

Responses to Child Vulnerability

Why do children migrate to the streets in Tanzania?

How does Government policy and Civil Society understand the issue of street children?

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Mkombozi...

is one of the leading child focussed agencies in northern Tanzania, working with over 1,000 vulnerable children and families a year in Kilimanjaro and Arusha regions.

We want a world where...

all children and youth are prioritised and can access opportunities to become well rounded, inquiring and productive people, who are working towards a more just and democratic society.

Mkombozi...

helps vulnerable children and youth to grow in mind, body and spirit and to build a more caring society for all.

We believe that...

we can promote social justice through participation and collaboration. We capture local potential through learning and reflection and act as a catalyst for holistic development.

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Abstract

The migration of children from their homes to life on the streets is a global issue. Problematically, little research has been undertaken to discover the factors that cause this behaviour. Mkombozi knows that in the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania, child migration is almost always due to reasons of non-income forms of poverty. The present paper explores how organisations other than Mkombozi understand the issue of child migration. Mkombozi hypothesises there are few organisations that fully grasp the complexity of the issue of child migration. As such, the present paper also researches the policies and practices of international, national and local agencies concerning this highly vulnerable group of children. Although international organisations, governments, and local NGOs are all in a position to implement effective policies which directly impact the situation of child migration, this can only occur when organisations clearly understand the link between non-income forms of poverty and child migration.

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Mkombozi's work researching the root causes of child migration

"It is important to know the problems faced by children in their families that make them run to the streets" (Young man who has lived on the streets)

The number of children migrating to the streets is on the increase. Organisations who work to curb this trend can make a real difference in the complex issue of street children. One of Mkombozi's key programmes works to prevent the continued migration of children from their homes and communities to the harsh reality of street life. Specifically, Mkombozi's Community Strengthening Programme develops and strengthens community-based interventions that target the root causes of child and youth migration. Such community-based interventions enable communities themselves to support their vulnerable children and youth before they actually migrate to the streets.

Through **Participatory Action Research (PAR)**, Mkombozi facilitates the direct involvement of communities in the research and understanding of child migration. PAR enables communities to decide upon and implement changes within their own geographical area to halt this pattern. Using participatory methods, Mkombozi supports communities to make these changes and strengthen their communities.

The Community Strengthening Programme has been operational at Mkombozi for three years. During this time, Mkombozi and the PAR communities have identified the root causes of child migration in Kilimanjaro region. However, in order to understand the role Mkombozi is playing to prevent child migration on a wider scale, more information is needed concerning the approaches and practices of other organisations. The present paper aims to do this.

It is hoped that the present paper will also help Mkombozi to assess international perspectives on street children, and the various approaches used by organisations when working with street children. Overall, these findings will show whether or not Mkombozi's understanding of the complex situation of street children are shared, and if there are global truths concerning why children migrate to the streets.



Participatory Action Research is based on the fundamental principle that the people best equipped to research, understand, explain and address any issue are those who experience it every day.

For example, Mohammed has stopped going to school and is begging in town. By bringing together all those responsible for Mohammed's future (parents, teachers, community leaders, and the child himself) we can empower them to address the reasons why he is truant, and we can also learn from their conclusions to inform our future actions.

Research objectives & methodology

Based on the work and findings of the Community Strengthening team to date, Mkombozi hypothesises that: "National poverty reduction policies do not address the non-income forms of poverty that drive children to the streets, and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are not addressing the causes of child migration to the streets because they do not understand the link between non-income forms of poverty and street children." Therefore, the objective of this paper is two-fold:

1. To analyse how the national policy framework on poverty reduction is implemented at a local level and to what degree it supports vulnerable children.
2. To document innovative community practices that strengthen local support systems for vulnerable children.

Primary and secondary research methodologies were used for this paper, including two literature reviews: one concerning international and national policies and papers, and the other concerning work that CSOs are doing with street children in countries outside Tanzania. Local NGOs in Tanzania have also been contacted and case studies researched and written on these projects.



Why do children migrate to the streets?

**"I do not want to believe that there are parents who neglect the children who are part of them."
(Child at Mkombozi)**

On the basis of research and experience, Mkombozi knows that children migrate to the streets because they become "vulnerable". Mkombozi considers children to be vulnerable:

- ⓪ **When they live in poverty;**
- ⓪ **When they are abused or neglected;**
- ⓪ **When they are abused within the home and/or their mothers are victims of domestic violence;**
- ⓪ **Where conflict and fighting are more common than love and care;**
- ⓪ **When the adults who are supposed to care for them misuse the family money;**
- ⓪ **Where the children do not get the opportunity to go to school;**
- ⓪ **Where home is worse for the child than life on the streets.**

The Poverty Reduction Strategy for Tanzania published in 2000 refers to vulnerability in terms of "AIDS victims and orphans, the handicapped, the very old, and refugees". It also points to the "breakdown of traditional systems that used to take care of vulnerable groups", "the escalating number of dependent persons", and the increased need for social "safety net programmes".

Many development agencies also use the term vulnerability to refer to a community or group of people who live without safety nets. Furthermore, it is said that when an emergency happens within the community (e.g. a lack of food, an Act of God), these vulnerable people are the worst effected, because they have no alternatives, nowhere to turn, and the only option is to "run".

In exactly the same way, children who live in vulnerable circumstances are often left with no option when an emergency occurs. As such, a single incident or event may be the determinant which ultimately sends the vulnerable child to the streets.

In general, it seems that definitions of "vulnerability" agree - vulnerable people are those who live in extreme and difficult situations without safety nets, and with limited options.

My name is Sylvanus and I am 17 years old.

When I was young, I lived in a family with my three brothers. My mother married many times and I do not know who my father is. My mother's second husband said to her that she should go and find out who my father is because there were many conflicts in the family. She showed me many different men and I went to live with them each for two to three months. This made me think that any man who I live with is my father. When I had been sent to live with one family, my mother got sick and when I went to see her, my family told me that she had already died.

I decided to run to the streets because the family I was living with were beating me and always asking me who my father was.

Causes of child migration

A child's departure from home is seldom sudden, despite common conceptions to the contrary. The causes of child migration actually happen at a number of different levels. In Tanzania, Mkombozi's research has identified that the immediate causation of street children is conflict - conflict is a factor within the home environment that frequently pushes children to run away, and conflict is endemic to life on the streets.

Consider that Tanzania is a largely patriarchal society which lacks universal awareness and acceptance of the rights of children and women. In recent years, the country has seen a rise of the individual's interest over that of the wider community. This has caused conflict within communities. Community conflict can lead to migration because of the various ways that rural poverty impacts the family unit:

- ⊗ Increasing numbers of fathers leave the family home to look for work;
- ⊗ Increasing numbers of single parent households, which occur as relationships break down, parents die, and children are birthed outside of marriage;
- ⊗ Failure of extended families to provide support;
- ⊗ Parents engaging in risky behaviour (alcoholism, prostitution etc.);
- ⊗ Single parents work unsuccessfully to make ends meet, leaving children unsupervised during the day.

Poor communication and conflict resolution skills within families are also problematic, especially when taken together with prevailing community attitudes of non-intervention and a lack of skills and resources within communities to enable mediation of family conflict. As a result, families strained by poverty are at higher risk of violating children's rights partly because there is low awareness of the consequences of physical and verbal abuse for the child, and partly because aggression is accepted within the familial environment.

In Tanzania's case, the structural causes of child migration to the streets include: a rapid population increase; an unresponsive employment market; an under-resourced educational system; increased pressures on peasants; and increasingly uneconomic small-holdings in the rural sector. In the current, weak economic climate of the Kilimanjaro region, many small farms are unproductive, and there are limited employment opportunities (other than alcohol brewing) for the unskilled and those who leave school. This reality is exacerbated by limited access to services in villages and limited information at the community level about the resources and service providers that are available.

