree with Warr that: 'the emotions and sensations I experienced during observation were qualitatively different from those gained when I interviewed [the women]' (Warr, 2004). In short, doing qualitative research among disadvantaged, marginalised and disenfranchised population can be emotionally challenging.

My emotional experiences during and after the observations were overwhelming: feelings of sorrow, fear, shock, guilt, anger, vulnerability, frustration and helplessness and hopelessness. A number of authors have stated that researchers can be negatively affected emotionally and physically by researching sensitive issues. Some of the negative outcomes include gastrointestinal problems (Dunn, 1991), insomnia and nightmares (Cowles, 1988; Dunn, 1991; Etherington, 1996 ), headaches (Dunn, 1991), exhaustion and depression (Ridge, Hee, & Aroni, 1999), threats to physical safety (Langford, 2000; Lee, & Renzetti 1995). Kleinman & Copp propose that

fieldworkers should become more aware of their feelings and use them as data (Kleinman, & Copp, 1993). Nevertheless, there were times when what I observed made me feel pleased and even excited, especially when I witnessed the children's solidarity within their groups, their initiative and their resilience.

Prior to my pilot study, I had a number of anxieties. An aspect of my anxiety had to do with how to gain access to my respondents. I was concerned with how to get close to the Street Children. Access to 'open' or 'public' settings is freely available but not always without difficulty, either practical (for example, finding a role for the researcher in a public setting) or ethical (should we be intruding upon vulnerable minorities?) (Silverman, 2005: 29). Some of these children had run away from home and might not want people intruding upon their privacy for fear of being found out. I had the feeling that it would not be easy to track them down. My perception was that they were always on the move and it would be difficult to get them in one place for even a week. I also thought some might have lost trust in adults. I was anxious about how to get them to trust me and how to establish rapport between us. The idea of using organizations who worked with these children to help me gain access was discussed with my Supervisors thoroughly but still there was uncertainty about whether these organizations would or would not support my research when I contacted them. I was also anxious about how helpful and co-operative the Street Children would be. I had my own earlier experiences and perceptions about children who wandered around and chased moving vehicles, for 'to suppose that any researcher enters a field without past

experience or some pre-existing ideas is unrealistic' (Strong, 1979, p. 229; Silverman, 2005: 29). I therefore tried as much as possible to keep an open mind to enable me understand why they are on the street from their own point of view.

It was also time consuming. As described above, I had to commit a large part of my time visiting the settings of the Street Children and staying for several hours to be able to follow their day-to-day activities. My plan was to use about three hours each time I went for observation, but sticking to this number of hours was difficult, because the life of the children is not static. The whole street life is so complex and on-the-move that I had to adjust to the different rhythms that are different to those I am used to.

### **3. 7. 2. Interviews**

Interviewing as a method of data collection involves researchers seeking open-ended answers related to a number of questions, topic areas or themes (O'Leary, 2010 p. 194). Conducting interviews according to Robson, is a flexible and adaptable way of finding things out and the human use of language is fascinating both as a behaviour in its own right, and for the virtually unique window that it opens on what lies behind our actions (Robson, 2002 p. 272). According to O'Leary (2010), interviews can be conducted in a formal or informal manner (O'Leary, 2010, p. 195). They can be structured semi-structured and unstructured (Silverman, 2005, Bryman, 2008, O'Leary,



2010 p. 195). Interviews can be conducted on one on one basis or on multiple bases (O'Leary, 2010, p. 195).

### **Issues with interviewing or doing research with children**

I used the local dialects of the children in our conversations throughout the fieldwork and also used these languages to conduct the interviews. These are children, and more particularly Street Children; a number of them dropped out of school at early stages. The use of their own language made it possible for me to explain myself better to their understanding. There was only one girl who offered to be interviewed in English. She had completed Junior High School (JHS) and I guess that she wanted to prove to me and her friends that she could speak the English language. But I still varied my style of questioning according to the ages of the children. For example, with the very young ones, I had to shorten my questions to make it possible for them to grasp what I was saying.

The duration and breaks varied between the children, so the length of the interviews was set by the pace with which each child was comfortable. The older children were able to talk at length and in more detail about their past experiences and their lives on the street more than the younger ones. Younger children were brief in giving accounts of their lives. There were seven- and eight-year old girls whose interviews did not last as long as that of the other children. With these younger girls, I asked their older sisters and/or older cousins to sit close to where we were having the interview to serve as a

form of 'social support' for them. I had to allow them some breaks during the interview period as well. They however, provided good information on why they are on the street and their feelings about the life on the street.

### **Informal and Semi-structured interviews**

I conducted interviews with twenty-five Street Children and personnel from five organizations who work with the children. The interviews were conducted in two stages. Thirteen of the children's interviews and three of the organisations' were conducted in stage one of the fieldwork between 17<sup>th</sup> of April, 2008 and 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2008. The remaining twelve of the children's interviews and two interviews with the organisations were conducted during the stage two fieldwork between 13<sup>th</sup> November 2008 and 8<sup>th</sup> March 2009. Before the interviews, a lot of preparation was done with the help of my Supervisors to develop an interview guide with clear and unambiguous semi-structured questions covering the major areas of enquiry and the research question (see appendix 1). Even though I went to the field with this interview guide, which consisted of a list of open-ended questions, I followed the natural flow of the conversation that occurred between the Street Children and me. The open-ended questions allow for more flexibility and more study of the perceptions and feelings of respondents (Silverman, 2006, p. 122).

The context of the interviews with the Street Children was the street. I took time to establish rapport, gain their trust and open up lines of communication with them. In some of the settings, I had to go to the street a few times, stay

around the places where Street Children were gathered and gradually mingled with them for them to accept me before I set a date for any interview. Children who agreed to be interviewed helped me to find various locations on the street, where we conducted the interviews. My style of interviewing the Street Children was casual and relaxed, to minimize any gulf between me and the children (O'Leary, 2010 p. 195). For example, when I asked a question and some decided to tell a whole life story, I just allowed them to tell their stories while I listened for some time. Almost all were interviewed in their local dialects which I understand and can speak. I sat with them on floors where benches were not available and interviewed them. As far as I can tell, they conversed freely with me about things that had happened or were happening in their families that made them to come to live on the street and how they managed their lives on the street.

The interviews were an interaction between me and a single child at a time. It was at one-on-one level and face-to-face. There was no separate note-taker or translator. Face-to-face interviews offer the possibility of modifying one's line of enquiry, following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motives (Robson, 2002 p. 272 - 273). 'Non-verbal cues may give messages which help in understanding the verbal response, possibly changing or even, in extreme cases, reversing its meaning' (Robson, 2002 p. 272 - 273). It was very interesting to talk with the Street Children when they finally accepted me, trusted me and could easily run to me and converse with me any time I went to them.

The manner in which some of the Street Children answered some of the questions prompted me to probe further or to go back to observe again some aspects of the children's responses. Children answered the questions in ways they felt most appropriate for them and had some choice over how they replied. I picked up on things said by the children to probe for further clarification. As O'Leary observes, this helped to get the information I wanted and enabled me to get some interesting and unexpected data (O'Leary, 2010 p. 195). The open-ended style of questioning provided powerful access to the interviewees' views, interpretations of events, understandings, experiences, feelings and opinions (Silverman, 2006 p. 114).

Using the semi-structured form of interviewing gave the Street Children the opportunity to talk about their worries to someone who wanted to listen. Silverman emphasizes that 'qualitative interviewing has been particularly attractive to researchers who want to explore voices and experiences which they believe have been ignored, misrepresented or suppressed in the past' (Silverman, 2006 p. 114).

The difficulty with the semi-structured interviewing of the Street Children was that some of them answered an open-ended question by talking for a long period, telling the whole of their life story. Flick observes that the interviewer faces the problem of deciding if and when to probe in greater detail and to support the interviewee if roving far afield, or when to return to the interview guide when the interviewee is digressing (Flick, 2009 p. 171). I wanted to

hear their stories. Their stories were important to me and to them: they have found someone who is interested in their plight and wants to listen to them. When the conversation was going smoothly and flowing between me and the children, it became hard and awkward to interrupt with another question and, when I did not interrupt in a skilful way to continue with the interview, some children could keep on talking for the rest of the day; as Robson warns, a situation can arise where the interviewer says that the interview will take half an hour but then keeps on going for an hour and a half (Robson, 2002 p. 273).

Sometimes it was not me, as the interviewer, who talked to prolong the interview session but the Street Child rather, who was involved in pouring out his/her heart. Of course, the Street Child knows of the period of the interview session but may not know of the number of questions I will be asking. So it is actually up to the interviewer to balance the time well between one question and the next, which is difficult to do practically. Flick (2009) warns that it might interrupt the interviewee's account at the wrong moment to turn to the next question on the interview guide, instead of taking up the topic and trying to get deeper into it. Whenever I realized that the interview was taking too long, I stopped my tape recorder, and asked the Street Child whether it was alright with him/her to continue with the interview or whether to continue another day. But even where to stop and ask this question without interrupting the conversation of the child was not easy. It is even more awkward to keep on referring to your interview guide to ask every next

question. To avoid this I tried to memorize my questions as much as possible. The danger here was the likelihood of forgetting one or two questions when the conversation became interesting and then trying to ask them at any other appropriate time later during the interview.

Interviews were time consuming, from the preparation period of contacting organizations which work with Street Children, getting permission from the officials from these organizations to interview, to visiting the settings of the Street Children several times before establishing rapport to interview them.

### **3. 8. Methods of data Analysis**

#### **3. 8. 1. Recording and transcribing**

I used an audio recorder to record the interviews in Ewe, Twi, Ga and Krobo languages. These are some Ghanaian languages which respondents understand and can speak as well as me. At the beginning of each interview, I pressed the start button on my digital recorder and it recorded every conversation between the particular child and me. Immediately after each interview, I put the recorder in my computer, played what I recorded and transcribed, translating it into English. I did this to each interview until I transcribed these audio-recorded interviews I had with all the Street Children and the organisations that work with them, verbatim and manually. Analysis was ongoing from the start of the fieldwork, as soon as I had gathered some data. Conducting the interviews and their transcription went concurrently to avoid the dangers of procrastination. I transcribed any interviews I had conducted before setting out to conduct new ones. The fieldwork was done in

two major stages, so the first batch of the transcription was done during the first stage of the fieldwork. Transcribing the tape-recorded interviews from the first-stage fieldwork enabled my Supervisors and I to thoroughly examine the quality of the interviews and what the children said. We discussed the emerging themes. I developed ideas which helped in my preparation for the second stage fieldwork and helped to improve subsequent interviews with children during the second round of fieldwork.

Conducting the interviews, translating and transcribing them myself brought me closer to the data. I had become so familiar with the stories of the children that I started identifying key topics and became aware of similarities and differences in their accounts. As soon as I picked a transcript, I pictured the child, his/her gestures during the interview and the particular place of the interview in the setting. Another benefit of the transcript is that I can re-use data from my transcripts in other ways in future. Also, Bryman (2008) notes that 'recording and transcribing interviews opens up the data to public scrutiny by other researchers, who can evaluate the analysis that is carried out by the original researchers of the data' (Bryman, 2008 p. 451).

### **Some approaches to data analysis**

There are different kinds of CAQDAS (Computer-assisted analysis of qualitative data) packages. Main stream packages include ETHNOGRAPH, NUD\*IST (Non-numerical, Unstructured Data Indexing, Searching and Theorizing) and ATLAS (Silverman 2005, p. 200). I did not use the CAQDAS

packages because I thought my respondents were not too many so it was better to work manually. Working manually also allowed me to be conversant with my data. Apart from the software packages, there are general strategies of qualitative data analysis. Among them are:

- Grounded theory – It is an approach to the generation of theory out of data. The approach is recursive, as it is sometimes called, meaning that data collection and analysis proceed in tandem, repeatedly referring back to each other (Bryman, 2008, p. 541). The primary aim of this study is not the generation of theory. This is why I did not use this approach.
- Analytical Induction – It is an approach to data analysis of data in which the researcher seeks universal explanations of phenomena by pursuing the collection of data until no cases that are inconsistent with hypothetical explanation (deviant or negative cases) of phenomenon are found (Bryman, 2008, p. 539).
- Conversation analysis – Emphasis is placed less on the analysis of the contents of a conversation and more on the formal procedures through which the contents are communicated and certain situations are produced (Flick, 2009, p. 335).
- Qualitative content analysis – Content analysis is one of the classical procedures for analyzing textual material no matter where this material comes from; ranging from media products to interview data. One of its essential features is the use of categories, which are often derived from theoretical models: categories are brought to the empirical material and not



necessarily developed from it, although they are repeatedly assessed against it and modified if necessary. The goal here is to reduce the material (Flick, 2009, p. 323 ). As stated, one of the essential features of this approach is that categories are brought to the empirical material and not necessarily developed from it, but with this study, categories are developed from the empirical data.

- Narrative analysis - It is a term that covers quite a wide variety of approaches that are concerned with the search for and analysis of the stories that people employ to understand their lives and the world around them. It has become particularly prominent in connection with the life history or biographical approach. However, narrative analysis is not exclusively concerned with the elucidation of life histories. The term narrative analysis is often employed to refer both to an approach - one that emphasizes the examination of the storied nature of human recounting of lives and events- and to the sources themselves - that is, the stories that people tell in recounting their lives. Narrative analysis entails sensitivity to: the connection in people's accounts of past, present, and future events and states of affairs; people's sense of their place within those events and states of affairs; the stories they generate about them; and the significance of context for the unfolding of events and people's sense of their role within them. It is the ways that people organize and forge connections between events and the sense they make of those connections that provides the raw material of narratives analysis (Bryman 2008, p. 553).

### **3. 8. 2. Thematic analysis**

My approach intends to provide a framework for the thematic analysis of qualitative data and provides one way of thinking about how to manage themes and data (Bryman, 2008 p. 555). Framework strategy is employed in conducting thematic analyses of qualitative data. It is an approach developed at the National Centre for Social Research in the UK (Bryman, 2008 p. 554). 'Framework is described as a 'matrix based method for ordering and synthesising data' (Ritchie et al., 2003 p. 219; Bryman, 2008 p. 554). 'The idea is to construct an index of central themes and subthemes, which are then represented in a matrix that closely resembles an SPSS spreadsheet with its display of cases and variables. The themes and subthemes are essentially recurring motifs in the text that are then applied to the data. The themes and subthemes are the product of a thorough reading and rereading of the transcripts or field notes that make up the data. This framework is then applied to the data, which are organized initially into core themes, and the data are then displayed in terms of subthemes within the matrix and for each case' (Bryman, 2008 p. 554).

Transcribing the tape-recorded interviews from the first-stage fieldwork enabled my Supervisors and me to thoroughly examine the quality of the interviews and what the children said. We discussed the emerging themes. I developed ideas which helped in my preparation for the second stage fieldwork and helped to improve subsequent interviews with children during the second round of fieldwork.

As stated earlier, during the examination of the first stage of fieldwork, I realised that there were some emerging themes. I examined these emerging themes and upon these, I developed ideas which helped in my preparation for the second stage of fieldwork, thus, already developing themes from the data.

After the second stage of the fieldwork, I read through all the transcripts and field notes thoroughly for both stage one and two fieldworks and identified key themes that ran through all the transcripts of the children and the field notes I recorded concerning the research question. The themes were consistent and this was reassuring. For example, almost all the children talked of the importance of friendship networks on the street and I observed how they helped each other. Developing these themes and their subthemes enhanced my understanding of the data. I then organized the data around the key themes identified. I wrote the themes down as analytical categories and assigned a particular colour to each of the themes. I then went back to the transcripts individually and coloured what the children said concerning these themes and what I saw concerning these themes. For example, yellow was used for the importance of friendship and sibling networks on the street, blue for poverty of their families and children trying to make money on the street etc. Colouring was done on the screen not on hard copy. I then opened separate word documents for each key theme.

I picked a key theme, went through all the transcripts and used the yellow for all that the children said about the importance of friendship and sibling

networks, I then copied all these statements with the yellow and pasted them in the Word document created for the theme, importance of friendship and sibling networks on the street. I did this for all the key themes and have different documents for each core theme with excerpts from the transcript. This helped in organizing the data and I felt at ease working with the separate documents containing the excerpts for the categories instead of the hitherto large, cumbersome data that was in front of me. The framework is then applied to data in each of these documents, which are organised initially into core themes, and the data are then displayed in terms of subthemes in a table. An example is the table below used for representing the data on the theme economic difficulty of parents. The subthemes are represented in the table with brief excerpts from the data from five Street Children placed under them in the appropriate cell.

**Theme** = Economic difficulty of parents

**Subthemes** = Difficulty of parents in providing economic support and

Work at home to support oneself and parent

<b>Street Children</b>	<b>Difficulty of parents in providing economic support</b>	<b>Work at home to support oneself and parent</b>
FW1SC6	My father was fighting with my mother over us the children. He said he lost his job. He was not able to provide school fees so my mother asked me to stop the school for the mean time so that when she gets money I will continue. There was no money for food at home and a lot of problems. It was during this time that I ran away from home to this place (FW1SC6: 2).	
FW1SC8	I was an apprentice learning how to sew but there was no money so I stopped to come and look for some money and go back to continue my	

	apprenticeship (FW1SC8: 2).	
FW1SC9	My parents do not have money. So I have come to work and get some money so that when our results are out, I can get some money to go to Senior Secondary School (High School) (FW1SC9: 2).	
FW2SC1		In our area where we were living at home, we normally went to the bush and bring firewood home to sell for money for school. So when my friend said we could work when we travel to Accra, I was convinced and followed him. When we came to Accra, he stole something and went back home (FW2SC1: 4).

FW2SC11		<p>We were going to Mankesim from Eyemen to work and get money for school. We were going to Mankesim every Saturday to work. We were carrying loads for people. It was after doing that for sometime that we decided to come to Accra. So in Accra, a friend told me that he works with the blind so I also started working with them. If I get money I will go home. (FW2SC11: 2 &amp; 5).</p>
---------	--	---

Table 2

I continued with the analysis and the writing up by presenting and discussing (interpreting) some of the interview excerpts showing the viewpoints of the children concerning how they experience their lives as Street Children under the various analytical categories.

The thematic approach is the most appropriate for my data. This method of data analysis allowed the reduction of the massive data sets into separate

documents containing the excerpts for the categories. Referring, picking and using the separate documents then is easier. The approach has helped to construct an index of central themes and subthemes.

### **3. 9. Consent and Confidentiality**

#### **3. 9. 1. Informed consent**

Even though this research is with children, they are children between the ages of 10 and 17. This group of children were able to say "no" or "yes" to being part of the research. As Street Children they are not under the control of their parents or any perceived adult. Their consent was therefore sought directly. Robson (2002) argued that the child will be able to appreciate at least something of what is involved and should be asked directly, in addition to the parent (Robson, 2002 p. 70). I informed them about the research and its purpose. I thoroughly explained to them why I am interested in doing my research with them. I made them aware that by narrating certain past issues which made them come to live on the streets, they may feel bad about the story. I informed them that observations will be carried out on their day-to-day behaviour. They did not appear to have any concerns about this. Some were concerned that I should not show them and their activities on national television. Some who ran away from home were not ready to be sent back. They did not want their whereabouts to be known and I promised them I will keep it secret. They were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time.



### **3. 9. 2. Confidentiality and Privacy**

Particular attention was paid to the issue of privacy due to the nature of the setting on the street. During our interviews, each child helped in choosing an appropriate place for us to conduct the interview, a little bit away from other Street Children and street dwellers. I assured them that whatever they told me would remain confidential. There was no situation where they for example told me of causing harm to themselves or another person, but there were situations where I had to link them to resources for some help, for example medical help.

At the beginning of each interview, I discussed with the children their freedom to either or not tell me their names. All of them mentioned their names to me, perhaps trusting that I said whatever they told me would remain confidential. Trust did not come easily though. For reasons of anonymity, pseudonyms have been used in place of the real names of the children. All the individual names in the thesis are names that can be found in Ghana but none are the names of children involved in the research.

With the organisations, I asked their permission to include their names in the thesis. These organisations will receive feedback about the research. Some specifically said they would be happy if I made available to them a copy of the thesis on completion. My belief is that the findings of the research may help the organisations in their work with the children. Feedback may then reach the children through these organisations who work with them.

Permission was sought from the School of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Nottingham. I completed an ethical clearance form which was approved.

To protect myself and my participants, I introduced myself personally and with an introductory letter from my Supervisors and with a short outline of the research explaining my research to the Social Welfare Department, which oversees the general welfare of people in the country. I also introduced myself to the Social Work Department of the University of Ghana, and also some organisations that work with Street Children in Ghana; one of these Organisations is the Children's Department under the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs. The Children's Department under the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs is the principal government institution for advancing the general welfare and development of children. It has the country's key advocacy role relating to children's rights and is the institution charged under the National Action Plan to monitor the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the child. The other organisation to which I introduced myself was Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS), a prominent NGO working with Street Children in Ghana. This Organisation introduced me to my first setting. They work with and help Street Children in this setting and others and supported me in doing my fieldwork with these children, as I have described earlier in this chapter. During my fieldwork periods, I occasionally briefed the above-mentioned departments on the progress of my work.

### **3. 10. Conclusions**

Bearing in mind that the subject of my research, the Street Children, posed a challenge for the organisation of qualitative research, I am reasonably satisfied that I made some progress in addressing my research purposes of understanding the varied, changing and complex lives which I saw around me. Of course, given the great numbers of Street Children in Accra and thus of different settings, my sample is small. But I have no reason to suppose that they are not typical of the majority. I have to admit that I was not fully prepared for the sheer complexity of the feelings of anxiety and dismay which their experiences would arouse in me. However, I believe that this in itself deepened my understanding.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Home Circumstances and Accommodation on the street**

#### **4. 1. Introduction**

This chapter begins the analysis of data gathered through interviewing twenty-five Street Children in the study settings in Accra, Ghana. The starting point is the development of emerging themes from interviews in the first and second stages of my fieldwork in relation to the over-arching research question of the study: how and in what ways Street Children try to survive and cope with their lives on the streets. Discussions and analysis of data in this chapter focus attention on answering the question: what earlier family/home experiences have been factors in bringing Street Children to the streets? This is discussed under two broad analytic categories: poverty or economic difficulties/hardship and neglectful and abusive families. The chapter also addresses the question: how Street Children occupy places and spaces on the street after leaving home and what freedoms and constraints do they perceive in their lives in sleeping on the street instead of their homes? This is discussed under the broad analytic category: Accommodation on the street, with sub-categories: occupying space and place to sleep, constructing boys' and girls' places and control over own lives.

## **4. 2. Home Circumstances of Street Children**

### **4. 2. 1. Poverty or Economic difficulties/hardship**

Poverty has direct effects on children. When poverty is entrenched in families, children are exposed to hardship at very early stages of life. Some never go to school, others drop out of school and apprenticeship without gaining a certificate and finally end up inhabiting the street. Findings from the research show that issues of poverty in some of the Street Children's families lie at the heart of their living on the streets instead of their homes. Findings from this research also support Brooks-Gunn and Duncan's findings that family income seems to be strongly related to children's ability and achievement-related outcomes (Brook-Gunn, 1997).

Although some of the respondents said they were running away from abusive parents, irresponsible parents and chaotic families, a number of them specifically complained of economic hardships at home which made them to come and live on the streets. Some of the children said their parents were finding it difficult to look after them, hence they moved from home to the cities in search of greener pastures. The children expressed their experiences of home prior to their coming to the street in the following excerpts:

*My father was fighting with my mother over us the children. He said he lost his job. He was not able to provide school fees so my mother asked me to stop the school for the mean time so that when she gets money I will*

*continue. There was no money for food at home and a lot of problems. It was during this time that I ran away from home to this place (FW1SC6: 2).*

*I was an apprentice learning how to sew but there was no money so I stopped to come and look for some money and go back to continue my apprenticeship (FW1SC8: 2).*

*My parents do not have money. So I have come to work and get some money so that when our results are out, I can get some money to go to Senior Secondary School (High School) (FW1SC9: 2).*

*My parents got divorced. When they divorced, my mother was not able to pay my school fees. So she asked me to stop the school which I did. So when I stopped, I told my mother that I wanted to come to live with my brother who is in charge of this corn mill (pointing to a wooden structure housing a corn mill). So when I came to my brother, I decided to get involved in carrying of loads/luggage in order to give the money I will be getting to him to keep for me so that I can go back to school. I thought of this and realized it will help me so I started being by the road and helping people carry their luggage (FW1SC2: 2).*

Respondents reported that their parents were finding it difficult to look after them, to pay their school fees, keep them in apprenticeship, and provide them with their everyday meals. In short they were unable to provide

economic support so they decided to move out of home. Almost all the children in this study migrated from the rural areas of the country and from the three regions found in the northern part of the country (Northern, Upper East, and Upper West regions) which are confronted with, as stated in chapter one, deteriorating social and economic conditions as well as limited opportunities or prospects (UNDP, 2007, p. 27). Difficulties in obtaining secure livelihoods for many people and children who originate from these areas could contribute to the inability of the parents to provide food and items needed for their children's schooling. A child can see and comprehend when their parents are struggling to provide for their day to day upkeep.

Back at home, some were working to support themselves at school, so when they heard that they could get a lot of work in the cities and get money, they thought that they could come to the street and work. The following are experiences of some of the children who were already trying to help their parents to get money to look after them and have moved on to the cities with the thought that it would be easier or better than home.

*In our area where we were living at home, we normally went to the bush to bring firewood home to sell for money for school. So when my friend said we could work when we travel to Accra, I was convinced and followed him. When we came to Accra, he stole something and went back home (FW2SC1: 4).*

*We were going to Mankesim from Eyemen to work and get money for school. We were going to Mankesim every Saturday to work. We were carrying loads for people. It was after doing that for some time that we decided to come to Accra. In Accra, a friend told me that he works with the blind, so I also started working with them. If I get money I will go home. (FW2SC11: 2 & 5).*

The above excerpts are taken from the interviews undertaken with the Street Children and illustrate how poverty/economic hardship is a crucial factor in understanding why those children who face poverty/economic hardship at home, drop out of school and apprenticeship and finally end up on the street. Eighteen out of the twenty five children involved in this study started formal education but dropped out on the way at various levels; one of them started an apprenticeship and dropped out after a year. Six of them reported never being to school, all with excuses of their parents not being able to look after them. This supports UNICEF's 2009 Ghana report, referred to in chapter one, which indicates that most Street Children have never attended, or have dropped out of school (UNICEF, 2009). Indeed in this study, a greater number were found to have started but dropped out of school.

