

**STREET CHILDREN'S ACCESS TO BASIC EDUCATION: THE CASE OF ZOMBA
MUNICIPALITY**

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DECLARATION

I declare that the work presented in this dissertation is the product of my own effort. All work from other sources have been indicated and acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to find out why street children have limited or no access at all to basic education. It sought views from street children themselves and parents/guardians on what could be the best way forward for these children to go to school. The study further assessed the role NGOs play to meet this basic need for street children in the Municipality of Zomba. Although the study used both qualitative and quantitative approaches, it was predominantly a qualitative case study. As such, it employed a mixed method to data collection, which included in-depth interviews, direct observations, questionnaires, focus group discussions (FGDs) and documentary search. Qualitative data was developed into themes, concepts and categories and was subsequently interpreted in a trustworthy manner so as to reflect true meaning of the data. In other words, explanations were attached to each category in an attempt to give the meaning of the data. Quantitative data in the study included numbers of street children and their age. Microsoft Excel and SPSS were used to analyse quantitative data in tables.

The study found out that the majority of street children do not go to school mainly because of poverty. Other major barriers to street children's access to basic education relate to poverty. These include lack of food (hunger), lack of clothes including school uniforms, lack of parental care and parental responsibilities. Basing on these findings, and poverty being the major barrier to basic education, the study recommends that Government should empower parents/guardians by giving them agriculture input or business loans for them to improve their economic capacity. This could help those with interest to send their children to school. On children failing to go to school because of hunger, the study recommends that Government should consider spicing the FPE policy with a feeding programme to influence poor parents/guardians to send their children to school. And finally, the study recommends that Government should establish Residential Institutional Care centres where among other basic needs, provision of basic education should be the primary focus. Of course, these recommendations should be understood within the context of the studied group. Otherwise there is potential for different and expanded recommendations if

one replicated the study to cover the entire country. In other words, the recommendations of this study are at best mere illustrations of otherwise a complex phenomenon.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife Monica and our children Wezi, Beatrice, Thandekile, Marumbo and Tapiwa including my nieces Gertrude and Stellia who missed my love and care while I was in college. It is also in memory of my late daughter Estace.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CCAP	Church of Central Africa Presbyterian
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSR	Centre for Social Research
DEM	District Education Manager
DFID	Department for International Development
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
EFA	Education for All
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
FPE	Free Primary Education
MOE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSO	National Statistical Office
PEA	Primary Education Advisor
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Scientists
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UK	United Kingdom
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

UPE Universal Primary Education

UPIC University Partners for Institutional Capacity

USD United States Dollar

US\$ United States Dollar

CHAPTER 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Malawi is a landlocked country in the sub-Saharan Africa bordering with Tanzania to the north-east, the People's Republic of Mozambique to the east and south, and the Republic of Zambia to the west and north-west. The country is 118,484 square kilometres, of which Lake Malawi occupies a third. Within its boundaries live 11.5 million people spread throughout three regions in 28 districts. Six districts are located in the Northern Region, 9 in the Central and 13 in the Southern Regions (Government of Malawi, 2005).

Economically, Malawi is a low-income country. In 2004 it was ranked the world's 13th poorest nation. In 2001 its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita was US\$163 (Meier and Rauch, 2005). An estimated 65% of rural and 55% of urban populations live in extreme poverty earning less than 1USD per day and 85% of the nation's people are dependent on subsistence farming for survival (Government of Malawi, 2005: 10).

Free Church of Scotland missionaries first introduced western formal education in Malawi in 1875. According to Banda (1982) from 1875 when the school was first opened to 1929, missionaries were the sole providers of education. This means that there were no government schools in the country at that time. The missionary aim was to enable indigenous Christians to read and write which would in turn facilitate the spread of the Gospel. Apart from being religious and education centres, the mission stations also acted as refugee camps for those running away from slave raiders and other hostile ethnic groups. Others were attracted by the incentives in form of jobs offered by missionaries to earn money and buy European goods. This trend significantly increased population in the early mission stations.

The coming of Christian missionaries also paved way for colonial administrators. Both missionaries' and British colonial administrators' presence in Malawi marked the beginning of urbanisation in the country. According to Mthawanji (1971), urbanisation in Malawi involved the assimilation of the indigenous community into the money economy. While as the Scottish missionaries' educational programmes aimed at introducing Christian values into the indigenous society, those of the colonial Government later aimed at training some Africans to assist in Government duties. Both missionaries and colonial Government contributed in transforming the traditional sector to modern sector. This was due to educational programmes whose curriculum was typically alien to rural life.

It is not surprising therefore, that most educated Africans readily adopted the foreign culture. They were estranged from rural life, which they found not rewarding after acquiring the new white man's education. According to Mthawanji (1971:191) those children who underwent the course were shattered to find that rural life did not offer them satisfaction in their newly acquired values. Accordingly, they had to flock to towns where they believed they would get a better job and use their acquired knowledge and skills. The white-collar jobs increased the quest for education in most young people. This speeded up rural-urban migration in Malawi as more educated young people drifted into the urbanised areas. Thus, education greatly contributed to the urbanising process.

Furthermore, the colonial administrators introduced the hut tax as a source of government revenue. The hut tax was also the colonial Government's tool to ensure that there was a continuous flow of labour to white-owned plantations in Thyolo, Mulanje, Chiradzulu and Zomba. The introduction of hut tax also forced many people to flock to towns to seek employment in industries, at least to pay the tax. Chikhwenda (2002:23) rightly points out that

the rapid growth of population in Blantyre City was partly influenced by the introduction of the hut tax in the surrounding agricultural districts of Thyolo, Chiradzulu and Mulanje that forced a lot of the natives to move to Blantyre area where they could get work for paid wages. This led to an increase in population in the urban areas of Blantyre.

Rural-urban migrations continue to this day in independent Malawi, with people's false hopes of getting a job and earning a better living in urban areas. The problem is that some of these villagers bring large families, which they cannot look after adequately due to economic hardships. Given the country's economic status, it is extremely difficult for the poor masses flocking to urban areas to lead a self-sufficient life. Most of them have ended up living in densely populated shabby settlements of very poor and risky health conditions. Families that cannot look after their children properly have given children an opportunity of doing piecework in town or even beg in the streets so that they can survive that way. Children too have joined the migration race to urban areas, running away from the pangs of poverty in rural areas. Like those who came with their parents, they too have ended up begging in the streets and live a very delicate life, prone to all sorts of abuses. All these have contributed to the evolution of the street child.

1.1 Definition of 'Street Child'

At this point it is important to discuss street children by definition or category so that we have a comprehensive knowledge of who they really are. The phenomenon of street children has existed for sometime throughout the world though it only attracted the attention of the public in the 1980s (UNICEF, 1994). Street children are there and will ever be there due to a number of factors (to be discussed later). According to UNICEF (1994:22) street children have been defined in many different ways and popularly believed by various terms such as 'runaways', 'out-of-

school youth', 'homeless kids', 'and vagrants'. Aptekar (1994:192) defines a street child as any individual under the age of majority whose behaviour is predominantly at variance with community norms for behaviour and whose primary support is not a family or family substitute. This definition implies that there are prescribed norms of behaviour and anyone who deviates from such norms is a street child. This may not always be the case because all children whose behaviour is in conflict with community norms cannot be said to be street children. Some of these could just be mere delinquents who have never experienced street life.

Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) of the Philippine Government broadly defines street children as those who live or spend a significant amount of time in the streets of urban areas to fend for themselves and their families. According to this department these street children do not receive adequate protection and care from responsible adults (Balanon, 1989:160). Indeed, it is very difficult for responsible adults to provide these children with full protection, supervision, and care they need because of poverty. Moreover, it also depends on the political situation of the country. In war-ravaged areas, for example, it is usually difficult for adults to think of such children as each one minds the safety of their own life.

Ortiz et al (1992:406) define a street child as any girl or boy for whom the street in the widest sense of the word has become his or her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood and who is inadequately protected, supervised, or directed by responsible adults. This definition seems to suggest that all street children are completely cut off from family life. The truth is that some of these kids have their families and occasionally visit them. A study by Anarfi (1997: 289) revealed that the destabilised situation of some of the children were parent-related. Some of the children indicated they ran away from parents because of maltreatment at home. Muula and Chanika (2002: 80) agree that some of street children have parents that neglect their

responsibilities while others run away from home, in search of a good life on the street. This however does not dispute the fact that there are some street kids who have completely lost touch with their families. In this study, street children will be defined as children on the street and of the street aged above 5 and under 18 years. They spend most of their time in the streets begging, vending, doing piecework, stealing, and even prostituting besides being involved in other antisocial behaviours. They do this either for their own survival or that of the entire family to which they belong.

All these definitions point to the fact that street children have been deprived of societal care, which they so much deserve. It is important to note that the street children phenomenon is negatively perceived by most people in the society, yet these very children are also human beings and are an essential part of that very society that rejects them. Paradoxically, these children are in the street by the act of the same society, which has evidently failed to retain them within its cultural norms. The sticking point here is that street children are destitute and are not accorded adequate attention they need by the public for their social well-being. In this sense, they are a people apparently abandoned by the society in one way or another. They are presumed to be social outcasts, no wonder they have been given names such as throwaways, runaways and such other derogatory names (UNICEF, 1994).

1.2 Categories of Street Children

To understand street children better, typologies of street children have been developed to cater for the deficiencies in the definitions. For example, UNICEF (1994) categorises street children in three different groups. The first one is that of children who have continuous family contact but stay with their parents on the public pavements in urban areas. Secondly, there are working children who spend all their days and some of their nights on the streets and in public places, but

who have occasional family contact. These have been referred to as 'children on the street.' The last category comprises children who do not have any contact with their families such as orphans, runaways, refugees, and displaced persons. These have been called 'children of the street.' This is the most vulnerable group because it does not have any protection from vagaries of nature and society (UNICEF 1994:23). Hemenway (1996) contends that children of the street are alienated from social institutions, such as schools and may make their living illegally, while also being victims of crimes and sexual abuse.

Although UNICEF categorises street children into three groups, two major categories can be summarised from them: children on the street and children of the street. The difference between the two is that children on the street, according to Lalor (1999) choose to come to the street to make money and go to their homes at the end of the day while children of the street are more likely to come to the streets because there is nowhere else for them to go. The street to them becomes their permanent home. Just like children on the street, children of the street also need to make money for their survival. In all this one would be tempted to think that all street children do not have parents. Contrary to this most studies have shown that a number of street children do have parents. For example, in Malawi street children comprise both orphans and children with parents. Muula and Chanika (2002:80) confess that some of these are orphans; others have parents that neglect their responsibilities while others runaway from home in search of a good life on the street. What is lacking, however, is clarification as to whether such children belong to a two-parent family or a single-parent one. Nevertheless, the issue at hand is that these children have opted for street life regardless of whether they have parents or not.

1.3 Some Causes of Street Life

Besides poverty, the street child phenomenon in the country has been compounded by other

factors, one of which is the HIV/AIDS crisis. Parents dying of HIV/AIDS have greatly contributed to a big number of orphans. According to the National AIDS Commission (2003: 16) one serious consequence of AIDS deaths to men and women in their prime childrearing ages is an increase in the number of orphans. According to this report, there are over 800,000 orphans in the country and 40% of them are due to AIDS. According to the Ministry of Gender, Child Welfare and Community Services there are 1.2 million orphans in the country and 15% of them live alone (Malawi Broadcasting Corporation, Radio one, 1.00pm news: November 11, 2006). The increasing number of orphans pose a great challenge not only to the extended families they are connected to but also to the entire nation especially on the provision for their basic needs in life.

It is also argued that African societies have also contributed to this phenomenon by adopting western family styles where communal life does not exist. According to Kalu (cited in Arnafi, 1986), there are apparently fewer relatives who are willing to provide support for vulnerable children in times of crisis. This implies that these children may not get the support they need for their life. This, to a large extent has been due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which has stretched the resources of extended families to the limit. It has been difficult for such families to cope with large family numbers. It is these circumstances that have compelled orphans to fend for themselves in the streets.

Some children however, go to town running away from ill-treatment from their own families and hope to find peace in towns. The problem of children flocking to towns is that such children are not provided with the necessary social services they need in their lives such as education, health, legal, accommodation, better clothes, good food, affection, proper sanitation, and lack parental care and guidance which is paramount to proper upbringing.

The increasing number of street children in Malawi is also due to school dropouts. In Malawi Free Primary Education (FPE) was introduced in 1994 to allow more children have access to basic education. Despite this development, there are many children who do not go to school. Some who go to school do not complete their primary education. They drop out of the school system before completing their primary education. By 2004, the total national enrolment was 3,166,786 of which 1,590,193 were boys and 1,576,593 girls (Ministry of Education, 2004). Thus, large numbers of children drop out of the school system every year. For example six months after introduction of Free Primary Education, 200,000 children dropped out of school (Office of the President and Cabinet, 2000: 335). This trend has continued to date. Table 1 below summarises dropouts for each of the years indicated.

Table 1: Dropouts from Primary School for Each of the Years Indicated

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Number of dropouts	338,381	301,908	325,501	337,251	336,149	264,567	270,338

The table above indicates that dropouts were very high in 1999, dropped in 2000 and picked up in 2001 and 2002 and then slightly dropped in 2003. The years 1999, 2001 to 2003 experienced droughts and famine. This suggests that many children dropped out of school because of hunger. It is worth noting that in Malawi the issue of hunger is recurrent, suggesting that children continue to drop out of school because of lack of food. But the high dropouts in table 1 above also give an impression that something is wrong with the FPE policy that makes pupils lose interest and drop out of school. What are conspicuously lacking in access policies are appropriate strategies designed to reduce dropout rates in schools. Dropping out of school has contributed to

the increasing number of street children in towns, municipalities, cities and other urban areas thereby increasing the number of children who do not access basic education.

The magnitude of inaccessibility to basic education can perhaps be understood better by using some demographic statistics collected by the National Statistical Office (NSO). The results of a survey conducted by the NSO in 2002 indicate that there were 3.8 million children in the 5-17 year age range out of which 2.7 million were attending school (Ministry of Labour, 2004). This suggests that 1.1 million of the 3.8 million were out of school. Although those attending school represented 72 percent of the group, we must not turn a blind eye to the 1.1 million children not going to school. In addition to this, there is also a good reason to worry about the retention of the 2.7 million children in the school system with the high dropouts experienced each year (see table 1 above).

The common characteristic of both those who drop out of school and those who do not even register for school is that they have no access to basic education. This is why it is important to find out factors that make them either drop out of the school or not register for it. This will help to come up with proper strategies to address the issue. For unless reasons are known, children's access to basic education will continue to be a challenge for Malawi. This is a serious problem not only for the child but also the entire nation of Malawi. Basic education is a gateway to accessing other levels of education, that is, secondary and tertiary education.

Limited or no access to basic education has adverse consequences both on the life of an individual and that of the entire society in which one lives. As already pointed out above, it leads to loss of human resource. These street children visibly represent a huge waste of human capital because if they do not go to school they will not be able to acquire some instrumental attributes

that come with formal or non-formal education. In other words, they will not be equipped with knowledge and skills required to enhance the performance of an individual in specific activities (Msiska, 2000). The continued inaccessibility to basic education and school dropouts slowly rob the country of a driving force for its economic growth. The increase in number of children in the streets is therefore reason enough to worry for the future of our nation in terms of economic development.