Consequently, many believe that a better life is easily available in urban areas and flock to town under the impression that the "streets are paved with gold". Notably, however, the influx of urban migration has resulted in a growth of squatter, or "slum" settlements, marked by severe overcrowding, ill-health, poverty and violence.

Overall, it is apparent that both the immediate and underlying factors of child migration are caused by forms of non-income poverty. Many organisations believe children migrate to the streets because of poverty and by this they mean, a lack of financial income to the family.

The immediate reason why a child leaves home to go and work or live on the streets could be a sudden drop in family income; loss of support from an adult family member due to illness, death or abandonment; or an episode of domestic violence.

The underlying cause of why this immediate situation that makes the child feel they have to do this could be chronic impoverishment, cultural expectations (such as the idea that a boy should go to work on the streets as soon as he is able), desire for consumer goods, or the lure of the city. However, there are also structural factors such as development shocks, structural adjustment, regional inequalities, and social exclusion. Mkombozi believes that this multiplicity of levels means that few children are able to perceive all the circumstances that contributed to their decision to leave home.

(ILO 2002: A Future without Child Labour. Geneva: International Labour Organisation, Consortium for Street Children 2004)

How does Mkombozi define “non-income forms of poverty”?

“Where there is desertification, there is poverty.” (Street child asked why poverty exists)

Mkombozi believes that non-income forms of poverty contribute to the creation of dysfunctional communities. In fact, Mkombozi's experience and research shows that many street children migrate from dysfunctional families and communities; therefore, it is important to understand the factors that contribute to non-income forms of poverty. According to Mkombozi, factors include the following situations and circumstances:

Some of the major factors of non-income poverty can be categorised as **family breakdown**. Marriage breakdown and divorce, step parenting and children being out of wedlock and/or to young parents all contribute to this.

Family breakdown is only made worse by a **lack of community support** which includes extended family members being unable or unwilling to help, a breakdown of support networks or merely ineffective support systems. Unjust community structures and practices, such as young marriage and corruption only reinforce the lack of support from the community and the nation. **Marginalisation** and exclusion are also real in Tanzanian society, such as traditional gender roles leading to lack of education for women. This breakdown in community and the family can lead to **violence** due to conflict in the home and **alcoholism**.

A shortened education and lack of exposure can lead to families without **familial skills**. Budget management, the ability to deal with stress and strong emotions, and the ability to peacefully resolve conflict can all be lacking. A lack of parental education about child care and child development can also be an issue.

There are also some factors that are community and even nation wide. Society in Tanzania can cause **pressures on the family** from outside influences. Jobs can allow little time to spend with children. Many youth imitating western cultures has led to a breakdown in traditional values.

Notably, for a child to transition from a state of "vulnerability" to one who actively migrates to the street, it is not necessary for all of these factors to be present in the family context. Mkombozi considers a child to be vulnerable when they face one or more of the factors above; the more factors present, the more "at risk" the child is to migrate.

Mkombozi has determined that there is a distortion of community structures in the rural villages of Kilimanjaro which exacerbates non-income forms of poverty, and that it is these non-income forms of poverty that primarily cause child vulnerability and ultimately push children to the streets:

In discussions that Mkombozi has had with community members, they described poverty as income poverty, which is caused by a lack of education or opportunities and gender or social marginalisation which causes frustration and anger, which in many cases manifests itself in alcoholism. This then, as well as exacerbating income poverty, also cycles up the dysfunction by catalysing domestic violence, corporal punishment and abuse within the home environment.

Therefore, it can be said that non-income forms of poverty exacerbate income poverty and lead to a high level of familial stress or dysfunction. Mkombozi defines familial "dysfunction" as a family unit wherein conflict, abuse, alcoholism, substance abuse, poor communication skills, out-of-school children, theft, illegal activities, isolation from the wider community, income poverty, and exclusion from social services are present. Ultimately, it is the non-income forms of poverty and resulting familial dysfunction that cause a child to leave home, whether they depart voluntarily or involuntarily.



What are the reasons for child migration according to policies and organisations?

"Poverty of not having medical care is poverty of the Government." (Child at Mkombozi)

Street children live in many countries, communities, and situations around the world. As a global phenomenon, the issue of street children must be addressed at a global level. In order for this to happen, however, a global understanding of the issue and its grassroots solutions, are required.

Mkombozi knows that certain regions in Tanzania produce more street children than others. Mkombozi believes this is primarily dependant on regional levels of non-income poverty, and as such, that the Tanzanian Government has the opportunity to make specific changes that will prevent the migration of more children to the streets.

Mkombozi has been exploring the current understanding that international organisations and the Tanzanian Government have with respect to the issues of child vulnerability and child migration. In this section of the present paper, a literature review of papers and documents written by international organisations and the Tanzanian Government is provided.

National poverty reduction strategies

The Tanzanian Government produced a National Eradication Strategy (NPES) in 1997 to address what were seen to be Tanzania's most pressing development issues - namely, ignorance, disease and poverty. This policy framework was rewritten in 2000 as the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) in an attempt to expand the analysis of poverty so that all forms of poverty in Tanzania could be addressed and eliminated.

The PRS (2000) recognised Tanzanians' concerns about non-material, as well as material, expressions of poverty. It categorised between income and non-income based development attributes. However the Tanzanian Government only identified a limited number of elements to non-income poverty, namely: education, nutrition, survival, clean and safe drinking water.

Strategically, the PRS (2000) focused on "reducing income poverty, improving human capabilities, survival and social well-being, and containing extreme vulnerability among the poor" with measures such as crop growing and stabilisation of food supply. In terms of elevating non-income poverty, the strategy focused on service delivery, especially access to education and

health facilities and the promotion of education and nutrition. Social well-being strategies include participation of the poor in policy development and justice systems (e.g. the time cases take to come to court, access to justice, overall efficiency, fairness, and transparency of the administrative system). Mkombozi knows that this type of strategy is insufficient to decrease child vulnerability because the understanding of non-income forms of poverty is incomplete - it fails to take into account the underlying structural factors that cause children to migrate to the streets.

In fact, in 2004 the PRS was reviewed, and significant consultations took place between Government, Civil Society and its stakeholders. Street children at Mkombozi who were consulted for the Review of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) explained that income poverty in isolation did not push them to the streets; if they had been living in a poor, but loving household they would not have run away. Although lack of money and resources within the family is a factor in pushing children to the streets, children explained that it was a concurrence of a lack of basic needs, family conflict, exclusion from support services (and sometimes school), and marginalisation within the home environment that forced them away from the family home.

As a result of the PRS review, the National Strategy for Growth and the Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP) (2005 - 2010) was recently established as Tanzania's national strategy to promote economic growth and reduce poverty. The focus of the NSGRP is to address the "multi-dimensional nature of poverty" by adopting an "outcome oriented approach...that stresses the cross sector collaboration and inter-sector linkages and synergies". The aim of NSGRP is to "translate the benefits of improvements at the macro-level into micro-level outcomes" by:

- ⊙ "Pay(ing) greater attention to mainstreaming cross cutting issues, namely HIV and AIDS, gender, environment, employment, governance, children, youth, elderly, disabled and settlements.
- ⊙ "Recognise(ing) the need to address discriminatory laws, customs and practices that affect the economic and human vulnerable social groups".