Directly related to the difficulty of parents in providing economic support for children is children's work to support themselves and their parents. As stated above, some of the children were already involved in working for money to take care of themselves in their villages and decided to move on to Accra for more work and money but also, their experiences of family life styles, as narrated by some of them suggest that parents/relations force their



involvement in work, but their earnings do not come to them directly. According to the findings of this study, some parents allow their children to work for other people and the children do not get the reward for their labour but, rather, their parents collect any wage due to them. From what the children say, some of the parents do not use the wages they have worked for, for their benefit. Some of the children in the study were sent by their parents to go and live and work for people in towns, regions or countries different from the familiar environment of the child. The children found these kinds of arrangements difficult. Children express their experiences in the following passages:

*I would not have come to live on the street, did I not have to go and live with someone for three solid years; the person gave my mother money and a sewing machine to put me into sewing apprenticeship. My mother refused to do that. I prefer to be here (that is on the street) (FW2SC2: 11).*

*Another boy says; the first reason of coming to live on the street has to do with my father. My mother is dead. When my mother died, I was living with my grandmother that is my mother's mother. My father came and introduced himself to me as my father. After my grandmother confirmed that he was my father, he took me to live with him at Akosombo. He said he would educate me, so I followed him. When I came to my father, I was working with him. I kept on asking him to send me to school. The answer was always, I will send you, just have patience. He was saying this until one day he made me go to live with somebody else and told me that the man would send me to school. I*

*asked him why someone else should send me to school. He told me the person owes him. I did not know he had collected money from the person and gave me to the person to work for the money he had collected. I kept on asking the man I was living with why he did not send me to the school. Whenever I asked, the man would say not until my father came. Once, I called my father and told him what the man was saying. My father answered me and said I had one more year to live with the man after which he would come for me. I exercised patience until the one year was over. After this one year, my father collected another sum of money from the man and asked me to live with the man for another four years (FW2SC6:2).*

In this kind of arrangement it appears as if the father sold the services of the child for some amount of money unknown to the child. (Among the Ewes in the Volta Region of Ghana, this arrangement is called 'aworba').

The children's stories suggest that some parents get them involved in occupations at too early a stage. A reason provided by the children explaining why they ran away from home was when the work became too difficult for them. When I questioned the boy in the above excerpt about how old he was when he started working with his father, the following was his answer:

*I was only three years old when I started working with my father. We were going fishing. I told you how my father made me suffer. As small as I was, my father was sending me fishing. He would leave me in the river, tell me to try and swim to the bank. He said he was teaching me how to swim and fish.*

*It was a very difficult time. Oh yes. You see even two year olds were going fishing. When my father left me in the river I would try, get some tree and hang on it for sometime, rest a little, and target another tree and hang on until I get to the bank of the river (FW2SC6:3).*

Children's work with their parents in some Ghanaian societies is taken to be a form of socialization to prepare them for their future jobs. For example boys are trained in fishing, farming, carpentry, mentioned earlier in the literature review (chapter one) (UNICEF 2009), and girls also receive training from their mothers, for example, in trading, bead making, sewing and hairdressing. The boy in the above excerpt was concerned about the age at which he said his father started going fishing with him. He appeared not to see going to fishing with the father as a form of training preparing him for adulthood, but as suffering. He narrated with more pain his stay and experience with another man that his father made him to live with and work for, for some years as the father collected money from the man. This boy is fourteen years old now. It was his immediate older brother who rescued him from continuing to work with the man his father sent him to (FW2SC6:3).

#### **4. 2. 2. Neglectful and Abusive Families**

Accounts of children suggest that because of bad and troublesome home lives, and living in chaotic, neglectful and abusive families, the children cannot find love and care at home. They are confused about what was going on between them and their parents, and also between their parents (father and

mother). Some Street Children may want to return home but because they are angry with their parents, they prefer to stay on the street. Their narratives show that some parents actually disown their own children and the children become confused as to where they belong. They feel abandoned by their parents and look for acceptance somewhere else on the street either from adults or from relationships with other neglected children with whom they can identify.

(i) Rejected or disowned by parents

The street boy in the following excerpt decided not to go home to his mother because she disowned him:

*When I go home, I do not go to my real home. When I go, I stay in a friend's house close to my mother's house. I am angry with my mother because one time as a boy I did 'galamsay' (illegal mining) work with a friend at Obuasi and he gave me GH¢20.00. My mother said something about the money and I was angry. She told me if I was annoyed, then I was no more her child. She did not give me money for food. I got angry with her and said I would no more live with her. Even when I go to Kumasi and she sees me, she passes by me. I spoke to her and I thought she would reply, but she did not and she passed me by (FW2SC1: 8, 27 & 28).*

Another street child in the following excerpt felt rejected by his mother when he said: *I was living in Koforidua when I came to the street. They came for me and sent me home. I was then sent to my mother in Aflao but my mother*

*said she does not like me because I am a thief. That is why I have come to live on the street.* This kind of neglect by biological parents may be disruptive to the development of children and could force them to leave home.

Physical abuse from parents and sometimes extended relations also contributed to children's running away to the street. Many Ghanaian families correct the child through caning and some children said they ran away from home because of beatings. They said the following about beatings:

*My father was beating me for every little thing, that is why I run away from home (FW2SC4: 2).*

*A girl says: My father used to beat me mercilessly. All these scars you find on me are from my father's beatings. I used to run away from home whenever he beat me (FW2SC5: 3).*

*Another girl says: My Aunt sent me to sell some items, when I sold them, the money from the sales got lost. I was afraid and therefore refused to go home. Anytime I go out to sell items and any amount gets missing, my Aunt beats me up. So this time round I was afraid and decided not to go home until I had looked for the money. It was when I was in town that I met Amenuveve and she suggested that we come here and look for money. When we came here, we met a sister of Amenuveve and Sitsofe who gave us money for food (FW2SC8:2).*

(ii) Not having clear sense of where they belong

Confusion in the lives of some parents cause children to see themselves as unwanted people in the family. They become bewildered as to who actually they are supposed to live with and who is to love and care for them. When they find it difficult to get answers to these questions, they move out of home. The following is what a street boy has to say about his confusion when he was asked why he stopped schooling:

*I was living with my Uncle while I was attending school. My father complained that he was not around when my uncle came for me. So he came back for me. He brought me to his hometown at Abaasa. He then went to marry at Mankesim and sent me to his wife to live with her. I was doing my best to help my step mother but she kept complaining about me to my father. Anytime she complained to my father, my father would beat me. It came to a time she would not allow me to use anything in the house. Our neighbour was giving me a bucket to bath, food to eat and so on. So I got fed up and ran away from home (FW2SC4: 1).*

From the child's point of view, his treatment is unjust. The story shows that the father, although in authority over this child, later showed little or no responsibility for his upbringing and leaves the actual job of caring for his son to the step mother.

Some Street Children were confused about life at home. They could not understand certain things that were going on and no one seemed to explain anything to them even when they tried to talk about them to parents or the

adults in the family. To them, no one understood their feelings. The excerpts that follow depict some examples of confusions children experienced at home prior to coming to the street:

*I do not know my father. My mother lives in Kumasi at a place called Kwamu. She can get very angry and beat me anyhow. The other time when she beat me, I got fed up and answered back. So she is annoyed with me. My mother is newly married with twins. But she kept on moving with another man which I did not like. She was always with this man and would come home late. I reported this to my step father but he told me that I was telling lies and that I want my mother to leave me to become a bad boy. I said alright and I left, as I never liked the idea of my Mum being a married woman and having a boyfriend (FW2SC1: 25).*

*This girl says: I was living with the mother of the sister who brought me to the street. My father was married to her mother. They are divorced and my father is married to another woman. I do not know my mother. I learnt he brought me to this sister's mother when he came to marry her (FW1SC5:5).*

This is the experience of this girl who does not know her mother and her father will not explain anything to her. He brought this girl into his new marriage and she grew up with this new wife and when the relationship between her father and his wife ended, he left his daughter with this woman and her family. The girl does not understand what is going on. She is confused about parental caring roles. And she does not know where she is

heading in her life. This Street Child and others like her have no clear sense of where they belong which is essential to normal development with a secure sense of identity.

These accounts show how unhappy and dissatisfied Street Children were at home, which contributed to their being on the street. The discussions add to previous studies' findings that some Street Children came from poverty stricken backgrounds (Agarwal et al 1997; Korboe 1997; De-Graft Aikins & Ofori Atta, 2007). Some were neglected by their parents either physically or emotionally and some came from broken homes (Apt, Blavo and Opoku, 1991; Korboe, 1997). Parton (1995), however argues that 'families characterized as neglectful can be recharacterised as families in need once the effects of disadvantage and deprivation are taken into account' Parton 1995 in (Daniel, 1999, p. 29). Thus, although this part of the analysis shows the great difficulties which many of the children experience in their own families, these difficulties are often inseparable from the economic and social problems which affect their parents.

#### **4. 3. Living places for Street Children**

##### **4. 3. 1. Accommodation on the street**

Most of the children when they conceived the thought of going to live on the street said they did not think of where they were going to sleep before starting their journeys from the rural areas. In the cities they become homeless and then faced with all kinds of hazards including health issues.



Some individual or agency explanations of homelessness appear to consider these individual children as being responsible for their homelessness and hence guilty and blameworthy. They may also be considered to have become homeless because of personal failures or inadequacy, for which they cannot be held responsible (such as mental illness or trauma). The children may then be considered 'to be in need of humanitarian assistance, usually casework or psychiatric treatment, in order for them to function. This is a victim-blaming approach' (Neale, 1997). A structural explanation as to why some Street Children are homeless is as important as agency explanations. Structural explanations argue that the reasons for the homelessness of these Street Children are located beyond them as individual children, in macro-socio-economic factors such as the housing and labour markets. Panter-Brick (2004), observes that 'it is poverty that matters for health, not homelessness per se or involvement in street activities' (Panter-Brick, 2004). Even though some street children have become fully aware of the challenges of street life, they find it difficult to stay at home and watch their parents struggle in vain to get them food and other basic necessities of life. As will be discussed later, a few even try hard to make some money on the street and send some home to their parents no matter how small the amount.

(i) Occupancy of space and place to sleep

Street Children move about a good deal. They move from street to street, area to area and setting to setting but some do occasionally colonize or settle down at particular places for a period of time before moving on again. Getting

a place to settle after leaving home is a difficult situation for anyone. In their homes, some Street Children might have been treated as children or young people who needed care and shelter from adults. Once they are out of home and on the street, they try to assume or are forced by circumstances to assume maturity prematurely. They find themselves in an ambivalent situation, neither children nor adults, and as Mathews aptly describes them: 'persons who are not quite adult but no longer a child' (Mathew, 2003). At night they occupy and sleep at bus stations, open markets, and shop corridors and in the day time, they walk along and hang around the streets, shopping areas and markets looking for jobs to do to be able to get some money for food. Sometimes, they are driven away from areas they occupy. At other times people ignore their presence. Street Children tend to like to stay in places where adults do not keep on driving them away or interfere with their lives, and to occupy places where they can get jobs and support, for example using the facilities of a drop-in centre.

When Street Children appear to be accepted at a particular place, they create a colony for themselves. As they are conscious of the fact that people do not like their presence, they try to get people to accept that they are not harmful. By necessity, they resist any new entrants who may come and make trouble for them. The following excerpt depicts what happens:

*The owner of this shop said he has asked us to leave this place several times but we have refused to go so he cannot do anything about it. However, he has warned us not to allow anybody to join us otherwise he will send us away.*

*So when we see any new persons trying to join us, we do not allow them to settle here. We drive them away (FW1SC6: 11).*

(ii) Constructing boy's and girl's places

Mathews' study shows that in seeking places to hang out, some girls suggested that their access to public space was constrained by the presence of boys (Mathews 2003). However, when it comes to sleeping time and space, the gendered sleeping pattern of Street Children is a complex one. While some of them are trying to imitate family life on the street by sleeping together with their boy/girl friends, others wished to sleep in groups of the same gender. But they may not be able to do so due to lack of space. They just have to cope with sleeping in the same place. In some settings where they have to sleep in mixed gendered groups, various arrangements were made between them. The Street Children in the following excerpt talk of the arrangements made in one of the settings where the boys and the girls without babies have to sleep on the seats of the bus terminal, and the girls with babies sleep on the floor of the sheds of the bus terminal:

*They sleep here with us (referring to the boys). It is because you came early that is why you did not see them. But one was sleeping when you were talking with Fafali. They were sleeping here, even before we came. They were sleeping on the floor. When we were sleeping at Tema station, the boys were sleeping at this bus terminal. We joined them when we were driven away from Tema station. When we were excluded from Tema station, the people*

*who oversee this terminal told the boys who were sleeping here that they could not leave us with our babies to sleep in the middle of the road. Overseers of the terminal told the boys that any of them who would like to continue to sleep at the terminal, should sleep on the seats so that we can sleep on the floor of the shades with our babies. That is how come they sleep on the seats with those girls who do not have babies and those of us who have babies sleep on the floor. The other patch of shade is full of boys (FW2SC7: 11).*

The above account shows that the girls were sleeping at a separate place until they were driven away and they had no other choice but to join the boys at their setting. The girl in the above excerpt and her colleagues had to readjust their sleeping arrangement when they were exposed to an adverse or vulnerable situation; when they were driven out of their sleeping place. Their babies might have made life more difficult for them, but at the same time, these babies serve as protection for their mothers because they appear to be part of the reason why the girls were accepted at the predominantly boys' setting, to sleep. The boys may not have got the same opportunity, faced with this risk, since they do not take the same responsibility for the babies. The situation of the girls appeared risky, when the overseers of the place they ran to for refuge told the boys that they could not leave the girls with their babies to sleep in the middle of the road. But street children look for ways to mitigate the risks that face them on the street. The girl and her friends were able to look around quickly to locate where they could move for safety, and

negotiated with the boys occupying the place, and the overseers of the place to sleep there with the boys. Practical arrangements of who sleeps where were made. In the context of exposure to significant adversity, whether psychological, environmental, or both, resilience is both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to health-sustaining resources, including opportunities to experience feelings of well-being, and a condition of the individual's family, community and culture to provide these health resources and experiences in culturally meaningful ways (Ungar, 2008, p. 225). The girl, (and possibly her peers), seemed to feel safe with the arrangements for sleeping with the boys at this setting.

Street Children also occupy spaces and hang out in groups of the same gender in particular settings, as a safety measure against assailants, as stated in the following excerpt: *No man comes here to disturb us. If any man comes to you it means you have discussed it with him already. Men know that if they come here to touch anybody, the person will shout and we will all beat the man up. And because we are many here, they are afraid to come* (FW2SC7: 9). Street girls are aware that they can be at risk of assaults from men including rape. They therefore group together to protect each other.

In addition, boys or girls, occupy particular setting in order to get food to eat: *In Osu, where I was living, we the boys sometimes contributed money and cooked our own food on some Sundays and ate the leftovers the following day* (FW2SC1: 14). They contribute money to cook partly because it is difficult for

one person to get money enough for cooking, and also because it is not easy for street children to purchase and keep cooking utensils. The boys are freer to enjoy their left over foods the following day rather than mixing with girls where they may feel shy eating leftover food.

Street Children also form groups, and give different names to their groups, according to the various places they occupy on the street. Street Children occupying the spaces of a particular setting see themselves differently from those in other settings. They name their areas either by the popular name of the setting or they give names to their areas by using the name of a popular feature in the setting: *But we have formed various groups depending upon the areas we find ourselves. Our area is different from other areas. We have divided ourselves into many groups. This place is different from other places. Our group here is called Obroni shower (Whiteman shower) (FW1SC5: 17).* The name is given because a Whiteman philanthropist has made a bathhouse for them. These groups are formed and differentiated from others either by the kinds of jobs they do, their places of origin, gender and so on. Some of the girls have negotiated with regular shoppers and relate well to them. They know where the shoppers park their cars, or the bus stations they use. They help the shoppers carry their loads to the extent that they have become their customers. They are the only people who will carry bags for these customers when they arrive at the bus stations or when they finish shopping. The following Street Child and her friends sleep at a particular bus terminal because they have managed to identify with some traders/shoppers who have

become their customers, who they fear to lose if they should go and sleep elsewhere: *We carry loads for some people who come to this bus terminal. If we go to sleep at Agbogbloshie, by the time we woke up and reached here, they would have asked somebody else to carry the loads for them. We would be losing our customers (FW2SC7: 10)*. All the girls in this group or at this place do the Kaya business and almost all of them originate from the northern parts of the country. They are powerfully united, have a strong sense of group identity, have positive relationships among them, feelings of well-being, and provide support for each other. For example they provide working tools for new entrants, give them directions; they keep watch over their peers' babies when they get jobs to do. This is discussed into detail in chapter 7.

Like any other human being, Street Children need to keep whatever they have in a shelter, even when they themselves do not have the opportunity of sleeping in one. When they get into a setting, they survey the setting to look for people who can help them survive. Street Children negotiate their way through by networking with other Street Children who have been in the area before them. They have managed to build relationships with Security men in the settings where they find themselves and keep their belongings with these Security men for safe-keeping. The Security men, in turn, charge them money for keeping these items safe. There is the practice in Ghana where some shop owners and industries employ the services of Security men to keep watch over their stock and properties. Often, the Security men and the Street Children come into contact because the Security men find themselves outside,

at work. They are either patrolling the areas of their work, in the streets, in the areas of where they are to keep watch. When Street Children are new in an area, and do not know anybody with whom they can keep their belongings, they carry them wherever they go and sleep with them when they go to sleep. Some even do not have anything to keep. The dresses they have on at a particular day and time are all that they have. Examples of these situations, discussed in the above paragraph, are in the following excerpts:

*I do not have anything. The one I am wearing is the only thing I have. When it is dirty, I will remove it, throw it away and buy new one. The one you have given me now, I do not know where to put it. I will put it in a carrier bag and hold it, carry it wherever I go, when I am going to sleep, I will put it under my carton bed and sleep on it. I bath at the shower, and pay, and if I want to wash my dress, I wash the top, leaving the bottom on me. When it is dry, I wear it. But when the bottom is dirty, I throw it away (FW2SC13: 5 & 6).*

*When you came, I carried some things to the place where I keep my things. It is beyond the General Post Office. There is someone I know there through my sister who was working with her. She sells hot food, so my sister was helping her. My sister has now gone back to our home town (FW2SC3: 8).*

*I wash them and hide them. Sometimes I give them to somebody to keep for me. When you keep them with somebody and you go to fetch them, they will charge you 20 pesewas (FW1SC3: 6).*



(iii) Control over own life

The street serves as a place where children and young people think they are free from adult control. They do whatever they feel like doing in the absence of adults, particularly their parents. When they work and gain money, it is for them and no adult can either take it from them or control how they spend it: the children can manage their money as they wish and with no restrictions whatsoever. 'Occupancy of the street, particularly with the exodus of adults after dark, enables young people to take on the fluid identity of the hybrid, person who are not quite adult but no longer child. The street represents a place on the margin, a location in which young people can establish their independence, display their ambivalence and set out their public identity' (Mathews, 2003). The child in the following excerpt wants her freedom from the control of her parents. She says:

*In the house, the insult and the beatings from my mother were too much. When she gives you one assignment, you will not complete that one before she tells you to stop that and do another one, and then another one, and then another one. You will have to be doing all the work she gives you to do at the same time. Here nobody forces me to do things. So I like it. At home I was waking up at dawn and doing a lot of work. When in the afternoon I become tired and want to sleep, I was not allowed to sleep. Here nobody will tell me not to sleep or to sleep. I do my own things. I buy my own food so no one can order me around (FW2SC2: 11 - 12).* It seems this child thinks her views and rights are not taken into consideration by her parents at home. Writing on the rights of children, this is an official of Department of Children's view to

buttress what this child has said: *There is a concept. Whether we like it or not, there is this funny concept that children are children, children do not have a say as far as their welfare is concerned and that adults decide for them. So this concept of exploitation: as far as the African or the Ghanaian is concerned, there is nothing wrong with using the services of a child. Children are to serve. Socio-culturally, people end up in polygamy because the more children you have the more hands you have to help you on the farm. Socially, psychologically, culturally we have the mindset that children must serve. It is acceptable that the child must serve. It is true we are asking for responsibilities but these are the extreme manifestations (DOC/MOWAC).*

This is how some children are treated in some African homes by their parents. Some parents appear to seem themselves as training their children. They may not consider themselves as maltreating their children, until perhaps they run away from home. The idea of respecting a child's rights is a very new concept and still controversial, and thinking about children's rights is relatively new in some African societies.

It is even more difficult when a child is living with a different family. People take children, particularly girls, from their parents, employ their services as house helps for example, and some maltreat them until they run away onto the street. This is how one of the officials I interviewed at Street Girl Aid (SGA) explained why children come to live on the street as maltreatment by an adult/s: *Some of them will tell you, I am being maltreated by a man I am*

*working for as a house help. Some of them also come from the city. It is not always migration, the man comes and tells you: I will take your daughter to come and serve me. I will take care of her and make her learn a trade. The girl comes and the maltreatment is too much. So she then leaves the house and the next point is the street (SGA).* Girls are victims of this kind of experience more than boys because in Ghana, girls are normally considered to be the ones who do the majority of the house chores, and therefore the ones asked for and given out as house helps in other families different from theirs. However, some girls are given into good and caring families, and experience positive developments in their lives. Some of these families help the girls to continue their education or apprenticeship which offers them better life.

Some of the children in this study rejected the idea of working for their parents without being paid. This is one of the reasons why they left home, whereas the street serves as a place for opportunities of working and being paid. They can utilize the opportunities opened to them and enjoy the freedom they long for. The following are the views of some Street Children on this issue:

*I was going to the farm with my parents. But they do not give me the money they get. So I am here to look for my own money (FW2SC3: 2).*

The Street Child in the following excerpts said she does not like to be controlled: *I am somebody who hates people lording things over me or*

*ordering me around. Here on the street, I am on my own. I am my own person. It is true that I am a 'koborlor' (rascal) here but I have my freedom. Nobody orders me around. I do what I like. At home, my mother shouts at me and orders me around. She was shouting at me and insulting me. Here I am free (FW2SC2: 9).*

*Nobody directs me. Here on the street, no one gives you orders. We do what we like. You see when even anyone wants to tell you what to do, we tell the person: 'look you have not brought me to the street here, so you have no right to order me around'. Nobody forces anybody here as to what to do (FW2SC2: 8).*

They are free from doing their parents work without any remuneration, free from their parents ordering them around, free to use the money they have worked for and free to do whatever they want to do. With the expression of these benefits in the above excerpts, one needs to be careful before saying that they are vulnerable for being homeless on the street. The children's expressions show that, some see sleeping on the street as influential in their taking control of their own lives, which they see as positive development. These opportunities and freedom however have adverse consequences. For, as Mathews argues 'streets are sites of latent contradiction for many young people, marginal places that are simultaneously dangerous and yet empowering' (Mathews, 2003).

#### **4. 4. Conclusion**

In summary, this chapter presents the Street Children's experiences of home prior to their coming to the street. For some, the poverty/economic hardship which they experienced included no money for school fees and needs, no money to continue apprenticeships, and no money for food. Many accounts were of neglect and/or abuse: children described parents disowning and rejecting them, experiences of family life styles, parents/relations forcing them to be involved in child labour, physical abuse from parents, and children confused about parental caring roles formed the history of their home experiences.

The chapter also concentrates on the accommodation of the children on the street. Street Children move about a good deal but some do occasionally settle down and sleep at particular places for a period of time before moving on again. They occupy spaces and hang out in groups of the same gender in order to support each other. They also form groups according to the various places they occupy and the kind of work they do on the street. Occupancy of the street by the children gives them freedom and thus the opportunity to control their own lives.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Day to Day Life on the Streets**

#### **5. 1. Introduction**

The previous chapter discussed the various reasons why children find themselves on the streets and their negotiations for accommodation on the street. This chapter continues with the analysis of the interview data, supported by observations gathered from the Street Children which focus around the questions: What kinds of works do Street Children engage in on the streets for their survival? What opportunities do they face in going about their life and work? What dangers, hazards and risks are embedded in their work? Are the works Street Children do gendered? What opportunities and constraints do they face in going about their life and work as girls or as boys? What do Street Children use their money for? The question of how children perceive their life on the street is also analysed.

#### **5. 2. Poverty and the struggle for survival**

As revealed in the previous chapter, many of the children are school dropouts and a few have never had any formal schooling. A number of them who dropped out of school said they had to do so because their parents said there was no money. Some said their parents could not provide them with food and other material resources. The children brave these developmental challenges of staying out of school, losing and missing their school mates and lack of food, by going out to look for money to either continue with their

schooling/apprenticeship or to save money for a more secure vocation or business which may impact positively on them. From peers, relations, those who have been to the cities before, they learned that they could work and get money in the cities. Most of the jobs they do on the street for money are not common in their places of origin. These include: head porter business, including running errands for market women (sweeping their shops, packing and unpacking goods), work with blind people, hawking in traffic, traffic direction, driver's mate, prostitution, making and selling fake phones, scrap business, begging for money, stealing and shop lifting. I learned about some of these jobs during interviews with the children: for example guiding blind people, making and selling of fake phones, traffic direction, and driver's mate business.

### **5. 2. 1. Trying to make money on the street**

Indeed, once they find themselves on the street, they try to make some money. Even those who did not come to the street because of poverty at home have to try to make some money to survive. They look round for any opportunities to get some money to enable them survive in a new environment.

For example, some try to make money by working with blind people. The following are excerpts from interviews with children, showing how they make money by working with the blind:

*When I arrived in Accra, I was wandering about. When I got to Cocoa Marketing Board (CMB), I did not know that is the name of the place. When I got there, a friend told me we should work with the blind. I asked what kind of job. He told me that I would guide a blind person by holding his/her hand and taking him to traffic lights to beg for money. Whatever the blind person gets from begging is divided into three parts. The blind person would get two thirds and I would get one third. I did this job for some time and realized it is a foolish job. So one day I ran away with a blind man's money and did not go back to do that kind of job again (FW2SC1: 6).*

*Every morning, you guide the blind person to traffic lights. So when the traffic lights stop the cars, I lead the blind person to the car and then he will beg the driver and the people in the car, and some give him money. When people give us money, we share it into three parts at the end of the day. The blind person takes two parts and I take one part. After work, we guide them to wash down and in the evening we guide them to where they sleep. This is what we do every day (FW2SC11: 18 & 19).*

*For a time, I stopped working with the blind and went to sell Bibles. I sold the small New Testaments. They were not buying the Bibles so I stopped and started working with the blind again (FW2SC11: 5 & 7).*

Before embarking on this research, I saw visually impaired people being guided by children on some of the roads in Accra and by traffic lights begging for money and thought the children were their own offspring. I thought the



cycle of poverty for the blind person's family would continue since their children are on the street with them, not in school or in any trade. However, the research revealed that children living on the streets help visually impaired people by leading them to busy roads and traffic lights to beg for money. It is a business, in which the child gets a part of the proceeds. Though the children get money from the visually impaired adults, the children also help the blind. They make life easier for the blind on the street in the absence of adequate state interventions. The state has two schools for the blind, one in the extreme north at Wa, and one in the south at Akwapim-Akropong. There is one other at Wenchi in the middle belt of the country which is integrated (that is for both sighted and the blind). This number of schools for the blind in the country is woefully inadequate. A number therefore grow up without employable skills. These then, find solace on the streets where they depend on the benevolence of city dwellers for a living, through begging, but they need the help of someone to lead them around to beg; hence the opportunity for Street Children to make money. From morning when they wake up till evening when they go to bed, these children guide them. This is a sort of adult company the children have found on the street and through which they gain mutual understanding and support. For a child to be able to do this, he/she must be loving and caring. This is one of the examples of 'altruism' between children and adults on the street.