Secondly, street children have no chance of developing skills, values, and attitudes that are otherwise necessary for their self-sufficiency and sustainable development. Education is very essential in the provision of such skills, values, and attitudes. According to Todaro (1992: 279) formal education attempts to impart knowledge and skills to individuals to enable them to function as agents of economic change in their societies. Thus, ignoring street children and denying them access to basic education is an act of disarming them of these essential tools for self and national development.

Lastly, depriving children of education is a violation of their right to education. This is a moral degradation of human life as it renders children prone to abuse and exploitation. Investing in education has a value in its own right because education broadens people's horizons and helps them to live healthier, more financially secure, and more fulfilling lives (Soubbotina and Sheram, 2000: 42). It is, therefore, important for everybody including street children to benefit from the pleasures that come with education in order to live successful and fulfilling lives. From this perspective, "education" is a human right because it is a means to achieving certain ends in life, which enable people to live happy and fulfilling lives (Msiska, 2000:88). To achieve this, access to basic education is paramount because it opens up channels to other levels of education thereby increasing more opportunities for a successful life to individuals who attain it.

1.4 Role of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Charity Organisations in Street Children's Welfare

This section presents the role charity and non-governmental organisations are playing in the Municipality to meet basic needs of the street children with special focus on provision of basic education. As a matter of fact, three voluntary organisations have attempted to help street children to meet the children's educational needs. Two of these are church organisations. The involvement of the NGO and the two church organisations in assisting street children confirms Epstein's (1996) observation that most of the educational programmes involving street children in the developing world are associated with NGOs or volunteer organisations that are church related. This suggests that governments have not taken an active and visible role in this area. Yet the duty to educate citizens of any country lies in the hands of Governments. Having children in the street is indicative of Government's failure in its duty to educate them and this increases the number of illiterate people in the country. NGOs' involvement may not fully solve the problem of street children's access to basic education but it is a good gesture and challenge towards Government to take similar initiatives to educate street children.

1.5 Education Programme Under Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO)

Among its many objectives, YONECO provides basic education to vulnerable children in the Municipality of Zomba. To this effect, the organisation has introduced five special learning centres in the municipality from which these vulnerable children such as street children, child workers and young sex workers receive an alternate basic education. For each centre, YONECO has two qualified government primary school teachers who provide basic education to the children on voluntary basis. Classes in these centres are usually conducted in the afternoon and children have only four hours of learning in a week from 2.00pm to 4.00pm every Mondays and Tuesdays (i.e. two hours each day). They also have six hours of counselling from Wednesday to

Friday from the same time. The idea is to equip these children with reading, writing and numerical skills besides life skills to help them change their lives for the better. The organisation also aims at connecting all children who successfully go through the programme to the formal education system so that they continue with their education after acquiring the skills stated above. This attempt is similar to Bahay Tuluyan programmes in Philippines where the educators hold the classes in the community targeting children of poor families (UNICEF, 1994).

1.6 Strengths of the Education Programme

The goodness of this programme is that it is able to assist children even though they are still in the street. While as this should not be taken as an ideal approach, it is a better method where all other means cannot work to provide basic education to this vulnerable group of children. In other words, it gives children a second chance to access basic education and this may inspire them to rejoin formal government primary schools. Secondly, the YONECO education programmes prove that it is easier to gather street children together as a group. With proper handling of these children in terms of providing them with basic needs in such centres, these children could gradually be swept out of the street.

1.7 Challenges of the Education Programme

One major challenge to this programme has to do with conducting different classes in one room at the same time. Pupils in these learning centres are bundled in one classroom and grouped according to their grades (standards). They are taught the content either in rotation or at the same time in their respective classes. It is however difficult to imagine how such pupils could concentrate in a crowded room with different classes taking place at the same time. Their attention is likely to be distracted by what the other group is doing. There is thus a need to improve in this area by finding more rooms in future to help the children better in their respective classes.

Secondly, there is little time allocated to basic education making it very difficult to teach all the subjects required at primary school level. Accordingly, English, Mathematics and Chichewa have been given a priority. Of course, provision of basic education is not the initial intention of the NGO but having taken the challenge, there is need to add more time to cover more subjects in the centres if these children are to be assisted adequately.

Thirdly, much as the programme encourages children to go to school in the afternoon, it also encourages them to continue with the very life (street life) organisations and Government are trying to redeem them from. Otherwise, whatever effort is being put forward should aim at sweeping them out of the street, educate them and let them live a self-reliant life. Failure to do so defeats the whole purpose of education.

Lastly, the study also found out that most children dropped out of the system and went back to the streets. Reasons for dropping out included difficulties to cope up with academic work in class. This, to the large extent was because some of these children cheated by registering for classes they had never attended before. It was revealed that most children who registered for wrong classes were older and felt embarrassed to register for and start learning in lower classes. Consequently, they could not cope up with the work in those upper classes they registered for and ended up abandoning school life. Because of dropouts there were always new faces, which made it very difficult for teachers to assess pupils' progress. One lady teacher in one of the centres said:

We do not have a class of consistent pupils as children keep coming and going. We keep on having new faces and losing old ones. We do not teach the same children all the time and it becomes very difficult for us to assess them because the new faces will not answer the questions from the content they have not learnt. When you try to give them the exams

they tell you that they had not learnt the stuff you have asked them because they had not attended the previous classes. (Oral testimony, 15th June 2006: Matiya School).

This implies that only few children who remain in the system benefit from the provision of basic education in these centres. What is important is to redesign the system and come up with activities that could retain the children in the programme.

1.8 Zomba Baptist Church

This was one of the first known organised religious groups to look into the welfare of street children. Pastor Paul championed it with the help of Pastor Chirwa of the Zomba Baptist Church. In 2002 they introduced a Feeding Programme, which was initially meant to help these children with food. This helped to gather street children together and prompted the introduction of an Education Programme for them. A building was borrowed from a well-wisher within the municipality where a volunteer teacher provided street children with basic education with the assistance of the Zomba District Social Welfare Office. The programme started with the introduction of standards 1 and 2 but was designed to introduce other classes later basing on its success on the two classes. The response from street children was encouraging evidently because of food provisions.

To facilitate provision of basic education, Pastor Paul sourced money from donors and well-wishers. He bought blankets for the street children under the programme and provided them with accommodation in the same building. The programme attracted more street children and this encouraged the authorities to buy bricks worth K15, 000 (fifteen thousand Malawi Kwacha) to build a kitchen, stores and a feeding hall with the aim of turning it into a big institution to provide basic education to street children. However, the problem was that the programme had little impact on street children due to its premature end. Street children who benefited from it

reverted to the streets. Nevertheless, the organisation's effort to have its own buildings where to operate its programmes was comparatively better than that of YONECO. It ensured stability of the education programmes without fear of any disruptions and evictions where borrowed buildings are used. In addition to this, it also suggests that street children may be better assisted if gathered together and such gatherings provide an appropriate environment to provide them with basic education.

1.9 Tathandizidwa Street Children's Club

Tathandizidwa Street Children's Club traces its origin to Zomba CCAP Church as a charity organisation that looks into the welfare of street children. The club was established in June 2005 and is a brainchild of Rev. Dr. Kay Hein (a Scottish missionary) with the assistance of Rev. Colonel Makata, the then parish minister of Zomba CCAP Church. It is said that the Scottish missionary was deeply touched with the plight of street children in the Zomba municipality. These included rumours of sexual harassment to girls and brutal treatment to both boys and girls, and the mere begging along the streets with their slogans "*njala bwana*" (I am hungry sir) or "*thandizeni bwana*" (Help me sir). These were reason enough for the establishment of the organisation to meet some of their needs. He was particularly concerned with the rising number of street children who did not go to school and thought of establishing an organisation that would remove the children from the street and help them to go to school to improve their lives. Secondly, the hardships the street children were going through in terms of food acquisition also prompted the establishment of the organisation.

1.10 The Education Programme

The club has made it a point that street children attend the same normal primary school like any other child so that they can also benefit from Free Primary Education. Street children attend classes together with other children. A feeding programme has been introduced which only

caters for street children. At the end of classes, they are provided with a meal (lunch) beginning with the infants in standards 1 and 2 followed by juniors in standards 3, 4, and 5. The last group to take lunch is that of seniors comprising standards 6, 7, and 8. After that, they join their friends again for extra curricular activities especially games on sporting days before they retire to their 'homes'. The organisation does not provide accommodation for the street children.

Prior to the introduction of the feeding programme, the club managed to register 51 street children for the education programme. However, the number was reduced to 21 as some of these children reverted to their street begging practice. After the introduction of the Feeding Programme, the number started to pick up again. At the time of the study the number of street children enrolled for school had risen from 21 to 35. This agrees with what street children and parents/guardians had said in this study, citing lack of food (hunger) as one of the major reasons for children not going to school (see table 3 on page 63). Some of these street children explained that they were encouraged to go to school because they were assured of getting something to eat there. This indicates that street children can still benefit from the FPE policy if their basic needs are catered for. A Free Primary Education policy with a feeding programme attached to it may attract more children to school.

The feeding programme has not been the club's only incentive to attract and retain some of these children into the school system. The other incentives include buying them school uniforms, giving them notebooks, soap and pens. Observation showed that it was very difficult to differentiate a street child from other normal children at the school. By buying them school uniforms, notebooks, pencils/pens, soap and providing them with food, the club has penetrated into some of the barriers that make street children fail to go to school. These street children have also been encouraged by the club's assurance to continue assisting them even up to secondary

and tertiary levels of education. However, knowing the complexity of the street children phenomenon, this is not a guarantee that these children will be maintained in the school system. There seems to be other factors, so complex, that contribute to their dropping out of the school system.

1.11 Challenges of the Feeding Programme

One major challenge of the feeding programme at the school was that it created tension between street children and other pupils. Street children were often mocked by other pupils accusing them of coming to school because of food. This is because the feeding programme is strictly for street children only. This suggests that the feeding programmes should not be discriminatory for the sake of discipline in the school. The problem however, is that it may be difficult for NGOs and Government to provide food to every child at school due to financial constraint.

The other challenge is that these children are only given a meal (lunch) a day. This means that they still have to look for food for breakfast and supper. Thus, they are still a fragile group that can easily revert to street life. This suggests that provision of all three meals in a day could keep them in the system. But this would require children to be accommodated as well. This may motivate street children to go to such schools and get educated besides being provided with food and accommodation.

1.12 Statement of the Problem

The Declaration of the Rights of the Child states that ‘the child is entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages’. The Government of Malawi introduced Free Primary Education (FPE) in 1994 with the expectation that more children would be on the school enrolment list. Compulsory education would not have worked because of several problems related to poverty such as need for more infrastructures in schools, text books and notebooks, and that several other ministries needed money to work effectively

and efficiently. However, the introduction of FPE was a significant step towards extending basic education to more Malawian youths. Indeed, there was a rise in primary school enrolment from ‘1.9 million in 1993/4 to 3.2 million in 1994/5 school session’ as revealed by the Ministry of Education (MOE) (1998). Despite the introduction of Free Primary Education to increase access to basic education, many street children seem not to go to school and there seems to be no action to encourage them to do so. Those who do, most probably do not attend fulltime school sessions and their school attendance is apparently irregular. They have to rush to the streets and shops to beg or do some jobs for their survival. Eventually, some of these kids completely pull out of the school system and adopt a street life style for the rest of their childhood. UNESCO (2002) observes that in a good number of countries, many pupils may register at the beginning of the year but do not subsequently attend on regular basis. Malawi is no exception to this particular tendency. As can be observed in table 1 (page 9), high dropout rates continue to haunt the education system in the country.

Dropping out of school even before acquiring appropriate knowledge and skills has far reaching consequences. In fact it constitutes social and economic problems, and a loss of human resource. Human capital theory tells us that individuals have to develop their skills through schooling. The consequence of not going to school, therefore, leads to a loss of human generation for the country and has got negative economic and social effects. Economically, they will be unable to live a self-sufficient life. Socially, children who are not educated may end up becoming criminals as a means of survival. Criminal life may cost the country even more as criminals tend to rob people and the country of its resources in a number of ways. They may also end up destroying people’s lives and this may lead to loss of human resource necessary for a country’s economic growth.

Furthermore, the dropouts represent a wasted or half-baked human capital, which may be incapable of engaging the country's development challenges. UNESCO (2005) views dropping out of school as a major obstacle to the fulfilment of Universal Primary Education (UPE) which the world is aspiring for. It is worthwhile to note that the major threats to UPE are the factors influencing high dropout rates and not necessary dropping out of school itself. The root causes for dropping out or lack of access to basic education should be known if the problem is to be solved. Once this is done, proper strategies could be put in place to overcome them. Only then could there be hope for UPE becoming a reality. It is against this background that this study sought to understand the plight of street children in terms of their access to basic education and how they could be assisted. It specifically sought to find out reasons for street children not going to school and why those who do, seem to have limited access to basic education.

1.13 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate reasons for street children not going to school in the context of a Free Primary Education policy, which has made basic education accessible to all, and make recommendations on how best to deal with the problem.

Specific Objectives

Specifically, the objectives of the study were:

- To investigate reasons for street children not going to school.
- To find out from parents, guardians and street children themselves, how best to improve street children's access to basic education.
- To investigate the role of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the municipality of Zomba in their attempt to meet street children's educational needs.
- To evaluate Ministry of Education's plans and strategies for helping street children to go to and stay in school.

1.14 Significance of the Study

This study will explore reasons for street children's limited or lack of access to basic education. It will thus generate information that other researchers might access and use for further research work related to this study. The information may also be accessible to policy makers for the improvement of the school system to make it accessible by street children. This will be in compliance with section 25 (1) of the Republican Constitution, which stipulates that 'all persons are entitled to education'. Non-governmental organisations and other government ministries involved in the provision of basic education may also benefit from this study in their effort to come up with successful strategies for extending basic education to street children.

Secondly, the database will also be of assistance in understanding the circumstances that force children to run to the streets and knowing as much as possible how they live. This is important because the street experiences of children will help us appreciate the nature and complexity of their plight. The study may also serve as a reminder to government on how much human capital is being wasted in street children by their inaccessibility to basic education. This may encourage government and organisations to extend basic education to all by redesigning their education policies and strategies to meet street children's special circumstance and needs.

CHAPTER 2

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is guided by the human capital theory. It is this besides other factors that contribute to the uniqueness of the study. A brief discussion of the human capital theory is therefore necessary before looking at how it applies to the study. To begin with, Becker (1994) defines human capital as activities that increase future consumption possibilities by increasing resources in people. It is the attributes of a person that are productive in some economic context. The central argument of human capital theory is that training and education are regarded as an investment in human resources and increase future consumption possibilities. 'Based upon the work of economists such as Schultz (1961), Denison (1962), and Becker (1964) human capital theory rested on the assumption that formal education is highly instrumental and even necessary to improve the production capacity of a population' (Fagerlind and Saha, 1989:47). Schooling raises earnings and productivity mainly by providing knowledge, skills, and a way of analysing problems.

According to Becker, investment in an individual's education and training is similar to business investments in equipment (Becker, 1993: 30). In human capital theory, human beings are viewed as capable of generating a flow of productive services over time, much as capital assets can (Browning and Browning, 1991). It is worth noting that, human beings can only reach their full potential in productive services after being empowered with knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes, which can only be obtained through education. According to Becker (1993:17) education and training are the most important investments in human capital. This implies that if one is to live a fulfilling life, he or she needs some education and training.