Importantly, the NSGRP is built around 3 main clusters of desired outcomes; namely, growth and the reduction of income poverty, improved quality of life and social well-being, and good governance and accountability. Each cluster mutually reinforces the others, and taken in combination, they should achieve a reduction in poverty. Under the NSGRP's cluster for improved quality of life and social well-being, specific goals strive towards:

- ⊙ "Improved survival, health and well-being of all children and women and of especially vulnerable groups" (NSGRP, Goal 2);
- ⊙ "Adequate social protection and rights of the vulnerable and needy groups with basic needs and services" (NSGRP, Goal 4);
- ⊙ "Systems in place to ensure effective universal access to quality public services that are affordable and available" (NSGRP, Goal 5).

Of particular importance in addressing the issue of street children and youth is Goal 4, whose operational targets centre around social protection, support to vulnerable groups and child protection and rights. The profound shift in language that NSGRP makes from traditional policy documents cannot be underestimated, and it is in this cluster that the change is most striking.

The adoption of NSGRP is, in Mkombozi's opinion, a pivotal moment in Tanzania's development process because it explicitly works towards strengthening the social safety nets of vulnerable groups. For the first time in a national policy, groups such as street children are identified as needing special attention. The strategies planned are also directed at strengthening the asset base and safety nets of these groups, focusing on community and family development.



However, Mkombozi feels that there is a real risk to the successful implementation of NSGRP since, at a local Government level, many actors do not know about the policy and do not integrate it into their planning and implementation. For example, the Acting Regional Social Welfare Officers in both Kilimanjaro and Arusha regions have not been involved in the consultation process and do not have information regarding NSGRP. This is probably typical of police, council members and many Civil Society Organisations. The challenge then is to both inform these actors that NSGRP is a national policy and to hold them accountable for the integration of all their local level decisions into NSGRP goals, targets and strategies. This would ensure that there is a cohesive national strategy and not just platitudinous policy statements that are not realised on the ground. The Arusha Caucus for Children's Rights will be looking closely at how local Government decisions contribute to achieving NSGRP goals.

International policies

At the international level, several policies have recently been written concerning poverty reduction. The international community, though the UN, has committed itself to meeting the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. These goals were adopted in 2000 and aimed at decreasing global poverty through an increase in investment. The targets decided upon were:

- 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.**
- 2. Achieve universal primary education.**
- 3. Promote gender equality and empower women.**
- 4. Reduce child mortality.**
- 5. Improve maternal health.**
- 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.**
- 7. Ensure environmental sustainability.**
- 8. A global partnership for development.**



These goals demonstrate the broad range of the UN's thinking concerning poverty. The fact that education, gender issues, health and the environment are all given targets shows that the UN acknowledges the importance of all of these issues for development. Poverty is referred to as "extreme poverty and hunger". Although Mkombozi would add that poverty also includes non-income forms of poverty, the other UN goals do cover these aspects to a positive extent. In short, the Millennium Development Goals suggest that the international community is committed to seeing a decrease in child poverty.

However, a recently produced UN analysis on "progress" (UN Millennium Project, as quoted in *The Economist* January 2005, p.69) tells a rather depressing story. For the sub-Saharan African region, the target of poverty reduction has had very little effect, or no change, on the level of poverty. In other areas, some progress has been made, such as an increase in the number of children who are receiving primary education. Issues of gender have also improved slightly and have gone a short way to meeting their goals, but progress is still lagging, particularly when referring to literacy for women and girls. The other areas covered by the targets, such as child mortality, maternal health, HIV/AIDS and other diseases, environmental sustainability and having a global partnership for development, are all at the same stage as they were in 2000 when the goals were produced. There has either been no change, or such a small amount of change, that the larger picture has been unaffected.

Therefore, the UN's Millennium Development Goals strive to address certain crucial issues that lead to child poverty. However, the goals do not go far enough to address the aspects of poverty that lead a child to migrate to the streets. The goals do take into consideration issues such as gender division and education, but the progress in these areas has been minimal and largely ineffective in bringing about the end of poverty. Unfortunately, in sub-Saharan Africa, the UN targets are off schedule, and unless actions and approaches radically change, they will make little difference to the level of development in this region.

On the basis of its experience in Kilimanjaro region, Mkombozi knows that 30% of children are currently at risk of migrating to the streets, and that their vulnerability is the direct result of familial stress incurred by non-income forms of poverty.

International organisations

International organisations have a major influence on policy and practice in development issues, and their understanding of why children migrate to the streets is important to note. In this section, the approaches and commitments of various international organisations are reviewed. Specifically, the organisations researched include UNICEF, Save the Children, Plan International, ActionAid, International HIV/AIDS Alliance and Family Health International and Childhood Poverty (CHIP). CHIP was funded by the UK Department for International Development, Save the Children and the Chronic Poverty Research Centre.

Each organisation similarly referred to income poverty as a reason that children migrate from their homes. For instance, Save the Children cites a "harsh economic climate" as the reason for the growing number of children who work for a living and/or are homeless. ChildHope UK states that the search for employment is a driving force for children's migration to the streets. The organisations also agree that the problem is exacerbated by a lack of adequate primary or secondary education, attitudes and expectations of parents and community, and the relative anonymity of children.

Some organisations have grasped the complexity of the issue and stress that poverty is just one of many contributing factors. For instance, Plan International's understanding of why children are on the streets include: the perception of the street as offering greater economic opportunities; the perception of the street as a safer place if there is abuse at home; a difficult home life; AIDS; and the orphaned status of many children.

As expected, UNICEF also cites poverty as a cause of child migration. UNICEF's research shows that 4% of children who migrated to the streets were born out of wedlock, 28% were from divorced parents, the parents of these children largely lived in rural areas and worked as farmers, and many of these children had a low standard of education. Interestingly, although UNICEF documents these factors, they do equate them with the reasons why children leave their homes. In contrast, Mkombozi understands that the breakdown of families and standards of education can both be push factors. Notably, UNICEF does state that children may migrate to join family members or to seek employment, and they state many children leave because of physical abuse.

ActionAid say most children on the streets have run away from poor or violent homes. The citation of violence is very much in line with Mkombozi's findings, but Mkombozi would further say that poverty exacerbates violence, and as such, if the state does not resource social services, it is not dealing with the issue. Finally, ActionAid make the valuable observations that relatively few street children are orphans, but that there are few reliable statistics about street children.

The International HIV/AIDS Alliance and Family Health International is an alliance of international development non-governmental organisations that have created a system of linking organisations. The organisations involved have an understanding of child migration that is very similar to Mkombozi's position. They state that there are push and pull factors for child migration. Factors which "push" children and young people away from the rural areas include poverty and lack of economic opportunity, rural underdevelopment, hardships and uncertainties of subsistence farming, as well as familial abuse, violence and breakdown. Many children and youth report problems with step-mothers as a major factor in their decision to leave home. Mkombozi's research confirms this as an important and causative factor, and adds the event of parental death. Specifically, many children living on the street are "double orphans"; that is, orphans who are taken in by an adult relative, only to be orphaned again when this extended family member eventually dies. This reality demonstrates the link between street children in cities and child-headed households in rural areas; that is, the factors which cause children and youth to live on the street in cities are also causing them to live as child-headed households in rural areas. Finally, the factors which "pull" children away from rural areas toward the streets include the perceived prospect of improved job opportunities, the prospect of leisure and entertainment, reports from peers of positive experiences, and a sense of adventure.

Interestingly, although each organisation cites poverty as the most pivotal and closely linked cause of child migration, few of the organisations explain what they mean by this. Poverty is a complex and multifaceted global concern, and undoubtedly children run away because their family lacks enough money to sustain themselves. But, it is also true that many children migrate due to non-income forms of poverty. Plan International and, in particular, ActionAid have an understanding of the driving factors for child migration which agrees with Mkombozi's research. Mkombozi's research shows that children run to the streets for a multitude of reasons, and no single reason is true for every child, but that conflict is a primary reason for migration in an overwhelming number of cases. In general, it is encouraging for Mkombozi to see that some international organisations also view non-income forms of poverty, such as violence and alcoholism, as causes of child migration.