Street Children know specific processes to employ at any given time and place on the street to survive. They have realised from experience with the blind on

the street their need for help to move around. The children fill this gap, by helping them with their movement while negotiating with them for some reward. They know some people would be sympathetic towards the blind. This work is particularly done by the boys. When asked, why she not, one street girl gave the impression that the girls feel shy about standing begging for money with a visually impaired man/woman, who seems like their mother or father, by cars and commercial vehicles loaded with people. As the girls feel shy about involvement in the blind people's begging, more boys than girls are involved. The kinds of work they do could therefore be said to be gendered. Even though there are some jobs which are done by both sexes equally, males tilt towards some jobs, while females tilt towards others. For instance, none of the boys said he was involved in prostitution. Rather, prostitution was mentioned as a type of job the girls do for money in the following excerpts:

*The girls do prostitution. I see a lot of them stand by the roadside. They stand at the 'Two Face' spot around the cold store (FW2SC12: 9).*

*The work some of the girls do to get a lot of money is prostitution (FW2SC1: 10).*

*The girls do prostitution (FW2SC11: 5 & 7).*

*I mean they go to do prostitution. So some of the girls when they come onto the street and they get hard up, they join the others and get involved in prostitution. This is why I say being on the street is not good (FW1SC4: 16).*

Here, respondents were pointing to someone else; they refer to another Street Child. Only once in the observations, a seventeen year old girl pointed to herself as practising prostitution:

*If I tell you I have never done that kind of work, I would be telling you a lie. I was selling oranges, before I gave birth to my first child. I was selling the oranges until she started walking but my boyfriend was not looking after us. He was not giving us money for food, so I started the prostitution work. I was involved in prostitution until someone called me and told me it is not good and I stopped (FW2SC2: 6).*

Street Children, particularly the girls, engage in sexual activities for money and/or simply to survive. Some said that they have runaway from poverty at home, putting them in a vulnerable situation, needing to look for money desperately through varied ways. Some also said they needed money to look after their children. They are able to make some money out of this job. The boys said that the girls got a lot of money from prostitution.

However, engaging in sexual activity for money renders the girls more vulnerable than the boys to the risks that go with it. They are at risk of unintended pregnancies. Some find themselves in abusive sexual relationships which render them vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV and other health related problems. This observation confirms Ampofo's study, (2007), which examined the sexual exploitation of children on the streets of Accra and concluded that, once on the street, children, mostly girls, are

extremely vulnerable to sexual exploitation, including entry into commercial sex work. Vulnerability in relation to sex will be discussed further under health-related problems later.

Whilst the boys, more than the girls do blind people's business, and girls were reported to be practising prostitution, most children get involved in head porter work, (that is carrying loads on their heads for people for money). This business is popularly known as the "Kaya" or "Kayayoo" business. Both boys and girls are involved in this business but the processes by which they go about doing it differ between settings and sometimes by gender. In some settings like Tema Station, Makola and other market areas, the girls carry loads with pans on their head while a few carry loads such as bags of rice on their heads without pans. A major working tool in this setting is the pan. In some settings, younger teenage boys also carry loads with their heads, but teenage boys who are involved in the Kaya business use four-wheel trucks or carts to carry the loads. With these tools, they carry more loads at a go than the girls and do not exert too much pressure on their heads and necks. They may also get more income than the girls on the days of less traffic in the shopping centres. As an aspect of this same Kaya business, teenage boys do loading and off loading of heavy goods such as bags of rice, flour and cement from articulated trucks into shops/warehouses and from warehouses to distribution vans. *A boy told me: I do rice work. We carry it to shops (FW1SC11:3).* They exert a lot of energy in doing this kind of work which may

lead some of them into taking of drugs particularly marijuana to get strength leading them on the way of substance abuse and risking their health.

A few try to carry out buying and selling on the street. Some run errands for market women and shop keepers as described in the following excerpts:

*Some of the boys sell cigarettes that I talked about. Some carry loads for people. When some get money, they buy things like PK (chewing gum), shirts and sell to get profit. Sometimes a shop keeper can select one Street Child to be sweeping her shop for him/her. In the morning you go and sweep and in the evening you go and sweep and she gives you something like GH¢2.00 Also, some of the girls do go to Labadi to help the women who sell fried yam there. They help them by peeling the yam for them and the women give them money (FW2SC1: 10).*

The jobs in the excerpt do not pose much hazard to the children involved, except the fatigue they may go through. They are not illegal jobs. They are jobs that even non-street children may do as part time jobs when schools are closed. But, as said before, these are jobs the children cannot access easily in their villages. They are only available at places where there are big markets and shops, in the cities. They therefore navigate towards where they can access these jobs in the cities, hence living on the street. With shop keepers paying a street child to sweep his/her shops and helping women in their food cooking businesses, girls more than boys are employed. Those boys who are contracted do the most tedious parts of the job like pounding fufu (a local meal). This is because in the Ghanaian context, girls/women are the ones who are more responsible for house chores, including sweeping, cleaning and

cooking. The negotiations and processes of these employments are discussed under the relationships street children build with adults for survival in chapter 7.

Selling ice water (a bottle or sachet of chilled water) is a very lucrative job in the urban areas of Ghana for both Street and non-Street Children especially when the weather is hot. Both boys and girls sell it but the study suggests that, girls more than boys are able to obtain it on credit from the market women. Due to the high temperatures and long traffic jams in the cities of Ghana, a lot of ice water is sold and bought in traffic, in markets and around town in general. This is one source of income for Street Children who can obtain the water on credit from those women who are willing to supply it to them. The following is how they go about this business:

*I sell pure water, but today because of the weather, I did not go to sell. They will not buy it in this wet weather. I do not buy it. It is down there in that shop with a certain woman. I go for it, sell it, give the woman's money to her and take my profit (FW1SC3: 4).*

*The whole pack of 30 sachets of pure water is GH¢1.40. When you sell the whole pack, you give the owner GH¢1.35 (FW1SC5: 7).*

Interviews with officials of one of the organizations in this research revealed the people behind the business of children selling ice water. They make the major profit: *You see them on the street out there, some of the girls sell ice water and we have people who are managing this business. They make the money. If you walk to Accra Central, you will see the police station there. All*

*the police wives have Deep Freezers in front of their small, small cubicles. They are the ones who earn the money. They buy the pure water from the car for 60 pesewas per pack. They give it out to the girls at GH¢1.20 pesewas. The girls sell it for GH¢1.50. The girls get 30 pesewas profit but the women get 60 pesewas (SGA).* The profit margin reported by SGA differs from the one described by a Street Child above. There is variation in what the children get as profit. It appears some of the market women from whom the children take the water give them very little money – 5 pesewas reported by the child as against 30 pesewas reported by SGA. Nevertheless, some children are able to make money out of this business, saving money as their reason for being on the street. They find it satisfying doing a genuine/acceptable business like this than being in their villages idling. This contributes to their experiences of resilience.

Those who sell the water in traffic however face some risks. For example the risk of being knocked down by vehicles. This is because they move to and fro through traffic and alongside moving vehicles. Any mistake from either the drivers or the children could result in children being knocked down by vehicles.

Those who run after vehicles searching for loads to carry for passengers face the same risk as those who sell water in traffic. Their popular 'head porter work' is sometimes done in a way that becomes hazardous. The following excerpt describes one of the risky things they do to get money:

*We run to the vehicles to carry people's loads. We struggle for the loads. Everybody wants to get a load to carry. We fight over the luggage; meanwhile, the vehicle is running. So we run after it, jump and stand on the bumper behind the vehicle to be able to carry the loads. I also run and jump onto people's vehicles and sometimes break the steps of the vehicles. Just yesterday I broke someone's. Sometimes the drivers beat us up. Other times they send us to the police station (FW1SC1: 12).*

The above activities can pose serious risks to the lives of the children who are involved. Those who carry loads for passengers chase the buses or vehicles as they pull into the bus stations. In one of the settings where only boys do this job, they run after the vehicles because it is he who gets there first who carries the load. The Street Child above runs and jumps onto peoples vehicles and sometimes breaks the steps of the vehicles. They themselves run the risk of being run over by vehicles as confirmed by observation data when I saw two boys who were knocked down by vehicles. *One boy's hand and leg were bandaged; his right arm was bandaged from the elbow down to the fingers. There was a big bruise from the shoulder to where the bandage started. The bruise was fading. Part of the wound on the leg was also bandaged and the healing part was showing. He was limping when he stood to show me his leg.* With the other boy the vehicle had run over his right foot. All five toes of the foot were crushed. He did not receive any treatment anywhere. The wounds were just open and bare. He had not seen the driver (Fieldwork journal, February 10, 2009). This is how vulnerable Street Children are to vehicles on roads and streets. They are knocked down by vehicles. They move along with



vehicles on the street. They work on the street and risk sustaining injuries while running after, sleeping under vehicles or when sitting or standing by road sides.

This load carrying business is however less risky, where the children do not run after moving vehicles but wait for vehicles to park before they carry the loads. But because they are many, as the boy in the above excerpt says, they struggle for the loads. At some of the settings where they carry loads, the children have arranged for some order in doing the work by introducing what they call 'hwaen ne ekor'. This is a term used by children who carry loads for people in Kaneshie. It means 'whose turn is it to carry the load'? Doing it this way is safer and more orderly.

Another work that only boys reported doing in this study is traffic direction, which enables them to earn some money. A boy describes his job in this excerpt: *You see the security dress? Do you see that yellow jacket that reflects? When you wear that jacket, you look for a flag to hold. Like at Osu, around Frankies, you go and stand there and when people drive there you direct them as to where to park if they do not get any parking place (FW2SC1: 13).* This looks like another risky thing they do to earn money. They are not trained traffic directors but they take advantage of the fact that, at certain times, traffic lights in Accra do not work or do not work properly and most shopping areas do not have enough parking space. Vehicles converge at the traffic lights with consequent confusion as to who should go

first. These Street Children immediately turn themselves into 'policemen' and traffic directors. This helps drivers but is dangerous to these children because a few drivers do not stop when the children signal them to do so. Directing people to park is a better and less risky job because it does not involve standing on a major road and directing vehicles to either stop or move.

Improvised driver's mate is one of the jobs of Street boys. In Ghana some teenage boys become commercial vehicle drivers by going through a driving apprenticeship for a period of time, passing their driving test and then becoming drivers. This is arranged by their parents or guardians but some Street Children organize themselves to do this driver's mate job: *When I have the chance to work as a driver's mate, I do it. We can be sitting down by the road and a vehicle will be passing by without a driver's mate. The driver will ask whether any of us will like to be his mate for the day, then I offer myself. The driver will ask you whether you know the route he is plying; if you say no, and he is a good man, he will say that he will show you the route. That is what we have been doing for money (FW2SC6: 7).* Street Children look for any chance by which they can make money to survive on the street but they also look out for opportunities that will offer them some training for a better job and future. When the chance comes, the circumstances become a secondary matter. Since the street boys' parents or guardians are not in the cities or on the street to sign any agreement for them to train as a driver's mates, they are happy when the drivers themselves contact them. If the drivers pick them, as in the above excerpt, and are able to keep, and train

them and they graduate as drivers, their status is enhanced. They can leave the street, and have a better life. However, improvised driver's mate is one of the jobs which dispose street boys to risk. Jumping on vehicles on impulse to become improvised driver's mate without any adult knowing what they are involved in except the driver of that vehicle is dangerous. Anything could happen in the process of being the driver's mate. An accident could occur, a boy could be injured, and the driver in question may not report to anyone who knows the boy as a relation.

Theft, selling of marijuana, making, and selling of fake phones are illegal jobs that are not acceptable in the Ghanaian society. But Street Children, particularly the boys, do engage in such businesses as well to earn money. The excerpt below is what a boy has to say about theft among Street Children: *Some steal, if you go to the road side right now, and they see this recorder of yours, they can pick it and sell. These groups of children steal all other kinds of things. Some sell marijuana (FW2SC6: 7).*

The above are all accounts from Street Children revealing the activities they do for money. Most of the jobs they do on the street empower them financially and keep them busy. They are satisfied that they are in control of their finances. Their jobs also bring them into contact with other people who offer them more work. However, some of the things they do to get money on the streets are rather too dangerous for young boys and girls. When they are hungry and want to get money, they jump on vehicles, they steal, and sell illegal drugs. The street boys are taken on to do any dirty job. As for those

who steal, when they are caught, they are put behind bars. An official of an NGO told me that most of the boys who come to the street end up behind bars. He said some of the boys are innocent of what they are accused of, but because some Street Children are involved in stealing and acts which violate the law, they are the first suspects when there are thefts and other illegal acts.

### **5. 2. 2. Usage of money on the street**

On the street, children have to pay for virtually everything. They have to buy food, and water for drinking and bathing. They pay for where they bath as well as for toilet. They buy clothing and pay for safekeeping. They now have power and control over the management of their finances which, they tend to see as influential to their positive development. The following extracts reveal some of the experiences that the children have on the street and some of the ways they use the money they can find:

*I use 50 pesewas for my breakfast, 50 pesewas for launch and 50 pesewas for dinner (FW2SC4: 5).*

*We buy food, water to drink, wash ourselves and our clothes. When a friend has no money for food, and you have some, you give to him when he asks you for help. I pay when I have to go to the toilet. I pay for virtually everything (FW2SC1: 13).*

*We do buy food on credit sometimes, so when we get some money we use it to pay our debt. We pay for toilet. We also buy clothes, water for drinking,*

*washing our clothes and bathing. It was only yesterday that we did not bath because we had no money (FW2SC5: 5).*

Their managerial skill is admirable. They are able to look for some money on the street, and able to manage any little money they have to survive. They are able to feed themselves, albeit some do go hungry. When the children talk of purchasing things on credit and paying later, their transactions are always in cash and also take place on an individual basis. For the food seller to agree to credit food to any hungry child is partly on humanitarian grounds, but is also based on the trust she has in a particular child. Trust however is not built overnight. There is a problem here for a new arrival on the street as s/he might be trustworthy but is of course unknown to the food sellers and possible caring adults; if the child is hungry and has no money, s/he goes without food until s/he builds up a relationship with a food seller to enable him/her buy on credit.

When some do not have money, they depend on the services provided by various organisations: *I bath at CAS. There we do not pay. That is why yesterday we did not bath. CAS was not opened (FW2SC5: 5).*

Children from the Kaneshie setting which is near a Non-Governmental Organization called Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS), go to this Organization where they are allowed to shower for free and are given tickets to go to a nearby toilet without having to pay. This Organization however closes at five in the evening and it is not opened during weekends and holidays. The children, therefore, have no access to these premises during

closure periods, and if they have no money during these periods to buy water and pay for the bath house, they have to go without a bath.

They also freely use their money for each other's welfare. This happens particularly in times of sickness. They say: *When one of us is sick, we have to get together to contribute money among ourselves to help the sick person. We think whether to send him to hospital or buy medicine for him (FW1SC2: 11)*. Contributing to send their sick friends to hospital is one of the ways they use their money. However, part of their money goes to older boys among them who take advantage of their voluntary contribution: *Sometimes the older boys who are our leaders will come and tell us, for example, that we should contribute some money to use in helping our colleague in trouble. Most of the time, you do not see the one they want to help with the money. You realize that they just collect the money from us, go to a place called Awudome, and use the money to smoke marijuana, drink and eat with the rest and that is it. They made themselves leaders (FW1SC2: 15)*.

Most Street Children come from communities and parents who have little access to the necessities of daily living: food and safe drinking water, clothing and shelter as discussed in the literature review. Some children are conscious of this. They therefore try to save on the street by various means. They have learnt to save money on the street to enable them survive on days when they do not get any work. Some make the attempt to save money to enable them learn a trade after staying on the street for a period of time, whilst others try to save money in order to be able to send some home to help their parents

look after their siblings. The girls who find themselves on the street because they want to purchase cooking utensils and other items for their marriage also attempt to save money towards this goal through the 'susu' system. They save some of their money with 'Susu' collectors. (Susu is a system where somebody moves round the markets and the market traders and some shop owners give them part of the profit they make a day). It is like saving money at the bank. There are differences in doing Susu: you give the money to an individual Susu collector or a Susu company for safe keeping. The Susu collector records whatever amount he has collected from each person under the person's name and the Susu collector keeps the money at the bank. People take their money back after a month, a fortnight, or after a week. They describe the processes by which they are able to save and their intentions in the following excerpts:

*I use part of my money for Susu, part for food and water. In the evening after buying food and water, I keep the rest of the money and use it for Susu the following day. When the Susu collectors close before I get some money, I hide it somewhere and go for it in the morning (FW2SC4: 4).*

*At Osu, cigarettes sell fast. When you sell five of them, you can get GH¢15.00 as a profit. You use part, and use the rest for 'susu' You can do this until you get money to either return home or rent a room here or use the money in whatever way you want to use it. It depends upon the plan of the individual (FW2SC1: 9).* The susu collectors help the street children in achieving their goal of gathering and saving money on the street.

Susu collectors are however not always reliable. Some do genuine business whilst dishonest ones collect money and run away with it. Due to this kind of experience, some of the Street Children keep money with some adults they can trust. They try hard to get trustworthy people to keep any money they make from the jobs they do as expressed below:

*I give it to a certain man so when I am going to my grandmother I collect it and send it home to my grandmother. He does not run away with our money (FW2SC6: 8).*

*When you give him money to keep for you, he will keep it safe for you and give it back to you when you request it. There are other older ones when you give money to them to keep, they tell you the following day that it is missing. Meanwhile, it is in their pocket (FW2SC1: 19).*

*I give it to the adult I talked about earlier. I keep on giving my money to her until I get enough, use it to buy something and send some home (FW2SC3: 11).*

*I keep my money with the trader whom I help to pack and unpack her goods. The day I will go home I will go for the money (FW2SC7: 9).*

*There is also a certain woman who sells on the park there throughout the night. So I give the money to her to keep for me until day break and I go for it (FW2SC4: 4).*



Street Children interpret their involvement in economic activity, being able to get some income for their basic necessities on the street, and meet their future plans, as their life being better of and successful on the street than home. Some parents may be happy and interpret this as positive development in their children's lives when their children are able to send them money. This is why parents may finance their young girls to travel from the north to Accra to undertake employment as Kayayee as Agarwal et al, (1997) found out. Even though none of the respondents in this study said that their parents sponsored them to come to the street, the study found a new dimension whereby older siblings and older cousins bring younger girls around 7 and 8 years to do babysitting for them with the promise of buying school items like school bags and uniforms for them. When they are able to save money and return to their villages, they are seen by the people they left behind as successful because they are able to go back to these communities with some items that they would not have been able to buy if they were to be still living in these communities. They become role models in their communities and younger ones want to follow their footsteps by coming to Accra as well. A street girl said about her understanding of the life of those who came to live on the streets of Accra from her community as: *Oh yes, if we were not to see any improvement we would not have taken their advice. We would have asked them 'when you went what did you get that would make us follow you?'* (FW2SC3:3). Some Street Children were given specific directions by those who had been earlier on the street to come and live on particular streets in Accra: *Those who advised us to come to the street told us*

*specifically to come to Tema Station. They directed us as to how to pick a vehicle and come here. They said we should pick a vehicle to Kumasi first, and then from Kumasi to Accra – Circle and pick 'trotro' to Tema station (FW2SC3: 5).*

But most children find it difficult to gather money. The following are some of their frustrations:

*Sometimes when you get to the vehicle and get the load/luggage first, an older boy can take it from you because you are a small boy. There are some people when you carry their load they give you any amount of money they like because you are a small boy (FW1SC1:11 & 13).*

*I have never gathered GH¢5.00 in bulk. I get say GH¢1.00, sometimes 80 pesewas and use them for food everyday. Whatever is left is used for food the following morning. This is the routine. When for example I get GH¢1.00, I use 50 pesewas for food in the evening and use the other 50 pesewas for food the following morning and that is it (FW2SC1: 9).* Saving is a difficult challenge in Ghana. It is the same frustration the adult traders of the country face. It is difficult for many people to meet the basic necessities of life and save money at the same time. This may have resulted in their parents and guardians not being able to pay for their wards' school fees and other commitments.

### **5. 3. What they say about life on the street**

It is crucial for any intervention in Street Children's situation to examine how they perceive their lives on the street and to discover whether they would

prefer to be linked with their families or whether they prefer alternative support. Perceptions of life are different, and it may not be appropriate to jump to a conclusion that the street is not a good place for children to live. Street Children have varied perceptions of their street life due to the varying circumstances of their individual backgrounds and their own expectations in life. Some of the participants in this research said living on the street was difficult and not good for them. Some declared that their lives were better on the street – indeed improved – from the lives in their villages. A number of them, after declaring that their lives were better on the street had diverse meanings and reasons why they said their lives have improved:

*My life has improved because the things I want to buy I have been able to buy some of them (FW2SC7: 13).*

The tensions that the children faced in their homes and their expectations on the street informed their meanings and reasons of improvement or not in their life circumstances. Those who are trying to resolve the problem of access to material resources, see their lives as improved when they are able to work and earn money on the street. For example the excerpt above shows that the respondent is satisfied with her life on the street because she has been able to acquire some of the items she wanted to buy and this raises her resilience level to be on the street to work more for the rest of her items. This is a girl who is expected by her culture to be ready with items such as trunk/suitcase, cloths, cooking utensils, bowls and other items before she gets married. The man who will marry her needs a cow or a number of them and

some other items. Meeting these cultural expectations for marriage influences her life positively.

In the excerpt that follows, the respondent sees his life as improved because he now receives remuneration for his labour. To him this is improvement/positive development in his life; to work and to be paid for work done: *I see my life as improved since I came to live on the street because in my home town I did not get any money for all the work I do at home but here I can work and get money (FW2SC3: 14).*

Street Children also compare the improvement of their lives between settings. They perceive their lives as more improved in some of the settings than others, and than their homes: *My life was better at Osu than home. At Osu, I got water to bath. Nobody was disturbing me. Any money I got was for me. I didn't like how I was being treated by my mother and step father. That is why I left home. But home is better than Kaneshie (FW2SC1: 29-30).* His stay in the Osu setting gives him comfort after the relationship problem he has with his mother and step father. Once the people and his peers in the Osu setting do not disturb him, he is positive, and confident comparing his home with this setting and saying that his life is improved in this setting compared with home. He has however seen deterioration in his life when he moved to the Kaneshie setting.

Accessing basic necessities of life through navigating and negotiating with resource providers means improvement in the lives to some Street Children: *I see my life as improved because I bath free at CAS; they give us free toothpaste and a brush. When we go to the toilet there, they give us free toilet paper. I do bath free at home but when I go to the toilet they collect money (FW2SC4: 11).*

Some Street Children, however, see their lives as deteriorating. They see the street as not a good or permanent place of abode. They think they have found themselves in the wrong place doing nothing: *My life has not improved. I don't get any benefit on the street. I am not doing anything here. I am not selling anything (FW2SC8: 8).* This respondent sees her life deteriorating because she feels she should be doing or selling something for money. Work and money therefore is very important in determining how they perceive their lives on the street; whether they are better off on the street than home. Another boy says: *I see my life as destroyed because when I was in school I was not like this. I have now grown lean (FW2SC13: 12).* This respondent compares his life on the street with when he was at school, and sees deterioration because to him, he has grown lean. His growing lean on the street may be linked to a number of difficulties, which will be discussed later.

Whilst a number of the respondents see improvement in their lives and some see deterioration, others say their lives have neither improved nor deteriorated on the street with expressions such as: *My life is still as it is.*

*There is no change because I have not yet earned any money. But I have not spoilt my life on the street because, when I came to the street, I did not join the robbers or the drug addicts. I would have spoilt my life if I had joined any of these groups. But as for improvement in my life, it will only come when I get a good job (FW2SC11: 17).* From this and the above, it is clear that work and money seem paramount in the experience of positive change in the life of children on the streets of Ghana. This finding contributes to Boyden 2005 and Ungar, 2008's call for the growing recognition of the need to account for contextually relevant factors, such as experiences of economic activity. This is an important influence on children's positive development as stated in the literature review.

The boy in the following excerpt has also not seen any change with his life: *If I do not leave the street soon my life will get spoilt. For now I am controlling and forcing myself. So there is no difference now. No improvement. I am just like I was. There is no difference between home and the street because at home I am not free. There are quarrels and quarrels and quarrels. On the street here, had it not been Mawuli and co, I would be walking alone. (FW2SC6: 15 - 16).* This respondent perceives his life on the street as not changed for the better, but relationships at home do not encourage him to go back home so he feels forced to remain on the street since his friends keep him company.

#### **5. 4. Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed living on the street; how Street Children try to make money. The chapter discusses the various activities they engage in for money. It takes us beyond some earlier studies which discussed one type of Street Children's jobs. This chapter discusses the various activities they engage in for money. It reveals many jobs of Street Children. The jobs that are done mostly by boys as well as those done mostly by girls for money are discussed. Even though there are some jobs which are done by both sexes equally, males tilt towards some jobs, while females tilt towards others. Analysis in this chapter has also covered the risks the children face in their work. In addition to discussing the risk the children face during their work, the chapter has gone beyond previous studies and discussed the positive interpretations the children give to their work on the street. The chapter has also added new perspective to the investigation and knowledge of Street Children's work by investigating and analysing what they use money earned for. It also discussed what they say about their life on the street.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Vulnerability**

#### **6. 1. Introduction**

The previous chapter discussed the kind of work Street Children do; the risks/vulnerabilities they face in their work, how their experiences of work impact on their development and the plurality of meanings they give for their feelings of well-being or improvement in their lives on the street.

This chapter continues with the analysis, including both interview and observations. The chapter will discuss further some other difficulties and vulnerabilities of Street Children as they try to live and survive on the street. Attention is focused on the questions: How do individual circumstances and situations of children render them vulnerable on the street? What problems do they face on the streets which are likely to affect their development? In what ways does gender contribute to Street Children's vulnerability? How are they vulnerable to theft? And how are they affected by the weather? The analysis is presented under the following analytic categories: beatings and bullying, Gender and health related vulnerabilities, weather and theft.

As discussed earlier, the concepts of vulnerability and resilience are based on the recognition of the differences between individuals in different contexts and cultures, in their reactions to difficult situations or challenges. As shown in the previous chapter, within the same street context, Street Children interpret their circumstances differently. Some interpret their lives as being in danger,



getting spoilt or deteriorating since they came to live on the street due to the hazards, risks and the stresses they encounter. It may be said that they see themselves 'vulnerable', while others see theirs as improving despite the risks they face. It is clear that there is considerable variation in the way they see their lives on the street.

Children are born with potential which needs to be developed. Encouraging the development and achievement of this potential is necessary. Successful childhood for each child can be seen in terms of achieving that potential he/she is born with (Daniel 1999). The development of potential depends to a large extent on life circumstances that children face at their various stages of development. As Daniel states, there can be different routes to this and different ways to encourage it. The possibility of children who find themselves in economically sound and peaceful families and societies in achieving their potential is high and cannot be compared with children who face adverse life situations such as loss of parents, abuse, and/or poverty, which pose serious threats to their healthy development. The adverse life circumstances of some Street Children may inhibit their potential development more than they support growth and development.

Some of the children and young people in this study left stressful home environments and sought extra-familial environments on the street, which some of them found more compatible and stimulating. They have the capabilities to enact change in their own lives. On the street, they have to fall

back on their individual personality factors, the nature of supportive relationships available to them, the relative vulnerability and risk, or resilience which has been shaped by their previous history, familial relationships, community and culture. Data gathered on Street Children in Accra has pointed to an apparent paradox in terms of vulnerability and resilience, and requires closer examination of how Street Children make meaning out of their lives as well as the context in which these meanings are constructed. While vulnerability and resilience are related to each other, I have analysed them separately, for clarity.

In what follows, the examples given show the various hazards, discomforts and dangers which the Street Children face.

