

- To determine how the local community behave towards children in their care.
- To gain an insight into what is the current extent of child abuse within families and the wider community.
- To gain an understanding of formal and non formal child protection networks and systems that are currently in place in these areas.
- To inform our current work with the community towards improving awareness of child protection issues.
- To collect baseline data which can be used for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the new strategic plan.

PURPOSE :

- To deepen our understanding of what really drives children to life on the streets.
- To strengthen our work in community engagement.
- To have a starting point for helping target communities to take increased responsibility to enable their children to grow positively in a safer environment in their own development, as laid out in the new strategic plan.

2. Definitions

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "CHILD VULNERABILITY"? A vulnerable child is one who is at risk of becoming street-involved. There are a multitude of factors that can contribute towards child vulnerability and this paper will attempt to explore them.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "PROTECTIVE FACTORS"? Protective factors are both formal and non-formal structures that can prevent vulnerable children from both physical and emotional harm. Particularly, in this context, any factors which may prevent a child from becoming street-involved.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "PROTECTIVE FACTORS ON A NATIONAL LEVEL"? Tanzania is one of the many countries who have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which means they are committed to protecting the rights of all children. However, it can be argued that the government of Tanzania is not taking the adequate steps to ensure the welfare of all Tanzania's children.

Notes on Methodology...

■ LOCATION

The geographical focus of this survey looked at the 3 districts; Moshi Urban, Moshi Rural and Arusha Municipal. Within these districts there were 10 research wards. Below is a short profile of each of these wards.

<u>Ward</u>	<u>District</u>
Njoro	Moshi Urban
Kaloleni	Moshi Urban
Mji Mpya	Moshi Urban
Rau	Moshi Urban
Manushi Juu	Moshi Rural
Uru Mashariki	Moshi Rural
Kombo	Moshi Rural
Ngarenaro	Arusha Municipal
Unga Ltd	Arusha Municipal
Sokon One	Arusha Municipal

It is important to note two issues that arose when selecting research areas for this study. Firstly, we had originally planned to look at Ngaremtoni, a semi-urban area in Arusha where Mkombozi has worked for several years. However, unfortunately, due to our time constraints and logistical issues, we were unable to use Ngaremtoni as a research area. Secondly, we only carried out 6 Focus Group Discussions (FGD) in Njoro, Kaloleni, Manushi Juu, Uru Mashariki, Unga Ltd and Ngarenaro. The locality of our FGDs depended very much on the contacts the Community Engagement team had in each district.

■ QUESTIONNAIRES

For the initial stage of baseline data collection we designed a short questionnaire to try to get a picture of how people think and behave towards the children around them. This questionnaire had 9 questions about how people bring up children and a few simple demographic questions.

We carried out the questionnaires in all 10 of the chosen areas of study as explained above. Between April and May 2011, a group of three researchers (two Swahili speakers and one research assistant) spent a day in each area to administer the questionnaires.

To ensure that we gathered as much data as possible in the short amount of time we had and to guarantee each questionnaire was returned, the Swahili speaking researcher went through the questions with each participant and wrote down the answers for them. This made the process like a short, structured interview rather than a basic questionnaire.

3. Discussion

▶ Despite the legal definition of a child ranging from 0 – 18 years, our research has shown that many people, women in particular, think of childhood as ending at an earlier age. This may have an impact on how people behave towards older children. If this is the case, perhaps there is a need to tailor any child protection interventions to different age ranges of children and youth and improve awareness of the legal definition of a child as 0 – 18 years.

▶ There is a high level of physical abuse towards children. However, it is the attitudes towards this that are especially interesting. There are still many people who believe in the power of beating a child as a successful tool of discipline. Even some of those who claim to realise the harm in physical violence towards a child still admit to using it as punishment on their children. The reasons given to support the use of beating were cultural or religious which makes them very difficult to challenge. This must be kept in mind when attempting to change this behaviour.