Several of the organisations researched have definitions of non-income forms of poverty similar to that of Mkombozi's, but only a few actually make the link between non-income forms of poverty and child migration.



Mkombozi knows that non-income forms of poverty cause child migration. Mkombozi defines non-income forms of poverty as **violence, family breakdown, and lack of community support.**

ChildHope UK defines non-income poverty as income poverty coupled with family violence, conflict and disease. They say conflict can result in fractured communities, broken relationships and shattered dreams.

ActionAid notes that people who are poor and marginalised are, by definition, those who are suffering the injustice of the denial of basic human rights. Without voice or power, people who are poor are invisible to decision-makers, and are unable to influence policy making. As a result, the poor often bear the further indignity of laws and policies which actively discriminate against them, or which exacerbate their poverty. ActionAid provides stark examples of such laws, pointing to inheritance laws which forbid women to own or inherit property, as well as laws which permit bonded labour. ActionAid further notes that it is much more common for policies and laws that harm the poor do so indirectly; for example, patent laws that forbid seed saving, and trade rules that favour large-scale industrial agriculture. Over time, the poor become ever-more impoverished and marginalised. Mkombozi is encouraged that ActionAid's understanding of poverty includes an understanding of marginalisation as fuelling the cycle of frustration and increased income poverty, but Mkombozi encourages ActionAid to expand and develop their understanding of non-income forms of poverty.

Some organisations understand poverty to be more about access to amenities, to education, to health, etcetera. For example, UNICEF defines poverty as including lack of basic education, basic health, nutrition, safe drinking water and sanitation, as well as living with disability and/or HIV/AIDS. Plan International also defines poverty as a lack of money or material possessions such that a person is unable to meet the basic needs necessary for survival. (Notably, although Plan International's definition of poverty is limited to income poverty, their website points to child labour as a significant problem because child-workers worldwide are involved in activities that are hazardous, excessive or exploitative.)

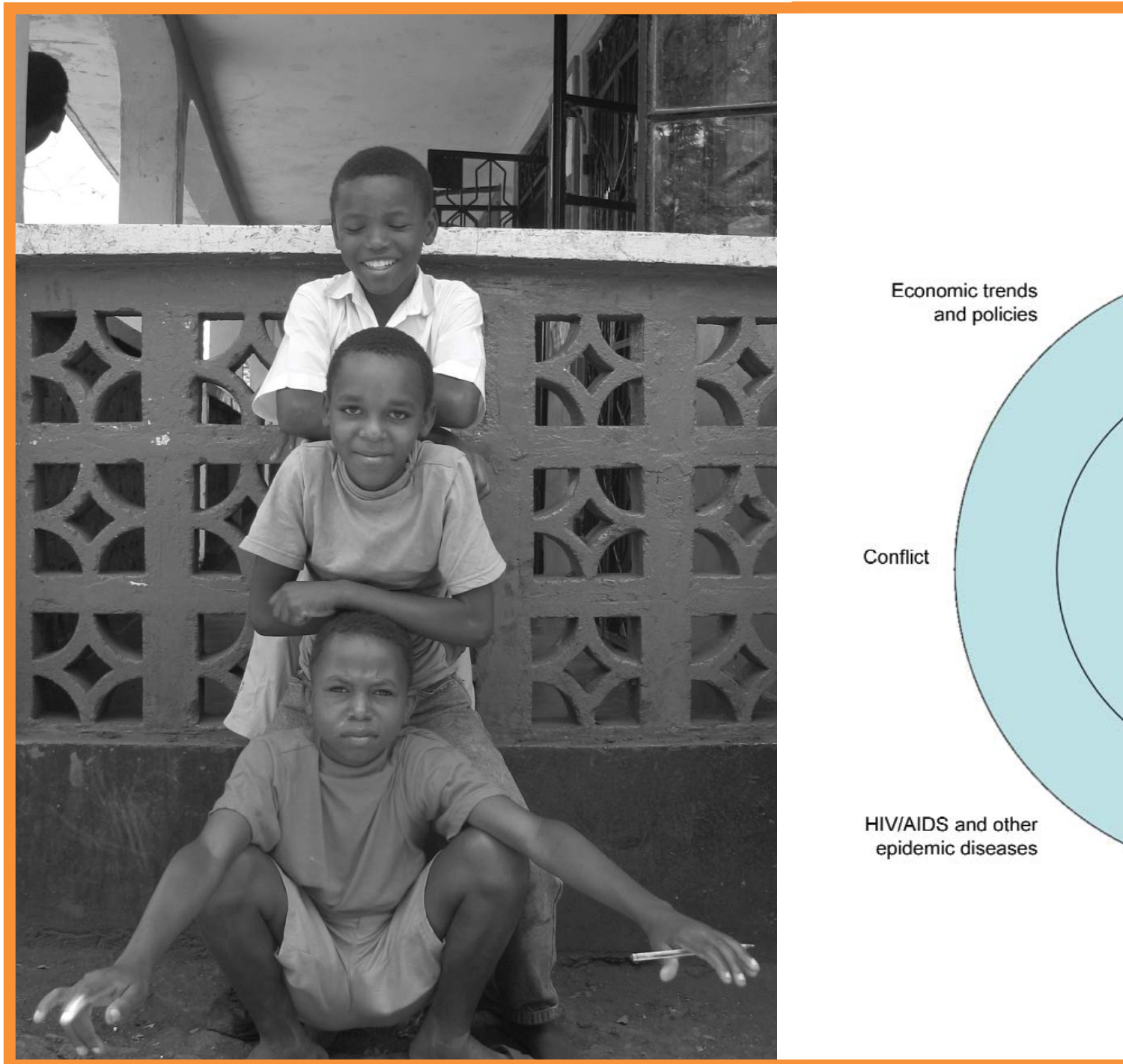
Like Mkombozi, CHIP says poverty is both income and non-income based, and that the factors which cause poverty are not separate, but often interplay and exacerbate the other. CHIP says that a child lives in poverty when he/she grows up without adequate financial and nutritional resources needed for survival and development (i.e. economic, physical and environmental resources), and also when he/she grows up without adequate education and life skill resources needed for human development (i.e. social, cultural and physical resources). CHIP further defines a child as living in poverty if he/she grows up without family and community structures that nurture and protect them, without parents/guardians who have the time (or ability/desire) to care for them, or without a community that cares for and protects its younger generation (i.e. social and cultural resources).

Finally, CHIP also states that a child lives in poverty if he/she grows up without opportunities to voice their concerns.