Furthermore, Becker (1993) points out that expenditure on education, training and medical care could all be considered as human capital. They are called human capital because people cannot be separated from their knowledge, skills, health, or values in the way they can be separated from their financial and physical assets ([http:// www. Tutor2u.net](http://www.Tutor2u.net)). Nicholson (1992) agrees with Becker and points out that contrary to other assets, human capital cannot (in the absence of slavery) be sold. The owner of human capital is inextricably tied to his or her investment (Nicholson, 1992: 722). This shows that once one is equipped with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes through education, he or she is well armed to live a self-sufficient and sustainable life. The skills acquired will eventually be put to use for a better living wherever one is. That is why, Marshal as quoted by Becker (1994: 27), stresses the point that the most valuable of all capital is that invested in human beings.

According to Nicholson (1992), human capital theory concerns the investment people can make in themselves in the hope that this will somehow pay off in the future. Acquisition of education, apprenticeships and learned skills on-the-job, medical services that maintain them in good health are examples of such investments. In the absence of education, training is a substitute for school education. It can be argued here that training without an amount of education may not be all that effective in terms of productivity. An acquisition of basic education by the majority in any country is particularly important in facilitating fast economic growth. Dahlin (2000) points out that an economy in which most individuals have a basic level of schooling may grow faster than one in which a minority of individuals have advanced education while the remainder of the population has little to no education. This implies that basic education contributes heavily in turning individuals into powerful engines of both individual and national development. That is why as Fitzsimons (1999) notes, throughout western countries, education has recently been re-

theorised under Human Capital Theory as primarily an economic device. He points out that human capital theory is seen increasingly as a key determinant of economic performance and that a recent reformulation of human capital theory has stressed the significance of education and training as the key participation in the new global economy. Large increases in education and training of a labour force significantly increases the productive capacity of a country.

2.1 Rate of Return

Impact of education on either an individual or society can also be determined by rate of return. The importance of education in relation to rate of return need not be overemphasised. Browning and Browning (1991) point out that education is investment whose returns are in form of wage or salary. They indicate that great training or formal education tends to pay higher wage rates. However, there is general agreement in most literature that primary education has higher returns than other levels of education. Psacharapoulos (1985: 55) points out that the average returns to primary education (whether social or private) are higher among all educational levels. Todaro (1993) also explains that farmers with a basic education are more productive than the illiterate ones. Thus any child who is not attending school is at risk of being less productive and may not lead a successful life to match that of those that have gone to school and become educated. The point is that in the face of unemployment, educated people in the rural area could use their education to live a better life. In an agrarian Malawi such people could become productive in the agriculture sector and this could lead to improving the standard of living.

The evidence from rate-of-return studies in developing countries has helped to focus more attention on the economic benefits of primary education. Psacharapoulos (1985: 55) explains that the fact that the average rate of return in developing countries is considerably higher for primary education than secondary and higher education suggests that priority should be given to primary

education as a form of investment in human resources. The evidence from rate-of-return studies in developing countries has helped to focus more attention on the economic benefits of primary education. The reason for this is that the importance of primary education lies in the fact that primary education equips an individual with reading and writing skills as well as solving mathematical problems. According to Msiska (2000) primary (basic education) is of critical importance in the society because it teaches a person how to read, write and carry basic mathematical calculations required to live a meaningful life. He argues that upon acquisition of these skills such a person can be trained into becoming almost anything (Msiska, 2000:99). However basic education alone is not a sufficient condition for an individual to escape poverty. Secondary and tertiary levels of education are directly or indirectly related to this. In the first place, since basic education lays the foundation of human development, secondary education takes over from what basic education has stopped. In other words, it builds on what primary education has already laid down. According to Msiska (2000: 100) the aim is to produce ‘an individual who is rational in handling and processing information available to him or her’. Tertiary education on its part aims at producing technocrats who are independent, rational and critical thinkers who often come up with ideas that could rid a society of its problems leading to an improvement in the living standard of that society. Sustainable national development also requires the development of secondary and tertiary education.

According to Thompson (1981: 142) the rate of return approach is based upon the assumption that the wages and salaries paid to workers closely reflect differences in their productivity and that their variations in their productivity are primarily the result of differences in the amounts and kinds of education they have received. He contends that an individual who invests in his own education rather than choosing to take up employment at an early age can expect to earn more

during his lifetime than he would otherwise have done even though he might have started to earn money sooner had he chosen to work rather than to receive education (Thompson, 1981: 142). Those who go to school and complete their education successfully make an investment that allows them to earn more and live a better life. The society benefits greatly from the educated worker. Psacharopoulos (1985: 36) states that the direct benefit of education for individuals is higher lifetime earnings and for society it is the higher productivity of educated workers and additional contributions to national income over their entire working lives. A healthy and educated nation leads to increased productivity, better income distribution and generally improved standard of living. Education also lowers fertility rate and improves nutrition.

2.2 Implication of Inaccessibility to Education for Street Children

Human capital theory can help us to understand the dangers that are likely to befall street children because of their inaccessibility to basic education. Lack of access to basic education leaves a permanent mark on the life of such children. They fall short of life skills that could actually help shape them into productive citizens of the country with a bright and healthy future. Educating street children could help increase human resource, which is paramount to the development of an individual and that of the society. It equips individuals with necessary knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes for self-sufficiency and sustainability. Through education, street children would increase their productive capacities thereby assisting in the development of the country. Muluneh (UNESCO, 2006) points out that when you don't give a child education you are losing someone who makes the world different and a better place. This implies that failure to invest in children through education is detrimental to their lives and deprives the society of a human resource that would make the world a better place to live in. Gurung (2004: 26), states that nation building is based on the development of human resources, or education in the broad sense of the term. He contends that the future destiny of any country in

the world is to be shaped in its classroom. This suggests that if children do not go to school, then the future of that country hangs in a state of uncertainty. This is reason enough to ensure that all children have access to basic education. Thus street children like any other child, need to have access to education so that the nation can be assured of sustained production and self-sufficiency. Psacharopoulous (1985: 15) states that education contributes directly to the growth of national income by improving the skills and productive capacities of the labour force. This implies that when people are denied education, they become incapacitated in terms of knowledge and skills that can lead to individual and national development.

States are expected to play a big role towards ensuring that people's basic needs are met. That is why one important obligation a state has towards its citizens is to provide them with social services in order to help them live a better life. These social services in question include education, health, water, sanitation, clothing, protection, etc. The provision of these social services is a right, which ought to be enjoyed by all. Thompson (1981:47) argues that if education is a human right, governments have a responsibility to ensure that their citizens are not deprived of that right. One such basic need, which all governments strive to achieve is provision of basic education to all the children in the country. To this end, the international community has committed itself in the Dakar Framework for Action to having all eligible children attending fee-free primary schooling by 2015 and to increase programmes for out-of-school youth (UNESCO, 2003). The reason behind this concern for children's education is simple. Education is of vital importance at both individual and societal level. According to Soubbotina and Sheram (2000: 35) most human capital is built up through education or training that increases a person's economic productivity, that is, enables him or her to earn a higher income. At individual level, education equips a person not only with independent thought but also with private economic power (Burrup

1977: 8). Using thought and economic power enables individuals improve their living standards. Primary education in itself often improves the welfare of the poor by making them more productive workers enabling them to learn new skills throughout their working lives and reducing the risk of unemployment (Soubotina and Sheram, 2000: 38). What these writers are saying is that education is a source of a self-sustained life. Whoever acquires it is able to live a comfortable life because in the process of learning he or she gains the means with which to improve his or her life. In addition to this, education is a source of employment through which people get wages and help to improve their living standards. That is why street children should be encouraged to go to school because as Meier and Rauch (2005: 184) observed in their study, ‘children who received more schooling earned higher wages when they became adults’.

It is worth noting that individual and societal developments go together. While fighting for one’s better life one also contributes in improving the living standards of the society in which he or she lives. Being important components of the society, people sit together as a community or nation, sometimes through their representatives to decide how to improve their socio-economic welfare. Education is among the issues that are frequently discussed because just like at individual level, at societal level, education is behind socio-economic development. According to Todaro (1992: 279) it is human resources of a nation that ultimately determine the character and pace of its economic and social development. Harbison (cited in Todaro, 1992: 279) contends that human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social and economic organisations, and carry forward national development. The point he is trying to raise here has got to do with the superiority of human capital over physical capital.

Human capital is important because it uses the brain and is able to put to use the physical capital. People have the capacity to plan, organise, and manipulate physical resources the way they want

in order to meet their needs. Thus, physical capital cannot manage itself in the absence of human capital. Because of this, Harbison, (cited in Todaro 1992: 279) argues that a country, which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people and utilise them effectively in the national economy, will be unable to develop anything else. Indeed, human beings need knowledge, skills, values and attitudes if they are to become effective agents of development to improve their living standards. It is only education that can nourish them with these aspects of development to bring about the desired standards for their lives. Todaro (1992: 279) states that the principal institutional mechanism for developing human skills and knowledge is the formal education system and that expansion of educational opportunities holds the key to national development. Therefore, the need for the provision of education to street children cannot be over-emphasised. It is a basic requirement every human being deserves for both individual and societal development. Education of street children will increase the productivity of the country because as Fagerlind and Saha (1989:47) put it, ‘an investment in education is an investment in the productivity of the population’.

According to Psacharopoulos (1985:15) the concept that investment in human capital promotes economic growth actually dates back to the time of Adam Smith and early economists, who emphasised the importance of investing in human skills. In 1960s, Schultz (1961) and Denison (1962) showed that education contributes directly to the growth of national income by improving the skills and productive capacities of the labour force. This implies that economic growth and education go hand in hand and therefore one can conclude that greater access to education leads to higher rates of economic growth. Thus, an increased access to basic education can be an important asset in the economic development of a country. Having realised this importance of formal education, governments’ efforts are now bent towards increasing its access to everyone.

According to Soubotina and Sheram, (2000: 38) most governments are committed to providing free primary and often secondary education because it is believed that not just individuals, but the entire country benefits significantly when most of its citizens can read, write and fully participate in social and economic life. Education for girls and women is actually highly recommended for this purpose. Effective labour is greatly wasted in people without access to education. They cannot contribute much to economic growth and development when compared to those who have had access to education. Such people resist development and any other new ideas because of superstitions.

Todaro (1992: 280) contends that literate farmers with at least a primary education are thought to be more productive and more responsive to new agricultural technologies than illiterate farmers. More access to basic education can thus, increase agricultural production of an agrarian state like Malawi. With basic education, street children could be involved in productive agriculture other than just being wasted in the street. Given the right education, that suits the developmental needs of Malawi, these children could play a significant role as agents of economic development. Because economic and social returns to society are known to be higher for primary education than of other levels of education, most governments are committed to providing free access to primary school to all children (Soubotina and Sheram, 2000: 39). This is because they want to educate the masses so that they can facilitate both self and national development.

According to Fagerlind and Saha (1989:45) several decades ago ‘a literate and educated population was regarded as more productive and desirable, and to tolerate pockets of illiteracy and undereducation was to tolerate wastage of human talent potentially available for society’s benefit. The idea behind this was to equip everyone with knowledge and skills for a better life in the society since education is a torch, which can help to guide and illuminate their lives. This,

however, remains a challenge. UNESCO (EFA, 2003) notes that millions of children around the world still fail to gain access to schooling, and even larger numbers among those who do enrol leave prematurely, dropping out before the skills of literacy and numeracy have been properly gained. Consequently, these children have ended up loitering in the streets only to be abused in many different ways. This obviously threatens the achievement of Universal Primary Education (UPE) especially in Africa in the next few years as well as Education For All (EFA) as stipulated in the Dakar Framework for Action of Education For All by 2015.

Others may argue that since most governments have opened doors to primary education by making it free, they (governments) may not shoulder the blame for inaccessibility to education by street children. It is up to the street children themselves and their parents/ guardians to make a choice, whether to go to school or remain in the streets. But it is also government's duty to protect its citizens against anything that could negatively affect them which could also have an impact on the government itself. According to UNICEF Malawi (2003:10) having children in the street points to the state's failure in its duty. This means that the governments have a duty to see to it that their peoples' welfare is met. If street children do not go to school even if education is made free, it is the duty of the governments to find out why. The reasons will be a basis for coming up with modalities in the education policy and planning that may reduce street life and promote school life.

2.3 Education as a Fundamental Human Right

Education is a tool to realising all the other social needs including a healthy life, economic sufficiency and making proper decisions and plans for one's well-being. CIDA (2002) points out that education as a right enables people to meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term. According to Thompson (1981:47) "education is a human right and that its

function is to develop the talents of the individual to the fullest extent possible to enable him to participate freely within a free society". It is worthwhile to explain why education is a human right. Msiska (2000:89) contends that anything that promotes individual's attainment and enjoyment of a happy and fulfilling life should be made available to every member of the human race, as a human right, so that every person is potentially able to live a happy and fulfilling life. From this perspective he argues that education is a human right because it is a means to achieving certain ends in life which enable people to live happy and fulfilling lives. He thus argues that if you deny some people education, you also deny them an opportunity to compete for the few good things such as wealth, status and power available in the societies (Msiska, 2000: 89). This is why there is a need for governments' responsibility to educate their citizens so that they equally benefit from the resources available in the country. Thompson (1981) argues that if education is a human right, governments have a responsibility to ensure that their citizens are not deprived of that right (1981: 47).

Education also helps people to advance in life by raising their awareness to what should be done and how it should be done (Msiska, 2000). According to Thompson (1981: 30) one of the philosophies of schooling is innovative, "in that it sees the school as an instrument for purposely initiating, controlling and directing change in society". This suggests that children who go to school acquire certain attributes that would help them direct their lives towards specified goals. The knowledge and skills gained in education at school make people to be rational and critical. It helps them to claim what rightly belongs to them, making everybody to benefit equitably from a social organisation (Msiska, 2000). The uneducated, according to Msiska (2000: 90), are cheated out and hence exploited economically, politically and socially because they do not know their rights and cannot meaningfully participate in the decision making process to ensure equitable

distribution of wealth, power, status and privileges. The very presence of children in the streets therefore, is a degradation of humanity because without attaining an education, these children will never know that they are being abused or exploited even after growing into adults. Schooling could help these children grow into responsible adults, who feel valued by the society, and are able to make their own valuable, personal contribution to that society (Hallam, 1996).

Matsuura (<http://portal.unesco.org/education>: 2003) contends that as an empowerment right, education is a primary vehicle by which economically and socially marginalised adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty, and obtain the means to participate fully in their communities. The means, which he is referring to here, are the skills, values and attitudes with which education empowers individuals to lead a self-fulfilling life. Indeed no one is happy to live a life of dependency. Developing one's talents helps to improve one's living standards and to live a self-sufficient and sustainable life. Thus, education is a human right that ought to be enjoyed by every child to prepare him or her for a better future in a better society. It occupies a central place in human resource and is essential and indispensable for the exercise of all human rights and for development (Matsuura, 2003: <http://portal.unesco.org/education>). As a basic need, education ought to be enjoyed by all. It is the duty of governments to ensure everybody's access to it including street children. Gurung (2004) suggests that governments and other organisations need to put in place viable policies and strategies that will ensure that the plight of street children is urgently addressed in terms of their basic education as a fundamental human right.