Individual circumstances and situations of children render some of them more vulnerable. The excerpts that follow show some of their individual predispositions, circumstances and situations that make them more vulnerable on the street as well as the risky situations with which they have to battle. The following is an excerpt from an interview I conducted with a girl, in which her individual predisposition may have caused her to be more vulnerable on the street:

*R: Can you tell me three reasons why you live on the street?*

*SC 5: when my parents were living, they left me with a cousin of mine. They gave her money to look after me but at a point she left the house and joined her boyfriend so I was left alone.*

*Sometimes at home something kept telling me to run away from home or to go and steal so I got out from home and roamed in town before I came back home. When I came back home I heard a voice telling me to take poison or to pick up a knife and harm people. Sometimes, when I slept in the night I saw some people dressed in frightening ways, which frightened me. I do not know why these things had been disturbing me.*

*R: Did you see the people in a dream or you saw them physically?*

*SC 5: I am telling you the truth. It is not in a dream that I saw them; it is 'feely', 'feely' with my naked eyes. Sometimes when I woke up to urinate in the night, I saw them and went back to sleep. The same thing happened to me when I went to live in our hometown; I was seeing them in the night. Any time I saw them I was shouting, calling God in the night.*

*R: Is there any other reason why you have come to live on the street?*

*SC 5: You see, when I heard the voice to run away from home, to go out and kill, do bad things, strip myself naked, and I run out of the house, I did not go back again.*

*R: So what about the one you said that your parents left you with, your cousin?*

*SC 5: Yes when my parents left me with this cousin, they gave her GH¢30.00 to look after us, but still over there I kept on hearing these voices. So when she left me at home and I heard the voice again to run away to kill, run to the main road for a car to run over me and all those voices, I ran to this place.*

*R: Are you sure of all that you are telling me? When your parents were around did you ever tell them of what was happening to you?*

*SC 5: Yes I did. Even when my parents sent me to our hometown to my aunt, I heard the voice to steal, so I stole her GH¢60.00 and ran back to Accra. My parents knew about this because my aunt told them I stole GH¢60.00. But when I came to the street and started attending this church it stopped. I have not been hearing those voices again and I have never stolen anything again (FW2SC5: 2-3).*

The church she is referring to is organized by one of the organisations I interviewed: AZUSA organisation.

*It is difficult for me to beg for food when I am hungry. Sometimes when am cold I do not get a cloth to cover myself. Living on the street is not good. I am always afraid because they say arm robbers will come and collect us and kill us. I become dirty on the street because sometimes I do not get money to buy water for bathing. People also beat me unnecessarily without any provocation. Some nights when I sleep a certain man came to pour water on me without me doing anything to him (FW2SC5: 8).*

*When I was at home in class two, I was raped before. I closed from school and was playing in town till late so when I was going home a certain man got hold of me in a corner when I started shouting he put dress into my mouth and raped me. He then left me when I could not walk I was crawling and I met somebody who was driving. He asked me what happened to me and I told him somebody raped me so he sent me to my house in his car. But my parents never sent me to hospital they only made me sit in hot water for*

*some time. I don't know the man but I think when I see him I can recognize him (FW2SC5: 8 & 9).*

The girl in the above interview appears to be already vulnerable. The voices she hears, telling her to kill, run into main road to be run over by the vehicle, to steal, are all particular characteristics of this child which render her particularly vulnerable. These characteristics might be the reason why her parents neglected her, and of course coming to live on the street with the kind of thoughts that she talked about causes her to be more vulnerable to abuse and/or neglect from people on the street as well. It seems likely that she has a mental/psychiatric or spiritual problem that needs diagnosis. Inadequate care and provision of health resources by the state for children such as this contribute to their vulnerability. This is a girl who said she has been raped before. She might have been affected by this ordeal. A thorough examination could diagnose whether she has any form of mental illness, but on the street appropriate, supportive mental health care is not available to her. Understanding these individual difficulties and their significance in the context of street life is very important. She appears to be at high risk of injury if one day she hears the voice to run under a vehicle or to kill as she claims to have been hearing.

She says living on the street is not good, and outlines a number of difficulties she faces on the street, but during the interview she also says 'but when I came to the street and started attending church it has stopped. I have not

heard those voices again and I have never stolen anything again'. This is how she understands her life in the situation in which she finds herself on the street. Even though one may say that considering her 'mental' or 'spiritual' problem she is particularly vulnerable to be living her life on the street without the supervision of any particular adult, she has a different view, as she understands her access to and positive relationship with the church to be good for her mental, emotional and physical well-being.

Beside the fact that some individual children come to the street already vulnerable, Street Children as well face a wide range of problems once they are on the street, which are likely to affect their development. They experience a whole new set of stressors including; health related problems, beatings and bullying, weather - (either wet or very dry and cold), theft - (victim of theft or indulging in it).

## **6. 2. Beatings & Bullying**

Beatings and bullying are some stresses that Street Children have to deal with on the street. These are vulnerabilities imposed by other people which might threaten or challenge healthy development. During my interviews with them, most of them were emphatic about people assaulting them in various ways on the street. It is stressful for a researcher to sit with a child during an interview when a child recollects with pain some beatings he/she received from an adult. The following are some quotations from the interviews with them:

*There is a certain man who beat me the other time. He is the one I am afraid of. I did not do anything to him. That day, some boys bought food. I told them I would eat some and they refused to give me. So I was standing by them, when one of them told me that the man was calling me. When I went he called some boys, they tied me with electric wire and started beating me (FW2SC8: 6).*

*When it happens that way, you become sad. Other times you are beaten severely, so much so that you do not know what to do with yourself (FW1SC2: 13).*

*There is no good thing about living on the street. It is only beatings you get (FW1SC2: 14).*

Observations from the field support the children's accounts of physical assaults they suffer from the hands of some adults on the street. *I observed some marks on the arms and thighs of an eleven year old girl. The marks looked as if she had been whipped with a cane. When questioned about the marks, she said a man had beaten her. She told me she was sitting in front of a house and the man came out to beat her with a piece of lorry tyre (Fieldwork journal, December 05, 2008).* These observable marks on the body of the girl buttress their accounts in the interview data of beatings and assaults from various people on the street. *During another observation in the same setting, there were street children hanging around the area and in front of the house where the little girl was whipped. A man came out of the house*

*with cane in hand and whipped the children as they run away (Fieldwork journal, December 06, 2008).*

According to the man, he wanted them to go back home to their parents. Outside his home is not their place of abode. He said the big boys and girls among them are already spoilt and know what they are about so he does not care about them but the little ones who have also come to live on the street will soon get spoilt when they do not go back home. He said the little ones were too young to live their lives on the street. So he thought he was doing the little children some good by caning and driving them away from the front of his house and the street. This is implausible. If the man really thought he was doing the girl any good by whipping her, the girl's understanding of the beating was different from that of the man. The girl did not see any problem about her stay on the street as the man sees it, rather, she perceives herself as vulnerable because of these beatings. The literature shows the difficulty in the classification of certain experiences or circumstances as "risky" or "dangerous" even within the same context/society people may interpret some practices and circumstances differently (Boyden & Gillian Mann, 2005). She was sad and bitter about the beating. She also became afraid of the man. These impacts are negative and not positive. Moreover, the girl did not go home yet, after she was whipped. She was still on the street, but she and others like her who are beaten and assaulted on the street however perceive their life on the street negatively and wish they could go back home. Their continuous presence on the street may mean that they have no home to go,



no-one to go home to, or that they fear going home because of the problems discussed in chapter 4 as their reasons of being on the street.

The above excerpts and observations suggest how vulnerable, children on the street can be; it is a rough life in which they find themselves. But Street Children face the risk of beatings from adults, depending on the communities and settings in which they find themselves. In some communities, particularly when they live too close to people's residences, they are regarded as nuisances by some community members and criminals by others. They get beaten mercilessly because of the varied perceptions people have about them. People do not understand them and do not see their use on the streets of their communities. Some adults like the one in the observation above perceive all Street Children to be bad. They are therefore treated with contempt and often abused.

In addition, they are vulnerable to beatings because they are very young and are not strong or powerful enough to defend themselves. The age at which they find themselves on the street renders them vulnerable to beatings from adults: the young people who have grown up on the street do not receive as many beatings as the younger ones. The adults sometimes do not dare attempt to beat the teenage boys who look strong and well built but rather report them to the police on flimsy grounds which often lead to their arrest and sometimes inhumane treatment by the police. Needless to add, Street

Children themselves are often in conflict with the law and they risk arrest and imprisonment.

Children, who experience beatings in their settings as expressed in the above, interpret their lives on the street as a misery and do not see anything good about living on the street except beatings.

Some of the beatings and bullying happen among Street Children themselves. The perpetrators tend to be the elder Street Children who are sixteen years and above, particularly the boys, while the victims are the younger Street Children between the ages of eight years and around fifteen years. This renders the younger group of Street Children more vulnerable than the bigger ones. The dynamics among the Street Children are complex, as there are self-imposed leaders who use their age, gender and stature to bully, beat and extort money from the younger ones and from those of the opposite gender. The children's experiences of bullying and beatings from elder boys on the street are expressed in the following excerpts:

*He has made himself like an elder or a leader. He will come and tell you to give him money. 'Give me coins.' When you do not give him, he will beat you. Nobody is able to do anything to him (FW2SC1: 22).*

*I feel that they are bad people. They do not even live here. They live at 'June 4<sup>th</sup>'. When they go and smoke their marijuana and their minds are excited, they go out looking for trouble. They come here and disturb us. Even when you do not step on them, they say you have stepped on them. They just find*

*fault with you to beat you. Nobody is able to do anything to them (FW2SC2: 8 - 9).*

*People beat me and collect money from me. The bigger boys around here beat us always and collect our money. Even when you put your money in your pocket and sleep, they remove it before you wake up (FW2SC11: 14).*

*When they ask for money and you do not give them any, and they want to search you and you refuse, they start beating you. I do not like that Amebala. Even when you are asleep, he will come and slap you (FW2SC4: 8).*

These are the kinds of bullying and beatings that go on among Street Children. The above excerpts show how vulnerable the younger and feeble ones are to the older ones on the street. Money is one commodity that all Street Children need and search for desperately. The self imposed leaders among them bully, beat them up and collect the money that they struggle to get. It is of great concern when some of the assaulted children in these excerpts say that no one is able to do anything to the perpetrators; they express a sense of helplessness. Of course, these kinds of beatings, bullying and helplessness create fear and hatred among the Street Children. The smaller children fear the bigger boys, seeing them as bad people they do not like. They expressed their fear in the following:

*I fear these Macho, Macho men. I fear them because they can come and send you on errands, and when you refuse to do it, they beat you up. They can also come and demand you give them an amount of money. If you are not*

*able to give them anything, they beat you up. I fear them because, without any provocation, they come and remove your money from your pocket with force and when you complain they beat you up. They can see you and shout 'hey! come and give me money' and if you say you do not have money, they beat you up. (FW2SC6: 11).*

*I fear those boys who are on the street with us, and who are older than us. They have been beating us (FW2SC13: 7).*

Even though the smaller boys fear the bigger boys as they stated above, they may see the bigger boys as their protectors, and people who settle cases among them as discussed later under resilience.

### **6. 3. Gender and Health Related Vulnerabilities**

There are specific health problems that can be linked to the individual situations and experiences they face on the street. As presented in the previous chapter Street Children, particularly the girls, engage in sexual activities for money and/or simply to survive. They are also vulnerable to related health problems associated with sex and commercial sex work. These adolescent girls on the street are at risk of unintended pregnancies, complications from abortions and emotional trauma which can lead to other health problems. Raffaelli's review, (1999), in Panter-Brick, 2002), concluded that the raft of studies leaves little doubt that homeless youth are at higher risk of abusive sexual relationships and of sexually transmitted infection than are their peers (UNICEF, 2001). Orme, (2007) also found that girls are

exposed to exploitation and sexual abuse (Orme, 2007). Their age, gender and homelessness bring vulnerability. The following are some excerpts with Street Children which relate to their health and safety:

*This girl has lost her unborn baby: She died before birth. You see, living on the street is a problem. It is not a good thing. You never know what will befall you. You can get involved in problems easily. When you are sick and the Achimota people do not come to your aid, you are in trouble. A girl died. She was pregnant and was trying to abort it by taking some medicine and died (FW1SC4: 11, 16 & 17).*

Some street girls do suffer from their unborn babies dying in their wombs, which is dangerous to their health, both physically and emotionally. They suffer this because in their street context, they may not access the necessary antenatal care. In Ghana, antenatal care is free, but they may not attend antenatal clinics, perhaps because they want to hide their pregnancies. It could also be that they do not have money to buy clothing good enough to appear before the medical team at the clinics, and as the girl in the above excerpt says, when the Achimota people (referring to an NGO which is sited at Achimota; a suburb of Accra) do not come to their rescue, they are in serious trouble. If there were adequate resources available for the use of pregnant street teenage girls, this vulnerability could be mitigated.

Deaths occur among street girls due to unsafe abortions as described above and also expressed in the following:

*Since I came to the street here, two girls and a baby died. One of the girls was complaining of stomach ache. We knew she was pregnant and she kept on saying she will give birth so we did not know she was trying to abort it. She already had one child. So we had no idea she will cause abortion. All the girls here when they get pregnant, they give birth. The medicine she took was like bomb. It blasted her stomach and she died. The other girl belongs to a group of girls who go to the Makola market. When they go to the market, they steal people's money and items. One time they went to a place they say is called Togo. When they came back from Togo, she fell sick. She was also pregnant, so we do not know whether she was trying to abort it or she stole someone's money from Togo and they did something to her we cannot tell (FW1SC6: 12 - 13).* When the girl in the excerpt above talks of 'since I came to the street here', she is referring to the setting where she finds herself on the street in a market area. She said that all the girls in their setting give birth when they get pregnant. This appears to be acceptable behaviour to the group of street girls in this setting and so they expect every girl who gets pregnant to deliver without aborting. But individuals have their own values, reasons and interests, which push them to abort their pregnancies. They self-medicate which causes serious health complications and even death, as reported above.

The excerpt that follows is from an interview with a pregnant girl:

*My boyfriend lives on the street but I do not know where he is now. I do not see him again. I sleep here on this veranda. When I give birth, my child will also sleep here with me (FW1SC5: 13)*

The girl in the above illustration is six months pregnant, and she said she had not intended to become pregnant. Her boyfriend, who also lives on the street in the area disappeared the day the girl told him that she was pregnant. She cannot trace the boy to any place because Street Children move on and off the street, and move between various streets and settings. The street and/or one particular setting does not represent the sum total of their social networks or experience. The boy in question has gone to another area and may father a child with another girl and treat her the same way. He may also be spreading any disease that he may be nursing. The girl and the unborn baby are both at risk.

As previously discussed in the literature review, adolescents reach sexual maturity before they develop the mental, emotional maturity and the social skills needed to appreciate the consequences of their sexual activity. They engage in unprotected sex with different sexual partners (Fee & Youssef, 1993; Ajuwon 2005). This makes them extremely vulnerable. Anarfi & Antwi (1995) found in their study of street youth in Ghana, that some of the Street Children were sexually active and had multiple sexual partners and some

were involved in sex for survival, among whom a number had contracted Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) at least once (Anarfi & Antwi 1995).

An official from SGA said the following about Street Children and STIs:

*And then these STIs are common among them. Somebody was just telling me about a girl who has an STI to the extent that even her thighs, the whole place has become sore. They self-medicate, from these drug vendors, they go to the traditional way, she is a prostitute. So she is even saying that no man even comes for her, but this is her livelihood (SGA).*

This study found out that Street girls' exposure to sex-related vulnerability is not only about contracting Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) but also about their inability to continue to work because of sickness, resulting in a loss of income. This study has also found out that street girls' exposure to sex related vulnerability is not only about exploitation, sexual abuse, contracting STIs and unsafe abortions but, in addition, it is about sicknesses related to pregnancy and delivery. Most of them, especially those found in a particular setting decide to give birth to their babies whether they have planned to become pregnant or not. As said before, these sicknesses follow from inadequately targeted health service provision for this vulnerable group of people in the country.

Numerous health complications are described by an official from SGA in my interview with him:



*They get health complications that they do not really have answers to. The drug vendors who are the quack doctors also go round and deceive them and worsen the case. And then the traditional birth attendants on the street, who have no training, deliver their babies. At times they can cut cords that they should not cut, and you will go and meet some of them, heavily drunk before even undertaking the delivery so you can image what he/she can do to that child. Is the instrument she is using even sterilized? And on top of all of that after the girls give birth, the traditional birth attendants take them hostage until they pay them GH¢30.00 (£12.00) and threaten them that if they do not, they will stay there until they pay. They deliver in their small wooden shacks. You go and see five, six babies there with their mothers in one small shack. They are waiting to pay and go (SGA).*

Their troubles do not end at the delivery point. Observations from the field show that street girls who have children face more difficulties with their children, who were around the ages of one-and-half and two years, who ran after their mothers as their mothers were working. It looked risky for street girls and their toddlers to run after buses which pulled at the station to pack, when the buses did not fully stop, particularly whilst other buses pulled behind them. These mothers and/or their children may be injured by vehicles. Street girls find it difficult to work with their children on their back and carry load at the same time. They said they have no alternative to leaving them behind at their resting place to carry the load, hoping that the toddlers would stay there without running after them. Meanwhile, their babies are part of the

larger picture of their lives. The babies cannot be separated from their mothers, yet they make life more difficult for their mothers on the street, particularly during work. The street teenage mothers and their children are particularly vulnerable because of the setting/context in which they are working: a busy bus terminal with a busy major road running in front of it with buses and other vehicles always moving. How they are able to resolve this problem is discussed in the next chapter.

In addition to sex-related health problems and constraints of street teenage mothers, both street boys and girls may catch malaria as a result of mosquito bites which are reported below under weather. There are still a lot of mosquitoes in Ghana. Their bites are avoided by using nets around the windows and doors of buildings to prevent them from entering rooms, sleeping under mosquito nets both treated and untreated, and by staying indoors in the evenings. All these are done to prevent malaria. As Street Children sleep in the open, they are exposed to mosquito bites and the resulting malaria, which is number one killer in Ghana and other tropical countries.

#### **6. 4. Weather**

Ghana is located on West Africa's Gulf of Guinea coast only a few degrees north of the Equator. Ghana has a tropical climate, but temperatures vary with the seasons and elevation. The hottest periods are around the months of March and April, with temperatures between 23 – 36 degrees Celsius, and the

coldest month around August with temperatures around 18 – 27 degrees Celsius. The country experiences two major seasons: the rainy and the dry seasons. The wet season is accompanied with powerful thunderstorms, heavy rains, wind gusts, and lightning. The dry season in Ghana is truly a dry season as no rain falls for two to three months in most parts and the air becomes very dry. This season, from December to February is the harmattan season when dust from the Sahara desert travels south and coats everything with fine white dust. This dust does not just affect furniture but also the body, as skin cracks and sometimes bleeds. Except in the north two rainy seasons occur. The seasons of rainfall in the south are the major season – starting from mid-March to mid-July and the minor season – starting from mid-August to mid-November. The northern part of the country experiences a single rainy season from June to mid-November and a relatively long dry season from mid-October to March. The driest month, January, has a maximum rainfall of 15mm and the wettest month, June has 178mm average rainfall.

A major risk for Street Children is difficulty in finding places to sleep. They are exposed to lack of shelter in both the dry and wet seasons. Clearly, they are at the mercy of the weather, come rain or shine. They sleep in overcrowded and in hygienically poor environments and under pathetic conditions particularly when it rains. The following is what they have to say about sleeping in the open:

*When it rains it becomes difficult. As soon as the clouds form we become worried. Because when it rains we do not have any place to stay, so we do not want rains to fall (FW2SC3: 8).*

*When it is raining in the night, I don't know where to sleep. You stand in the rain till day break (FW1SC3: 11).*

*When it rains, there is nowhere for you to go. You do not have any place to sleep. Sometimes when it rains the whole of this place gets flooded. Mosquitoes also bite us. Our belongings are carried away by the flood waters when it rains heavily.*

*(FW1SC5:20).*

*When it rains, we get soaked and we do not know where to hide ourselves. When it is raining, we get up and stand on the passenger seats until it stops. We could have gone to Agbogbloshie to sleep in a kiosk there and pay but it is far from here (FW2SC7: 10).*

Their problem with rain is particularly serious in the night. When it is raining in the day time, they are able to hide at the various places where they roam. They hide under corridors of shops or verandas of buildings when it rains during the day. Those who run errands for shop-keepers can also hide with them. In the nights however, these shops are closed. They normally sleep in groups or close to the group at lorry parks and railway stations. A few sleep

on the passengers' seats in the stations but majority of them sleep on pavements in and around the stations in the open. They also sleep in markets, on tables, under overhead bridges and in wooden structures. They squeeze themselves in any convenient corner they find. They fear being isolated from the group at night, which makes it difficult for an individual Street Child to search for a corridor to hide when it is raining at night. As they reported, they are drenched when it rains at night. In addition, during heavy rain, they risk of being carried away by flood waters because their sleeping places get flooded. The recent floods in the country in October 2011 killed nine people though one cannot be sure whether or not Street Children are included (Daily graphic of Thursday, October 27, 2011).

Street children face diverse problems: if it is not rain causing difficulty and discomfort, it is fire. I will draw on what the children say about the problems of fire:

*We live in these wooden structures. Fire disturbs us. These wooden structures do burn sometimes. If it happens that the whole place is not burnt, you go and sleep with somebody whose place is not burnt for about a week and build yours again (FW1SC10: 13 & 14).*

Two months after my fieldwork started, I learned that the place described in the above excerpt had been burnt: apparently there was a big fire and almost the whole place was burnt down. They put up the wooden structures every time their shelter is burnt. An official I interviewed told me that the wooden

structures can be built by adults who are not Street Children. They build them and then rent them out to Street Children who can afford to pay the rent. While this provides temporary shelter for the children, these wooden structures are built in unauthorised places, creating shanty settlements, prone to flood and fire, which attract government task-force teams from the District/Metro/Municipal building inspectorate division, driving the children away from the settlements and breaking them down or setting fire to them.

Officials from both governmental and non-governmental organisations involved in this study, who work with Street Children, express worry about the activities of the organizers of the wooden structures. The officials see the activities of these wooden structure providers as a way of making money out of the children's need for shelter. According to an official of Department of Children of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (*DOC/MOWAC*) (government organisation): *There are others who have built wooden structures and rented them out to them. They rent them out and at the end of the day, they make profit out of this. If you go among them like this without getting the approval of their leaders, disguising yourself and not disclosing your identity, if you do not take care you will be beaten, you will be beaten to death. The leaders will think you are coming to spoil their business (DOC/MOWAC).*

Another official from Street Girl Aid (SGA), a non-governmental organisation, made a similar claim:

*A street child sleeps in these wooden shacks, which belong to a normal person who does not stay on the street. The shacks you see belong to the normal people who are living in good homes and they make money, huge sums of money. They accommodate thirteen and eighteen girls in a twelve by twelve wooden structure and everybody is paying 30 pesewas per night for just a place to put their heads. People are paying 50 pesewas per night. The girl who is a head porter, the Kayayee as we say, where she puts her head pan, she pays for it. She pays for the head pan that she puts there for the night at other places. She pays the watchman that watches over it. She pays for the public place of convenience. She pays for even the water she uses. She uses a bath house, and pays for both warm and cold water. She virtually pays for everything. At the end of the day, the girl is left with nothing. So, that dream of coming to save money and go back does not materialise. When she saves a small amount, because of the bureaucracy in the bank, she cannot save in the bank. In fact, I can tell you, when I went to the street last, there was this guy who lost GH¢8000.00 which is eighty million cedis in the old currency. He was collecting people's money for Susu. He cannot put it in the bank. He kept it and fire came to sweep everything away. This happened in one of the shanty areas at Railways Kantamanto area. So, these things happen. He was virtually left with nothing (SGA).*

From the expressions of these officials who work with the Street Children, it may be said that the children's already vulnerable situation is being worsened by the adults who provide the wooden structures. They make business and money out of Street Children. They double as their landlords and organizers,

who would not allow people to get close to them for fear of disrupting their business. The children are not safe in the wooden structures as the study reveals that people intentionally set fire to the wooden structures to have the chance to collect any money they might have kept and any personal items they might have purchased, as reported by one NGO official:

*At Kokomba we call some place Sodom and Gomorra, people wait and when they see that the Kayayee are preparing to go home, you know when they are going home, they buy personal items. Those from the North who want to go back and leave their babies and then return, people wait and when they are preparing, you know, they have money and personal items with them. People intentionally set fire to the place. In their struggle to escape the fire, they take all those belongings away from them. So every year Kokomba market is set on fire twice (SGA).*

These problems with the wooden structures mean the children prefer to hang around during the day time and sleep at any unoccupied open place at night, instead of wasting money renting an unsafe wooden structure.

### **6. 5. Theft**

Street Children are accused of, and have confessed to, being thieves. They are also victims of theft. As stated in chapter 4, stealing is one of the ways Street Children try to make money, but as shown in what happens when there is fire, other people who are not Street Children steal the little money and



belongings that Street Children have gathered. They expressed their concerns of being victims of theft:

*We cannot keep any good thing because people come to steal our things when we are asleep (FW2SC3: 8).*

*Our shoes and dresses Hmmm, Madam, if I get somebody who will help me out of this street life, I will so much like it. When you are asleep, people will come and cut your dress and steal your shoes. Even right now, there is a small boy walking around carrying loads without shoes. His shoes were stolen. When it happens that way, it is sad. They just cut the dresses with blade when you are asleep. Sometimes when you are asleep, they come and search you for money (FW1SC2: 16).*

*We keep our belongings under the tree there in the day time and sleep with them in the night. When we put them under the tree, people keep on stealing them. I do not know why. For example, the day after the election, that is on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December, 2008, which was a holiday, we came to sit under the shades here and left them under the tree; they came to steal them. In actual fact, I went to help a certain woman unpack her goods and my friends were sitting in the shade here. By the time I came back my child's dresses, my own and my money was taken. I was left with this dress on me. In the morning, when you came, did you see that girl? They stole her things and money as well. (FW2SC7: 7).*

*They have even stolen all those things. We do not have any place to keep our things. Even you wash your dress and dry them, people steal them. (FW2SC11: 8).*

In chapter 5, Street Children's desperate search for money, and their reasons for looking for money are described. Some of the children are on the street to work, gather money and go back home, some want money for food, school fees, apprenticeships and items in preparation for marriage. They become happy when they are able to work and save money towards their goals. Some do purchase the items they need. But, most often, their environment does not help them in achieving these goals. Their happiness is cut short by theft, which abounds in these settings, as expressed in the above excerpts. They lament that these items and any money saved are stolen because they have no place to keep them. This is why some of them, who have planned to live on the street for shorter periods and go back to school or into apprenticeship, end up living for longer periods on the streets. They are not able to achieve their aims as a result of people stealing whatever they have gathered. This is why they spend part of their income paying people to look after their items for them.

They are exposed to risk and violence when people come and cut their dresses with blades when they are asleep, to remove money from their pockets and/or to wake them up and search their pockets for money. In the process of cutting the dress, the child's body could be cut. There could be a fight if the victim sees that he/she can defend him/herself. The victims are

exposed to, and may also learn these kinds of stealing and cheating tricks and may become thieves themselves. The respondent in the following excerpt, as discussed in chapter 5, worked with a blind person for some time but stopped this job and stole the blind person's money when he realised that he was being cheated. He says: *This blind man when I worked with him and we got, for example, GH¢6, he was to give me GH¢2.00; he would give me 50 pesewas, saying I should use it to buy food to eat and that is it. He would not give me what was due me. He continued to do this for about a week. He took advantage of me as the child. Meanwhile at that place, that is not what they do. So after one week, I ran away with what we got. I checked the money and it was GH¢5.00 exactly and I ran away with it (FW2SC1: 7).*

The boy above is vulnerable, as a child working with an adult, and his vulnerability has made it possible for the adult to cheat him, which in turn has made him turn into a thief by running away with the blind man's money. While theft cannot be condoned, it is important to understand why Street Children steal.