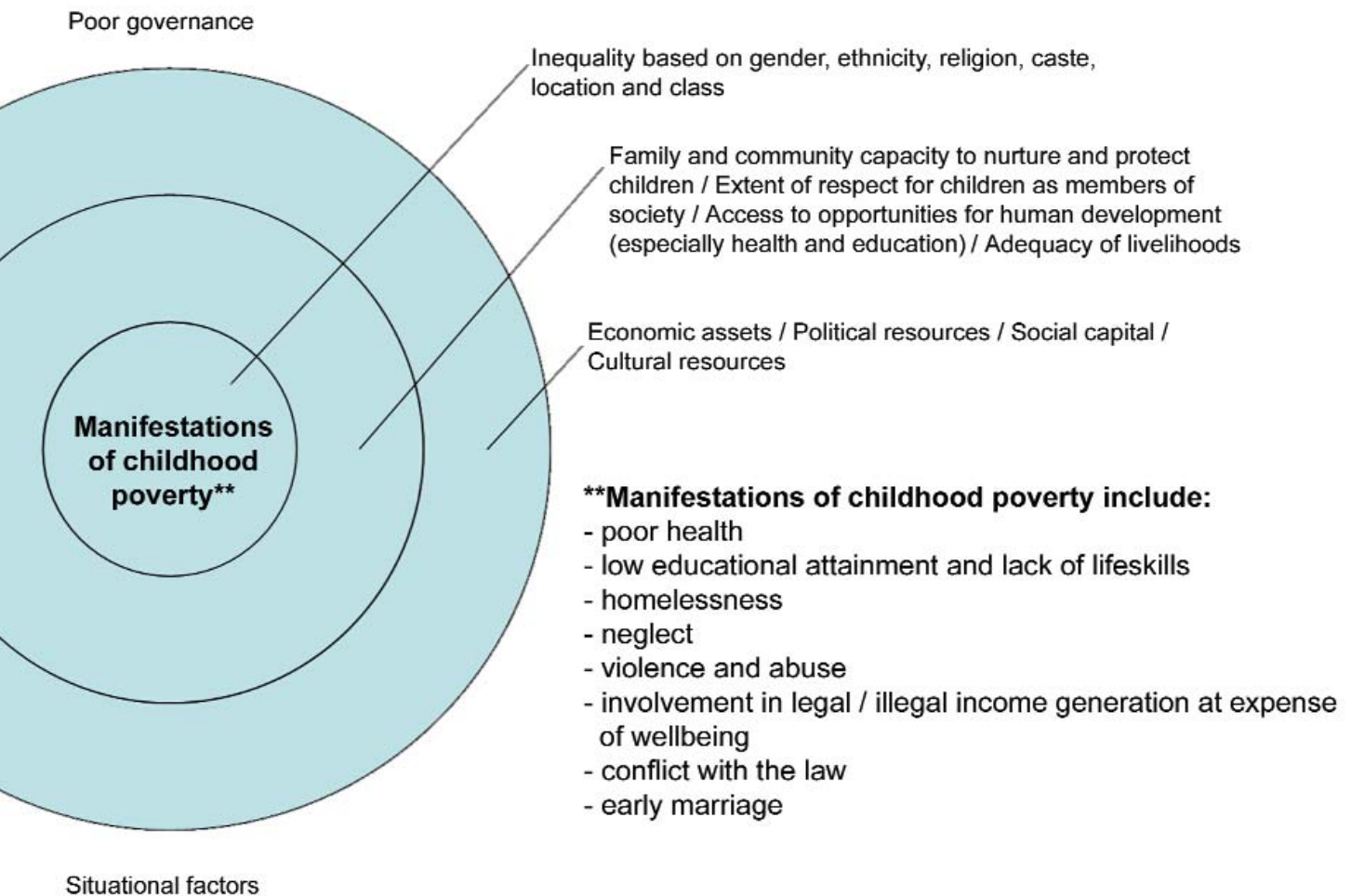
CHIP's definition of childhood poverty acknowledges that the more traditional concept of "income poverty" has been replaced by a multi-dimensional definition, and that to ensure a child's well-being, adequate care and protection may be as important as a household's financial resources. Indeed, much of the experience of poverty by children and youth is similar to, and shared by, that of their families, communities and countries. The following diagram shows the links between the various factors manifested in childhood poverty.

Diagram 1: Conceptualising children as a "vulnerable group"

(Adapted from CHIP Briefing 1: Children and Poverty, p.2)



A child's departure from home is the result of a combination of stresses on different levels, including immediate, underlying and structural factors. Few children are able to perceive all the circumstances that contributed to their decision to leave home. Mkombozi is committed to unravelling this web of factors that bring a child to street life. We are always looking for reasons why, and then finding ways we can address those reasons.



CHIP provides an example of the impact that family situations can have on children: "For a farming family, a failed harvest may mean hunger, selling key assets, such as livestock, getting into debt and enormous stress. For children, there may be additional important consequences, such as having to drop out of school, missing out on critical health care, or being stigmatised by their peers for wearing old or torn clothing."

Overall, Mkombozi does not deny that a lack of financial security is poverty; rather, Mkombozi stresses that non-income forms of poverty must be considered in addition. Organisations that fail to consider non-income factors as poverty actually fail to understand how poverty manifests itself. Mkombozi is encouraged that ActionAid's definition of poverty mentions unjust laws and systems, and also that other organisations mention child labour, a lack of health care, and so on. But Mkombozi is particularly impressed that CHIP and ChildHope UK both clearly acknowledge non-income forms of poverty, including factors such as the amount of time the family spends together, the use of violence, people having a voice, and the myriad familial factors which make family life a pleasure or a struggle. In particular, Mkombozi appreciates CHIP's understanding of the interplay and entrenching effect of non-income and income forms of poverty, because Mkombozi knows this is true, and has many children in its care that can testify to this reality first-hand. Indeed, it is encouraging for Mkombozi to discover organisations who understand the complexity of non-income poverty.

Mkombozi works to address the root causes of why children migrate to the streets. Mkombozi's multifaceted approach ensures it works to prevent other children coming to the streets, as well as working with children on the streets, providing care and offering opportunities.

There is no single proven way to reach and assist street children. Each organisation employs a variety of innovative approaches to ensure street children can access their basic human needs, including direct street outreach. For instance, Save the Children works to teach vulnerable children how to protect themselves. They have a team of social workers training children to teach healthy living to their peers. The organisation also runs shelters that offer children a hot meal, clean clothing, washing facilities, and information about first aid and reproductive health. If a child at a shelter needs medical treatment, staff will take them to a local doctor or to the hospital. Similarly, ActionAid offers street children opportunities for education and vocational training, so that children can provide for themselves in the future, and they also run drop-in centres.

Plan International also works with children already on the streets. Their approach uses individualised programmes so children can choose the opportunities that suit them best. One example is based in Surabaya, Indonesia, where Plan International works with children who earn money scavenging materials for recycling, shining shoes, selling newspapers or singing. This programme improves children's access to basic services such as education (i.e. education which is delivered at the child's work place so that it is not seen as a threat to family livelihood), health facilities, savings services, and recreation and play facilities.

Mkombozi works to prevent children migrating to the streets by working in schools and communities to raise awareness of the factors which cause children come to the streets and by developing community solutions to break the pattern. ChildHope UK also targets the communities from which street children originate, aiming to build sustainable mechanisms that facilitate child rights and combat gender inequality. They establish groups of youth community agents who develop initiatives in their communities to benefit children and youth, and they also strengthen existing youth supports via capacity building and networking.

In their February 2005 Programmes Strategy, ChildHope UK recognises the need to address long-term sustainable development issues, an approach which has also been adopted by institutional donors such as the Department for International Development and the EU. This is accomplished by reducing violence against children and by reducing the incidence and impact of HIV and AIDS on orphans and vulnerable children. ChildHope UK also carries out this work using a number of partner organisations around the world - Mkombozi is one of these partner organisations.

Plan International actively works with children to prevent them from coming to the streets by means of credit and saving facilities and food security activities. They also work with children, their families and their communities to ensure that no child is forced by circumstance to look to the street for a livelihood or accommodation. They do this by focusing on improvements in the household economy in order to eradicate the need for child labour.

Some of the larger organisations have begun to advocate on behalf of street children to influence policy change. UNICEF works to strengthen government commitment to child protection, to improve legislation and its implementation, and to change customs or practices that do not adequately protect children. They also promote open discussion of the issue of street children, work to increase the capacity of children and adolescents for their own protection, and advocate for improved services and reporting mechanisms for financial assistance.

In addition to its work with individual children, Plan International works at a global level as a member of the Consortium for Street Children pooling resources and expertise toward greater change. The Consortium works to raise awareness of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to give poor people opportunities to get themselves out of poverty, and prevent and eradicate all types of child exploitation. Specific activities include awareness raising about children's right to education and leisure, microfinance programmes, provision of health and educational services for working children, and ensuring that AIDS orphans are equipped with skills that will help them as adults.