Education as a human right is a means to promoting other human rights, which help the people to exercise their freedoms. Human rights begin with children's rights. The right to education is one of the basic rights for children. Education is a human right because it is a basic need every body needs to make a difference in their lives. As such, it is supposed to be enjoyed by all for skills,

attitudes and values for self-improvement. It should therefore be noted that, if one is denied education, he/she is denied a start in struggling for a better life. Education helps individuals to make maximum use of their capabilities (Volio, 1979:24). Education is indeed very essential for future peace not only of an individual but also the entire society in which one lives. It is an important foundation of good citizenship. "To day it is a principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values in preparing him/her for latter professional training, and helping him/her to adjust normally to his environment" (Supreme Court of the USA, 1956). Article 29 paragraph (a) of the Convention of the Rights of the Child stipulates that the goal of education is to develop the child's personality, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential. Therefore, as pointed out by UNESCO (EFA 2003), if children are excluded from access to education, they are denied their human rights and prevented from developing their talents and interests in the most basic of ways.

Every human being needs education to adjust himself or herself properly to any environment that he or she may happen to be. It is these very talents and interests that will be of significance in adjusting oneself in order to live a self-sufficient life in that particular environment. Education should in any case be conceived as a birthright and should not be confined to few individuals but rather to all in the society. This is because it is a means of survival that everybody else aspires for, for both individual and societal wellbeing. As human beings, we are entitled to all survival means and education is one of those means. That is where it becomes a basic human right without which our survival is jeopardised. UNESCO (1999) says that education is a fundamental right to all children, guaranteed by article 28 and 29 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child. According to M'Bow (1979:15) the right to education is an economic as well as a moral

necessity. It has already been stated above that violation of children's right to education is a moral degradation of human life.

Education is very important because it provides freedoms, which include economic freedom. According to Sen (1999: 18) the success of a society is to be evaluated primarily by the substantive freedoms that the members of that society enjoy. Volio (1979:32-33) contends that there can be no freedom worthy of its name unless our thought is educated to use its freedom. He stresses that freedom of education and the right to education are consequently indivisible. Once educated, one has a peace of mind that can bring further development in one's life. Among others, Sen (1999) looks at inaccessibility to a functional education as a form of unfreedom. Thus, getting children to school or schools to children is the first essential step towards the removal of the sources of unfreedom. No wonder then, Suchodolski (1979: 43) observes, hundreds of inquiries and surveys have drawn attention to the fate of neglected children, orphans, children unloved by their families, children who are exploited by their parents. The reason behind this is to try to find ways of increasing freedoms of these children. Sen (1999: 18) contends that greater freedom enhances the ability of people to help themselves and also to influence the world, and these matters are central to the process of development. Indeed no one can be creative enough in the faces of the major sources of the unfreedoms. Unless these major sources of unfreedoms are removed, neither the individual nor the society can develop. According to Thompson (1981) one basic philosophies of schooling may be regarded as liberative, concerned with freeing individuals from their cultural and intellectual blinkers enabling them to think logically and independently, to identify and solve problems and to take responsibility for initiating change (but not seeking to limit their freedom).

Everybody, including street children, is entitled to live a better life, which can only come about through the provision of education to develop skills and reach one's full potential. Proper education could give hope for street children for the future and "skills to ensure that they have options in life beside living on the streets, labouring under exploitative, hazardous or abusive conditions, or life of crime" (UNICEF, 1999). Thus denying children the right to education is tantamount to disarming them of the very necessary and essential weapon for their own development and that of their society. In these days it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he/she is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right, which must be made available to all on equal terms (Supreme Court of the USA, 1956).

2.4 Challenges of Giving Education to Street Children

There are several challenges of giving education to street children. Most writers agree that major challenges to educating a street child are rooted in poverty. M'bow (1979:13) observes that to a large extent, the obstacles barring the exercise of the child's right to education are very often to be attributed to poverty. UNESCO (2003/4: 24) in the EFA Monitoring Report agrees that education is very expensive to the poor. Study after study shows that poverty is a major barrier to schooling. It discloses that lack of money is the primary constraint for leaving school. The introduction of FPE by different governments does not imply an automatic hundred percent increase in primary school enrolment. According to Soubbotina and Sheram (2000: 39) even when primary education is accessible, poor children may be unable to benefit from it. Many of these must work rather than attend school. Sometimes, parents, forced by poverty, may encourage their children to go into the streets to beg, steal or engage in different child labour areas (Gurung, 2004:11). Many children have opted for street life to seek survival and to them education is only secondary. UNICEF (1994:24) contends that the pressure to survive almost

negates any kind of regular school attendance in spite of aspirations children have to go to school. Child workers ply the streets and market places in a desperate attempt to eke out a meagre living to support their families or themselves on a day-to-day basis.

Ouma (2004:31) points out that street children have adopted unique values, which make it hard for them to enrol and remain in school. They value the jobs they do to earn a living more than they value getting an education. As Epstein (1996:290) puts it, survival becomes a moment-to-moment preoccupation and, for those in such a situation, the ability to divide and order time so as to contemplate, let alone plan for a future, is an unfamiliar luxury. This indicates that self-actualisation cannot be achieved unless basic needs are satisfied. Poverty is a national problem, which can only be addressed by coming up with sound economic policies. The policies should aim at reducing it so that the poor are not barred from the provision of education because of their low economic status. They should not be seen as a social group that can be exploited. It is only education that can pull them out of this predicament and help them make sound decisions for a good and happy life.

The other thing to take into consideration is that school has become a burden to the poor because of the demands made on them. Kadzamira et al (2001:5) argue that although primary schooling is free, orphans and their guardians are often asked to pay the extra charges commonly levied at primary schools. Indeed, incidents of pupils being chased from school because they have no school uniform or fail to pay levies for development, construction, and many others are common in primary schools. This is where school committees and head-teachers need some advice to stop such practices because they contribute to the rising dropout rates. Thus, enrolling children in school is on its own hopeless if those children are not kept there. CIDA (2002) observes that access to education involves more than just enrolling children in school. There is a need for an

education that motivates children to stay in school. If this lacks, some children withdraw from school and remain in the street begging or employed illegally. This suggests that education for street children remain a challenge in as far as their basic needs are not met. It is worth noting that these children do not look at what tomorrow requires. To them what matters is satisfying the basic needs of today. Of course, this may make them survive for that day but it does not equip them with permanent survival skills that can only be obtainable through basic education.

Another challenge to the provision of education services to the street children has got to do with resistance of street children themselves. They are so attracted by the money they get in the street that they do not dream of going to school at all. Pham as quoted by Peterson (<http://www.transitionsabroad.com>) emphasises the need to understand that many kids make so much money from begging that they can't afford to go to school. According to IRIN (2005) when experienced street boys are brought into homes, they tell their tricks to the other boys and some of them want to go to the market to make money. This is a pull factor that motivates children to drop out of school and try their luck on the street. This tendency has got a ripple effect in that it further attracts other children who also dump their school life for that of the street. It can therefore, be argued that in as long as the pull factors remain, more children will continue finding their way to urban areas to spend life on the street. This jeopardises the effectiveness of the FPE policy and leads to considerable loss of human capital. One would want to think that if there was a balance of economic power between rural and urban areas, rural-urban migrations could be minimised and perhaps reduce the population of street children in urban areas. It is these very children that can develop their areas once given the right education. But this does not suggest that all street children come from rural areas. There are some who have been born in the urban setting and have never lived in the rural areas. The point is that there is a tendency of children

just like adults to flock to urban areas where they think they can get opportunities of employment and other fortunes.

In view of the foregoing observation, it is clear that the possibility of earning money in the markets is an incentive for children to maintain the street life style at the expense of their education, yet the chance of getting this money through begging decreases as the child grows up. Lalor (1999) contends that once engaged in street life, the child's street "career" is often terminated by his or her changing appearance, as he/she grows older. By about 14 or 15 years of age, adolescents are beginning to lose their appeal to passers-by. This is the time that most of these kids turn into criminals by joining dangerous gangs or criminal groups (see also Epstein, 1996: 295). The point is that these people have not acquired life skills, attitudes, and values from basic education to stand on their own. The only way for them to earn a living is by becoming criminals. At this stage, it is almost impossible for the child to think of going to school to attain basic education. Furthermore, having grown up in poverty and lived a street-life style it is difficult to expect these kids to become future responsible parents that would encourage their own children to go to school. M'bow (1979) contends that having kept parents illiterate, poverty prevents them from providing their children with a background conducive to schooling. The danger of this is that the society will have an illiterate and unproductive population, which cannot initiate any change for developmental purposes in an area. Their life-style would only exacerbate street life, thereby, crippling the country's work force due to lack of basic education.

Furthermore, some children are restricted from going to school because either they have acquired parental responsibilities after losing their parents/guardians or the parents/guardians themselves are incapacitated. According to UNICEF (1994:4) children whose parents are dead accumulate ever-greater burdens of responsibility as head of household when a grandparent or other

caregiver dies. In Malawi after the loss of a caregiver, closest relatives of the deceased take responsibility over the children left behind. In certain cases grandparents who are poor and incapable themselves take over responsibility over their grandchildren left behind by their deceased sons or daughters. However, in both cases there are sometimes problems in the caring of such children due to poverty. In cases of extreme problems children break away from guardians and choose to stay alone.

Some of these children actually fail to go to school because they lead their blind parents or relatives to the streets, shops or market places to beg at least for their living. Others are actually sent by their parents/guardians who are themselves incapacitated. Rita Hieble of the Missionary Sister of Our Lady of Africa (MSOLA: 2005) suggests that other parents encourage their children to beg because they receive more than adults do in their work. They depend on their children or grandchildren for survival through begging. These circumstances in which these children are caught up make it very difficult for them to go to school and benefit from the FPE policy. This happens at the expense of the children's education. Once their parents/guardians die, it is the children themselves that suffer the brunt of their own inaccessibility to education. They look to other people for assistance and this renders their lives prone to continued abuse for the rest of their lives -a situation which could have been avoided had they invested in education. Because they lack basic education, they also lack 'life skills that people need to build a sustainable livelihood and to fully participate in society. As a result of this, they live a life of dependency for the rest of their lives (UNESCO, EFA Global Monitoring, 2003/4: 25)'.

2.5 Experiences of Other Countries

Almost all governments in different countries have been affected by the street children phenomenon. However, it is important to note that it is NGOs that have actively been involved in

the fight against street life than governments themselves. According to Epstein (1996:296) most of the educational programmes involving street children that have received notoriety within the developing world were originally associated with NGOs or volunteer organisation that are church related. This suggests that governments have not played a vital role in meeting the educational needs of street children. This portrays the work for street children's welfare to be a responsibility of charity organisations rather than governments.

In the Zambia's African village of Malambanyama, a children's town has been established as a residential education and vocational training institution. It is designed to give some of these children basic life skills and hope for the future. According to Zulu (<http://www.pbs.org>), each child goes through a five-year training programme in which they are taught life skills, responsibility, values and self-care. However, this is not basic education but vocational training. Nevertheless it provides an opportunity to introduce basic education within the centres. Special residential institutions may help to discover children's potential skills, which can easily be promoted within those institutions. In addition to this, children are well taken care of since they are provided with food, good healthy surroundings and are free from harassment they would experience in the streets. All this may arouse children's curiosity to stay in the institutions and acquire the knowledge and skills intended for improving their lives. This would provide a better opportunity for the provision of basic education to help street children acquire attributes from education that would lead to a fulfilling life. Vocational training should be provided to enhance basic education. This would actually have a significant impact on these children that could lead to a self-sustainable life.

In India, Maharashtra (<http://www.ashanet.org>) indicates that the education of the street child is one of the priorities of an organisation known as Aasara because education is a key to integrating

them into the society. State literacy centres known as Balwadis have been established where children are taught different things including songs, poems, the alphabet, the colours etc. Aasara believes that unofficial educational programmes must be made available to street children. Here, the teachers try to unlock the potential ability, learning skills and creativity of the street children through a range of activities such as games, play-acting, debates, talks, craftwork and others. The involvement of children in games, play-acting, debates, talks and crafts acts as motivation for the children to attend classes. This also gives an encouragement to parents to send their children to these State Literacy Centres. These programmes would however, be much better if basic education dominated the rest of the activities. This is because it is the first provider of reading, writing and numerical skills that help the child to develop an understanding of his/her environment and enables him/her to solve the problems he/she may counter.

In Nepal, Government Organisations as well as Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have been actively involved to address the educational problem for out-of-school children, particularly street children, in relation to EFA (Gurung, 2004:11). It is however noted that not enough is done to address the problem of education for out of school children. Nevertheless, Nepal has managed to provide both formal and non-formal education in order to facilitate the extension of basic education to all including the street child. According to Gurung (2004:11) the provision of formal or non-formal education for street children remains an ignored tragedy that is set to have a devastating impact on the development of the country in general and the achievement of EFA in particular. The response to the problem has thus been muted and remains ignored or sidelined by the government and the general public. The good thing about this is that the country has taken a step forward to ensure street children's access to basic education. These issues also require political will and commitment without which nothing can be achieved. M'bow (1979:16)

contends that effective application of the child's right to education is primarily a question of political will. Only through political will by governments and the international community could accessibility to basic education by all be achieved. This can be done through feasible and effective policies. Thus Governments must not only show their willingness to assist street children, but must also be seen redesigning and implementing their education policies to assist these children.

In Philippines, the Bahay Tuluyan's programmes for street children have been introduced which encourage the community to use its resources and to take care of their needs. The programmes are based on the principle that 'the most effective means of education is when children share their knowledge with their peers' (UNICEF, 1994:57). Junior educators have been identified to teach children on the street and communities. These junior educators are selected from among street children and provided a six-month period of training and evaluation. This approach motivates street children themselves to relate and learn from one another. Street children need sensitisation and involvement in programmes that are aimed at their social welfare. This could help to reach and benefit the disadvantaged children in several communities. However, street children who themselves do not have adequate education could not be expected to teach others and perform a wonderful job. It would be more meaningful if there were special well-educated and trained educators to handle street children's education as a profession. The street children themselves could be used as bait to attract others to join the programmes but not necessarily as teachers. Street children could only assist better after going through a successful basic education that has led them to further education. In this way, they could serve as very important role models to other street children. The Ministry of Education could play the role of monitoring and evaluating programmes to ensure they are in line with educational goals and objectives.

Other countries declared compulsory education to ensure every child's access to education. For example, according to UNICEF (1994:32) Thailand declared a policy in 1992 to extend compulsory education from 6-9 years. This policy is important in that on one hand it reduces the problem of children's inaccessibility to education. On the other, it delays children's entry into the labour market until they become of age. However, compulsory education is expensive because it demands more classrooms, teachers, writing materials, books etc. due to the increase in the enrolment rate. This may therefore not be a priority for most poor countries, which tend to have a number of other burning economic issues to deal with before they can look into issues of compulsory education policies. In view of this, poor resourced countries should try to come up with other means such as feeding programmes to attract those outside the school system without necessarily forcing them to go to school. This may arouse children's interest in school and they may begin to influence each other to go to school. In addition to this, poor countries like any other country should make education reflect the needs of the community so that it provides solutions to their problems. The relevance of school to the community needs may influence parents to send their children to school.