## **6. 6. Conclusion**

The chapter has discussed individual circumstances and situations of children that render some of them more vulnerable on the street. The chapter also analyses the various hazards, discomforts and dangers which the Street Children face. It analyses how vulnerable Street Children are to beatings and bullying that they experience on the street.

Beatings, assaults and bullying are some stresses that Street Children have to deal with on the street. These are vulnerabilities imposed by various people, which might threaten or challenge healthy development. Both boys and girls face the risk of beatings from adults. Beatings and bullying happen among Street Children themselves. The perpetrators tend to be the older Street Children who are sixteen years and above, particularly the boys, while the victims are the younger Street Children between the ages of eight years and around fifteen years. This renders the younger and feeble group of Street Children more vulnerable than the bigger and stronger ones. Children who are beaten and assaulted on the street perceive their lives on the street negatively, and wish they could go back home.

The chapter also analysed gender and health related problems; adolescent girls are vulnerable to health problems associated with sex and commercial sex work. They are at risk of sexual exploitation, abuse, unintended pregnancies, complications from abortions, and emotional trauma which can lead to other health problems. Deaths also occur among street girls due to unsafe abortions. Street girls do suffer from their unborn babies dying in their wombs, which is dangerous to their health, both physically and emotionally. This study has found out that street girls' exposure to sex-related vulnerability is not only about exploitation, sexual abuse, contracting STIs and unsafe abortions but, in addition, is about sicknesses related to pregnancy and delivery. This study also found out that Street girls' exposure to sex-related vulnerability is not only about contracting STIs but also about their

inability to continue to work because of sickness, resulting in a loss of income. Observations show that both street girls and their babies are vulnerable when running after and between vehicles. Observations also show that street girls find it difficult to work with their children on their backs and around them.

The chapter analyses how vulnerable Street Children are to the weather. A major risk for Street Children is difficulty in finding places to sleep. They face diverse problems with the weather: if it is not rain causing difficulty and discomfort, it is fire. During heavy rain, they risk of being carried away by flood waters.

Issues relating to theft are also discussed. Street Children are accused of, and have confessed to, being thieves. They are also victims of theft. They are exposed to risk and violence when people come and cut their dresses with blades when they are asleep; to remove money from their pockets and/or to wake them up and search their pockets for money. The victims are exposed to, and may also learn these kinds of stealing and cheating tricks and may become thieves themselves.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Resilience**

#### **7. 1. Introduction**

The previous chapter analysed difficulties and vulnerabilities of Street Children. This chapter will discuss some of the ways by which Street Children mitigate these difficulties. The chapter also analyses specific characteristics and processes Street Children employ in their relationships with others and the negotiations that go on between them and the people they find in their settings to access resources for their wellbeing and survival. The analysis in this chapter focuses on the questions: What kinds of relationships do Street Children try to build on the street? What are some of the interactions and negotiations that go on between Street Children and their peers and other people they come across in the settings where they find themselves, for their mental, emotional and physical wellbeing? These will be discussed under the major analytic categories: Friendship Networks, identifying, associating and negotiations with peer Street Children, associating and negotiations with older peers. The Environment whether it is Protective or adverse, interactions and negotiations with adults, associating and negotiations with organisations and religious institutions.

In the face of the difficult circumstances of Street Children and the risky experiences that confront them on the street, they still manage to survive. This is what an official of Department of Children (DOC) has to say about their

resilience -- *They are smart. Yes they face the crises, yes they face the challenges but there is a 'toughness' in them that makes them to quickly pick up the pieces and say well, this is my situation how do I go about it? They are able to do the computation, they are able to look at the situation on the ground, and they will beat you to it and if you ever have the opportunity to interact with them they are 'toughened' and the situation on the ground which they have to cope with has strengthened their coping abilities. They will survive (DOC/MOWAC).* Even though adverse life circumstances often negatively affect the development of children, it is not uncommon to come across children who have undergone very similar circumstances but whose reactions are entirely different (Daniel, 1999, p. 11). Resilience is defined as the outcome from negotiations between individuals and their environments for the resources to define themselves as healthy amidst conditions collectively viewed as adverse (Ungar, 2004, p. 342). Some of the statements from the interviews that I conducted reveal factors which make some of them apparently resistant to the various issues that negatively affect other children. In thinking through what strengthens them and enables them to cope and survive, resilience literature has been helpful.

Resilience literature such as Ungar (2004), Ungar (2007), and Ungar (2008) is used to help explain and interpret the interactions and negotiations between Street Children and their environment and their community, their peers and other people they come across in the settings where they find themselves, for their mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. The outcomes of these

interactions and negotiations act as buffers and enable a strengthening of the children to help them withstand their difficult life situation.

Street Children try to relate to and maintain contact with people they think can help them survive in their settings. In addition, they associate themselves with other Street Children whom they find compatible, supportive adults, and some organisations who work with them. In short, Street Children build social structures/relationships on the street. To function appropriately and effectively, children need to make sense of their own and other people's behaviours, reactions, emotions, intentions, needs, desires and beliefs. The development of social and emotional understanding is crucial if children are to become effective, knowledgeable and competent social players, in short to become socially 'literate' (Howe, 1998). The capacity to make and sustain friendships is protective, a source of comfort and support: these serve as major resources that enable greater resilience for Street Children. They build various social structures/relationships as a result of the interactions and negotiations that go on between them and other players in their settings on the street. I will now discuss the various social structures and relationships that, with the help of the other people they discover on the street, the children create, maintain, and inhabit. These contribute to an understanding of how some Street Children find ways of sustaining themselves.



## **7. 2. Friendship Networks**

### **7.2.1. Identifying, associating, and negotiations with peer Street**

#### **Children**

On the street, they identify with other Street Children, make new friends and build relationships with their fellow Street Children. Accounts of children show evidence of 'caring' or altruism between children on the street. Most of the children have talked about their friends on the street as being supportive and helping them somehow survive emotionally on the street. They depend practically on their friends for survival, as they give each other money, food, clothing and whatever little help is within their means. Some lend their working tools to make it possible for the new-comers on the street to work and get some money for food. In addition, they direct the new-comers and advise them. Some said their friends helped them when they were sick. They also organise and perform funeral rites for their colleague Street Children. For some, they like their friends because they play with them and make them happy. They express the love and care they show to each other:

*I have friends called Dorla, Etornam, Selorm, and my friend with whom I travelled to the street here who has now become a brother. I like them because they give me money when I do not have any. When I am in need they help me. I also do the same to them. When I am going to watch film, I go with Dorla. Even when I do not have money, he pays for me. I also pay for him when he has no money. I feel my friends are good (FW2SC4: 6).*

*Another respondent says: I love everybody so everybody is my friend. I like them because when I do not have money they buy food for me and when they do not have money I buy food for them as well. I walk with them to all places. The days we do not go to work, we go to the video centre for the whole day watching films. I feel better because with them I do everything alright (FW2SC11: 9 - 10).*

*This respondent says: I like my friends because they give me money and clothes. I also go to CAS (Catholic Action for Street Children, an NGO) with them and we play together. I feel as if they are my siblings or my relations (FW2SC5:7).*

The care and love that emanate from these friendships is very healthy and helps in their positive development. Some see their friends as good people to the extent that they have taken them as their siblings and relations and one of them expressed that he feels better with his friends because with them he is able to do everything alright. They are more comfortable in settings in which they have friends because they support each other. They sometimes even borrow money from each other, which sustains them.

Observations covering street teenage mothers working around Tema station, Makola areas complement their accounts of support they give to each other. Observations show street teenage mothers running after buses to get loads to carry with their little children around the ages of one-and-half, and two years running after their mothers as their mothers struggled to work. The other

street girls who were not running after buses at a particular time called the little children to come back or run after them to catch them and take them away from danger to enable their mothers work. The girls in this setting told me they all come from a tribe from the northern part of the country.

The study found that, as part of their survival strategy, Street Children who come from a particular tribe of the country converge in one setting, and they do so for a long time and therefore 'colonize' the place. They protect the territories in which they find themselves and protect their work spaces so that they achieve monopoly over the porter business, which is their major source of income. They quickly create a culture of their own on the street and they appear to convey messages like: 'This is what we do, this is our work, and this is how we behave'. They said they settle at vantage points in the city according to their tribes. They told me that they drive away any young person who comes to the setting who is not from their tribe. They protect and support each other.

The monopolization of places on the street is not only on a tribal basis but is also based on gender. As a survival mechanism, the girls at this bus terminal; Tema station, Makola areas, have attached themselves to this place creating what (Beazley, 2002) describe as 'positive self-identity for themselves as a street-girl culture' and also as head porter workers. Some of these girls said they were on the street to look for money and purchase some items that their culture demands of them to have before marriage. Certain customary

requirements were needed for one to enter into a marriage; puberty rites where applicable, ability to pursue adult economic activities to support a family etc (Nukunya, 2003). They know and identify with each other and support each other to cope with street life and acquire these items for marriage. Their babies and toddlers in the observation above also appear to know their mother's peers and felt comfortable with them when their mothers run away from them to work. This gives the teenage mothers the assurance of the safety of their toddlers and increases their resilience in continuing to be on the street with their babies, toddlers and work.

Street Children also receive much advice from each other; particularly, the more experienced try to influence the new arrivals. The experienced ones direct the new entrants where to locate resources, such as where to hang out for jobs, where to buy cheap food, clothing, and medication when they are sick. Some realise that their fellow Street Children are not strong or resilient enough so they try to give very firm advice, as in the following:

*When I first arrived on the street, there was a boy who called me and told me that he realized that my appearance was not strong. He told me that for me to be able to live on the street; I have to know how to have strong face (to be strong/bold). So he told me he would teach me how to be strong on the street. So he taught me how to be strong. On the street I have come to realize that it is true that if you are not strong and bold, you cannot survive. For example, you can get a load and somebody stronger than you will come*

*and push you and collect it from you. If you are strong you will also push him so that you will be able to carry the load. When I arrived first, I could go to the road-side and would not get even GH¢1.00. It was after this boy taught me how to be strong that I now work and get some money (FW2SC5: 9).*

This piece of advice empowered him to gather himself together for work and money. Physical strength is a quality that helps Street Children to cope on the street, and needless to say those children who are not physically strong find it difficult to survive on the street.

To illustrate the importance of advice for survival, the following quotations from the interviews give further illumination:

*My friend, the one I came with, has been in Accra before. So when we arrived he taught me about the life style in Accra. He taught me the dos and the don'ts of street life in Accra (FW2SC11: 10).*

They have their own street culture which they have to follow to survive. Those who have lived long on the street advise their friends who are new entrants to go according to the rules of street life:

*When I came first to Kaneshie here I was at the roadside on the main road but a lot of the guys drove me away. They said I should go to the market and that I am a small child. They said the small, small children live in the market*

*so I left and went to the market. Those guys on the main road are from Selorm's age group upwards (FW2SC12: 12).*

It is only the Street Children, fieldworkers, and perhaps some market traders who work with Street Children in the Kaneshie market who know that the bigger Street Children roam on the main roads around the market while the smaller ones roam in the market itself. An outsider would not know these arrangements. These are the Street Children's own rules and culture in this particular setting, which the respondent in the above quotation did not know. Children who have lived longer in this setting know it is very dangerous for smaller boys to be roaming and working on a very busy main road so they advise small boys who are new in the setting to stay in the market and work there for their own safety. These kinds of directives help the children to roam and hang around at safer places for their wellbeing:

*My best friend gives me good advice. For example when I want to pick someone's money, he tells me not to pick it. The other day some people were smoking marijuana somewhere and somebody sent me to go there and purchase cigarettes from that place for him, but my friend told me not to go but to give the person's money back to him which I did. A few seconds later there was confusion there and the police came to arrest the people selling the marijuana (FW2SC1: 17).*

Street Children do get themselves involved in smoking of marijuana, confusions among smokers and subsequent arrest by the police. While some draw their friends into it, others advise their friends not to get closer to the

marijuana smokers, to avoid trouble as presented in the quotation above. The respondent in the excerpt understands his friend's advice as timely and useful because he escaped arrest.

There are, as I am outlining, various forms of interactions and help that are provided between and among Street Children. Some of the Street Children love their friends because they feel they helped them when they fell sick. They know that none of them have their parents or relations on the street and they therefore try to help each other in times of need. As discussed in chapter 5, they use part of their money to care for their sick friends. This is confirmed by a beneficiary in the following extract:

*My friend is called Evame, but I have other friends called Mawumenyo and Setsoafia. Apart from Evame teaching me how to be strong on the street, he and the other friends helped me before when I was seriously sick and had no money. They all put their little money together and sent me to hospital. Evame even donated blood for me to survive. This is why I like them. I watch films and play with them. I have been thinking that if God helps me and I become a rich man in future and they are still living on the street, I will come and take them away from the street and take them to my house and help them (FW2SC5:9 - 10).*

This is incredible caring. He thought he would have died on the street without his friends' help. These kinds of help and support they receive from each

other impact positively on them mentally, emotionally and physically, enabling them to keep on going on the street.

They even perform funeral rites for their dead friends on the street, or organise and attend their friend's funeral as in the following accounts:

*We performed our funeral rites here on the street and her relatives also performed their own at home (FW1SC4: 17).*

*When one of us dies, we carry the deceased's picture on posters, we wear red, go round town and beg for money. Whatever money we get, we contribute and add to it. The girls contribute GH¢3.00 each and the boys contribute about GH¢5.00 or GH¢6.00 each. On the day of the burial, we hire a vehicle and go (FW1SC6: 13).*

Much importance is attached to funerals in Ghanaian society. A lot of money, time, and energy are spent to organise a befitting burial for one's relatives. Normally in Ghanaian culture, funerals are organised by relatives, work colleagues and the religious groups of deceased persons. On the burial day, sympathizers, friends and work colleagues gather from far and near in great numbers for the burial and the funeral rites. The Street Children are aware of these, and feel society expects them to perform funeral rites for their dead friends/colleagues on the street. Street Children make extraordinary efforts to imitate rituals that are important in their communities and to society as a whole. Street Children who find themselves in the same setting can be said to



be work colleagues because they find themselves doing the same jobs: carrying loads for people, running errands among others. In instances where Street Children can trace their dead colleague's family and home, they organise themselves as work colleagues or friends of the deceased, contribute money, rent vehicles as described in the extract above, and attend the burial and funeral. If they cannot trace the deceased's home, they organise and perform their funeral rites for the deceased on the street. Street Children therefore know and are encouraged that, whether dead or alive, their friends/colleagues on the street are there as a support. It can then be said that Street Children in Ghana find, through their interaction with other colleague Street Children and their working experiences with their colleagues, positive sources of efficacy and cohesion, strong identity, feelings of well-being, positive relationships, and access to material and social capital. These are outcomes associated with resilience.

### **7. 2. 2. Associating and negotiations with older peers**

In addition to negotiations between their peers, the smaller ones, particularly the smaller boys also negotiate their way out of trouble with the older peers to mitigate the risk of exposure to beatings and bullying. Smaller Street Children identify and link up with the older peers on the street for help and protection. They seek close proximity to selected older peers when their level of anxiety begins to rise. They report any bullying and beatings to these protective peers:

*I fear the strong guys but my adult friends in the Zongo told me not to fear anyone because they are also strong. They told me to report anyone who disturbs me to them and they will deal with the problem person. So I also do not fear these strong guys any longer. My friends in the Zongo who are also strong came to Kaneshie here and warned the strongest guy here. They said he should warn his boys that they should never come to me and ask for money, nor himself. So he does not come to worry me again. This guy's name is Sesenadu. He is the one who has been distributing marijuana for the boys to sell (FW2SC6: 11).*

This boy gets much support from his relationships with his Zongo friends, he trusts them, and knows that they will protect him against bullies on the street. According to his account, the strong guy and his 'boys', who used to disturb him have stopped, and so his stronger friends serve as a buffer against the bullies on the street.

Another respondent reports: *When I had not long arrived on the street, Sesenadu came holding a stick in his hand, and asked me to bring money. When I said I did not have money, he hit me with the stick. Seth came and challenged him as to why he was beating me (FW2SC6: 12).*

This respondent also says: *Apart from Amebala, there is a certain man called Tamesese. That day I was sitting down with a certain boy and he came to complain to us that when we get money we do not 'settle' any on him. So he*

*made us stand up and he searched our pockets. I did not want to agree so he slapped me and collected my GH¢2.00. I went to report to Brother Andy and he came to slap him back and collected my money for me (FW2SC4: 9).*

The connections and help they solicit from the bigger boys to mitigate the risk of exposure to beatings and forceful collection of their money by bullies are expressed in the above accounts. The victims quickly fall on their bigger friends when they sense danger or being maltreated by bullies. When a bigger boy slapped and extorted money from a smaller one, the smaller one called on his friend, who is bigger and stronger than the one who slapped him, and he came to slap the perpetrator back. These are specific processes Street Children employ to survive in the context of the rough street culture. These behaviours are normal in the context of street life in these settings in Ghana, but may be unacceptable in a different context. Life on the street is complex, where the children negotiate among themselves for safety and well-being. But this association may also mean that whatever the bigger friend tells the smaller one, he must obey and do. Negative advice may impact negatively on the smaller one's life while a positive one may help in their development. It also implies that the small boy's safety and wellbeing is under threat the day he offends or flouts the orders of the bigger boy. Also, those who are new entrants on the street and who do not have people to protect them are likely to continue to suffer from the hands of bullies until they locate one.

An interview with an official from AZUSA, one of the non-governmental organisations involved in this study, supports the accounts of the boys, their discussion of beatings, bullying and negotiations to avoid them:

*You see some of them pose as the bosses among them and you have to associate yourself with a boss or you are not safe on the street because your money and any other thing will be taken away from you. So you have to give them some kind of royalty at the end of the day. Sometimes some big guys will show up among them, they have come to collect money from them. They are gangs on their own and notorious ones. So if you do not belong to them you are in trouble. They can pounce on you and ask you to bring your money any time. The young ones associate with these big guys because of security. It is like protection. These leaders emerge by staying on the street for a long time; some of them have been on the street for about ten or twelve years. And you see they also met bigger and notorious ones and they tried to learn from them. Through the bullying they received from the bigger ones they have also become experienced and hardened on the street and gradually assume leadership when the other big ones are no more there. Some of them may be jailed or killed. Nobody elects them. They acquire that leadership position by their own fitness. It is like the survival of the fittest (AZUSA).*

### **7. 3. The Environment whether it is protective or adverse?**

#### **7. 3. 1. Interactions and negotiations with adults**

A protective environment can serve as a resilient factor in the life of Street Children. Livelihood activities and opportunities and various health sustaining resources are concentrated in Accra, the capital city of Ghana as discussed in chapter one. Some children and young people, who have dropped out of school, and those who have not had the chance of attending school for various reasons discussed already, migrate to Accra to have access to these resources. In Accra they select, hang out, roam and sleep at particular areas on the street, where they have discovered resources that they think can help them sustain their lives, as discussed in the previous analysis chapters. Some Street Children in this study see themselves doing better in some settings and they select what they need from their environment and make good use of it. They usually converge around market and other commercial areas because there are job opportunities in and around these settings. They occasionally get jobs for money, which they need for access to material resources. They are tolerated in certain areas but are abhorred in others. In some settings, they come across adults who are supportive and protective. Examples of such adults are some of the market traders, shop owners, and shoppers, perhaps because of the jobs these adults have to offer, and because of the services the children provide. Such adults also include security men (what we call in Ghanaian parlance watchmen), and some people who were Street Children but have now grown into adults and are still living their lives on the street. These are important adults in the lives of Street Children: they provide

resources such as work, advice and other supports needed by children for their positive development. Street Children identify with these adults in the settings where they find themselves. Interactions and negotiations ensue between the children and these adults. Building relationships and networking with these adults is one of the important resources Street Children build on the street. They negotiate their relationships with these adults in a number of ways, for example trying to gain the trust of market traders so that they may allow them to collect goods from them to sell or retail, bringing back the money to them after selling the goods. Among these are goods such as 'pure water', oranges, second hand clothes, candies and many others. Some are happy when market traders contract them to work for them and to carry out chores such as sweeping the shops, packing and unpacking goods and running errands.

While the market traders take serious precautions and study the children for some time to see if they can trust them, before allowing them to come to their shops to work for them, the children on the other hand do not have that chance because of their compelling need for somebody to give them work. Practically, they need to work, to get money and survive because, as stated earlier, they pay for virtually everything on the street. For some of the children, the relationship between them and the adults is just to get money and food, while a few of them talk of the emotional satisfaction they receive from relationships with some adults. Some of these relationships develop through networking with other Street Children, who might have worked

before, or are still working with particular adults; and so the network is such that when some Street Children trust a friend, they introduce them to adults they are working with, so that the adults can also give them work or wares to sell.

At the beginning of the relationship, the children need to work hard at presenting themselves to the adults as obedient, trustworthy and as children who are ready to take orders, because of the prejudiced perception of people about Street Children, and because of cultural expectations of Ghanaian children to obey and take orders from adults without complaining, which gives the children more work to do in building up the relationship. But the children also expect that their relationship with the adults would yield positive outcomes, and therefore expect the adults to be trustworthy as well. On realising that adults they are relating to are not trustworthy, they opt out of that relationship, as expressed in the following extract:

*You see those who cook food to sell come and look for some girls to help them. When the girls do not get any jobs to do, they agree and follow them. They go and work with them in the day time and at night come back here to sleep. Girls from my home town prefer carrying loads for people to going to work with people. They say sometimes you work with people and they do not pay you. The people give excuses of not having money, business not being good etc. so I cannot pay you today, I will pay you tomorrow and the like. However, when you carry 'Kaya', you are paid instantly (FW2SC7: 5).*

In Accra, other traders including hot food sellers employ the children to work with them, as expressed in the above. Girls are contracted more than boys to work in hot food production businesses but the big boys are contracted to pound 'fufu' (pounded cassava, yam, cocoyam and plantain) on a commercial basis. When they are employed this way, they are paid money at the end of the day, or at the end of the week but, according to the children, some of the people who contract them give excuses when it is time to pay. They resolve this by refusing to work with such people. They rather involve themselves in any available job which brings money into their own hands. This is one reason why many Street Children from the northern part of Ghana especially are involved in business as head porters.

Their interactions with adults include negotiations for collection of goods from the adults, on credit, to sell and make some profit. An example is the ice water business discussed in chapter 5. The respondent in the following extract negotiates with a trader and gets some apples to sell: *You can get help. For example someone can give you some apples to sell. When you sell them, you can get some money which will help you (FW2SC1: 25)*. This is a way they get goods to sell, get their profit and return the capital to the owner. It is difficult to transact this kind of business in the rural areas: first, because children may not get people to give them goods on credit and second, it is difficult to get buyers who would purchase the goods directly.



Some of the relationships between Street Children and adults have grown from instrumental to expressive. The relationship between the boy and the tree market women in the following excerpt is an example. The women he works with now know him and trust him, to the extent that when he has no money for food, he could go to them and they would support him: any of them could give him money. He feels they are good due to their support and even has future plans for them:

*I have these three Madams I work with. They help me when I do not have money. For example if I am hungry and I do not have money I go to them. They may give me a cedi each and that will be GH¢3.00 in all. They also give me advice as to how to live my life on the street so that it will be well with me. The same way I think about Evame and co, the same way I think about them. My thoughts are that in future when I become rich I will help them. I feel they are good people. Because of them my suffering on the street is reduced (FW2SC6: 10).* According to the respondent, his interactions and relationship with the three women has reduced his suffering on the street. The problem here is when this child moves from this setting, he will lose these adults and the help they give him.

Accessing soft loans is another important resource available for some Street Children. It is difficult to find somebody from whom you can borrow money in the rural areas from which these children come, and more difficult because they are children who do not have any form of collateral as a support. They are however able to relate to some adults on the street so well that they can

borrow money from them: *I sometimes borrow money from the blind person I work with, when I do not have money, and sometimes my friends. This is because they are the only people I know (FW2SC11:11)*. Some think that the street is a better place for their positive development, because of the availability of these facilities they enjoy in the city which they cannot get in the rural areas.

Some enter into positive relationships, which provide needed resources or new directions in their lives. The more coherent, responsive and stimulating the social relationships in which children find themselves, the more they will be able to learn about and understand themselves, other people and the relationships between them.

A Street Child gives the following account about an adult he came across:

*Somebody came to take me from the street to Tema. The person enrolled me in a school, but I could not stay. So when I came back, one of the blind people called me and advised me to go back to the person, but I said I could not go back, because I said if the person does not come for me I cannot go by myself (FW2SC11 & 11)*.

The child's response, when asked whether the person who came for him was maltreating him, was: *They paid my school fees, bought dresses for me, I had water free, free food and many other things. My only job was to go to school, come back, eat, have morning, afternoon and evening devotions and sleep, but here I buy water, food and do everything on my own. I do everything with money on the street here. I have regretted coming back to the street*

(FW2SC11 & 12). This respondent found an adult in his setting who took him home, gave him food, enrolled him in school, was paying his school fees and took responsibility of his well-being upon himself. This is an example of some of the positive relationships Street Children enter into, which provide needed resources or new directions in their lives, in some of the settings they find themselves on the street.

Street Children learn when and how to interact with and manoeuvre around people in various settings, to enable them keep on going on the street: *As for Osu, I know where we keep the things. We have a lot of security men who are our friends so we keep our things with them. For example we are able to enter Olandos and keep our things there (FW2SC1: 15).*

Street Children, particularly those who live on the street for long periods, come to know what they can get from which area. The setting the boy in the above excerpt is referring to, Osu, is a district in central Accra, Ghana, known for its busy commercial, restaurant and nightlife activity. It is locally known as 'London's West End' of Accra. Many foreign embassies are located in this area and a number of foreigners are found here. The life on an Osu street is quite different from that of Kaneshie, where it is easier for people to perceive the Street Children they see as thieves, because some of them are involved in stealing. The few Street Children who will be in Osu are likely to get food from benevolent people and from surplus food due to the number of restaurants found in the area and they may be able to use the facilities in the area. They

make friends with the numerous security men who give them help in diverse ways.