▶ Children were accused of dressing provocatively and talking casually about sex and being careless in their sexual behaviours. This was seen as a result of westernisation and media which concerned parents who worried about the morals of their children. As with any parent and child relationship, there is a need to find a common ground in order to reach a level of agreement between the two parties. The mention of the importance of child participation in household decisions in Unga Ltd and the reports about having an open dialogue between parent and child by some participants suggests there is scope for change.

▶ Despite there being some participants who were keen on the idea of physical discipline in raising a child, there were an encouraging number of participants who recognised the need for change. Participants wanted to see the government take more responsibility by holding people accountable for child abuse and by providing better services for vulnerable children. There was also call for some kind of social education to improve awareness of the issues that children face and how to overcome them. This is a positive comment for Mkombozi as it very much validates the community work we are doing currently.



4. Conclusion

The information presented above paints a realistic picture of the everyday interaction between children and adults, as described by adults themselves, in the 10 research areas we have examined. From this data we have gathered solid baseline data of the community's attitudes and behaviours towards children focussing on child vulnerability and protective factors.

Poverty is prevalent in all 10 areas. The economic challenges faced by most people were very apparent when conducting the questionnaires, yet, it was not until the FGD section of the research that the extent of the poverty people face came to light. The accounts from Unga Ltd, Ngarenaro and Njoro, especially, show a startling reality consisting of substance abuse, prostitution, unemployment and a lack of support from local authorities. It can be very easy to judge certain behaviours and attitudes towards children from a westernised perspective without adequately taking the context into account. While, clearly this paper makes no attempt to condone such behaviour as beating a child, it does bring to light the everyday challenges that many parents face in raising their children. From the information presented above, it looks as if poverty and unemployment often drive people to destructive behaviours such as drinking, gambling and taking drugs which, in turn, can impact negatively on their home life. School contribution fees are another challenge for many parents who, despite their best intentions, may not be able to afford to keep their children in school. Therefore, when discussing violence against children in this context, it is vital to acknowledge the external factors that can contribute to such behaviour. This holistic understanding becomes extremely important when looking at potential interventions.

That said, this baseline survey indicates a high level of abusive behaviour towards children in our research areas. An overwhelming majority of respondents reported regularly witnessing harmful practices. The physical abuse aimed at children often goes beyond a beating when they have misbehaved to include cruel punishments like burning, pinching and kicking and has even resulted in reported fatalities in some cases. Added on to that is the risk of general neglect by parents, the risk of sexual abuse, and the influence of alcohol, marijuana and gambling. Essentially, there are many children in these areas who are extremely vulnerable.

In addition, this research has made clear that, although there are existing child protection systems in place in our research areas, they are not adequately reaching vulnerable children or their families. This is an important starting block for Mkombozi to begin to address the huge need for increased protection for children in Moshi and Arusha. Crucially this can be done by strengthening and coordinating the current systems rather than replicating their services.

One potential flaw in this research is that although we want to assess people's behaviour towards children, we have only been able to measure their reported behaviours. Therefore, we must allow for people over and under reporting their own behaviours. By asking what participants saw other people doing rather than themselves, it is possible that we eliminated the fear of stigma from their responses meaning they could answer more openly. Yet, there is no way of knowing this was the case. We must also allow for the fact that when people see NGOs, especially with the presence of foreigners, some participants may have over-reported levels of poverty with the hope of receiving some assistance. When we carried out the questionnaires, it was common for people to approach us and ask for support from Mkombozi.

Nevertheless, this baseline study has given us a good insight into the attitudes of the communities we work with and those in which we aim to work more closely. This insight can now be used to shape our current and future interventions in community engagement with the aim of, hopefully, increasing child protection, reducing child vulnerability and, ultimately, decreasing the number of children who end up living on the streets in the Kilimanjaro and Arusha regions. We believe this can only be achieved with the combined efforts of Mkombozi and the local community members themselves.