A combination of the Bahay Tuluyan's programmes and those State Literacy Centres in India could be effective in Malawi if blended properly. These centres could be established in the communities where with the help of a task force children could find themselves in the centres for the provision of basic education. However, Government through the Ministry of Education will need to come in to help in designing education programmes for the children to ensure quality education.

This study is aware of some existing literature on street children by either individuals or

organisations such as the Centre for Social Research (CSR) in the University of Malawi and UNICEF. However, most of these studies have concentrated more on the general plight of the street children and some orphan care centres and organisations that try to assist these children in terms of their basic needs, especially food. Such studies have focussed on the population of street children in different towns and cities. As such, there has not been any vigorous discussion on street children's need to access basic education and its effects on such children.

To begin with, UNICEF-Malawi targeted street children less than 14 years of age in the cities of Lilongwe, Blantyre and Mzuzu. The main objective was to identify root causes of the street children problem in the country in order for appropriate intervention programmes to be initiated to change the plight of these children (1999: 5). On education, the study found out that most children of the street do not attend school. This agrees with what UNICEF Malawi (2003) found. Most children were in the street without any supervision or protection and very few of them attended school (UNICEF, Malawi 2003: 9). The study found out that in Mzuzu children attend school and are on the streets to help in contributing to their families' income through vending (1999: 42). However, there is not much discussion on factors that bar these children from going to school. The study does not discuss how such children could be retained in the school system and acquire the basic skills that come with basic education. It is also important to note that it is not every child on the street or of the street that goes vending as the study suggests. These children do not have the financial capacity to engage themselves in business endeavour because they are in the street mainly to survive. If anything, they are only abused by businessmen or parents/guardians who do not realise the importance of education.

CSR found out that many children in urban areas who grow up with their poor families or guardians are more or less bound to take care of themselves and do not receive any education

and social training that they need in order to become well functioning citizens (1998: 166). The study does not give much elaboration on how these children could become well functioning citizens. In fact this is about building human capital which is the basis of the current study.

CSR (1996) found out that education for all has not yet been achieved. One of the underlying causes for failing to achieve education for all include the limited access of marginalised communities to education and the problems encountered when children do enter school. To this effect the study also points out that in Malawi Government introduced a policy of universal access to basic education for all individuals in 1994. This aimed at abolishing school fees and uniform, the possibility of Government assistance and provision of teachers to previously unassisted community based schools (1994: 81). Furthermore the study found out that there were barriers to the universal education policy in Malawi. It is these barriers that greatly affect street children's access to basic education. Most of these barriers had to do with lack of resources to cope with the implementation of this policy and as a result it is heavily dependent on donor funding.

In the light of these studies, this study has focussed on reasons for street children not going to school and the negative impact of this as far as building an effective human capital is concerned. This has specially been highlighted to show how human resource is being wasted in the street children that do not access basic education. It is this discussion that makes this study unique.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This is a predominantly qualitative study geared towards the exploration of issues surrounding the street children phenomenon as regards to their access to basic education. According to Creswell (2002: 50) a qualitative research is used to study research problems requiring an exploration and understanding of a central phenomenon. The qualitative approach is appropriate for this study because it is 'pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experiences of the people' (Marshall and Rossman, 2006: 2). As a research strategy, the inquiry was approached as a case study. This helped to arrive at a comprehensive knowledge of street children, as a social group of concern not only within the Municipality of Zomba but the whole country in as far as human capital is concerned. Holistic description, explanation and interpretation were at the heart of this study. To a very limited extent, the quantitative approach was used in the form of descriptive statistics.

3.1 Study Design

The study was conducted in the Municipality of Zomba. The municipality was chosen because of the ever-increasing number of street children in recent times, making it a very suitable area for a case study. The study particularly focused on the heart of the municipality, especially the market places, main shopping centres such as People's Trading Centres (PTCs), Shoprite, streets, food selling points, Zomba bus depot and Chancellor College. The reason for this is that these are areas where street children are visibly noted begging from the people. Chancellor College campus was included in the study because lots of street children have been found scavenging within the College's premises even during school hours.

Primary schools within the Municipality were particularly targeted and were categorised into core, semi-core and periphery. It was hoped that some of these street children had been enrolled in these schools for basic education. It was, therefore, appropriate for this study to find out the population of such children in these schools. Head teachers were essentially involved to provide information pertaining to street children in their schools. NGOs/Charity organisations were also included in the study especially those that care for street children and other vulnerable children. The aim was to find out how they assist these children in terms of the provision of basic education and other basic needs.

Parents/guardians were included to give their views on education for their children. Lastly, the study would have been incomplete without the involvement of Ministry of Education, the parent ministry on education issues. It was, therefore, included to give its stand on the education of street children in the country.

3.2 Sampling

Snowball sampling was particularly used to move from one respondent to another in the interviews with street children. According to Robson (1993), snowball sampling is a useful approach when there is difficulty in identifying members of the population especially when there is a clandestine group. Prior to the study, the researcher identified individuals either from the street children themselves or the general public who were used as informants to identify other interviewees who in turn were used to identify yet other informants for the study on issues pertaining to street life and access to education. This process went on until data was collected. In certain cases street children took the researcher to their parents or guardians for the interviews. This was particularly helpful in learning more about the family background of the child, which

helped the researcher to discover the home side of some street children and understand why these children face problems.

Stratified random sampling technique was employed in selecting schools for the study. There were three strata of the schools selected based on the location of such schools. The first stratum was composed of three schools from the core of the municipality. The second one comprised four schools in the semi-periphery of the municipality. These were the schools that bordered those of the core of the municipality. The third and last stratum was that of schools in the periphery. They were five of them located in the outskirts of the municipality. These schools were chosen to broaden the sphere from which street children operate.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

Prior to the commencement of data collection, permission was sought, in writing, from responsible officers, to conduct the study in the areas/organisations. These included the Chief Executive of Zomba Municipality who gave permission to interview street children and other responsible people within the municipal jurisdiction. Permission was also sought from the Ministry of Education Headquarters, South East Education Division (SEED) and selected schools for the interviews. The NGO and Charity Organisations also granted the researcher permission to conduct the study within their organisations. The police were made aware of the study in writing. This was necessary given the sensitivity of the study which was done at a time when there were lots of stories about child abduction and child trafficking. As for street children themselves, permission was sought a day before or at the time of data collection when they were politely asked for an interview with the researcher.

In addition to this, a pilot study was conducted in Liwonde Township to test the instruments especially questionnaires for street children to find out if they were giving the required

information. Refinements were made to the instruments before commencement of actual data collection.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

This was a qualitative study because it produced data that was holistic, contextual, and descriptive (Wamahiu and Karugu, 1995). Mixed method approach to data collection was employed. The reason for this was to obtain a holistic view of the street children's life and their access to basic education and its implication on human resource. In-depth interviews, direct observations, questionnaires, focus group discussions (FGDs) and documentary search were the main data gathering methods. Justification for using these methods and how they were used are discussed below.

3.5 Interviews

Initially, the study was designed to interview 100 street children but ended up interviewing 111 of them. This was because of the snowball sampling and the researcher was anxious to find out more common experiences from street children he had been referred to. A guide for the in-depth interviews was prepared to facilitate discussions. The researcher asked follow up questions where necessary to direct the course of the study. In the process, the researcher identified 12 street children for an in-depth interview comprising five girls and seven boys in an attempt to obtain balanced ideas on issues affecting street children from both sexes. These children were chosen depending on their maturity in answering questions during the general interviews. The intention of the researcher was to interview equal numbers of boys and girls, but most girls were shy and hence ended up interviewing 5 girls and 7 boys.

As an entry point in the world of the street child, the researcher used two facilitators who assisted in identifying children for the interviews. The facilitators were identified weeks before the

interviews commenced to make sure they had enough time to prepare. One of these facilitators was an older adolescent street child who had been noted in of the major shops, sometimes giving instructions or settling disputes amongst fellow street children. Lalor (1998: 31) states that the ideal facilitator may be a gang leader or some other respected member of street life in a given area. He or she should actually be seen not only as a leader but also a friend to the interviewees. This helped the researcher to mix freely with street children as a friend who understood their situation and wanted to know more about their life in the street. There was also one facilitator from a Charity Organisation who assisted in organising interviews with street children. The facilitators greatly assisted in the identification of respondents for the interviews. Lalor (1998) contends that a facilitator can help in locating interviewees and bring them to the researcher to be interviewed. There are high levels of fear and mistrust among street children as some people mistreat and abuse them. Because these facilitators lived with the street children, it was easy to encourage the children to take part in the interviews. At the end of the study 111 street children were interviewed from different parts of the municipality.

3.6 Questionnaires

Five structured questionnaires were prepared and these were for street children, charity organisations (NGOs) taking care of street children, street children's parents/guardians, head teachers and Ministry of Education. Researcher-administered questionnaires were used to collect information. The five questionnaires were different as they sought different information. The one for street children focussed on their personal life and how they perceived education while that for charity organisations dwelt on their roles as regards social welfare for street children. A questionnaire for head teachers/class teachers aimed at soliciting information about street children and their school life especially on their attendance, discipline problems and how they could be assisted. That for Ministry of Education helped to gather views from the Ministry

officials on what they are doing to ensure that street children benefit from FPE. The questionnaire for parents and guardians aimed at soliciting their views on the plight of their children and how they thought these children could be assisted in terms of schooling. All these questionnaires included open-ended questions 'that allow the respondent to reply in his/her own words' (Weiss, 1998: 140).

3.7 Direct Observations

Some data in this study was collected through direct observations, which focused on the daily activities and experiences of the children in the street. The researcher carefully watched street children's activities and discovered some characteristics and pattern of behaviour, which the children never mentioned during interviews. This is in agreement with Weiss (1998: 258) that observational techniques enable the researcher to gather information that often would be unavailable by other means. This is because 'it takes the researcher inside the setting and that it helps him or her discover complexity in social settings by being there' (Rossman and Rallis 2003: 194). The direct observations, thus, significantly assisted to uncover the realities of street life in this study. This method helped a lot to ascertain what the street children had said during the interviews. More importantly, this information was quite reliable because it was extracted from real life experiences of street children themselves as they interacted with the public for assistance. Rossman and Rallis (2003: 194) note that 'observation is fundamental to all qualitative inquiry. Through observation, the researcher learns about actions and infers the meanings those actions have for participants'.

3.8 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

These were organised group discussions focused around a single theme (Krueger, 1986: 1 as cited by Vaughn et al, 1996: 4). Vaughn, Schumm and Sinagub (1996: 6) point out that groups are best used when conducting exploratory research. This method was used to verify what

children had said during the interviews. A guide was prepared to focus the discussion on the information the researcher intended to collect. The initial plan was to conduct the FGDs in two homogeneous groups of 8 street children each; one for boys only and the other girls only. The reason was to ensure balanced views from both sexes but also allow the groups to express certain issues freely without being embarrassed in the presence of members of the opposite sex. But it was difficult to gather a girls' FGD and this ended up conducting a mixed FGD comprising 6 boys and 4 girls. According to Folch-Lyon and Trost (1981, as quoted by Vaughn et al, 1996: 50) groups should consist of 6 to 12 persons in FGDs. Fewer than six people may provide an insufficient number for a stimulating dialogue, and more than twelve are too many for all participants to get a chance to express their points of view. The researcher moderated the interviews and gave chance to all participants to express their experiences in the street. This was done in order to avoid extroverts and vocal characters from dominating in the discussion. The FGDs were duly recorded on the tape for preservation and analysis.

3.9 Documentary Search

To come up with a comprehensive study, a number of documents on street children were used. These included papers by UNESCO, UNICEF, newspapers, website data, research journals, samples of different free writings, etc. This helped to gather information about what other studies have done in a similar field of research. In other words, it helped to provide a theoretical frame of the study. The knowledge gathered from the documents helped to identify a gap on which this study based.

3.10 Data Analysis

Data analysis involved converting a mass of raw data into a coherent account (Weiss, 1998: 271) and as an on-going process commenced at the same time with data collection and continued to the end of the study. In this study both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and

analysed differently. Quantitative data in this study included enrolment numbers of street children, their performance in class (for those at school), school attendance and age. Microsoft Excel and SPSS were used to analyse quantitative data in tables.

The qualitative data was analysed in a trustworthy manner so as to reflect the true picture of the findings. Themes, concepts and categories were developed from the data as interpretative measures of the data. The data that appeared regularly were developed into themes or categories to facilitate the interpretation. According to Merriam (1988:133) developing categories, typologies, or themes involves looking for recurring regularities in the data. Thus, in this study, qualitative data was developed into themes and categories with different concepts and then explanations were attached to each category. According to Marshall and Rossman (1995) putting qualitative data into categories or themes brings order and meaning to mass of the collected data. In qualitative studies, data collection and analysis go hand in hand to promote the emergence of substantive theory grounded in empirical data (Marshall and Rossman, 1995: 111).

3.11 Limitations of the Study

Firstly, this study was dealing with a presumed delinquent group of street children some of who did not want to be interrupted in their business. In such cases, the problem was getting their cooperation, which at times meant giving them some money. As such, they may have given convenient responses so as to finish with the interview. The second limitation had to do with the sensitivity of the study. The study was done at a time when there were lots of stories about child abuse, abduction and trafficking in the media. Most street children feared for their lives amid these stories.

CHAPTER 4

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study sought to find out why street children have limited or no access at all to basic education. It sought views from street children themselves and those of their parents/guardians on what could be the best way forward for these children to penetrate barriers of access to basic education. The study also attempted to find out what Charity Organisations and NGOs are doing to meet street children's educational needs in the Municipality of Zomba. Furthermore, the study sought to find out and assess the strategies put in place by the Ministry of Education to make street children go to school and get retained in the school system. Details of the findings of the study are presented and discussed below.

4.1 Categories of Street Children in Relation to School Life

This section discusses the major categories of street children based on their responses to questions in connection with their school attendance. Table 2 below summarises the categories.

Table 2: Categories of Street Children in Relation to School Attendance

N=111

Category	Frequency	Percent
Dropped out of school	53	47.75
Have never been to school	7	6.31
Go to school	51	45.95

Table 2 above shows three major categories of street children namely, those who have dropped out of the school system (47.75 percent), those who go to school (45.95 percent) and those who have never been to school (6.31 percent). Those who have never been to school constitute the lowest proportion. This suggests that most street children go to school but do not complete primary education as they drop out along the way. This is contrary to the assumption that most street children do not access education.

As can be observed in table 2, the school dropouts are in majority compared to those who have never enrolled for school before. This is in agreement with UNICEF's (1994) observation that the majority of street children are school dropouts. This is similar to a study conducted in Karachi City in Pakistan where 44 percent of street children were primary school dropouts (UNICEF, 1994). In Nepal a study by Gurung (2004) of Child Welfare Scheme UK, also indicated that the majority of street children had previously been to a formal government school but left the school without completing their basic school education due to various factors. Both those who have dropped out of school without acquiring some basic skills and those who have never enrolled for school are at risk of living in poverty for the rest of their lives. UNESCO (2005: 52) has found out that compared with individuals who never attended the school, the risk of poverty for individuals who attended and completed primary school is significantly less.