### **7. 3. 2. Associating and negotiations with organisations and religious institutions**

Street Children are capable of accessing health resources provided by organisations in the areas they live for their wellbeing. Street Children get various supports from some organisations particularly Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) who work with them and the ones who are near to these organisations' premises benefit from the drop-in centres which they provide. Teenage mothers and pregnant girls report that there are some NGOs who help them when they become pregnant. An example of such organisation is Street Girl Aid (SGA). Teenage street girls access the antenatal and post natal services of this organisation when the officials notice them and convince them to attend. They also help the girls to learn trades like sewing and hairdressing to enable them fend for themselves and their children. The following are some accounts about the support they receive from NGOs:

*I gave birth to my first child at a place where they said they would help me learn a trade. When this second child of mine starts to walk, I will go to them to help me learn a trade. If I am able to go through the apprenticeship, I will work in future, get established and get off this street. Until this time, I will still be on the street (FW2SC2: 4).*

*The NGO now at Achimota was then at Mamobi. That is where I went to give birth (FW1SC6: 9).*

*The same NGO did the National health insurance registration for me and sent me to the Ridge hospital (FW1SC6: 10). (Ridge hospital is the government's regional hospital for Greater Accra Region.)*

*If you do not have a helper or any home to go to when you fall sick or in need, there are some people in Achimota who help us when we fall sick or when we get pregnant (FW1SC4: 13).*

*There are some people who come to send us. They are from Achimota. It is a house you go and stay. If you like you will stay there. They will make you attend hospital there until you deliver. After delivery, if you get yourself pregnant again they will not come for you again. I went to live there, only recently (FW1SC5: 14-15).*

The extracts above are from teenage girls who access the resources provided by SGA. SGA works with street girls. The offices and workshops of SGA are situated in Achimota, a suburb of Accra, that is why the children refer to its workers as 'the people from Achimota'. The Field Department of the organization visits the street of Accra, befriends the street girls, and organizes some health education for them. They then do referral from the street to their house of refuge. They refer to the refuge, stranded girls, pregnant girls, and lactating mothers whose children are malnourished. At the refuge, the girls are then referred to various departments. The children's stories show the SGA

linking them up with hospitals and taking responsibility for the hospital bills, their food, clothing and shelter throughout their pregnancy and delivery. SGA also helps the children to get their National health insurance, which enables people in Ghana to attend hospital without having to pay. Girls who want to stay with SGA and learn a trade do so. SGA provides opportunities for the children to train in hair-dressing/beautician course, tie and dye batik making and sewing. The girls select from the services provided by the organisations what they think can impact on their positive development. While some are happy to take part in apprenticeship schemes, leading to gaining skills as seamstress, hairdresser or batik production, some are interested only in accessing their health services, the antenatal and postnatal services, for their wellbeing during pregnancy and delivery. They prefer to come back to the street after their maternity break and work for money and go back to SGA when they get pregnant again, but they are not given this chance. As a respondent reports: *After delivery if you come and get yourself pregnant again SGA will not come for you again (FW1SC5: 14-15)*. The organisation allows the girls to use the organisation's antenatal and post natal services only during first pregnancy, after which they are given the chance to come back and learn a trade. It is then difficult for the group of girls who prefer to be on the street, working for money but at the same time would want to be enjoying SGA services, to remain at the level of wellbeing they enjoyed during their first pregnancy.

Field observations gave another perspective of this same issue of support to street teenage mothers. Whilst the girls' accounts in the Agbogloboshie setting show that SGA provides the service to them in the SGA premises, in an observation in the Tema Station setting, two nurses from one of the state's hospital were seen offering post-natal services on the street to support the care of the street girls' babies. This health resource is taken to the Street Children in their setting occasionally on Sundays when they were less busy. The support does not include help during pregnancy and delivery.

Some of the children are particularly pleased to find themselves in a setting in which an NGO called Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS) operates. The children described enormous support from this organisation:

*I wash at CAS. The day CAS is not opened, I wash at Shower (FW2SC4: 4).*

*I bath free at CAS; they give us free toothpaste and a brush. When we go to the toilet there, they give us free toilet paper (FW2SC4: 11).*

*I keep them (my belongings) at CAS. I wash at CAS. But when CAS is not open, I wash at Shower and pay (FW2SC6: 9).*

*I keep them at CAS. I also bath and wash my things at CAS (FW2SC8: 5).*

Washing and keeping clean is something that is very important in the life of Street Children. They know people refer to them as dirty children. Meanwhile, they lack toilet and wash-room facilities. They make every effort to keep clean. They use a chunk of their income on paying to use toilets and bathrooms and therefore cherish these services, provided by Catholic Action for Street Children. A number of Street Children like to be in settings close to this kind of organisation to enable them access their services.

Whilst the children enjoy the toilet and bath services of CAS, there are negotiations between some of the Street Children and CAS to train the children in various fields such as classroom education, farming and in trades such as masonry, carpentry, sewing, hairdressing, bead making and batik making:

*I want CAS to help me learn a trade. After learning the trade I will go home (FW2SC4: 4).*

*CAS people said they will help me. I will go and learn how to become a mason. CAS people said they will enrol me at a school. They asked me what I will do after school and I said I would like to be a mason. When CAS people help me to learn the trade and I finish successfully, I will go home (FW2SC4: 12 - 13).*



Some children negotiate to access the services of these organisations for their positive impact on their lives on the street and also for their future development. The organisation was reported to have trained a number of the children in various areas. The respondents in the above accounts suggest that they remain on the street hoping that they will attend school and/or learn a trade with the help of CAS.

#### **7. 4. Social Competence And Autonomy**

The boy in the excerpt below is a teenager who has come to Accra determined to train and become a professional footballer. He believes he has the talent and he has a sense of purpose and future. He is confident of getting a lot of money when he becomes a professional footballer and that he will be able to look after his parents. The positive self-identity keeps him going on the street despite the difficulties he faces, especially in a setting like Kokomba market. *There is no team in my hometown Ma. I believe I will get it, (referring to money) when I qualify as a professional footballer. I will play in Accra when I qualify as a professional footballer, but I will keep on going home. I can go home about say a month, visit my parents, take care of them and come back (FW1SC12: 10 - 13).*

It will be difficult for this young person to achieve his goal of becoming a footballer in his hometown, where he says there is no team. For his strong ambition of becoming a footballer to materialise, he has to travel to Accra, where resources - for example football teams, coaches and other resources -

are available to help him train to become one. His personal qualities and belief that he can become a good footballer, plus availability of resources in Accra for his training as a footballer increases his resilience on the street: importantly his confidence that the odds can be surmounted enables him to keep going.

Developmentally, adolescents are more able to reflect on their relationships with others, including their parents/carers, and begin to differentiate what their parents can offer and also what they can give back. They are more able to understand their parents' lives and to reach out to them. Looking after and taking care of one's parents is a cultural expectation of children in Ghana and this young person is conscious of this. As stated in the literature, the Ghanaian elderly persons took care of their children and relatives during their youthful days, and they expected the young ones to reciprocate by caring for them during their old age (UNDP, 2007; Korboe, 2000). There are no old people's homes where one's parents could be sent for care and protection. This young person sees his training as footballer as a positive development which will lead to his earning money in the future, to look after his parents. In Ghanaian society, and perhaps many other places, professional footballers command money and respect. Parents and community members are happy with their children when they are professional footballers, or are receiving training to become players. They see it as positive development. Siegler (2002) argues that greater maturity occurs in the reasoning and problem solving abilities of adolescents (Wilson et al 2008, p. 164). The child in the

excerpt above decided to migrate to the city where he thinks he can be autonomous and develop in his own way by becoming a professional footballer, while at the same time thinking of the well being of the parents. He also desires to have a continuing relationship with his parents and to be in touch with them. Adolescents have two apparently contradictory tasks in their relationships with their parents: to establish autonomy and independence while at the same time maintaining an emotional connectedness to them. This runs through a few of the excerpts where Street Children wish to keep contact with their parents, and also with adults on the street. This boy has joined his hometown association in the Kokomba market and, according to him, the association supports him occasionally by giving him money to go for training sometimes when he has no money.

### **7. 5. Religious Activities**

Involvement in the activities of churches and a strong faith give meaning to the lives of some Street Children. For some, participation in the activities of the church provided structure for their lives and assured them salvation, security and a sense of a mission in an 'alien world', the streets of Accra. Such a faith was tied to identification with fundamentalist religious groups. For others, however, faith was not tied to a specific formal religious affiliation but rather, to a confidence in a centre of value. Their faith enables them to have the feeling of hope and confidence that all will be well with them one day. Some feel one day, God will bring somebody their way to help them, either by taking them home to look after them, or by taking responsibility for

putting them into an apprenticeship, or by sending them back to school. Their hopes are expressed in the following excerpts:

*My hope is that somebody will have mercy on me, take me out of the street and help me to become somebody in future. I wish the person will take me to his/her house. I will not like anybody to take me to my own house, but if somebody wants to take me to his/her house. (FW2SC5:11).*

This respondent is hoping that someone, possibly in the city, may come for her to live with him/her. This is a girl discussed earlier, under vulnerability, who said she was hearing voices at home urging her *'to pick up knives and harm people, take poison, strip naked, and run unto the main road for a car to run over her.'* She understands her life to be improved and better away from her home, and therefore does not want to go back home. This is one reason why programmes to take Street Children home and reunite them with their families fail in some cases. Not all of them really want to go back home for various reasons.

As the above respondent is hoping that someone may come for her to live with her, the following one is trusting God: *Well, God will tell. Whether I will undertake table top trading and or will be able to open a workshop and work after learning the trade is in the hands of God. I am looking up unto God (FW2SC2: 13).*

Faith is gained and maintained in many different ways, and alongside their faith in God, and their attendance at Church, their resilience level is enormously increased by the thought of working on the street to get money, buy sewing machines and put themselves into apprenticeships. They have diverse ideas as to what they would like to become in future and they are looking for money and ways to reach their desires. Street Children can be optimistic and hopeful.

The mere beauty and admiration of city life keeps some of the children going on the street. The lights, beautiful dresses, which are not commonly found in the rural areas, attract some children. They want to be in the city, enjoy the electricity and the other resources in the city and dress like the city dwellers. A number of them said such things as: *'people dress nicely'* and *'I like the dresses'*. This is why a particular seven year old is on the street, she said *'When I see school children going to school, they look beautiful to me with their school uniforms and bags. My sister said I should come and do baby sitting for her. So I have come to help her so that she will buy school uniform for me'* (FW2SC9: 2 - 4). She admires the school uniform and bags of school children and this gives this seven year old girl the hope that – after living on the street for a period – she will get her school uniform. She may gain school uniform in a different way, as recently, school uniforms have been provided for very deprived rural children free of charge by central government.

Most Street Children know how to make themselves happy in the midst of their difficulties on the street. They use their opportunities. In some of the settings, they play music and dance. One child, I asked what makes her happy on the street, said: *When, for example, they play music or they show films (FW1SC5: 22)*. Another one says: *Amenuveve has got some people who we all play with. I go to watch films and play games at the games centre with Amenuveve (FW2SC8: 5)*.

Play is very important in the life of children. Street Children like other children still enjoy playing and having fun. Film theatres, game centres and other entertainment centres for children are not common in the rural areas but abound in the cities. Film centres are operated by electric power, which some villages and remote areas in Ghana lack. In the settings of Street Children in Accra, there are film show centres and game centres where they pay, and watch films which make them happy.

## **7. 6. Conclusion**

This chapter has taken me beyond earlier studies of difficulties and constraints of Street Children and analysed the ways by which Street Children mitigate the constraints and difficulties that confront them on the street. The chapter analysed specific characteristics and processes Street Children employ in their relationships with others and the negotiations that go on between them and the people they find in their settings to access resources for their wellbeing and survival.

The chapter has discussed friendship networks between Street Children; it analysed how Street Children identify, associate, relate and negotiate with colleague Street Children on the street. Findings show that the care and love that emanate from these friendships are very healthy and help in their positive development. The experienced ones direct the new entrants where to locate resources, such as where to hang out for jobs, where to buy cheap food, clothing, and medication when they are sick. They also give advice on how to avoid the troubles of the street. These kinds of directives help the children to roam and hang around at safer places for their wellbeing. They mourn and perform burial and funeral rites when one of them is dead. These kinds of help and support they receive from each other impact positively on them mentally, emotionally and physically, enabling them to keep on going on the street. Street Children therefore know and are encouraged that, whether dead or alive, their friends/colleagues on the street are there as a support. It can then be said that Street Children in Ghana find, through their interaction with other colleague Street Children and their working experiences with their colleagues, positive sources of efficacy and cohesion, strong identity, feelings of well-being, positive relationships, and access to material and social capital. These are outcomes associated with resilience.

The study shows specific processes Street Children employ to survive in the context of the rough street culture. It shows that younger street children, particularly the younger boys associate and negotiate with bigger street boys.

These connections with bigger boys help them to mitigate the risk of exposure to beatings and forceful collection of their money by bullies.

The chapter has taken us beyond other studies and analysed interactions and negotiations that go on between Street Children and some of the adults that they come across in their environment or settings. These are important adults in the lives of Street Children: they provide resources such as work, advice and other supports needed by children for their positive development. Some enter into positive relationships, which provide new directions in their lives.

The chapter has also discussed how the children are able to navigate towards and access health resources provided by organisations in the areas they live for their wellbeing. The children select from the services provided by the organisations what they think can impact on their positive development. Some children negotiate to access the services of these organisations for their positive impact on their lives on the street and also for their future development. Some of the organisations were reported to have trained a number of the children in various areas. The children's accounts suggest that they remain on the street hoping that they will attend school and/or learn a trade with the help of CAS or any other NGO including philanthropists.

The chapter discusses how personal qualities, talents and belief in oneself that they can make change in their lives, plus availability of resources in Accra for training and developing their talents increase the children's resilience on the



street: importantly their confidence that the odds can be surmounted enables them to keep going.

The chapter also analysed how involvement in religious activities and a strong faith give meaning to the lives of some Street Children. For some, participation in these activities provided structure for their lives and assured them salvation, security and a sense of a mission in an 'alien world', the streets of Accra and gives them a sense of progress and personal development.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Concluding Reflections**

This thesis is organised into eight chapters which enabled me to address the overarching research question of this study; how, and in what ways, do Street Children try to survive and cope with their life on the street? Related questions that I explored include: What earlier family experiences have been factors in bringing Street Children to the streets? What is the nature of their day to day life? What kinds of relationships do they form on the streets as individuals, in groups and within various social structures? What opportunities do their lives offer and what difficulties do they encounter? How do the children perceive their lives on the streets? What are their hopes for the future?

I decided to start the thesis by providing contextual overview of Ghana, the study country since independence on 6<sup>th</sup> March, 1957. This helped in throwing light on the country's history, family tradition, livelihoods of the Ghanaian and the general socio-politico-economic changes that have taken place since independence and how these contribute to bring children to the street. For example, educational changes since independence in 1957 through 1960s, 1970s to contemporary times and their effects on the Ghanaian child is discussed. My research draws on existing works on Ghanaian family systems such as Fortes (1971), Nukunya (1992), Apt (1997), Korboe (2000), Van der Geest (2002), Wusu & Isiugo-Abanihe (2003), Badasu (2004), Takyi (2006),

UNDP (2007), UNICEF (2009), to bring meaning into explaining the contribution of Ghanaian family to the upbringing and general welfare of the Ghanaian child. Information gathered from the above literature about the Ghanaian family systems and their contribution to the upbringing and general welfare of the Ghanaian child has enhanced my investigation and understanding of the question; what earlier family experiences have been factors in bringing the Street Children to the streets, which is a related question to the overarching research question; how, and in what ways, do Street Children try to survive and cope with their life on the street?

Drawing on existing research on the accessibility of livelihoods among the people in Ghana such as Foster (1965), Assimeng (1999), UNDP (2004), GSS (2005), UNDP, (2007), UNICEF (2009) helped to bring meaning into the life histories that Street Children narrated about their home circumstances. Their experiences of home prior to their coming onto the street provide some bases for understanding why they are on the street (**Chapter 4, Section 4. 2**), what they do on the street (**Chapter 5, Section 5. 2**) and how they perceive the impact of street life on their development (**Chapter 4, Section 4. 3. 1 (iii), Chapter 5, Section 5. 3**).

Chapter two continued with literature review which examined some concepts/theories and knowledge such as adolescent sexuality, vulnerability and resilience which underpin our understanding of the Street Children phenomenon. It also reviews studies undertaken with Street Children in

Ghana. Literature on adolescent sexuality has helped in understanding street girls' thoughts, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships concerning sexual activity, reproduction and roles in taking care of their children.

Ideas of vulnerability & resilience enhance my understanding of the life situations of the Street Children. It has helped me to read meaning into the varied ways in which the Street Children see their lives on the street. Applying the idea of vulnerability to my data has helped to approach my data by analysing the children's own accounts and understanding of their vulnerability. This has provided me with a new and additional meaning to Street Children's vulnerability that not all situations are as devastating as one may perceive it from outside.

My research draws on theories of resilience and existing works on resilience such as Boyden & Mann (2005), Ungar (2008), Liborio & Ungar (2010) to bring meaning to how some Street Children perceive their lives and work on the street. Reading about resilience has provided a deeper understanding of children's work on the street and helped me to understand better how Street Children perceive their work and other opportunities on the street. My research draws on the study of Ungar, (2004) to bring meaning to or to understand data concerning interactions, negotiations between Street Children and their environments for resources. Applying the knowledge of resilience from the literature has helped in analysing interactions and

negotiations that go on among Street Children and between them and their environment to access resources for their wellbeing. This has provided deeper understanding of how they are able to survive and cope on the street.

To investigate how Street Children try to survive and cope with their life on the streets, it was necessary for me to get close to them and interview them in their context. Observing them in their street context and life also provided important data on things they do to survive which compliment their accounts. The general approach and strategies employed, the course of decisions I made prior, during and to the end of the study are explained in **Chapter 3** of this thesis.

Data gathered for the study is analysed in chapters four, five, six and seven. In chapter four, I analysed the earlier family experiences which had been factors in bringing Street Children to the streets I have also analysed how they are able to manage their accommodation. Literature about social and economic history of Ghana since independence and livelihoods of the Ghanaian has enhanced the analysis and increased my understanding of data gathered on the children's family experiences (**Chapter 4, Section 4. 2**).

This increased understanding has come about by connecting what I have seen, heard and learnt in my fieldwork to a range of theories which examine the issue from different perspectives. Thus, for example, some understanding of economic forces and the effects of poverty on family structures must be complemented by specific questions about children's developmental needs at

different ages and stages and by their varying capacities to survive in their environment.

The literature about social and economic history of Ghana since independence (chapter 1) enhanced my understanding of the factors which underlie the growth in numbers of Street Children in the cities. The extent and complexity of the background problems make solutions to the present situation very difficult. In the Northern, Upper East, and Upper West regions and in other rural areas of the country, poverty and the disintegration of traditional family structures, without effective new ones, combine to bring children and young people into the cities in ever increasing numbers.

## **Findings**

Findings from the research show that issues of poverty in some of the Street Children's families lie at the heart of their living on the streets instead of their homes. Some gave accounts of their parents not being able to keep them in apprenticeships, provide them with food, school fees and items necessary for them to attend school and do well. These made them drop out of school and in some cases never attend school, as outlined in this thesis **Chapter 4 Section 4. 2. 1**. This supports UNICEF's 2009 Ghana report, referred to in chapter one, which indicates that most Street Children have never attended, or have dropped out of school (UNICEF, 2009). The thesis also supports Brook-Gunn & Duncan's (1997) discovery that family income seems to be strongly related to children's ability and achievement-related outcomes.

Almost all the children in this study migrated from the rural areas of the country and from the three regions of the northern part of the country (Northern, Upper East, and Upper West regions), which are confronted, as described in chapter one, with deteriorating social and economic conditions as well as limited opportunities or prospects (UNDP, 2007, p. 27). Difficulties in obtaining secure livelihoods for many people and children who originate from these areas are among the contributing factors to the inability of the parents to provide food and items needed for their children's schooling.

Directly related to the difficulty of parents in providing economic support for children is children's work to support themselves and their parents. This study finds that some parents allow their children to work for other people; the children are not paid for their labour but, rather, their parents collect any wage due to them. From what the children say, some of the parents do not use the wages they have worked for their benefit. The children's stories also suggest that some parents get them involved in occupations at too early a stage. A reason provided by the children explaining why they ran away from home was when the work became too difficult for them. Meanwhile children's work with their parents in some Ghanaian societies is taken to be a form of socialization to prepare them for their future jobs, as mentioned earlier in chapter one (UNICEF, 2009). The children's stories however, suggest that some of the work, either to socialise them or support family income became too difficult for them.

Secondly, drawing on existing work on livelihoods and economic difficulty has been relevant to understanding the experiences of Street Children concerning the neglect and abuse some reported to have suffered at home, which made them come to live on the street as discussed in **Chapter 4 Section 4. 2. 2.** This study found out that some of the Street Children decided not to go home to their parents because their parents disowned and/or rejected them. Even though parents' attitude of neglecting and abusing their children may be explained in different ways and under different circumstances, Parton (1995) argues that 'families characterised as neglectful can be re-characterised as families in need once the effects of disadvantage and deprivation are taken into account' (Parton, 1995; Daniel, 1999). Although some of the Street Children experienced difficulties in their families, these difficulties were often part and parcel of the economic and social problems which affected their parents. The analyses add to previous studies' findings that some Street Children came from poverty stricken backgrounds (Agarwal et al 1997; Korboe 1997; De-Graft Aikins & Ofori Atta, 2007). Some were neglected by their parents, either physically or emotionally, and some came from broken homes (Apt, Blavo and Opoku, 1991; Korboe, 1997). Poverty underlies the desperation of Street Children to making money on the street to survive, as discussed under **Section 5. 2. 1 of Chapter 5.** The thesis confirms that poverty in all its aspects and forms is a key factor in understanding why children turn to life on the street.



On the streets the children occupy spaces and hang out in groups of the same gender in particular settings, as a safety measure against assailants. At night they occupy and sleep at bus stations, open market spaces, and shop corridors, with various sleeping arrangements. In the day time, they walk along and hang around the streets, shopping areas and markets looking for jobs to do to be able to get some money for food. The research shows that Street Children form groups, and give different names to their groups, according to the various places they occupy on the street. These groups are also formed and differentiated from others by the kinds of jobs they do, their places of origin, gender and so on. Those who have been on the street for long periods managed to build relationships with Security men in the settings where they find themselves and keep their belongings with these Security men for safe-keeping, which they pay for. When Street Children are new in an area, and do not know anybody with whom they can keep their belongings, they carry them wherever they go and sleep with them when they go to sleep. Some even do not have anything to keep. The clothes they have on at a particular day and time are all that they have.

The research shows that some see sleeping on the street as influential in taking control of their own lives, which they see as positive development. This is a new understanding I have got on the issue of Street Children's homelessness which makes an important contribution to knowledge on homelessness of Street Children. They said they are free from doing their parents' work without any remuneration, free from their parents ordering

them around, free to use the money they have worked for and free to do whatever they want to do. With the expression of these benefits, one needs to be careful before assuming that they are vulnerable for being homeless on the street.

The Street Children's day to day life on the street is analysed in **Chapter 5**. The chapter analysed the kinds of works the children engage in on the streets for their survival, the dangers, hazards and risks which are embedded in their work, the gendered nature of the works they do, the opportunities and constraints they face in going about their life and work as girls or as boys, what they use their money for and how they perceive their life on the street. I have gained better and detailed knowledge of Street Children's work on the street and the children's perspectives on their economic activities. Much work is done in this study on the jobs Street Children do on the street to earn money, which is a valuable contribution in answering the overarching research question in this thesis; how, and in what ways, do Street Children try to survive and cope with their life on the streets. On the street, the children try to make money to enable them survive, as discussed under **Section 5. 2. 1 of Chapter 5**. They engage in a variety of jobs and activities to earn some money. This study points out that most of the jobs they do on the street for money are not common in their places of origin. These include: head porter business, including running errands for market women (sweeping their shops, packing and unpacking goods), work with blind people, hawking in traffic,

traffic direction, driver's mate, prostitution, making and selling fake phones, scrap business, begging for money among others.

This study argues that the kinds of work Street Children do could be said to be gendered. This research shows that, even though there are some jobs which are done by both sexes equally, males tilt towards some jobs, while females tilt towards others. This makes a contribution to what is already known about Street Children's work in general. For instance, none of the boys said he was involved in prostitution, which could be an area of further investigation for another study. Rather, prostitution was mentioned as a type of job the girls do for money. Also, none of the girls said she was involved in the business of making and selling of fake phones, driver's mate and scrap business: it was found that these businesses are preserves of boys.

Findings from this study show that not only do Street Children look for any chance by which they can make money to survive on the street but they also look out for opportunities that will offer them some training for a better job and future. As discussed under **Section 5. 2. 2 of Chapter 5**, the children use their money for various benefits on the street including buying food, water, paying for bath house and toilet, buying of clothing and paying for safekeeping. They save money on the street to enable them survive on days when they do not get any work. Some make the attempt to save money to enable them learn a trade after staying on the street for a period of time.

Others try to save money in order to be able to send some home to help their parents look after their siblings.

Most of the jobs they do on the street empower them financially and keep them busy. They are satisfied that they are in control of their finances. They now have power and control over the management of their finances, which they tend to see as influential to their positive development.

Drawing on theories of resilience and existing works on resilience (Boyden 2005; Ungar 2008; Liborio & Ungar, 2010) has helped to approach my data by analysing the children's own perception and understanding of their life on the street. I have shown that the children do not perceive their lives on the street as full of misery only. It reveals that some of the children view life on the street as better than their previous lives in various dimensions, including getting food, money and meeting other needs as discussed in **Chapter 5, Section 5.3**. This finding contributes to existing knowledge about the life of Street Children. Another new finding is that Street Children interpret their involvement in economic activity, being able to get some incomes for their basic necessities on the street, and meet their future plans, as their life being better off and successful on the street than at home. It also shows that those who are trying to resolve the problem of access to material resources see their lives as improved when they are able to work and earn money on the street. This supports Liborio & Ungar's (2010) observation that viewing potential positive outcomes of children's work through the lens of resilience

can help to explain why children continue to participate in economic activities (Liborio, 2010) and contributes a new perspective to existing knowledge on Street Children's work in Ghana.

Work and money are therefore paramount in the experience of positive change in the lives of some children on the streets of Ghana. Street Children perceive working, earning money and using the money to meet their needs in their own way, send some home to their parents to look after their siblings as positive developments in their lives. This serves as a buffer, strengthening them to continue to live on the street and work. This finding supports Boyden 2005 and Ungar, 2008's call for the growing recognition of the need to account for contextually relevant factors, such as experiences of economic activity. This finding develops existing knowledge of Street Children's work in Ghana.

This study also reveals that when Street Children are able to save money and return to their villages, they are seen by the people they left behind as successful, because they are able to return to their communities with some items that they would not have been able to buy if they had been still living in these communities. They become role models in their communities and younger ones want to follow their footsteps by coming to Accra as well. This contributes to explaining their ever increasing numbers. This is important information, contributing to reasons why children come to live on the street.

However, findings of this study, discussed in **Chapter 5 Section 5.2.1** show that some of the work they do on the streets of the cities to earn money and the processes they employ in doing the jobs pose serious risks to their lives. For example, they move along with vehicles, run up and down on roads in traffic hawking, they chase buses or vehicles as they pull into the bus stations searching for loads to carry for passengers, they run and jump onto peoples vehicles all in search of work, risking being run over by vehicles and sustaining injuries. Indeed, this study observed children knocked down by vehicles on the roads. Some of the drivers who knock them down run away or they pick them up from the accident spot as if they were sending them to hospital and abandon them on the way, giving them some few cedis. These findings build on the observation of Apt et al (1991) that a child living and working in the streets is vulnerable to environmental and occupational hazards.

While money is a crucial factor for survival, the consequences of sexual relations are gendered. Girls from about 13 years to 17 years approximately, and adolescent girls in general are vulnerable to related health problems associated with sex and commercial sex work. As discussed in **Chapter 5, Section 5.2.1**, street girls do engage in sexual activities for money to survive on the street. This study showed that these girls are particularly exposed to sex-related risks and hazards. Girls engaging in sexual activity for money are at risk of unintended pregnancies. Some find themselves in abusive sexual relationships which render them vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections,

including HIV and other health related problems. This observation confirms Ampofo's study, (2007), which examined the sexual exploitation of children on the streets of Accra and concluded that, once on the street, children, mostly girls, are extremely vulnerable to sexual exploitation, including entry into commercial sex work. It also supports Anarfi's study (1997) that Street Children are a vulnerable group of young people whose life styles place them at high risk for the contraction and transmission of HIV and other STDs.