CHIP's paper concerning children and poverty suggests ways to reduce poverty, with emphasis on a multi-dimensional approach. They state that poverty can be tackled, in part, by working towards economic growth and equity, but that economic growth alone will not necessarily reduce poverty. To reduce poverty, the correct distributions of wealth and "pro-poor" policies are required. Moreover, social sector investment, accessible and affordable (preferably free) primary health care, primary education, and early childhood development programmes are also vital for eradicating childhood poverty. Social protection services that are aimed at improving the well-being of poorest and those who are vulnerable to poverty are important, but integrated policies which consider all aspects of society to find suitable and appropriate responses are vital to reduce child poverty.

The work that each organisation does is admirable and highly valuable - indeed, any organisation working to alleviate the problems street children face cannot be underestimated. Organisations who work with street children need to use sustainable and effective methods. Ideally, they work with children to offer them real solutions to street life, they research the reasons that children migrate to the streets, they advocate, and they protect the human rights of all vulnerable children.

International organisations have the power to influence policies of Governments and the international community, as well as a variety of local, grassroots organisations. As such, they are in the position to influence policies and practices of a wide range of actors. However, if organisations work with street children by tackling income poverty alone, children will continue to come to the streets. Only those organisations that take the time to research and fully understand why children migrate from their homes can make a sustainable change for street children.

In short, as Mkombozi hypothesised, international organisations are working to alleviate the problems street children face. Unfortunately, these organisations must begin to address the non-income forms of poverty that cause children to migrate before they can fully address the complex issue of street children, and help to stem the tide.



What organisations outside Tanzania work with street children?

"Society needs to know the problems faced by children on the streets." (Child at Mkombozi)

Mkombozi has become the lead agency working with street children in northwest Tanzania, due in large part to their pioneering work and dedicated approach. However, many organisations around the world are working with street children. Mkombozi believes it is important to research the approaches of other organisations that work with this highly vulnerable group of people, so that it is possible to constantly improve and expand the programmes and services offered to children.

The organisations contacted and researched for this paper include Dwelling Places, Tiger's Club, Juconi, Grandsons of Abraham and Aschiana, all of which work with street children in developing countries.

International organisations

Each organisation working with street children uses a variety of approaches in an attempt to provide the best support to children in their care. In Kampala, Uganda, two organisations work closely with street children. One organisation, Dwelling Places, is a Christian ministry born from an international schools ministry and it uses the residential approach to working with these children. The Dwelling Places website claims there are currently 10,000 street children in Uganda who live alone, lack parental guidance, experience financial hardship, and have been malnourished since birth.

Dwelling Places assists street children by providing a residence where they can stay. The home, which they call a Transitional Rehabilitation Home, offers accommodation, food, education, counselling and foremost, the love of Jesus Christ. Currently, Dwelling Places is catering to 106 children in a Transitional Rehabilitation Home in Mutundwe, a Kampala suburb. The Mutundwe residence houses 60 children who come from the slum area of Katwe, and 46 children from the local community. The organisation also devotes much effort to the prevention of recurring street migration among children in Kampala and other Ugandan towns.

For Dwelling Places, the two main emphases of their work are education and reunification. Education involves learning at formal school, or at the educational centre. Reunification involves the return of a child to his/her home and parents, or if possible, to other extended family members. The chance of being fostered or adopted can also be offered to some children.

Another Christian organisation working in Kampala is Tiger's Club. Tiger's Club does not work primarily as a residential centre however, they began by using football as a means of outreach and to foster trust among street children toward the organisation. Children are then invited to visit the drop-in centre, which provides a washing block, workshops, medical clinic, kitchen, emergency refuge, classrooms, art workshop, and counselling rooms. At the centre, children are encouraged to wash themselves and their clothes, play, eat and sleep, and educational opportunities are made available to encourage children to be mainstreamed into schools. If a child needs a place to stay in an emergency, they can sleep at the emergency refuge.

Tiger's Club also runs a Halfway Home and Farm. An agricultural training curriculum developed and delivered by an experienced agronomist teaches the boys basic skills required for farming with livestock. Their daily routine of counselling, work and leisure also allows them to adopt positive behavioural patterns, to adjust to a more disciplined lifestyle, and to prepare for life away from the streets.

Tiger's Club works in two unusual ways. They use vocational training and income generation activities with children and their families. This means families are more likely to be able to break away from poverty and assume part or all of the financial responsibility for the child. The organisation is also beginning to research why children leave their homes, in order to prevent more children from migrating to the streets.



Grandsons of Abraham, based in Mombassa, Kenya, is the only street child organisation in the city. Like many other organisations working with street children, they are run by the Church. The organisation functions as a rescue centre that conducts street work, rescues children from the streets, and brings children to the centre. Their primary focus is reunification of the children in their care. At the centre, there are various programmes related to rehabilitation and resettlement. An informal education system is run, as well as counselling and spiritual development. There are also numerous outdoor activities, such as sports, agricultural work, reunification and recreational walks, which are all geared towards rehabilitation. Grandsons of Abraham also delivers vocational training and outreach programmes designed to empower the youths to undertake skill training and foster their future independence. The organisation believes that interventions should be more community-based rather than home-based to decrease the number of street children.

In Mexico and Ecuador, Juconi works to help children break from street life and access opportunities for skills training and employment. Juconi use specific programmes to enable children to exit street life. Street children enter one of Juconi's programmes and then remain there for 3 to 5 years. There are various programmes, consisting of either a residential programme (2 years), a programme in the family home (1.5 - 2 years), or a day centre (1.5 years). Each child then takes 1.5 to 3 years in the follow-up service where children adapt gradually to life in society. Many of the youngsters in Juconi House are too old to attend day school and instead catch up with formal education at evening classes. Juconi encourages those over 14 to look for a part time job. The youths learn about their rights as employees, health and safety laws and precautions, first aid, administration of the workshop and job application techniques. The majority of Juconi youngsters transition directly to a job in which they have personal interest.

Juconi also prides itself on the therapeutic work it does with children and their families. Work with the communities involves training programmes and group activities for the communities in which street-working children and their families live. Training topics include drugs and sex education, nutrition, effective discipline, family planning, training for teachers in local schools, and youth work training. The overall aim of this work is to help local organisations innovate to find effective ways of helping children move out of poverty and grasp society's opportunities.

Understanding of the factors that cause child migration

All of the organisations researched indicate poverty is a primary reason that children migrate to the streets.

For instance, Dwelling Places says street children continue to be a problem because of poverty and the epidemic of HIV/AIDS. Tiger's Club mentions extreme poverty to be a causal factor, but it also points to war, AIDS, child abuse and child exploitation. Juconi believe children from low-income and middle-income communities fall through Government safety nets and therefore cannot access the personalised help required to break out of the poverty cycle.

In fact, Juconi's position in this regard reflects Mkombozi's finding that the absence of social safety nets are directly related to a child's feeling that they have no choice but to run to the streets.

Grandsons of Abraham was the only organisation to state the importance of "pull" factors. They cited peer pressure as a push factor that moves children to the street, and they cited the perception of a carefree life style as a pull factor to the city.

Pull factors are also said to include the perception that children on the streets can beg for money, attention, materials, and that they can reap the fruits of freedom by escaping regulation and rules. For instance, recently in Mombassa, an increase in the number of citizens giving street children money is said to have contributed to an increase in the number of street children.

In other cases, parents also contribute to the problem of such pull factors by sending their children to the streets to beg for money on their behalf.

When I reached the street, I met some people from Mkombozi, and they said there was a centre that provided food and education. I began to go there and to help in the office. It was very difficult for me at first, but I started to want to learn more and other students began to ask me to teach them things.