Table 2 further shows that 45.95 % of street children interviewed were on the school enrolment. These actually go to school but also have time to loam the street for various reasons. These children normally flooded the streets and shopping centres in the afternoon and early evening hours. Some of them even claimed to have engaged themselves in begging to find money to buy exercise books and pens because their schools and parents did not supply them with these materials. It was also observed that some of these children absented themselves from school to beg even during school hours. This is an indication that most of them do not have enough time for classes, as they are getting attracted to and absorbed in street life. Such children are likely to drop out of the school system just like most others have done. Thus the 45.95% is a fragile group that can easily be lost to street life after dropping out of the school system. This could result into a considerable loss of human capital that could have been effective for the country's and individual development. Hallam (1996) observes that there are also absences instigated by

parents e.g. getting a child to help at home or undertake paid work. All these are signs of poverty as well as ignorance on the importance of education by such parents.

4.2 School Attendance

It was in the interest of this study to find out from 12 head teachers whether street children who had enrolled for school attended school on regular basis or not. This was necessary in order to find out if they have adequate access to basic education or not. In all these schools, it was found out that street children's school attendance was irregular. The 12 head teachers gave several reasons for irregular attendance. Some of the reasons are similar to those for not going to school. Apart from absconding classes for their usual business on the street, the study found out that street children do not attend school regularly because they feel embarrassed. One reason for this is that other pupils do not want to work with them during pair and group work. The other is that of poor class performance and over-age. Whatever the cause, these children receive limited basic education due to such irregular school attendance. In extreme cases these factors have forced some street children to drop out of the school before acquiring adequate knowledge that could assist them in their future lives.

4.3 Reasons for Street Children not going to School

The study sought to find out from street children themselves and some of their parents/guardians reasons for street children not going to school. The question targeted 60 street children who were not going to school at the time of the study and 10 parents/ guardians of some of these children. Table 3 below gives a summary of the reasons from both street children's and parental/guardian perspectives.

Table 3: Reasons for Street Children not Going to School**N=111(Street Children), 10 (Parents/Guardians)**

Reason	Street children		Parents/guardians	
	Frequenc y	Percent	Frequenc y	Percent
Lack of food (hunger)	58	96.67	10	100
Ill-treatment	31	51.67		
Piecework	46	76.67		
Parental responsibilities	21	35.00	7	70
Mocked and laughed at by other pupils	17	28.33		
Lack of proper clothes/uniform for school	53	88.33		
Parent desertion	13	21.67		
Lack of parental care	51	85.00	8	80
Street children's desire for pleasure (own choice)	11	18.33	4	40
Lack of money to pay for school fund	9	15.00		
Death of parent/ parents	34	56.67	9	90
Lack of notebooks, pens and pencils	44	73.33		
Poor treatment at school by some teachers	3	5.00		
Poverty			10	100
Parental dependency on children			6	60
Many orphans to look after			4	40
Marriage break-up (divorce)			5	50

Table 3 above suggests that the major reasons for street children not going to school are poverty, lack of food, lack of proper clothes/uniform for school, lack of parental care, piecework, lack of notebooks, pens and pencils, death of parents, parental dependency on children and ill-treatment. Some of these reasons are discussed below.

4.4 Poverty

Table 3 above suggests that from parental/guardian perspective (100 percent), poverty is the major reason for street children not going to school. They said that they could not afford to buy school materials such as notebooks, pens and pencils as every coin they find has to be spent on food for the family. They further complained that since the introduction of FPE their children are not being supplied with notebooks, pens and pencils. Street children themselves (73.33 percent)

indicated they could not go to school because of lack of notebooks, pens and pencils. This suggests that if schools provided these materials more street children could go to school and possibly stay in school.

Some of the parents admitted that their impoverished status forced them to drive their children to the streets to beg and do some piecework to earn a living for their families, hence, parental dependency on children (60 percent). This group agreed that ‘sometimes’ they do send their children to town to do piecework for the family to survive. They claimed that they were too poor to manage the family without the children’s assistance. This agrees with Parsons (1988: 32) that some children are sent out to earn money for the family. From table 3 above 76.67 percent of the children interviewed were not going to school because they were involved in piecework. They agreed that they help the families to survive out of what they get from piecework. This is a reflection of poverty not only in the ‘homes’ of street children but also the entire society of Malawi. This suggests that poor parents do not have economic power to provide for their children’s needs, which include sending them to school. Consequently, such children have been unable to either go to school or complete their primary education.

From table 3, most reasons given for street children not going to school relate to poverty. This is in agreement with most literature on children’s access to basic education. Writers such as M’bow (1979), Soubbotina and Sheram (2000) and UNESCO (2003/4) all attribute children’s inaccessibility to education to poverty. There is an element of poverty in most of the reasons given in table 3 such as lack of food (hunger), piecework, lack of parental care, parental responsibilities, lack of copies, pens and pencils, lack of proper clothes/ school uniform to wear at school. This implies that most parents cannot afford to buy school requirements for their

children. The situation is especially worse for children without parents. Most of these have dropped out of school life to seek survival means in the streets.

4.5 Lack of Food (Hunger)

The responses in tables 3 and 4 from both street children (96.67 percent) and parents/guardians (100 percent) respectively, suggest that the majority of street children do not go to school in the Municipality of Zomba because of lack of food (hunger). Street children said they had no time for school because they had to search for food and other basic needs in order to survive. Parents/guardians were agreed with street children that they had problems feeding their children attributing this to poverty. It was observed that most of them took health risks and scavenged in dirty dumping places to live on scraps. At Chancellor College (a constituent college of the University of Malawi) street children were seen picking food leftovers from the bins in the cafeteria and right inside hostels, sometimes assisted by some students who pitied them. This suggests that if children are to go to school, they need to be properly fed. However, what may not be guaranteed is their retention because apart from hunger, there are other factors such as school environment, the desire to make money in the street, poor teacher-pupil relationship and other complex factors, which may push children out of school.

4.6 Lack of Proper Clothes/Uniform for School/School Materials

Street children (88.33 percent) in table 3 indicated that they could not go to school because they lacked proper clothing and school uniform to wear at school. In addition to this, 28.33 percent disclosed that they could not go to school for fear of being mocked and laughed at by other children at school because of the way they dress. *'We stop going to school after being mocked and laughed at by our friends for wearing poor clothes'*, commented one street boy during a focus group discussion. Thus, street children get embarrassed when other children mock them. This suggests that even their schoolmates are estranging them from social benefits provided by

the society. This could affect street children for the rest of their lives if they are not given an opportunity to acquire basic education.

It is also important to note from the table that street children (73.33 percent) fail to go to school due to lack of notebooks, pens and pencils. Obviously, lack of proper clothes/school uniform and school materials such as pens, notebooks and pencils is due to poverty, which makes parents/guardians fail to buy them. This indicates that parents/guardians do not have adequate resources to buy their children these school items. It also suggests that the availability of these materials could make such children go to school.

4.7 Poor Pupil Treatment by Some Teachers

Table 3 also shows that teachers contribute to pupils not attending school by giving pupils poor treatment (5 percent). Though very few street children have mentioned this, it is a good signal to educators that they need to change especially in the way they treat children. They should not contribute to poor school attendance by treating children unfairly since their duty is to impart knowledge and skills to the children so that he or she can later lead a productive life. Teachers are expected to create an attractive school environment that would influence children to enjoy schooling. Otherwise poor treatment implies lack of proper professional skills in handling pupils. Such treatment suggestively contributes to an increasing number of school dropouts and consequent wastage of human capital.

4.8 Lack of Parental Care

Both parents (80 percent) and street children (85 percent) in table 3 agree that lack of parental care is another major barrier to children's access to basic education. In the same table, the evident factors that have deprived children of parental care include death of parents as indicated by children (56.67 percent) and parents/guardians (90 percent), divorce (50 percent) according to

parents, and parental desertion (21.67 percent) as indicated by children themselves. In the case of divorce the study found out that some parents completely neglect their children from previous marriages after remarrying. This suggests that stable first marriages are able to give care for their children and provide all the necessary school materials to encourage their children to go to school. This suggests that children with foster parents need to be protected by law to ensure that they receive adequate care and provided with all necessities for school so that they go to school. Parents who have divorced and remarried need to be obliged by such a law to educate their children. Otherwise, whatever form of desertion, child abandonment is in itself child abuse detrimental to both growth and development of the child. It deprives the child of parental love and care whose importance need not be over-emphasised. Such children feel rejected by own parents and lack support and encouragement to go to school.

Furthermore, parents seeking employment in the tobacco farms of the Northern and Central regions have ended up leaving the children behind without any parental support. One street child lamented:

After the death of my father, my mother went to the North (Northern Region of Malawi) to work as a tobacco tenant in an estate. Since then, she has never returned home and I have stayed without her for six years now. I do not communicate with her, but those who have managed to come back from the North tell me that my mother is married to another man there and that she will not come back (Oral testimony, 19th April, 2006: Shoprite, Zomba).

The boy disclosed that he was left behind because the owner of the vehicle who was also the estate owner could not fit him in the lorry because the space this child was going to occupy was meant for one who was to become his tenant. This suggests that tobacco farmers stifle or erode

parental responsibility over children. Parents need to take their children with them wherever they go so that they should continue to provide them with parental care and encourage them to go to school.

These factors make it very difficult for children to go to school because they have to think of how they are going to survive the day. This suggests that continued parental care and support could encourage children to go to school. The fact that children are found on the streets instead of in the school, is in itself a manifestation of lack of parental care and guidance. It suggests that such children are in the street because they lack a better home to belong to, where they could be provided with all the care and basic needs of their lives including basic education.

4.9 Ill-treatment

Table 3 also shows that children (51.67 percent) do not go to school because they had been cruelly treated by parents/guardians. Some of these children were chased away from home, denying them food, and were not provided with necessary school materials like notebooks, pens and pencils to help them at school. Some parents/guardians would rather see the children work than go to school. One street child complained that he was locked out of the house because he had gone to school after her grandmother had assigned him to do some work. He said:

My grandmother locked me out of the house because I did not go to harvest a portion of groundnuts in our garden and went to school instead. She did not give me food that day and threatened to beat me if I went to school before that portion was harvested. I had to obey for fear of the beating and being denied food (Oral testimony, 19th May, 2006, Zomba CCAP School).

Obviously, one cannot expect such children to excel in school life. These children eventually end up dropping out of school without acquiring basic skills that could help them live a better life.

Uneducated themselves, such children cannot be expected to treat their own children differently. Neither could they be expected to responsibly send their own children to school. This contributes to wastage of a human resource that could otherwise have achieved higher standards of life both at individual and societal levels. This suggests that a friendly home environment could promote mutual trust and a sense of responsibility that could see parents support their children including sending them to school and providing them other necessities.

This study further found out that stepfathers and mothers do not want to give enough support to children of their spouses from previous marriages and often ill-treat them. A 15-year-old boy whose mother had remarried said:

I have a stepfather who is so cruel to me that he does not care about my life. He only cares for the children he has borne with my mother. In most cases he shouts at me and I am not given any food when I reach home late. Usually I am given smaller shares of food compared to his children. Ndimangokhalira wayenda wapenga (I just accept the situation as it is) (FGD, 3rd June 2006: Behind Shoprite, Zomba).

This tendency puts children from previous marriages in jeopardy because such parents do not give adequate support for them, let alone, encourage them to go to school. This suggests that parents with steady marriages could fully support their children together and provide for their children's needs to see them excel in life.

4.10 Death of Parents and Parental Responsibilities

From table 3, it is clear from both street children (56.67 percent) and parents (90 percent) that death of parents has contributed to some children not to go to school. It has actually made many children assume parental responsibilities. The study found out that there were several street children (35 percent) who could not go to school because of such parental responsibilities. Elder

children were responsible for taking care of other siblings. Some street children explained that they also have a parental responsibility towards their own blind and physically handicapped parents/guardians (i.e. leading the blind and driving the crippled on wheel chairs to major shopping centres of the Municipality to beg). It is thus not surprising that these children do not have time to go to school. This suggests that if these children were relieved of such responsibilities they could have time to go to school. This however, is on assumption that minus this problem, there are no other factors that bar such children from going to school.

4.11 Street Children's Desire for Pleasure (Own Choice)

The study revealed that some street children (18.33 percent) do not go to school because they have found pleasure in street life. In addition to this, some parents/guardians (40 percent) attributed street life to children's own choice. They complained that some of their children were so rude and could not heed advice. One parent said, *'I try my best to tell my child the goodness of going to school and the dangers of loitering in the street but he does not listen'*. She attributed this behaviour of her son to peer pressure. She said her boy is influenced by other unruly boys from within the location to join them in the street to do *'ganyu'* (piecework) for money. Indeed, this study found out that these children spend most of their days begging in the street and doing piecework. The money they get out of this is used for watching video shows in the municipality, buy food items and even use it on beers. This is similar to findings of a study by Gurung (2004) in Pokhara and Kathmandu in Nepal where, among others, the money street children got was mostly spent on food, alcohol and watching movies. They look at school as something that wastes their time without realising that there is investment in education. The problem is that most children and even some parents/guardians want immediate benefits. They have been discouraged by long-term school benefits like getting a better job, high salaries and improved living standards

that come after a long rough way. The result of this is that they end up living a poor life because they lack empowerment that is associated with education.

4.12 Street Children's and Parents'/Guardians' Views on Accessing Basic Education

This section presents views of street children themselves and some of their parents/guardians on the children's access to basic education. It mainly focuses on how they feel chances could be opened up for street children to successfully access basic education. The section begins by presenting street children's views before looking at those of their parents and guardians in order to have clear comparison views which may help to find common solutions that need to be implemented in education policies to let street children go to school. The specific question asked to those who do not go to school was, 'What should happen for you to go to school?' For those who attend school the question was, 'what should happen to those who do not go to school for them to go to school? A total of 10 parents /guardians were also asked how they thought their children could be made to go to school. Table 4 below gives a summary of suggestions.

Table 4: Suggestions on Improving Access to Basic Education**N=111(Street Children), 10 (Parents/Guardians)**

Suggestion	Street children		Parents/guardians	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
NGOs/Government should assist in provision of basic needs especially food	73	65.77		
Adoption of street children	47	42.34		
Punish parents neglecting/ill treating children	17	15.32		
Introducing feeding programmes in schools	95	85.59	7	70
Schools not to demand levies from pupils	29	26.13		
Government should provide materials for school e.g. pens and copies	87	78.38		
Provide them with clothes and school uniform	81	72.97		
Provision of loans to poor parents			6	60
Special assistance from Government for orphan carers			4	40
Special help for the aged and incapacitated parents	5	4.50	3	30
Strengthen community ties to help one another			1	10

4.13 Provision of Food at School

The responses in table 4 above suggest that the majority (85.59 percent) of street children think that the provision of food at school is the best solution for them to access basic education. This is agreeable with parents/guardians (70%) who also think that the best way to make their children go to school is by introducing feeding programmes in the schools. This confirms that hunger is a major problem affecting children's access to basic education in the Municipality of Zomba. As such, feeding programmes may act as bait for children to go to school. Other studies elsewhere have shown that feeding programmes have a positive impact on the education of children. According to Birdsall et al (2006), in Bangladesh school based food distribution increased enrolment by 20 percent at a time when enrolment at non-participating schools fell by 2 percent. In Jamaica, Tamil Nadu (India), and other places where school feeding programmes have been evaluated attendance and retention generally rose. In Kenya a randomised study demonstrated

that children's school participation was 30 percent higher among students attending schools with feeding programmes. In Malawi, school attendance and enrolment increase when Government distributes free maize to pupils in famine situations. An introduction of the School-feeding Project by Plan International, an NGO (<http://www.plan.international.org>) in some parts of Lilongwe, Kasungu and Mzimba shot up attendance figures suddenly. This suggests that feeding programmes could attract children to school.