This study adds and contributes a new perspective to knowledge of street girls' sex-related vulnerability by showing that street girls' exposure to sex-related vulnerability is not only about exploitation, sexual abuse, contracting STIs and unsafe abortions, but also about their inability to continue to work because of sickness related to pregnancy and delivery, resulting in loss of income (**Section 6.3. Chapter 6**). Inability to work and earn money is particularly devastating to Street Children as it is a major way by which they are able to sustain themselves on the street.

The study found out that some girls, especially those found in a particular setting, decided to give birth to their babies whether they planned to become pregnant or not. This is the culture of this setting. But some suffer from their unborn babies dying in their wombs, which is dangerous to their health, both physically and emotionally. They suffer higher risk of this because, in their street context, they may not access the necessary antenatal care. As shown, these sicknesses follow from inadequately targeted health service provision

for this vulnerable group of people. The children mentioned only one NGO that gives them some support during pregnancy and delivery.

This study shows that, even when street girls deliver healthy babies, they still face problems with their babies with them on the street. Findings show that street teenage mothers find it more difficult to work and earn money to feed themselves and their babies, because their babies trail behind them making work difficult (**Chapter 6, Section 6.3**). Some said they have no alternative to leaving them behind at their resting place to carry the load, hoping that the toddlers would stay there without running after them. The research shows that when in difficulty, some who had hitherto decided to stop prostitution get back into practising it to enable them get some money to feed themselves and their babies, with serious consequences. The research adds to existing knowledge, for example Anarfi & Antwi (1995), who discovered through their study that some Street Children were sexually active and had multiple sexual partners and some were involved in sex for survival, among whom a number had contracted STIs at least once (Anarfi & Antwi 1995).

The findings reveal that some Street Children interpret their lives as being in danger, spoiled or deteriorating since they came to live on the street, due to the hazards, risks and the stresses they are exposed to as children. It may be said that they see themselves 'vulnerable', while other Street Children see their lives as improving, despite the risks they face. It is clear that there is considerable variation in the way they see their lives on the street.



In addition to risks embedded in the work they do for money, this research shows other hazards and stresses of Street Children that make their survival on the street very difficult (**Chapter 6**). Beatings and bullying are some such stresses that Street Children have to deal with on the street. These are vulnerabilities imposed by other people, which might threaten or challenge healthy development. They are beaten by adults and/or by older Street Children.

The study found out that some children are beaten by adults because of the varied perceptions people have about them. People do not understand them and do not see why they are loitering around on the streets of their communities. Some adults perceive all Street Children to be bad. This study shows that the children are vulnerable to beatings, because they are very young and are not strong or powerful enough to defend themselves. The bigger ones do not receive beatings from adults. The age at which they find themselves on the street therefore renders them vulnerable to beatings.

Beatings and bullying happen among Street Children themselves as well. The perpetrators tend to be the older Street Children who are sixteen years and above, particularly the boys, while the victims are the younger ones, particularly younger boys between the ages of eight and around fifteen years. This renders the younger group of Street Children more vulnerable than the bigger ones. Money is essential but hard to come by for Street Children. It is one commodity that all Street Children need and search for desperately.

Some of these big boys are self-imposed leaders who use their age, gender and stature to bully and beat up the younger ones and extort the money which they struggle to earn, making life more difficult for the younger ones; and no one is able to do anything to the perpetrators. It is also difficult for the younger ones to get jobs as the older ones bully and take jobs from them. These kinds of beatings, bullying and helplessness create fear and hatred among the Street Children. The smaller children fear the bigger boys, seeing them as bad people they do not like.

Children, who experience beatings in their settings interpret their lives on the street as a misery and do not see anything good about living on the street. Street Children's vulnerability to beatings and bullying contribute to their other known vulnerabilities.

A major and obvious risk for Street Children is difficulty in finding places to sleep. They become homeless on the city streets. They face a lot of difficulties with the weather (**Section 6. 4 of Chapter 6**). If it is not rain causing difficulty and discomfort, it is fire. They are exposed to lack of shelter in both the dry and wet seasons making life difficult. Their problem with rain is particularly serious at night. When it is raining in the day time, they are able to hide in the various places where they roam, under corridors of shops or verandas of buildings. At night however, these shops are closed. Because they normally sleep at lorry parks and railway stations, on pavements in and around the stations, in the open, in markets, on tables, under overhead

bridges and in wooden structures, they are drenched when it rains at night. In addition, during heavy rain, they risk being carried away by flood waters because their sleeping places get flooded. Clearly, they are at the mercy of the weather, come rain or shine. They sleep in overcrowded and in hygienically poor environments and under pathetic conditions.

Findings reveal that as Street Children are accused of, and have confessed to, being thieves, they are also victims of theft (**Section 6.5 of Chapter 6**). Most often, their environment does not help them in achieving their goals of gathering money and going back home, getting money for food, school fees, apprenticeships and items in preparation for marriage. Their happiness is cut short by theft, which abounds in their settings. They lament that the items they struggle to buy and any money saved are stolen because they have no place to keep them: contributing to the risks faced by Street Children. This is one reason why some, who planned to live on the street for shorter periods and go back to school or into apprenticeships, end up living for longer periods on the streets. They are not able to achieve their aims as a result of people stealing whatever they have gathered.

This research shows that Street Children are exposed to risk and violence when people come and cut their dresses with blades when they are asleep, to remove money from their pockets and/or to wake them up and search their pockets for money. In the process of cutting the dress, the child's body is at times cut. There could be a fight if the victim sees that he/she can defend

him/herself. The victims are exposed to, and may also learn these kinds of stealing and cheating tricks and may become thieves themselves.

This research has added to existing studies on the vulnerability of Street Children: It has also developed valuable new insights through investigating and analysing why the children continue to live on the street, despite the difficulties they face. Reading the literature about resilience, and applying the knowledge to the data in this study reveals negotiations for resources and pathways to well-being by the Street Children. The concept of resilience has been crucial in helping me to understand ways by which Street Children are able to resolve and cope with vulnerability in the situations that confront them.

My research draws on theories of resilience, and existing works on resilience such as Ungar (2004), Ungar (2007), and Ungar (2008), to bring meaning into the interactions and negotiations that go on between Street Children and their environment and their community, their peers and other people they come across in the settings where they find themselves, for their mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. The outcomes of these interactions and negotiations help them to mitigate some of the risks that confront them, acting as buffers and enabling a strengthening of the children to help them withstand street life.

Various forms of interactions and help are provided between and among Street Children. **Chapter 7, Section 7. 2. 1** of this thesis shows how they

Identify, associate, relate and negotiate with colleague Street Children they find compatible and supportive. Findings of this study show that the care and love that emanate from these friendships are very healthy and help in the children's positive development. They receive strength from their colleagues to remain on the street through the various supports their friends give them. This study shows that one way in which street teenage mothers are able to solve the difficulty of working with their babies around them on the street is the support from other street girls in caring for their babies. This assures them of the safety of their toddlers and increases their resilience in continuing to be on the street with their babies, toddlers to work.

In addition to their peers helping with the care of their babies, some receive help from their relations. The study found out that older siblings and older cousins bring younger girls around 7 and 8 years to do babysitting for them with the promise of buying school items like school bags and uniforms for them.

Experienced Street Children direct new entrants where to locate resources, such as where to look for jobs, where to buy cheap food, clothing, and medication when they are sick. This contributes to their well-being. They have their own street culture which they have to follow to survive. Those who have lived long on the street advise their friends who are new entrants to act according to the rules of street life.

Some important outcomes of their interactions and negotiations are support for their fellow Street Children during sickness and death. They attend burials and funerals of fellow Street Children. If they cannot trace the deceased's home, they organise and perform funeral rites for the deceased on the street. Street Children therefore know and are encouraged that, whether dead or alive, their friends/colleagues on the street are there as a support. As some of their accounts show, they have a family on the street.

Associating and negotiations go on between younger street boys and the older boys. This research found (**Chapter 7, Section 7. 2. 2**) that to mitigate the risk of beatings and bullying from bigger boys, smaller Street Children, particularly, smaller boys, identify and link up with the bigger boys on the street for help and protection. The smaller boys connect and solicit help from the bigger boys to mitigate the risk of exposure to beatings and forceful collection of their money by bullies. The study revealed specific processes the big boys employ to help the younger ones (**Chapter 7, Section 7. 2. 2**) in the context of the rough street culture. These behaviours are normal in the context of street life in these settings in Ghana, but may be unacceptable in a different context. Life on the street is complex, where the children negotiate among themselves for safety and well-being.

This study found that some children and young people, who have dropped out of school, and those who have not had the chance of attending school for various reasons, migrate to Accra to have access to various resources which are concentrated in Accra, the capital city of Ghana. On the street, the

children select what they need from their environment and make good use of it. They usually converge around market and other commercial areas because there are job opportunities in and around these settings. They occasionally get jobs for money, which they need for access to material resources.

In some settings, they come across some adults who are supportive and protective. These adults include some of the market traders, shop owners, shoppers, watchmen, and some other people who were Street Children but have now grown into adults and are still living their lives on the street. Interactions and negotiations ensue between the children and these adults. These are important adults in the lives of Street Children because they provide resources such as work, advice and other supports needed by children for their positive development. The study found that their interactions with adults include negotiations for collection of goods from the adults, on credit, to sell and make some profit. This study shows that interactions and relationship with some adults have reduced the suffering of children on the street. Findings also show that some of the positive relationships Street Children enter into provide needed resources or new directions in their lives.

In **Chapter 7, Section 7. 3. 2**, the various supports provided by one or two organisations in some of the settings of Street Children, which contribute to the wellbeing of the children are discussed. Some Street Children are capable of accessing health resources provided by organisations in the areas they live

for their wellbeing. They select from the services provided by the organisations what they think can impact on their positive development.

Washing and keeping clean is seen as very important in the life of Street Children, because they know people refer to them as dirty children. A number of them therefore like to be in settings close to organisations who provide toilet and wash-room facilities to enable them access these facilities. These organisations are, however few considering the great number of Street Children. Whilst the children enjoy the toilet and bath services of CAS, for example, there are negotiations between some of the Street Children and CAS to train children in various fields such as classroom education, farming and in trades such as masonry, carpentry, sewing, hairdressing, bead making and batik making. Some children managed to negotiate access to services of these organisations for their positive impact on their lives on the street and also for their future development. Accounts of some Street Children suggest that they remain on the street hoping that they will attend school and/or learn a trade with the help of CAS.

Cultural expectations of children in Ghana, for example, children expected to care for their parents during their old age, place responsibilities on the children, pushing some to develop their talents for earning money in the future and/or to look for money, to look after their parents. (Old people's homes need to be built to take care of the aged. In this way children would



not be desperately looking for money to care for their parents' welfare when they grow)

A strength of this thesis is the detailed knowledge of the day-to-day life of children on the street that is provided throughout. A range of studies, made in Ghana and various countries exist, concerning the lives of Street Children (See, for example, Apt, Blavo & Opoku, 1991; Apt, & Grieco 1997; Beazley, 2002; Panter-Brick, 2002; Evans, 2004; Ampofo, 2007). However, this study enters into the small and lived details of the children's lives, in a way which was less evident in other studies, in order to grasp what the business of daily survival really involves (documented in chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7). Qualitative interviews with Street Children and observations gave a deep understanding of many aspects of their struggles to acquire money for basic daily living: keeping clean, sleeping, eating, toileting, their 'tribal' loyalties, their positive and negative relationship with adults, their sexual behaviour and its consequences and their leisure time. They also gave accounts of their earlier family troubles. I was struck by their willingness, even eagerness, to talk to me and by the efforts they made to 'keep decent' in the face of severe accommodation difficulties.

My study gives a deeper understanding of Street Children through its qualitative methodology accessing children's own accounts. This research has built upon and added to existing studies on the vulnerability of Street Children. But in addition, it has gone beyond other studies and developed

valuable new insights through investigating and analysing why the children continue to live on the street, despite the difficulties they face.

This study contributes a new perspective to the knowledge of Street Children's work in Ghana by showing that, Street Children interpret their involvement in economic activity, being able to get some incomes for their basic necessities on the street, and meet their future plans, as their life being better off and successful on the street than at home. A discovery that the study has made is that financial autonomy is one of the factors that increase Street Children's resilience level and makes some of them to remain on the street. This is so because from the children's own view, whatever income they generate is controlled by themselves and no adult controls them or directs them as to how to use it. They perceive working, earning money and using the money to meet their needs in their own way as positive developments in their lives. This serves as a buffer, strengthening them to continue to live on the street and work.

The study also goes beyond others to investigate and analyse interactions and negotiations that go on between Street Children and their environment and their community, their peers and other people they come across in the settings where they find themselves, for their mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. The outcomes of these interactions and negotiations help Street Children to mitigate some of the risks that confront them which strengthens them and enables them to continue to live on the street.

## **Reflections on the process of the study**

The research impacted on me in very important ways and I am now more able to understand the challenge to a researcher of undertaking qualitative research of this kind. I faced some quite serious dilemmas about interfering in risky situations during my observations: for example, I wanted to take a toddler away from danger when he ran after his mother as his mother ran after buses in pursuit of a job. The researcher in me was telling me to just be still and watch, while my private self wanted to jump forward and rescue the toddler. Hedican, (2006) describes this kind of situation as a classic fieldwork dilemma -- to get involved or not. Another dilemma was whether to show respondents, who were sick, such as a girl I observed with chicken pox where to go for treatment or not. Another dilemma was about keeping quiet when I could have added my voice to the voice of a girl I was interviewing to support her when she was wrongly accused by a market woman. There were occasions when I felt extremely anxious and disturbed at what I was seeing, yet the qualitative methods used reached down into the reality of people's experiences, for which there is no substitute.

The concept of resilience is not one used commonly in studies of Street Children in Ghana, perhaps because studies were more concerned with the vulnerabilities of the children. To address this, the analysis drew out reasoned links between the children's involvement in economic activities and their contribution to their positive development and wellbeing; the outcomes of interactions and negotiations among children and how these contribute to the

wellbeing of the Street Children; the outcomes of interactions and negotiations between the children and adults they come across on the street and how these outcomes promote the children's wellbeing, strengthening them to remain on the streets; the outcomes of interactions and negotiations between the children and the organisations in their settings; how the children are capable of accessing resources provided by these organisations for their positive development which encourage the children to cope on the street.

The main focus of the research, which is how Street Children try to survive and cope with their life on the street, does not enable detailed recommendations for policy development, or even an appraisal of current strategies of GOs and NGOs. This is because the research focused on the detail of the day-to-day lives of the Street Children, rather than studying in detail the activities of the various organisations. Interviews with personnel of some organisations on the work they do with the children, as well as visits to their premises and observations of their facilities which the children enjoy, contribute to the research evidence about the Street Children's day-to-day lives, their vulnerabilities and their resilience.

The thesis has provided valuable insight into children's own understanding of their vulnerabilities on the street, and what they perceive as contributing to their wellbeing, which perhaps makes way for future research to examine policies aimed at addressing Street Children's welfare.

## **Increased awareness of society's ambivalence towards Street Children**

Society has mixed feelings about Street Children. Some of them survive on the street through the help they get from organisations and some adults: market women, shoppers and security men. But their accounts, supported by observations, also show how unwelcome the children are to many adults they encounter on the street. It is indeed often the struggle for survival which often (but not always) brought out the dislike which some people have for the Street Children. They are classified by some as delinquent, not needing any sympathy and are often treated harshly despite their difficult circumstances. Some people feel the children would have been at home if they had been 'good children'. They feel they are a nuisance and need to be driven away from the street. But some of these children actually have no place to go. It may interest people to know that some of the children in the study do not know their parents. Some know their parents but do not know their whereabouts. Some have no homes and they identify the street as home. Any improvement will depend in part on improving attitudes through better understanding in the general population of the reasons for the presence of the children on the street. Awareness needs to be created in societies that these are children in need with individual characteristics and differences.

The need to address economic problems in rural Ghana and its effects on the city population is to an extent recognized by politicians. The Vice President, Mr. John Dramani Mahama, interacted with a section of Street Children (who

are called Kayayee) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 2010. He was reported to have said that the establishment of the Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA) would create economic opportunities in the savannah areas of the country and make it unnecessary for the youth in the three regions of Northern Ghana (Northern, Upper East and Upper West) to travel south to engage in menial jobs and live in deplorable conditions. By the implementation of SADA, government hopes to create a northern savannah growth pole as part of a national effort towards sustainable development and a middle income country. The areas of coverage of SADA will include the Northern, Upper East, Upper West, and some areas in the Brong Ahafo and the Volta Regions which are considered the poorest in the country. The implementation of SADA is intended to improve incomes, reduce poverty, facilitate accelerated economic growth and increase access by the poor to basic economic and social infrastructure (Daily Graphic, 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2010). The SADA bill was passed by parliament on Friday, 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2010 and is awaiting Presidential signature to become law, (Ghanaian Times, 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 2010). Meanwhile, the children who are now on the street need help to alleviate their struggles for survival.

## **Recommendations**

Because this thesis specifically focused on the detail of the day-to-day lives of the Street Children, social policies are not at its heart. But I offer the following recommendations in the full knowledge both of their necessity and the resource implications that they imply.

Children should be made to benefit from economic activities they engage in at home. There is the need for parents to use money their children earn from their involvement in any economic activity for the children's welfare at home. This may prevent some children from taking the decision to leave home and live on the street. Some children perceive the street to be a better place than home because they said at home, they worked but the money they earned went to their parent. While on the street, they have control over the money they work for.

Some of the children interviewed said they are on the street to work so as to gather money to either go back to school or purchase sewing machines and hair dryers to enable them go back home and go into apprenticeships. Young people who are on the street looking for money to go back and learn a trade could be identified and helped to go back to their communities as they wish with appropriate equipment or working tools for the trade they intend learning. Not only should they be sent back home with the equipment such as sewing machines, dryers among others, but they should be registered and put into apprenticeships of their choice through regular ways of registration, and

the full cost for the apprenticeship paid on their behalf. It is only by giving them the necessary equipment, registering them in the trade of their choice and paying the full cost of the apprenticeship that they would not return to the street.

Currently the government is pursuing a skills acquisition program known as LESDEP (Local Enterprise and skills Development Program). The counseling and occupational therapy sections could identify some of the children who can fit into this program and encourage them to enroll on to it. This has the potential of transforming them into productive members of Ghanaian society.

Street Children are energetic and want to work. Findings show they try to save money on the street to be able to get some capital to enable them trade when they are out of the street life. Government organisations and NGOs interested in the welfare of children should identify these young people and give them some start up capital to enable them establish their own small-scale businesses. They would then be able to rent rooms in Accra and stay away from the street. Organisations and industries could give the children goods on credit to sell for some profit.

Some of their work on the street could be regulated. Some Street Children who are around seventeen years could be trained to complement the work of existing traffic directors and policemen since these children are already



involved in the job unofficially. They would be safer in the directing of traffic when they are trained and are wearing the uniform appropriate for the job.

In Ghana, most commercial drivers belong to unions. The leadership of these unions should ensure that those of their members who go in for the services of these Street Children as drivers' mates treat them humanely. Members should be sanctioned where they abandon a Street Child to his fate when he gets injured during the course of their engagement. Likewise at the lorry parks, the unions should restrict the Street Children from jumping onto vehicles and into the boots of buses when they are not fully packed, looking for loads or luggage to carry.

Almost all of them try to generate some income and try to save. There should be an arrangement with financial institutions that can save their money for them. They can then have access to their money when they need it. This would prevent the situation where the older Street Children bully and forcibly take the money from the younger ones or steal them outright.

Drop-in centres should be provided for Street Children in their settings. These could be provided by the state through the Department of Children (DOC) under the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, Department of Social Welfare (DSW) and any other government body/agency responsible for the welfare of children in the country. NGOs whose services contribute to the welfare of children could also help in the opening up of more drop-in centres. The drop-in centres should be close to the children. The first priority of these

centres should be toilet and bath facilities, food provision and health services provision. As the findings show, washing and keeping clean is something that is very important in the life of Street Children because they are aware people refer to them as dirty children which they do not like. These drop-in centres should be equipped with facilities where the children will be free to walk in everyday and have their bath, use the toilet, change their items of clothing, wash their clothing and even keep them under hygienic conditions. These drop-in centres should remain open throughout the week (weekends and holidays inclusive). Findings show that CAS provides bath and toilet services for children in one of the settings but these services from one organisation is woefully inadequate for even children in one setting. Also, CAS does not open on weekends and holidays. About five to seven drop-in centres in one setting would meet the children's needs.

One major struggle of the children is for money for food and water. I therefore recommend that food should be provided for the children in these drop-in centres. Regular food is not provided officially in any of the organisations in the settings of the study. Three square meals would be more desirable but if not possible, a lunch every day would help the children and prevent them from going hungry all day when they do not get any job to do for money on a particular day.

Health centres could be attached to the drop-in centres. These should be staffed with general practitioners, midwives, clinical psychologists, and

trauma management specialists (Traumatologists). Street Children are among the most vulnerable to injury and sickness; they get injured often, infectious diseases spread amongst them, including sexually transmitted diseases. Children should be able to access the health facility without any hindrance. They should be able to walk in for treatment when they are sick. The health departments of the drop-in centres would help treat the minor injuries sustained by the children, while major injuries which they may not be equipped enough to handle could be referred to bigger hospitals. This health service provision would help the children to avoid being cheated by drug vendors, traditional medicine practitioners and prevent the effects of self medication.

The attachment of midwives and other medical personnel to the centers would be supportive to the girls who become pregnant. The girls would be monitored during the antenatal period as well as the postnatal. Any abnormalities or complications associated with the pregnancy such as unborn babies dying in their wombs/still birth, unsafe abortions, found in the study can be identified and remedied in good time. Most of these teenage mothers are not able to avail themselves at the government facilities in town but they can access these targeted health services knowing that it is provided purposely for they Street Children. Ghana has targets to achieve under the millennium development goals to reduce maternal and child mortality to two thirds from the 1990 level by the year 2015. Managing the teenage mothers who are contributing a great deal to childbirth under very unacceptable conditions

would go a long way to help achieving these goals. The personnel in the centers would also provide needed counseling to the girls on ways to avoid STIs and HIV.

The stories told by some of the children suggest that they went through some trauma before deciding to spend their life on the street. For example, those who felt neglected and disowned by their parents and the girl who reported that she was raped. This has contributed to some of them not trusting anyone. These situations need to be professionally handled so as to bring these children back to a better frame of mind. This would go a long way to integrate them into society. The story of one respondent, who could be said to have been suffering from suicidal tendencies calls for the provision of Clinical Psychologists and Psychiatrists in the centres to examine the mental health of some of the children, and for subsequent treatment of those who need it. This will prevent the dangers that children with suicidal tendencies pose to the other children and themselves.

In addition to the drop-in centres there should be improvement of outreach health services for the Street Children. During observations, in one of the settings, two nurses from the Adabraka polyclinic (a government facility) rendered postnatal services to street babies on the street. The nurses lamented that when they advise the teenage mothers on the kinds of food they should give to their children, they are not able to provide them to their babies, but give them the food they themselves eat. There should be

improvement in this service. This polyclinic can network with either the Department of Social Welfare or the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs to provide supplementary feeding to augment what their mothers can provide. The service provided by this polyclinic could also be improved to cover the antenatal period as well. There should also be more of this kind of support in the other settings. Other polyclinics in various settings could render the service to the children in their areas since the children feel reluctant to go to the hospitals, because they feel so different from other children, and some hospital staff are unkind to them at the hospitals. Children's accounts suggest that rudeness to them makes them avoid the hospital.

Outreach programmes by the state should be improved to include the provision of health services by a team from Ghana Health Service/Ministry of health to cover Street Children of both sexes and not only for the babies of the girls. In addition, cooked food provision could be part of the outreach programme. The Ministry of Agriculture and/or the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs can go round the settings with cooked food vans to distribute cooked food to the Street Children. This could be done more frequently. Perhaps the food could be provided once a week for each setting. Azusa is a religious NGO, which, as part of the help they give these children organise church service for them in a classroom in one of the settings on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. They give them tea, bread and some clothing after the church service. The children appeared happy during that short period of the church service and the taking of the tea and the bread.

Even if they were not attending the church service for the sermon, they could take some tea and bread and get some 'T' shirts on those days of the service. Government organisations should also reach out for these children in their settings, give them food and clothing. Churches and other religious organisations can also distribute food to the Street Children.

The state should establish children's homes and take over the responsibility and welfare of children who cannot be catered for by their parents and families. These should serve as permanent homes for those who have no homes until they grow up and can settle on their own. They can serve as temporary homes for the children who may want to be later linked back with their families. Provision should be made for units in the homes where street teenage mothers can stay with their babies and toddlers.

Findings show the many troubles that children have with rain in particular. The provision of places they could sleep at night would be very helpful. In the day time, they are out till the evening when they come to sleep. This accommodation support would protect them from drenching when it rains and prevent the risk of being carried away by flood waters during heavy rains. The respondents' accounts show accommodation support from only one NGO. This support is for only teenage mothers during their first delivery and no more for all the other categories of Street Children. Of course, this NGO may find it difficult providing accommodation for every Street Child in their setting. If possible, this support should be improved to accommodate the girls even

during their subsequent pregnancies as well. It could also be further extended to accommodate the girls at any stage of their pregnancies. Another NGO could take up the accommodation of boys, especially those found to be sick and or to have contracted a communicable disease.

There are some nurseries in the settings where street teenage mothers are found, but most of them do not send their babies and toddlers because they said they do not have money to pay the fees, afford diapers, provide food and other needed items that their babies should send to the crèches or nurseries. There should be state intervention to identify and send these children to the crèches and nurseries at no cost to their mothers.

Cultural expectations of children in Ghana to look after their parents when they grow put responsibility on children to look for money to care for their parents. The state could help with this responsibility by providing old people's homes to take care of the welfare of the aged. In this way children would not be desperately looking for money to care for their parents' welfare when they grow.

As a long term measure, it is very important to create economic activities in all the rural areas of the country. It would be of great help to the three regions of the northern part of Ghana in particular if dams and irrigation facilities among others could be improved so that they can farm all year round. It is hoped SADA (Savannah Accelerated Development Authority) will address this because the long period between planting and harvesting and the

next planting season is a contributory factor to some young people migrating from the area to the urban cities. The creation of economic opportunities in other rural areas of the country is important because some of the Street Children migrate from these other parts of the country too.

It is hoped these recommendations would go a long way to provide support to the Street Children.