I like school more than anything and now I spend my time learning instead of taking drugs. I am in Secondary School and will continue to Form 6.

I would like to become a lawyer so I can help other children who live on the streets.

Grandsons of Abraham also notes conditions of the familial home as a significant push factor, specifically in the case of long-term abuse by parents and relatives, and generally poor parental relationships. They suggest that push factors also include persistent pressure to perform well at school (despite widespread unemployment and economic hardship), poor environmental conditions at home (such as prostitution or local alcohol brewing), and the reality of AIDS affected/infected families (which push children to the street to earn money to support surviving siblings).

In Afghanistan, Aschiana work with children who have been displaced and had their lives interrupted due to conflict. Displacement and conflict are the reasons these children leave home in search of work. Unfortunately, a large number of children face this reality in Afghanistan and elsewhere. With respect to child migration to the streets, war and conflict are isolated causal factors that do not interplay with other factors that typically cause migration.

Surprisingly, the internet and e-mail research in this study showed that some organisations had little or no information available concerning why children come to the streets. For instance, Dwelling Places stated they have insufficient information. Although they record the reason for each child's migration in their individual files, they have not yet been able to summarise causes across children. It seems that Mkombozi is correct in its hypothesis that many CSOs are not aware of the reasons that cause children to migrate. Unfortunately, this means that CSOs are generally not able to address the causes of child migration in services and programming, because they have not yet fully understood the link between non-income forms of poverty and street children.

What other organisations in Tanzania work with street children?

"It's really important that not only Mkombozi gets involved." (Volunteer at Mkombozi)

The Community Strengthening approach that Mkombozi employs is unique within Tanzania, and it has enabled Mkombozi to extensively research the root causes of why children migrate to the streets in Kilimanjaro region. Overwhelmingly, the findings show children leave home due to non-income forms of poverty. With this in mind, Mkombozi is interested to know what other street child organisations believe to be the causes of child migration and whether the reasons children leave their homes in Kilimanjaro region (and Arusha) are true for the rest of Tanzania. The following case studies focus on three organisations based in Tanzania that are highly regarded for their work with street children in the Kilimanjaro and Arusha areas.

Case Study #1: Amani Children's Home

Amani's programmes & approaches

Amani Children's Home is an independent centre, based in Moshi, northern Tanzania. The home exists mainly to provide care for street children and orphans who have nowhere else to turn. (For more information, visit: <http://www.amanikids.org>). Like Mkombozi, one of the main objectives of Amani's work is to ensure children can find shelter, food and care at their residential centre. The centre links children to formal and non-formal education opportunities, and life-skills training is also provided. Amani helps older children find a path for their lives and live independently through work and apprenticeship placements.

Work outside the centre involves outreach to children living on the streets in Moshi and Arusha. Amani staff uphold children's rights as laid down by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and Amani's overall philosophy is that children should have the chance to live in a family environment, if at all possible. As such, children who are met on the streets are invited to the Amani Children's Home, and if they agree, they are accepted into Amani's care. Any child or youth who is living on the streets must first be referred to the Children's Home before they can access other services, such as education and shelter, from the organisation.

Amani's street work also includes life skills education (such as washing clothes), and talking to children about plans and life goals. The organisation always tries to locate the child's family or relatives, to determine the reasons for the child's running away. If Amani establishes that the child's family is able to care for the child, and if the child is willing, he/she is then returned home. (Notably, whenever possible, home visits and reunification occur from the street, so that the child is not required to spend time at the residential centre.) After reunification, Amani continues to play a role in the child's and the family's life. They ensure follow-up visits are made and the best interests of the child are being met. Older children can choose to receive training and apprenticeships in skilled work. This can be done from the streets or at the Amani Home. The organisation works to prevent a reunified child's return to the streets by providing the family with continued support. This includes services such as paying for school fees, providing shoes and clothes, and generally supporting the family as much as possible.

Amani's work has shown them that part-time street children can soon become full-time street children. The organisation is currently developing programmes for part-time street children and is planning to hire new street workers to work with these children. Amani's objective is to ensure that part-time street children can return home and continue with their life in that setting, before they become full-time street dwellers.

Following her recent visits to street child centres in Uganda and Kenya to review the various approaches being employed, the Director of Amani commented that "if every organisation developed a niche and a specialty, it would be beneficial for all of the children involved".

"Full-time" street children live, sleep, eat and work on the streets without adult care.

"Part-time" street children spend a part of each day on the streets, begging, playing or working, and then return home at night.

Amani's understanding of migration

Mkombozi and Amani are both based in Moshi and have the benefit of being able to share experiences. Amani acknowledges Mkombozi's role in much of its research and understanding on this issue. For instance, Amani believes that the primary causal factors driving children to the streets in Tanzania's Kilimanjaro region are neglect and abuse of a verbal, physical, and/or sexual nature, and the Amani website refers to Mkombozi's literature for further understanding of these causal factors.

Amani's work has shown there are two well-defined groups of children who come to the streets: children from urban areas, and children from rural environments, and that the migration of children from urban areas is on the increase. It is also noted that children from poor urban areas have a tendency to transition from part-time to full-time street dwellers quickly, simply by association with other children already living on the streets. According to Amani, the reasons urban children migrate to the streets include factors such as poverty, inaccessibility of primary education, and boredom at home and in the community. AIDS, death, family breakdown and remarrying are also push factors (i.e. especially when step-families reject a child or create unstable environments). In general, the same causal factors apply to children from poor rural areas. However, Amani does suggest that children from rural environments tend to exhibit greater physical deterioration and often appear as though they are starving when they arrive at the centre.

Notably, Amani has not formally researched the root causes for the child migration; rather, they have identified causal factors on the basis of their own perceptions and experience of intake interviews and informal interaction with children on the streets and at the Amani residential centre. In general, Amani's work uses similar principles and practices to that of Mkombozi, and the organisation has developed a similar understanding of child migration. However, Mkombozi stresses that the situation in Kilimanjaro shows children leave their homes because of non-income forms of poverty, and that non-income forms of poverty must be clearly understood before the people of Kilimanjaro and Tanzania can act effectively to prevent vulnerable children from facing a life without safety.

Case Study #2: Children for Children's Future (CCF)

CCF's programmes & approaches

CCF (in partnership with Action for Children) is a Tanzanian NGO working with street children in Arusha. Because the UN Tribunal for Rwanda is based in Arusha, the town receives many overseas guests and therefore has a troubled relationship with its street children. Specifically, local officials want to maintain the city's appearance and attract more tourists, and they want to do so by "cleaning the streets" and eliminating the "untidy" and disturbing presence of street children. Essentially, this means children are often forcibly removed from the streets. The work that CCF does is vital in supporting these children and offers them an alternative to a life that lacks safety.

CCF runs a drop-in centre for street-children and a residential centre for former street children. Children are first contacted on the streets by a CCF staff member. They work to build trust with the children and tell them about the centre. The drop-in centre serves children who find themselves suddenly requiring a short-term of care. The children can then choose to go into longer-term care, in which case they will be referred to a centre in Maji ya Chai.

Reunification with families is also an option for street children involved with CCF, if it is determined that the child's family is capable of caring for and supporting the child. However, if a child comes from a home where poverty is the cause for their migration, CCF has no option but to return the child to institutional care. Street children invariably have very complex home situations, and issues that arise (e.g. prostitution by the mother, extended family living) can further complicate the reunification. Unfortunately, CCF does not have the time and financial resources to investigate every possibility for each child's care.