4.14 Provision of School Materials and Clothes/School uniform

The responses from street children (78.38 percent) in table 4 also suggest that provision of school materials such as pens and notebooks by Government could boost children's interest to go to school. Apart from reducing poverty through agriculture and business loans, there is a need to encourage poor people to engage in local industries such as basketry, carving, pottery and such other art work that could help them generate income to buy notebooks and pens for children to go to school. The other 72.97 percent of the respondents think that they can easily access basic education if given clothes and school uniform. These said that they could not go to school in rags because other pupils laughed at them. In addition they also claimed that teachers sometimes chased them away for not wearing school uniform. This is against government policy and yet it still happens. MOE needs to advise educators through Primary Education Advisors (PEAs) and District Education Managers (DEMs) that it is against the policy to chase pupils from school for not wearing school uniform. It is also important to distribute copies of the education policy to every school so that teachers are well informed of it. This suggests that teachers act out of ignorance and do not even know what the policy is saying. As implementers of the education policy, teachers need to be aware of what the policy is saying in order to implement it appropriately.

4.15 Non-Governmental Organisations' and Government's Assistance

Some street children (65.77 percent) think that the solution to go to school is for Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Government to come to their rescue. These explained that NGOs and Government could assist by sending them to school while at the same time providing them with some basic needs, especially food. This would require gathering these children together to assist them accordingly. However, the problem is that some of these children run away from such institutions for complex reasons. One of the kids who had run away from an organisation taking care of street children and orphans in the municipality said:

I ran away because there was no freedom there as they always kept us busy and expected too much from us. I could not cope with that type of life. I wanted to find money to buy things, which they could not give us there (Oral testimony, 19th April 2006: Shoprite, Zomba).

This is a clear indication that some of the street children are so used to street lifestyle that it may be difficult to retain them in institutions being mentioned. This suggests that some of these children cannot be accommodated in institutions that are trying to rescue them from their hardships. Such children cannot be expected to adapt to life in a school boarding institution even if they are fed. This suggests that such children expect too much from the institution care centres.

4.16 Adoption

Other street children (42.34 percent) suggested adoption as one way of stamping out street life and focussing on school life. The response suggests the children's quest to belong to a comfortable home. That is why most of them explained that if adopted by parents who could treat them as their own children and give them all the care they need, they could go to school. However, this could only work with parents who are really willing and committed to take responsibility of such children and give all the support the child will need. It could also depend

on the child's positive response in the new home. The problem is that it may be difficult for such children to cope up with the new home environment having been used to street environment. However, in cases where there is mutual acceptance between the adopted child and the foster parents, the child could excel in life especially if he/she is enrolled in school and gets educated.

4.17 Provision of Loans

Furthermore, 60 percent of parents/guardians interviewed in table 4 suggested that Government should provide loans to poor parents. These said that loan provision could help alleviate their poverty and enable them to give proper care for their children including sending them to school. They complained that poor families were often sidelined when it came to provision of loans in the communities on the assumptions that it would be difficult for them to pay back the loan. The problem with this is that most of these may not benefit from the loans, as they may be tempted either to use the loan money on food or sell the loan equipment to find food and other basic needs. Loans can work better if people can provide for most of their basic needs.

Suggestions by parents/guardians that Government should give special assistance to all parents/guardians looking after orphans could be problematic in that it would be difficult to verify if that help really benefits the targeted children.

4.18 Suggestions from Head teachers

Having found out views from children and their parents on how they thought children could be made to go to school, the study sought to find out views from 12 head teachers on how they think street children could be helped to go to school. Their views are closely related to those of the parents and street children. Table 5 below gives a summary of their responses.

Table 5: Solutions Suggested by Head Teachers to Help Street Children Go to School**N=12**

Solution	Frequency	Percent
Establishment of boarding schools for street children	6	50.00
NGOs to vigorously come in for assistance	5	41.67
Introduction of Feeding programmes in schools	4	33.33
Counselling street children	4	33.33
Introduce a law forbidding street life	3	25.00
Providing them with enough school materials	3	25.00
Educate illiterate parents	3	25.00
Extended family relations to care for street children	2	16.67
Chiefs to assist reuniting street children with their relations	1	8.33
Use role models to encourage street children to go to school	1	8.33

From Table 5 above, 50% of the head teachers interviewed were of the view that introduction of boarding schools could help bring street children together in one place. According to this group it would be easier to assist them in one place and provide for some of their basic needs. Building special boarding schools for street children could assist if street children could be tactfully fished out of the street to encourage them to concentrate on school life. However, this may be hindered in the first place by financial constraints in the country to come up with such schools. Secondly, this study found out that some street children run away from boarding institutions initiated by NGOs. It is therefore difficult to assume that they will stay in boarding schools, if they cannot stay in boarding institutions established by NGOs.

In Table 5 above 41.67 percent suggested that NGOs could assist by introducing strong programmes that could cater for provision of basic education for street children. According to this group these organisations could also assist by providing clothes and food items for the children. This could arouse street children's interest in school. In addition to this, some head teachers (33.33 percent) said that street children could be better assisted with the introduction of the feeding programmes in primary schools. This is in agreement with both street children

themselves and parents/guardians (see Table 4). This may be expensive for the Government but with political commitment it could be possible.

Another interesting suggestion raised by three (25 percent) head teachers was for Parliament to come up with an Act forbidding street life. This could attract the wrath of human rights groups if no better alternatives are offered to street children. There is a need for a legal provision, which should oblige parents to send their children to school. This could also compel the Government to expand infrastructure to absorb this population in the school system.

4.19 Family Status of Street Children

This study sought to find out if some street children had parents or not in order to establish if there is a difference between the two groups in terms of school interest and attendance. In other words, the aim was to highlight whether having a parent or not affects street children's interest in school and eventual attendance. For this purpose the researcher interviewed both those with parents and those without (orphans). It is important to note that some orphans had a single parent while others lost both parents. Table 6 below gives a summary of family status of the street children interviewed.

Table 6: Street Children's Family Status and School Attendance

N=111

Family Status	Frequency	Percent	Attend School	Percent	Do not Attend School	Percent
No Parent	44	39.6	16	36.36	28	63.64
Single Parent	59	53.2	28	47.46	31	52.54
Have Both Parents	8	7.2	7	87.5	1	12.5

Table 6 shows that the majority of street children have a single parent (59) representing a 53.2 percent. Of this group, 28 (47.46 percent) attend school and 31 of them (52.54 percent) do not attend school. Those without a parent, 44 of them, who either lived with their guardians or alone,

second this group. These represented a 39.6 percent of the 111 street children. But out of the 44 children, only 16 (36.36 percent) of them were attending school while the remaining 28 (63.64 percent) were not attending school. These first two groups constitute orphans having lost one or both parents. Their majority in the street could be an indication that their single parent or guardian has little influence on them in terms of encouraging them to go to school.

The group with both parents living together was the smallest in the street with only 8 children (7.2%). Of this group, only one (12.5 percent) child did not attend school after dropping out of the system while the rest 7 (87.5 percent) were school goers. This suggests that having both parents has an impact on children to attend school. It is assumed that such children receive the care they deserve from their parents in terms of the provision of their basic needs and receive considerable encouragement to attend school.

4.20 Head Teachers' Comments on Street Children in Schools

This study further sought information from 12 head teachers on the number of street children they have in their schools, their attendance and how head teachers themselves assist them to improve the children's school attendance. This was necessary to check if schools were doing anything to retain street children in the system. The idea was to check if the school acts as a "pull" or "push" factor. In other words the study wanted to establish whether or not the school provides conducive and supportive environment for street children to continue attending school. Table 7 below summarises the head teachers' assistance.

Table 7: Head Teachers' Assistance to Street Children Attending School**N= 12**

Assistance given	Frequency	Percent
Counselling and Guidance	8	66.67
Teachers personally assist them	6	50.00
Praising them for good work done	4	33.33
Discussing with their parents or guardians	4	33.33
Showing love to them	2	16.67
Homework to keep them busy with school	2	16.67
Excusing them on school uniform and school fund	2	16.67
Sensitising parents and elders during PTA meetings	2	16.67
Use of role models	1	8.33
Special attendance register for street children	1	8.33
Punishing them	1	8.33
Conducting remedial lessons for them	1	8.33

Table 7 above indicates that the majority of head teachers (66.67%) use counselling and guidance as the technique for encouraging street children to concentrate on their education. It also shows that many teachers (50%) personally assist street children. It was disclosed that some teachers and head teachers buy some street children school uniforms, give them used clothes, soap, pencils, notebooks and textbooks to encourage them to go to school and work hard. The study found out that children who were given such assistance attended school regularly. This suggests that children assumed to be motivated to go to school could either be retained or pushed out of the school. They could be retained because of the provisions of the school materials and pushed out because of lack of the same. However, provisions of such materials by teachers may not be a good way of encouraging street children in the school. This is not an issue that need to be addressed by teachers per se. It is a national issue and requires Government's attention to find ways and means in order to regularly supply school materials so that poor children could be motivated to go to school.

Furthermore, 2 (16.67%) head teachers disclosed that during Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and School Committee meetings they also sensitise parents, elders and the community as a whole to take care of orphans and other needy children who can still trace their relatives. A female head teacher said:

We tell them the goodness of educating children and the dangers of neglecting the children's educational needs. We encourage them to send their children to school to help them become productive citizens of the country. We advise them to give support to these children because we know there are some street children who have relatives who could properly look after them (Oral testimony, 12th June 2006: School X).

Although only two head teachers raised this point, it is important because as already indicated in this study most street children operate from their parents'/guardians' homes in different communities. Some of these parents condone children's behaviours that encourage them not to go to school. However, their involvement in such meetings could only have a positive impact in the school life of their children if parents or relatives of these children are willing to assist. Otherwise, parents/guardians need to be assisted by promoting their economic status through loans that could boost their ambitions in business to make money or promote agriculture so that they sell their surplus production to the market. This could motivate them to buy school items for their children and encourage them to go to school.

One head teacher (8.33%) raised a very interesting and important point that he uses to assist the two street children he has in his school. He said that he had made a special attendance register for the two children. Every morning the two street children report to the head teacher's office to announce their presence in the school. After school, just before going home, they again report to the head teacher to show their work as a confirmation that they had been in class and then leave

for their homes. According to this head teacher, this system has worked very well and the street children's progress in class had greatly improved. He said:

I keep on monitoring their progress and encourage them by looking at their work. They are now used and report to me daily before and after classes. This has helped them not only to reduce absenteeism but also to work hard in class. I sometimes give them notebooks and pens to boost up their interest in school (12th June 2006: School Y).

Monitoring of street children's attendance and progress in school is good, but could be difficult given a big number of street children in the school. Moreover, this could be too demanding to teachers who already are overworked. This system could work where there are very few street children in a school. Otherwise, these children could be assisted and encouraged right in their respective classes so that they improve on school attendance, which may lead to their eventual retention in the school system.

4.21 The role of NGOs and Charity Organisations on Street Children's Welfare

This section is an assessment of what NGOs and charity organisations are doing to meet street children's educational needs and other social welfare. The aim is to show whether what they are doing is enough to lift the child from his/her hurdles to better living standards. In other words, the section is an evaluation of NGOs' roles to find out if such roles lead to an end of the child's street life. It has already been noted that three organisations have tried to assist street children in their daily plight in the Municipality of Zomba and this includes provision of basic education. These organisations include YONECO, Zombs Baptist Church and Tathandizidwa Street Children's Club (see pages 12-18).

In general, this study found out that these organisations face a number of constraints that affect proper performance of their roles to assist street children in their general plight and educational

needs. To begin with, some of these organisations have other major goals and objectives that do not necessarily reflect that of providing basic education to street children. YONECO for example aims at assisting the youth by teaching them various technical skills as well as empowering young sex workers to combat prostitution. Thus provision of basic education is not one of the major objectives of the organisation. This role is only secondary and is not accorded the full support it ought to have been.

Secondly, much as these organisation want street children to benefit from FPE, they do not fully provide the basic needs particularly food. This is why most children revert to street life. A case in point is that of Tathandizidwa Street Children's Club, which provides only a meal a day and the child, has to find own means of survival the rest of the day. It is difficult for such children to concentrate on school life when they have to think of where to get the next meal. Consequently, some children have completely withdrawn from the club.

Thirdly, these organisations do not have well-established facilities to adequately assist street children in provision of basic education. They lack blocks and do not have boarding facilities which could facilitate better supervision of the children. This implies that they do not have the financial capability to establish such facilities. However, this has also got to do with priority. Despite the financial capability, some organisations have not prioritised provision of basic education for other reasons. Lastly lack of good leadership also affects organisations to fulfil their roles promptly as was the case with one organisation, which after the departure of the founder it also collapsed and came to an end.

In view of this, it has been difficult for NGOs and charity organisations to fully support the street child in the provision of basic education and other social welfare. Thus despite their effort, most

street children have remained in the street. This implies that organisations have not fully managed to socialise the street child and lead him/her to abandon street life for school life. This suggests that there is still much to be done if street children are to willingly enrol for basic education and get retained in the school system.

4.22 Government Policy on Street Children's Education

It was in the interest of this study to find out what the Ministry of Education (MOE) is doing to encourage street children to go to school. This section therefore, discusses a number of issues raised by MOE as regards to education of the street children. According to Ministry of Education, the FPE policy does not discriminate against any group. The very introduction of Free Primary Education was a strategy to extend basic education to all children including those in the street. The Ministry, however, is aware of street children who despite the FPE do not go to school. As such, it has engaged itself in an investigation of strategies to make education all-inclusive targeting different groups of children such as orphans, children with special educational needs, girls, and out-of-school youth (MOE, 2001). This is proof enough that the education policy is not discriminatory against any social group. Yet there seems to be a problem in implementing the policy to address the educational needs of street children most of who do not go to school.

Table 1 (page 8) has shown the ever-high numbers of school dropouts from primary schools in the country. As already indicated, most of these have ended up in the street. This totally agrees with what this study found out. For example, 47.75 percent of the street children interviewed were school dropouts and 6.31 percent had never attended school before (see table 2). Basing on these findings, it can be argued that the education policy is not aggressive enough to encourage children to go to school or even ensure their retention there. There seems to be no effort to

translate the policy into action. This among other factors could be the problem of implementation of the policy. In its attempt to help out-of-school children (some of them are street children) to go to school, the MOE has come up with the strategies discussed below.

4.23 Establishment of Complementary Basic Education Centres

This study found out that Ministry intends to introduce Complementary Basic Education (CBE) centres targeting out-of-school children and youth. At the time of this study this programme was being piloted in the districts of Chikwawa, Lilongwe rural and Ntchisi. It is intended to absorb and provide basic education and life skills to children who have left the formal school system for one reason or another. Although this programme does not specifically target street children, the assumption is that it could reduce children's flow to urban areas and this may in turn reduce street life in the urban areas.