## Bibliography

- Agarwal, S. M. (1997). Bearing the Weight, the Kayayoo - Ghana's Working Girl Child. University of Ghana, Legon. *Social Policy Studies* , 1-24.
- Ajuwon, A. J. (2005). *Benefits of Sexuality Education for Young People in Nigeria. African Regional Health Education Centre. Department of Health Promotion and Education. Nigeria. PhD.* Ibadan, University of Ibadan.
- Altanis, P. & Goddard. (2004). "Street Children in contemporary Greece." *Children and Society* 18(4).
- Ampofo, A. A. (2007). *Examining the sexual exploitation of children on the streets of Accra.* Accra: University of Ghana, Legon.
- Anarfi, J. K. (1997). "Vulnerability to sexually transmitted disease: street children in Accra." *Health Transition Review: the cultural, social, and behavioural determinants of health* 7, 225 - 306.
- Anarfi, J. K., & Antwi, P. (1995). "Street Youth in Accra city: Sexual network in a high risk environment and its implication for the spread of HIV/AIDS." *Health Transition Review* 5(suppl.), 131 - 151.
- Anarfi, J. K. (2009). *Independent Migration of Children in Ghana* . Accra: University of Ghana, Legon.
- Ankomah, A. (2001). International Encyclopaedia of Sexuality: Ghana 2001. The negotiation of sexual relationships. Accra, Ghana.
- Ankomah, A. (2007). *International Encyclopaedia of Sexuality: Ghana.*
- Anthony, E. J. (1987). Risk, vulnerability, and resilience: An overview. In E. J. Anthony & B. J. Cohler (Eds). *The invulnerable child*, 3-48.
- Apt, N. A., Blavo, E. Q. & Opoku, S. K. (1991). Street Children in Accra: A survey report. *Social Policy Studies*.
- Apt, N., A. Grieco, M. (1997). Listening to Girls on the Street Tell Own Story; what will help them most? *Social Policy Studies*, 1-43.
- Apt, N. A. (1991). "Who is Caaring for the Elderly in Ghana?" *BOLD Quarterly Journal of theInternational Institute on Ageing* (1): 4 , 5-10.
- Apt, N. A. (1997). Listening to Girls on the Street Tell Their Own Story; what will help them most? *Social Policy Studies*.

Assimeng, M. (1999). *Social Structure of Ghana. Social Structure of Ghana: A Study in Persistence and Change. 2nd edition.* Tema, Ghana Publishing Corporation. Publishing Division Tema.

Austin, V. L. & Sciarra, D. T. (2010). *Children and Adolescents with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders.* Pearson Education, Inc., publishing as Merrill, Upper Saddle River.

Author. (2004). A constructionist discourse on resilience: Multiple contexts, multiple realities among at-risk children and youth. *Youth and Society* 35(1), 341-365.

Awedoba, A. K. (2002). 'Kasena Norms and Reproductive Health'. *Research Review* 18 (1) 13-26.

Awusabo-Asare, A. A. M., & Kumi Kyereme, A. (2004). *A synthesis of Research Evidence. Occasional Report. Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health in Ghana: The Alan Guttmacher Institute.*

Badasu, D. (2004). 'Child Care among Ewe Migrants in Accra: Cases of Crisis'. *Research Review Supplement* (16), 17-28.

Beazley, H. (2002). "'Vagrants wearing make-up': Negotiating spaces on the streets of Yogyakarta, Indonesia." *Urban Studies* 39(9) 1665-1683.

Boyden J, Mann, G. (2005). Children's risk, resilience, and coping in extreme situations. In Handbook for Working with Children and Youth: Pathways to Resilience Across Cultures and Contexts. Ungar M (ed). Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA. 3-26.

Boyden, J & Elizabeth, C. (2007). Questioning the Power of Resilience: Are Children Up To the Task of Disrupting the Transmission of Poverty? *CPRC Workshop on Concepts and Methods for Analysing Poverty Dynamics and Chronic Poverty* (pp. 1-17). Manchester: Chronic Poverty Research Centre ISBN.

Brook-Gunn, J. & Duncan, Greg, J. (1997). "The Effects of Poverty." *Children and Poverty* 7(2): 55 - 71.

Bryman, A. E. (2008). *Social Research Methods.* New York: Oxford University Press Inc.

Caldwell, J. C. (1968). The New Urban Elite in Ghana (1974). *Population Growth and Family Change in Africa.* 457-484 DOI: D01:10.1177/0010400600403.

Catholic Action for Street Children (2003). *The Ghanaian Street Child.* Saki Publicity Limited, Madina, Ghana.

- Cohen, Judith, Mannarino, A. P., Deblinger, E. (2006). *Treating Trauma and Traumatic Grief in Children and Adolescents*. . New York: The Guilford Press.
- Cohen, L. M. (2000). *Research Methods in Education*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Cowles, K. B. (1988). "Issues in qualitative research on sensitive topics." *Western Journal of Nursing Research* 10(2)163 - 179.
- Daily Graphic. (2011). *Daily graphic of Thursday, October 27*. Accra: Ghana News Agency.
- Daniel, B. W. (1999). *Child Development for Child Care and Protection Workers*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers UK.
- De-Graft Aikins A. and Angela L Ofori-Atta. (2007). Homelessness and Mental Health in Ghana: Everyday Experiences of Accra's Migrant Squatters. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 761-778.
- Dunn, L. ( 1991). "Research alert! Qualitative research may be hazardous to your health!" *Qualitative Health Research* 1(3):388 - 392.
- Duyan, V. (2005). "Childhood." Relationship between the Socio-demographic and Family Characteristics, *Street Life Experiences and the Hopelessness of Street Children* 12(4): 445.
- Enew, J. (1994). *Street and Working Children: A guide to planning*. London: save the children.
- Etherington, K. (1996 ). "The counsellor as researcher: Boundary issues and critical dilemmas." *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling* 24(3): 339 - 346.
- Evans, R. (2002). "Poverty, HIV and barriers to education: Street Children's experiences in Tanzania." *Gender and Development* 10(3): 51-62.
- Evans, R. M. (2005). "Social Networks, Migration, and Care in Tanzania: Caregivers' and children's resilience to coping with HIV/AIDS." *Children and Poverty* 11(2) 111-129.
- Fee, D. Youssef, N. (1993). *Young people, AIDS and STD prevention: Experiences of peer approaches in developing countries*. WHO.
- Flick, U. E. (2009 ). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London : Sage Publications Ltd.
- Fortes, E. (1971). *The family: Bane or Blessing?* Accra: University Press.

Foster, P. (1965). *Education and Social Change in Ghana*. Plymouth.: Latimer Trend and co Ltd.

Garnezy, N. E. (1988). *Stress, Coping, and Development in Children*, The Johns Hopkins University Press Baltimore.

Gilligan, R. (2007). "Adversity, resilience and the educational progress of young people in public care. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties* 12(2), 135 - 145.

Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) (2008)

Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS). (2008). *Ghana Living Standards Survey Report of the Fifth Round (GLSS 5)*.

Ghana Country Report on unemployment (2002)

Greig, A. Talor, J., Mackay, T. (2007). *Doing Research with Children*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Ghana Statistical Service (GSS). (2003). *Ghana Child Labour Survey*. Accra.

Ghana Statistical Service (GSS). (2009). *Ghana Demographic Survey (2008)*. Accra: Ghana Statistical Service.

Ghana Statistical Service (GSS). (2005). *Ghana Population Data Analysis Report: Socio-Economic and Demographic Trends, Vo:l. One*. Accra: Ghana Statistical Service.

Ghana Statistical Service (GSS). (2002). *2000 Population & Housing Census: Summary Report of Final Results*. Accra: Ghana Statistical Service.

Ghana Statistical Service (GSS). (2010). *Economic Survey 2005 - 2007*. Accra: Ghana Statistical Service.

Hedican, E. J. (2006). "Understanding Emotional Experience in Fieldwork: Responding to Grief in a Northern Aboriginal Village." *Journal of Qualitative Methods* 5(1).

Howe, D. (1998). *Patterns of Adoption*. London: Blackwell Publishing Company.

Kaplan, H. B. (1999). Toward an understanding of resilience: A critical review of definitions and models. In M. D. Glantz & J. L. Johnson (Eds.). *Resilience and Development: Positive Life adaptation*, 17-84.

Kleinman, S. C. (1993). *Emotions and Fieldwork*. Sage Publications Inc.

- Korboe, D. (1997). A profile of Street Children in Kumasi. *Social Policy Studies*, 1-21.
- Korboe, D. (2000). Social Cost and Benefits of "Family-Houses": Some Notes from Kumasi. *Journal of the Centre for Social Policy Studies (1)1*, 1-68.
- Kwankye, S. O., Anarfi, J. K., Tagoe, C. A. and Castaldo, A. (2009). Independent North-South Child Migration in Ghana: The Decision-making Process, Working Paper T-29, Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty, University of Sussex
- Langford, D. R. (2000). "Developing a safety protocol in qualitative research involving battered women." *Qualitative Health Research 10(1)*: 113 - 142.
- Lee, R. M., & Renzetti, C. (1995). *Dangerous fieldwork*, . Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage.
- Lerner, R. M., & Benson, P. L. (Eds) (2003). *Development assets and asset building communities: Implications for research, policy, and practice*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum.
- Liborio, R. M. C. & Ungar, M. (2010). Children's Perspectives on their Economic Activity as a Pathway to Resilience. *Children & Society*, 24:326-338. doi: 10.1111/j.1099-0860.2009.00284.x , 326-338.
- Luthar, S. S. (2003). *Resilience and vulnerability: Adaptation in the context of childhood adversities*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Mathew, M. (2003). *The street as a liminal space: the barbed spaces of children*. *Children in the City: Home, Neighbourhood and Community*. P. a. O. B. Christensen, M. 101 - 117. London: RoutledgeFalmer:
- Mizen Phillip & Ofosu-Kusi, Y. (2010). Asking, giving receiving: Friendship as survival strategy among Accra's street children. *Childhood 2010 17 (4) 441-454* , 442-454.
- Mudaly, M. &. (2006). *The Truth is Longer than a Lie: Children's experiences of Abuse and Professional Interventions*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- National AIDS Control Programme, Ghana Health Service. (2011). *HIV Sentinel Survey Report 2010*. Accra.
- Neale, J. (1997). "Homelessness and Theory Reconsidered." *Housing Studies 12(1)*: 47 - 61.
- NETRIGHT. (2009). *Ghana NGO Alternative Report for Beijing+15 Ghana*. Accra, Network for Women's Rights in Ghana. Accra.

- Nukunya, G. K. (2003). *Tradition and change in Ghana, An introduction to Sociology, 2nd edition*. Accra: Ghana Universities Press.
- Nukunya, G. K. (1992). *Tradition and Change in Ghana*. Accra: University Press.
- O'Leary, Z. (2010). *The Essential Guide to Doing Your Research Project*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Orme, Julie. & Seipel, Michel. (2007). Survival strategies of Street Children in Ghana: A qualitative study. *International Social Work* 50(4) , 1-11.
- Panter-Brick, C. (2002). "Street Children, human rights and public health: a critique of future direction." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31 , 147 - 171.
- Panter-Brick, C. (2004). Homelessness, poverty, and risks to health: beyond at risk categorizations of street children. *Children's Geographies* 2(1) , 83-94.
- Parton, N. (1995). 'Neglect as child protection: the political context and the practical outcomes'. *Children and Society* 9(1): , 67 - 89.
- Plummer, D. M. (2007). *Self-Esteem Games for children*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Quinton, D., Rutter, M., & Gulliver, L. (1990). Continuities in Psychiatric disorders from childhood to adulthood in the children of psychiatric patients In L. N. Robins & M. Rutter (Eds.). *Straight and devious pathways from childhood to adulthood* , 259-278.
- Ridge, D., Hee, A., & Aroni, R. ( 1999). "Being "real" in suicide prevention evaluation: The role of the ethnographers' emotions under traumatic conditions." *Australian Journal of Primary Health Inter-change* 5(3): 21 -31.
- Ritchie, J., Spencer, L., & O'Connor, W. (2003). '*Carrying out Qualitative Analysis*', in J. Ritchie and J. Lewis (eds.) *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. London: Sage.
- Robertson, C. (1984). "Formal or Non formal Education? Entrepreneurial Women in Ghana ". *Comparative Education Review* 28(4): 639.
- Robson, C. (Ed). (2002 ). *Real World Research*. Swanston, Australia. Blackwell.
- Rudolph, C. (2003). "Who is responsible for the economy? The formation and consequences of responsibility attributions." *American Journal of Political Science* 47(4) 697 - 712.
- Rutter, M. (1987). "Psychosocial resilience and protective mechanisms." *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* (57), (316 - 331).

- Rutter, M. (2005). Environmentally mediated risks for psychopathology: Research strategies and findings. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 44(1) 3-18.
- Schofield, G. (2001). 'Resilience and family placement; A lifespan perspective'. . *Adoption and Fostering* , 6-19.
- Schofield, G., Beek, M. (2009). "Risk and rsilience in long-term foster care" *British Journal of Social Work* (2005), 35, p. 1283-1301, republished in M. Courtney andJ. Thoburn (eds) (2009)childrn in state care, Library of Esays in Child Welfare series. Aldershot: Assgatee Publishing Ltd.
- Siegler, B. D. (2002). *How Children Develop*. New York: Worth Publishers.
- Silverman, D. (2005). *Doing qualitative Research (Ed.)* . London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Silverman, D. (2006). *Interpreting Qualitative Data, 3rd edn*. London: Sage.
- Strong, P. (1979). *The Ceremonial Order of the Clinic*. . London: Routledge.
- Takyi, B. K. & Broughton, C. L. (2006). "Marital Stability in Sub-Saharan Africa: Do Women's Autonomy and Socioeconomic Situation Matter?" *Family and Economic Issues* 27(1): 113 - 132.
- United Nations Development Program (UNDP). (2004). *"Cultural Liberty i Today's Diverse World" Human Development Report*. UNDP: UN.
- United Nations Development Program (UNDP). (2007). *Ghana Human Development; Towards a More Inclusive Society*. Combert Impressions.
- Ungar, M., Brown, M., Liebenberg, L., Othman, R., Kwong, WM., Amstrong, M. & Gilgun, J. (2007). Unique Pathways to resilience across cultures. *Adolescence* 42(166) , 287-310.
- Ungar, M. (2004). A Constructionist Dicourse on Resilience, Multiple Contexts, Multiple Realities Among At-Risk Children and Youth. *Youth and Society volume 35 No. 3* , 341 - 365.
- Ungar, M. (2008). Resilience across cultures. *British Journal of Social Work* 38 , 218-235.
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). (2006-2010). *Country Programme Action Plan*. Government of Ghana - Unicef.
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). (2009). *Children in Ghana*.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). (1998). *The Unheard Voices. Homeless-Youth/Street Children in Kenya from a local and Global Perspective* Volume, DOI:

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). (2001). *We the Children: End-Decade Review of the Follow-Up to the World Summit for Children*. New York/Geneva: United Nations Children Fund.

Van, Der, Geest. (2002). *"The Toilet: Dignity, Privacy, and Care of Elderly People in Kwahu, Ghana"* in S. Makoni and K. Stroeken (eds.) *Ageng in Africa: Socio-Linguistic and Antropoligical Approaches*. London: Ashgate Publishing Company.

Volpi, E. (2002). *Street Children: Promising Practices and Approaches*. Volume, DOI:

Warr, D. (2004). "Stories in the Flesh and Voices in the Head: Reflections on the Context and Impact of Research with Disadvantaged Population." *Qualitative Health Research* 14(4) , 578 - 587.

Wenner, E. (1993). "Risk, resilience and recovery. Perspectives from the Kaul Longitudinal Study." *Development and Psychology* 5: 503 - 515.

Wermer, E. E. (1982). *Vulnerable but invisible: A longitudinal study of resilient children and youth*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

World Health Organisation (WHO). (2002). *Sexuality and sexual health. Report of a technical consultation on sexual health*. Geneva: World Health Organization.

Wilson, K. R. (2008). *A Social Work, An introduction to contemporary practice*. London: Pearson Education Limited UK.

Wusu, O. & Isiugo-Abanihe, U. C. (2003). "Family Structure and Reproductive Health; Decision-Making among the Ogu of South Western Nigeria: 'A qualitative Study'." *African Population Studies* 18(2) , 27 - 45.

Zimmerman, Ramirez-Valles & Maton. (1999). Resilience among urban African American male adolescents: A study of the protective effects of sociopolitical control on their mental health. *American Journal of Community Psychology* [on-line serial], 27(6). Available <http://proquest.umi.com> .



**Appendix 1: Interview guide with Street Children**

**'STREETISM' OR LIVING IN THE STREET, AN EMERGING PHENOMENON, AS A WAY OF LIFE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: A CASE STUDY OF CHILDREN LIVING ON THE STREETS OF GHANA.**

**1. BIO DATA**

1. SEX	Male [ ]	
	Female [ ]	
2. AGE	8 - 12 [ ]	
	13- 17 [ ]	
3. EDUCATION	No formal education	[ ]
	Primary	[ ]
	J. S. S.	[ ]
	S. S. S.	[ ]
4. RELIGION	Christian	[ ]
	Moslem	[ ]
	Traditional	[ ]
	Others (Specify) .....	
5. REGION OF ORIGIN	Greater Accra	[ ]
	Central	[ ]
	Western	[ ]
	Eastern	[ ]
	Volta	[ ]
	Ashanti	[ ]
	Brong Ahafo	[ ]
	Northern	[ ]
	Upper West	[ ]
	Upper East	[ ]
6. REGION OF MIGRATION		
	Greater Accra	[ ]

Central	[ ]
Western	[ ]
Eastern	[ ]
Volta	[ ]
Ashanti	[ ]
Brong Ahafo	[ ]
Northern	[ ]
Upper West	[ ]
Upper East	[ ]

**2. REASONS FOR LIVING ON THE STREET**

1. Can you tell me three reasons why you live on the street?

**3. LIFE ON THE STREET**

**A. Patterns of life on the street**

1. Did someone suggest to you to come and live on the street, if so, who?
2. How long have been living on the street here?
3. Did you move from another street to this place?
4. How often do you visit home?
5. Do you have relations in Accra?
6. If yes, how are you related to this person?
7. Do you visit him/her?

8. Do you sleep at home sometimes?
9. If yes, how often?
10. How long do you plan to live on the street?

**B** Trying to survive physically by themselves

1. Tell me about the types of work Street Children do to get money.
2. Do you do these kinds of works?
3. Can you tell me some of the things you have to pay for on the street?
4. Do you have an idea of how much money you need to get a day to survive?
5. Tell me two main types of work you do on the street to get this money
6. Is this work able to sustain you?
7. Where do you get your food from?
8. Where do you keep your belongings?
9. Where do you wash yourself and your dirty clothes?

**C** Building of relationships on the street for survival

1. Do you have a best friend on the street?

2. Are there some other children you see as your best friends?
2. Why do you like this friend(s)?
3. If you will want to play or watch film, who will you like to do it with?
4. What is your feeling about your friend(s)?

1. Is there any one most important adult in your life on the street?
2. Why is this person important to you on the street?
3. Who directed you as to what to do at your arrival first on the street?
4. Who do you turn to for help on the street the day you do not have money?
5. Why do you go to this person for help?
6. Who do you turn to for advice if you need it?
7. Why do you turn to this person?
8. What is your feeling about this person?
9. Are you afraid of any particular person on the street?
10. Why do you fear this person?
11. What is your feeling about this person?

#### **4. PERCEPTION ABOUT THE STREET**

1. What difficulties or challenges do you face on the street?
2. Has anyone tried to touch your body in a way you did not like before?

3. Has anyone assaulted you and collected either your money or clothing from you before?

2. What are the good things about living on the street?

## **5. FAMILY BACKGROUND**

### **a. Relationship with father**

1. Are your parents together?

2. Can you tell me where your father lives?

a. Was he living at this same place when you left home for the street?

b. Do you contact him?

c. How do you contact him?

d. How often do you see him?

### **b. Relationship with mother**

2. Can you tell me where your mother lives?

a. Was she living at this same place when you left home?

b. Do you contact her?

c. How do you contact her?

d. How often do you see her?

### **c. Relationship with siblings**

3. How many siblings do you have?

a. Where are they?

b. Were you all together when you left home?

- b. Do you contact them?
- b. How do you contact them?
- c. How often do you see them?
- d. Are you the eldest of your siblings?

**d.** Whom were you living with before coming onto the street?

**6. THEIR OWN PERCEPTION OF THEIR LIVES ON THE STREET AND THE FUTURE**

- 1. Do you see your life as improved or rather deteriorated since you come to live on the street?
- 2. If improved, can you tell me about some of the improvements?
- 3. If deteriorated, can you tell me why you think your life has rather deteriorated?
- 4. What are your hope and aspirations for the future?
- 5. Do you plan to return home in future?

## **Appendix 2: A guide for observation**

### **'STREETISM' OR LIVING IN THE STREET, AN EMERGING PHENOMENON, AS A WAY OF LIFE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: A CASE STUDY OF CHILDREN LIVING ON THE STREETS OF GHANA.**

#### **OBSERVATION**

1. I will observe the kind of interaction that goes on between the street children.
  - a. How friendly they are with each other.
  - b. How violent they are to each other.
  - c. How they help each other in relation to age, sex, tribe etc.
    - Sharing of food and other things
  - d. The extent to which there is leadership.
  - e. Are there groups?
  - f. Gender. Do they move in groups of the same sex?
  - g. If there are babies, are babies' fathers around?
  
2. I will observe the interaction between them and others who are not street children.
  - a. Their relation to grown ups on the street.
    - Are grown ups friends or enemies?
  - b. Their day by day relation with others. For example
  - c. NGOs.
  - d. Police.
  - e. Authorities.

3. Will like to see how they sleep and wake up.
  - a. Taking the weather into consideration.
    - Is it raining or dry season?
    - Where they sleep?
    - On what they sleep?
    - How they cover themselves.
      - If there are babies, how they sleep.
4. Will observe how well or not well they look.
  - a. Their skin condition
  - b. Their hair
  - c. Physical condition.
5. Will observe their movements and involvement in activities on the streets.
  - a. Think family life.
    - Are they trying to replicate family life?
  - b. Do they have time to play? For example games, drumming and dancing and other games.



### **Appendix 3: A guide for organisations**

1. In what ways are you trying to help SC?
2. How successful do you think you have been?
3. What difficulties do you face?
4. How do you hope to go about them?
5. In case your present interventions do not work what do you think should be the alternatives?

**Appendix 4a** An introductory letter to the field



**The University of  
Nottingham**

School of Sociology and Social Policy  
Centre for Social Work

University Park  
Nottingham  
NG7 2RD

Tel +44 (0)115 951 5231

Fax +44 (0)115 951 5232

[www.nottingham.ac.uk/sociology](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/sociology)

12 November 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to introduce Mrs Christine Tettgah to you. Mrs. Tettgah is in her final year of undertaking a PhD and is in the process of the second and final stage of data collection.

I am writing to you as her PhD supervisor and to request that you provide any support that may be required. As this is the final stage of data collection it would be helpful if any documentation required could be made available and similarly if Mrs. Tettgah could interview members of staff to enrich her findings and understandings.

Please do contact me if you require further information  
[amal.treacher@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:amal.treacher@nottingham.ac.uk)

Yours truly

**Dr. Amal Treacher**  
Course Director

**Appendix 4b** An introductory letter to the field



The University of  
**Nottingham**

School of Sociology and Social Policy  
Centre for Social Work

University Park  
Nottingham  
NG7 2RD

Tel +44 (0)115 951 5231

Fax +44 (0)115 951 5232

[www.nottingham.ac.uk/sociology](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/sociology)

12 November 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to confirm that Mrs. Christine Tettgah is undertaking a PhD at the University of Nottingham. She is in the second and final stage of data collection. Mrs. Tettgah is due to submit her thesis in September 2009.

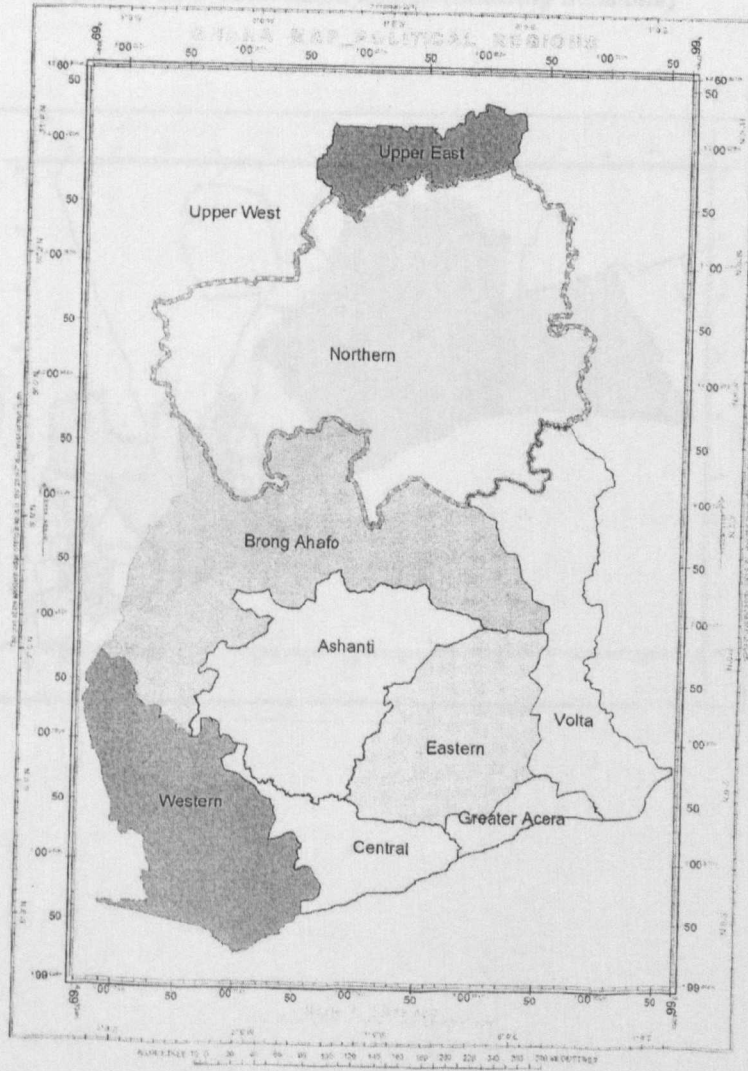
I am writing to you to introduce Mrs. Tettgah to say that I would be grateful, if the University of Ghana, could provide any support that Christine Tettgah may require.

Please do contact me if you require any further information on [amal.treacher@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:amal.treacher@nottingham.ac.uk)

Yours truly,

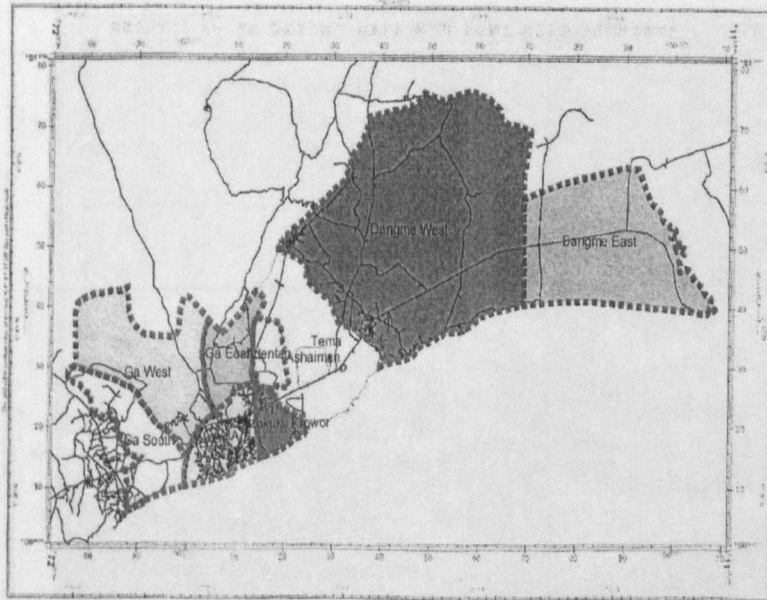
**Dr. Amal Treacher**  
Course Director

Appendix 5a Ghana Political Regions





Appendix 5b Greater Accra Region (Showing Divisions)



Appendix 5c Study Areas in Accra