Notably, however, CCF does provide counselling, education and vocational training to children on the streets in Arusha, such that the children can generate income and finances are eliminated as a factor hindering reunification. Small grants are also given to older children to participate fully in their own income-generation schemes and micro-enterprises, which they plan, manage and run themselves. In fact, CCF is currently planning to extend the scale of its work by increasing the number of home visits and family reunifications, in part by providing support to very low-income families.

CCF's understanding of migration

According to CCF, the main reasons that children migrate to the streets are poverty, divorce and HIV/AIDS. Poverty itself leads to divorce and prostitution as people become desperate about the lack of funds.

CCF also acknowledges the link between part-time and full-time street children. They suggest that the transition is facilitated by the relative ease with which street children can earn at least some money, and so part-timers begin to stay on the streets for longer and longer periods of time to maximise their earnings. In fact, children who work and live on the streets full-time find it hard to move to life in a residential centre because of this lost independence, and many ultimately choose to live permanently on the streets.

Unfortunately, CCF is currently having intra-organisational troubles - the entire management board resigned in March 2005. Although Action for Children is working closely with CCF to find a way forward, the situation could leave Arusha without an important city-based group working with street children. In fact, children currently living at the residential centre could be left without any other option except a return to the streets.

Like CCF, Action for Children also believes poverty is the root cause of child migration, and that familial financial stress often leads to alcoholism, domestic violence and child abuse. As previously discussed, this type of home environment causes children to be pushed to the streets to escape abuse and to be pulled to the streets to earn a living.

Case Study #3: Kwetu Counselling

Kwetu's programmes & approaches

Kwetu Counselling is a project that works specifically with street girls in the district of Mbagala, Dar es Salaam. Although there is often more focus on street boys, the organisation says there are just as many girls on the streets, but that the work they do is less visible. Specifically, whereas boys survive street life by committing petty crimes, girls turn to prostitution.

The organisation works on the streets to meet these girls and refer them to an outreach centre where they are given food, care and counselling, and where they are encouraged to give up drugs, begging and prostitution. From the outreach centre, the girls may be invited to the "Kwetu" shelter - a home where trained staff live with the children in a safe, settled environment for a longer-term of care. During this time, staff check into the child's background, and determine if reunification or supported community living are viable options for the child. At the same time, the girls are encouraged to return to school or undertake vocational training, and to develop dreams and aspirations for their future.

The "Kwetu" shelter can accommodate 30 girls at one time. It is entirely environmentally friendly, and includes cross ventilation, water harvesting from the roofs and gutters, and solar panels for the supply of power for the whole centre. The "Kwetu" shelter is still in the process of being built.

Kwetu's understanding of migration

The number of street children in Dar es Salaam is on the increase. Kwetu Counselling says this is because Dar, like all African cities, has been absorbing the negative effect of the AIDS pandemic as well as globalisation and structural adjustment programmes delivered in the rural areas. The result has been a massive migration of adults and unaccompanied children from the rural areas to the urban centres, which in turn has collapsed traditional social security networks.

Kwetu Counselling's research shows street girls are just as widespread as street boys in Dar es Salaam. Furthermore, their research shows that girls are on the streets primarily because:

- ⊗ The girl's mother is a prostitute, and the child must spend time on the street while her mother invites a "customer" home;
- ⊗ The girl is escaping a rural environment, and views the city as an opportunity for survival and livelihood.

Mkombozi's conclusion & recommendations: Government and Civil Society must address child vulnerability

"Life with poverty is a husband and wife who are not together, and life without poverty is them together and happy." (Child at Mkombozi)

Although many national and international organisations believe children migrate to the streets because of financial poverty in the familial context, this paper has shown that the immediate and underlying factors of child migration are actually caused by non-income forms of poverty. More specifically, non-income forms of poverty exacerbate income poverty and lead to a high level of familial stress or dysfunction. In turn, this dysfunction - including conflict, abuse, alcoholism, substance abuse, poor communication skills, truancy, theft, illegal activities, and isolation from the wider community - cause children to be "vulnerable" or "at risk" of leaving home.

It is consistent with Mkombozi's research and experience that the complex issue of Tanzania's street children must include an understanding of non-income forms of poverty and resulting familial and community dysfunction. Problematically however, national poverty reduction strategies and international organisations generally fail to fully address the non-income forms of poverty that drive children to the streets, and they do not include any form of protection for children from the factors that cause them to migrate to the streets. In fact, even international organisations - perfectly poised to effect real policy change - are largely focused on working with street children by tackling income poverty alone or by tackling the problems children face when they're already on the street.

Given the current focus in policy making circles on implementing the NSGRP and developing pro-poor policies, it is vital that Government and Civil Society build a picture of the dynamics occurring amongst the most vulnerable groups in society. Street children and socially excluded youth are a visible manifestation of poverty in rural and urban contexts - they provide a clear indicator of the success or not of social safety networks in addressing child and familial vulnerability. Mkombozi recommends that attention be focused on how the Government (both national and local), CSOs and the public can work together to ensure that NSGRP strategies (particularly those related to improved quality of life and social well-being) are integrated into our practices and realised at a grassroots level.

For this reason it is encouraging that there are countless organisations working with street children world-wide, and it is essential that these organisations continue to deliver their targeted programmes and services. Unfortunately however, Mkombozi is correct in its hypothesis that many CSOs have not yet fully understood the link between non-income forms of poverty and street children, and consequently they are not addressing the causes of child migration in their programming. To enable these organisations to stem the tide of street children, and to make a sustainable change, Mkombozi urges CSOs to research and understand the global and regional truths about the causation of child migration from the home.

Similarly, the case studies presented of street child organisations working alongside Mkombozi in the Kilimanjaro region (and Arusha) show that important and effective work is being done with Tanzania's street children. For instance, the understanding of critical "push" and "pull" factors which cause children to migrate to the streets (e.g. AIDS, poverty, family breakdown, inaccessibility of primary education, boredom at home and in the community) is an essential premise to a complete understanding of the causation of non-income forms of poverty. However, Mkombozi once again emphasises that because children in the Kilimanjaro region leave their homes due to non-income forms of poverty, it is necessary for the families, schools, communities and organisations within Kilimanjaro and Tanzania to fully understand non-income forms of poverty in order to prevent vulnerable children from becoming street children.

The case studies also show that Mkombozi's Community Strengthening approach is unique in Tanzania. This approach enables Mkombozi to thoroughly research and programmatically target the non-income forms of poverty that lead to child vulnerability and ultimately to child migration in the Kilimanjaro region. In the Kilimanjaro region, there are two key factors that push children from their homes - an expectation of a better life in urban areas, and conflict within families. Mkombozi works to develop community-based interventions that address these root causes of child migration, such that members of target communities are better able to support children who are at risk of coming to the streets and those whom Mkombozi has reunified with their families.

Overall, this paper strongly recommends that local, national and international street child organisations adopt and employ the Community Strengthening model so that the crucial link between non-income forms of poverty and child migration can be understood at a global and regional level. In this way, communities can be empowered to design and develop interventions and strategies to mediate conflict in families and in the community, knowledge can be shared among groups, and social support networks can be improved. Mkombozi knows that 30% of children are "at risk" of coming to the streets, and as such, it is not enough to work with children already on the streets - every effort is required to find innovative and effective ways to reach those children who are vulnerable within their homes now and will inevitably turn to the streets.



Mkombozi believes that helping children to grow in body, mind and spirit is the way to build a strong community. One unprotected child is one too many.

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Mkombozi Centre for Street Children
P.O. Box 9601 Moshi, Tanzania
Tel: (255) 27 2754793
Fax: (255) 27 2753410
E-mail: info@mkombozi.org
Website: <http://www.mkombozi.org>

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① **UN**

www.un.org/millenniungoals

① **UNICEF**

www.unicef.org

Poverty Reduction begins with Children (2000)

Situation Analysis of children in Tanzania (2001)