In this programme, the community will be directly responsible for managerial issues just like what School Management Committees do in formal schools. The community as a whole will be expected to support children to go to school as well as monitor their attendance. It will also be expected to employ its own teachers from the school leavers within the same community. Structures such as church buildings, community-supported buildings, and school buildings when not in use are possible venues for learning under this programme. Classes will be designed in such a way that they match the yearly calendar and daily timetable of the community. For example during heavy rains and planting seasons, there would be no classes as attendance is likely to be reduced.

The programme is designed in such a way that it will cover two years of primary schooling in one year. There will be two concurrent programmes, CBE 1 and CBE 2. Children between 9 and 13 years of age will take a three year CBE 1 course while those between 14 and 17 years of age

will undertake a three year CBE 2 which may have common elements with CBE course 1 but adopted for the age group and including more prevocational elements. Children younger than 9 years will be encouraged to rejoin formal primary schools because they are not too old to enter those classes but all those aged 18 and above will be encouraged to join adult literacy programmes.

The curriculum will be the product of both the community and the learners themselves so that it meets their need. But other demands will be considered in the curriculum to ensure parity with formal schooling system. The involvement of learners in the production of the curriculum may itself be motivation enough to push many children to the CBE centres. The school dropouts could also be motivated for having a second chance to learn. These factors may encourage many children within those communities to go to the CBE learning centres for basic education.

Much as the CBEs are set to help the out-of-school youth, it is yet to be seen what impact they will have on street children in town. The problem is that this programme is especially designed for out-of-school youth in rural areas and does not directly target street children. It may therefore have little impact on street children in towns. Moreover, it would be better to look into real issues affecting children's inaccessibility to basic education in an attempt to come up with solutions help them to go to school.

4.24 Introduction of Feeding School Programmes

According to MOE the school feeding programmes have also been introduced with the help of donors like the World Food Programme and GTZ. The problem though is that these are seasonal programmes and often come at a time when hunger is at its peak. Yet there are lots of poor families, which do not have any food throughout the year. Feeding programmes may motivate street children to go to school and get retained in the school system. This study has shown that

those children who received lunch provided by the Tathandizidwa Street Children's Club improved their attendance and most of them got retained in the school system. The danger, however, lies in a situation where these donors decide to pull out as this might likely paralyse the school feeding programmes. It could have been better if Government itself was in the forefront with these programmes without putting too much trust in the donors. Donors should only complement Government's efforts in this respect. It is worthwhile for Government to teach its citizens skills of production basing on one's talent such as carpentry, sewing, gardening, fishing, basketry, etc, which can help them generate income. Improved poor people's income could be used on the education of their children.

4.25 Construction of Junior Primary or Feeder Schools

Ministry of Education has also engaged itself in the construction of Junior Primary or Feeder Schools near communities where children come from in order to reduce the walking distances of the learners. Most of these schools are located in rural areas and are meant to assist all children in the provision of basic education. However, it has already been pointed out in this study that reducing the walking distance does not necessarily mean that children will be attracted to school. This study has found out that most pupils do not go to school because of different reasons such as poverty, lack of food, lack of parental care, etc, which have nothing to do with distance especially in the Municipality of Zomba where schools are closely located.

4.26 Removal of Barriers for Schooling

The Government has also removed other user fees that restricted children from going to school such as school uniforms, removal of school fees and other non-tuition fees e.g. development funds. The motive behind this is to help poor families to send their children to school. The removal of school fees has indeed helped children to go to school but the issue is that the majority of them do not finish primary education. Moreover, this study found out that pupils

were still asked to contribute something towards the running of primary schools. There were other authorities at school level that still chased children from school for not wearing school uniform. Street children who see this happening will not be encouraged to go to school. Those who cannot manage to buy school uniform are being forced to drop out of the school. The problem here is not with the policy per se but rather its implementation at the grass root level. It is therefore important for Primary Education Advisors (PEAs) to advise teachers not to deny children education for failure to pay levy and lack of school uniform. It is also commendable to send copies of the policy to the implementers so that they do what it exactly says. Some of these actions are done out of ignorance and it is children who suffer by being deprived of their right to basic education.

CHAPTER 5

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, the study set out to understand why street children do not go to school when as a matter of fact the opportunity is there for them to enrol for primary education which is free. These children are not catching the opportunity and according to the human capital theory, it is this lack of access to education that leads to a wasted human resource. The point here is that children go to school to build human capital after investing in education. Thus the 1.1 million children (see page 10) not going to school visibly represent a wasted human resource. Such individuals lack those basic skills that come with primary education because they do not attend school. As a result, they are unproductive in the society and cannot contribute anything to their own development and that of their society.

From the data gathered it could be concluded that street children do not access primary education mainly because of poverty. It was observed that other reasons given for not going to school were just digressions of poverty. It was found out that poverty prevents them from going to school in a number of ways. Firstly, due to the impoverished circumstances, parents and guardians do not have adequate food for the survival of the family. This has prompted many children to go to town to beg or do some piecework in order to find food at the sacrifice of schooling. Secondly, parents have not been able to provide their children with school materials such as notebooks, pens, pencils, etc, to facilitate children's education because of poverty. This challenge is extremely difficult for street children living alone and those who have taken over parental responsibilities after the death of their parents. The other major reason for street children not going to school is truancy. Children make their own choices not to go to school because of

reasons that include the desire to make money through piecework or watch movies in the Municipality.

On NGOs' role, the study found out that in as much as they try to provide basic education, food, school uniforms, etc, this does not completely take children off the street and keep them in schools. Some have actually run away from school even while under the care of such NGOs. This suggests that the problem is complex and bigger than we have attributed to poverty. It could be something to do with motivation and appreciation of school on the part of street children. In other words, there does seem to be deeper issues that prevent children from going to school, which need to be explored systematically and exhaustively. This study has just done part of such an exercise.

Despite the removal of school fees, the study found out that the Free Primary Education policy still does not result into many children going to school as evidenced by the yearly high dropouts and non-attendance (1.1 million of the 3.8 million school-going age children were not attending school in 2002). This suggests the need for redesigning the policy to accommodate the plight and challenges of street children.

Lastly, many suggestions have been given on how children can be made to go to school and get retained there. However, not all these suggestions are feasible given the poor economic status of the country. There are a number of sectors such as health, agriculture, etc, which also scramble for the same meagre financial resources. But Government should consider putting into practice those suggested solutions that may be affordable. This could improve children's access to basic education.

5.2 Recommendations

Having looked at the problems street children face, the study recommends that Government should consider some or all of the strategies presented in this study. Firstly, the issue of poverty has to be dealt with if children are freely to access basic education, otherwise all academic talks cannot be fulfilled if it prevails. To address the issue of poverty, Government should empower parents/guardians by giving them agriculture input or business loans for them to improve their economic capacity. The agriculture-input loans could have a two-fold impact on family lives. It could increase crop production, thereby, solving the problem of food for starving parents. Secondly, the surplus produced could be sold for money and help parents who have interest to educate their children to buy school materials such as notebooks, pens, pencils and school uniforms necessary for school attendance. Thus, improving poor people's economic status through loan facilities could reduce poverty. This study is aware of the fertiliser subsidy programme but that need to be explicitly stated that they also aim at encouraging children to go school. The objective should be to have adequate wealth and food to support children to go to school to build an effective human capital for the nation.

On children failing to go to school because of hunger, the study recommends that Government should consider blending the FPE policy with a feeding programme. The introduction of such a feeding programme may influence poor parents/guardians to send their children to school as it relieves them of the burden of feeding their children. In addition to this, it may improve children's school attendance, which may lead to their ultimate retention in the school system.

From what has been said on the problem of lack of parental care, the study recommends that Government should establish Residential Institutional Care centres. The care centres should provide some basic needs for street children. This may contribute to a better home for the

children. Those without parents or those ill-treated by their parents/guardians may find this very appealing to them. Once in the care centres, Government, through the Ministry of Education, should take this opportunity to provide them with basic education just like any other pupil in primary schools. This should be the primary focus of the Residential Institutional Care Centres.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STREET CHILDREN

- This questionnaire will help us collect information on the plight of street children and their views on their access to basic education.
- Thank you for accepting to answer these questions.

Family background and street life

1. Name (optional) _____
2. Age _____
3. Sex _____
4. Home _____
5. How many are you in your family? _____
6. Who do you stay with? _____
7. If you live alone, where do you live?

8. Do you stay at home? Yes ☐ No ☐

9. If no, where do you stay?

10. When did you leave home?

11. Why did you leave home?

12. If you have been away from home for some time, would you like to return ? Yes ☐ No ☐

3. If yes, why?

14. If not, why?

15. Do you visit your parents/relatives? Yes ☐ No ☐

16. What do you do in the street?

17. How much money do you find in a day? _____

18. How much money did you find yesterday? _____

19. Where did it come from?

20. How do you spend the money you find in a day?

21. Apart from money, what else do you get?

22. Do you find enough to feed yourself? Yes ☐ No ☐

23. If not, how do you survive the day?

24. How much do you need to survive the day? _____

25. What is good to you about living on the street?

26. What do you think are the problems you face on the street?

(a) During the day:

(b) At night:

Schooling

27. Do you go to school? Yes ☐ No ☐

28. If yes, which school? _____

29. In which class are you? 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐

30. Did you go to school

today _____ Yes ☐ No ☐

yesterday? _____ Yes ☐ No ☐

on Friday _____ Yes ☐ No ☐

Monday? _____ Yes ☐ No ☐

31. If not, why?

32. Have you attended school before? Yes No

33. If yes, how far did you go with your schooling?

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐

34. Why did you leave school?

35. Can you read and write? Yes ☐ No ☐

36. Do you like attending school? Yes ☐ No ☐

37. If yes, why?

38. What should happen to those who do not go to school for them to go to school?

39. If not, why?

40. Do your parents/guardians encourage you to go to school? Yes ☐ No ☐

41. If yes, what are the reasons they give you for the encouragement?

42. Would you go to school given an opportunity? Yes ☐ No ☐

43 If yes, why?

44. If not, why?

45. What should happen for you to go to school?

46. How do you think can you be helped to be retained in school?

Knowledge of charity organisations

47. Do you know any organisation giving assistance to street children? Yes ☐ No ☐

48. If yes, which organisation?

49. What type of assistance does it give?

50. Are you one of the beneficiaries? Yes ☐ No ☐

51. If not, why?

52. What kind of support do you expect from such organisations?

Future life and suggestions

53. What do you want to be (to do) in future?

54. What does it require for you to become that?

55. What need to happen for you to become that?

56. Can you tell me what needs to happen for you not to be in the street?

END OF QUESTIONS

Thank you for your co-operation

APPENDIX B: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STREET CHILDREN

The following pertinent issues will guide the in-depth interview:

1. Family background

2. Schooling

3. Knowledge of charity organisations

4. Future life

END OF QUESTIONS- Thank you for your co-operation

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR NGOs TAKING CARE OF STREET CHILDREN

- This study aims at exploring the role your organisation plays in supporting street children in Malawi.
- The information you provide will be treated with confidentiality unless with your permission.
- Be assured that during report writing no organisation shall be mentioned or identified by their names unless authorised by the organisation.

1. Name of your organisation

2. When was the organisation established in Malawi?

3. What are the main objectives of your organisation?

4. What are the circumstances that led to the establishment of your organisation in Malawi?

5. How many street children do you have as of now?

6. What specific programmes do you have for street children?

Do you have any education programmes for street children? Yes ☐ No ☐

7. If yes, what exactly do your education programmes involve?

8. What is the response of street children to your programmes?

8. How do you identify street children for your organisation?

9. Where do most of these kids come from?

10. What kind of contact do you have with parents/guardians of street children?

11. What problems if any, do you experience with street children in your organisation?

12. How do you deal with such problems?

13. How do you raise funds for programmes?

15. What are the strengths of your programmes?

16. What else do you think needs to be done to enhance performance of your programmes?

17. What type of assistance do you get from communities in which your organisation is working?

18. What role does the Government of Malawi play in your programmes?

End of Question Paper
Thank you very much for your co-operation

**APPENDIX D: A QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STREET CHILDREN'S
PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

- This study is intended to try to understand why kids stay on the street and what else we could do to prevent kids from going on to the street.
- I have come to share with you how to assist these kids from their plight on the street.
- Thank you for accepting to hold a discussion with me.

1. Name_____

2. Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

3. Age: _____

4. Relationship with child_____

5. How many children do you have? _____

6. How many of these children go to school?_____

7. For those who do not go to school what is the reason for them not to go to school?

8. Do you think it is necessary for children to go to school? Yes ☐ No ☐

9. If yes, why?

10. If not, why?

11. How can street children be assisted in their plight?

12. What is it that we need to do for our children who are on the street to go to school?

13. What benefit do you get from your child's/children's street life?

14. What problems do you face with your children/child in his/her/their street life?

15. Do you know any organisations that give assistance to street children?

Yes ☐ No ☐

16. If yes, what type of assistance?

17. Is your child one of the beneficiaries? Yes ☐ No ☐

18. If yes, in what way does this assistance also benefit you?

19. What other support do you expect from such organisations?

20. Apart from all what we have said, is there any other thing you want to share with me as far as the issue of street children is concerned?

End of Questions- Thank you for your co-operation.

APPENDIX E: A QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEAD TEACHERS

- This study is intended to try to understand why kids stay on the street and what else we could do to prevent kids from going on to the street.
- I have come to share with you how to assist these kids from their plight on the street.
- Thank you for accepting to hold a discussion with me.

1. Name _____

2. Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

3. Age: _____

4. Are you able to tell that some of the pupils you have in the school live on the street?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, how many are they?

5. Is the attendance of these kids regular? Yes ☐ No ☐

6. If not, what are the reasons for their irregular attendance?

7. What is their academic performance in class?

8. What discipline problems do you face with these kids?

9. What do you do to assist these kids in terms of schooling?

10. In your opinion, why do street children fail to attend school?

11. Can you suggest ways in which we can assist street children to ensure that they attend school?

End of Questions

Thank you for answering these questions

APPENDIX F: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MINISTRY OF EDUCATION ON EDUCATION AND STREET CHILDREN

- This study is intended to find out what the Ministry of Education has put in place to assist street children?
- Thank you for accepting to answer these questions.

1. Specifically, what strategies has the Ministry of Education put in place to encourage street children to go to school?

2. Do we have a policy addressing the plight of street children as a special group?

Yes ☐ No ☐

3. If yes, what does the policy say?

4. If not, are there any plans to develop a special policy addressing the education needs of street children? Yes ☐ No ☐

5. Does the Ministry of Education have any particular problem with education of street children? Yes ☐ No ☐

6. If yes, what are these problems?

7. Does the Ministry of Education work in collaboration with organisations supporting street children? Yes ☐ No ☐

8. If yes, in what ways?

9. If not, why?

10. In general, as a Ministry, can you just talk to me about how this a country intends to handle the issue of street children in terms of access to education whether immediately or on a short or long term?

End of Questions: Thank you for sparing your time for the interview.

APPENDIX G: A GUIDE FOR A FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

The Focus Group Discussions will be guided by the following questions

A. STREET LIFE

1. What are the major reasons for you to be on the street?
2. For you to be out of the street and go back home, what should happen?

B. SCHOOL LIFE

1. Why don't you go to school, for you who don't go to school?
2. What do you think should happen for you to go to school?

C. DANGERS OF STREET LIFE

1. Do you think there are any dangers for you to be on the street?
2. What are these dangers?
3. In spite of your knowledge of these dangers, while are you in the street?

End of Group discussions: Thank you for your participation