

**FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO STREET CHILDREN LEAVING  
REHABILITATION CENTRES AND RETURNING TO THE STREETS**

BY

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## SUMMARY

Much of prevailing research on street children pertains to their experiences at home prior to their abode on the streets, as well as their ordeal on the streets once they have departed from their homes. Only a few studies highlight their experiences in rehabilitation centres. Hence no study was undertaken to explore factors that contribute to their departure from rehabilitation centres and return to the streets.

The aim of the study was to determine why do some of the street children who were formerly placed in the rehabilitation centres return to the streets. Thus the objectives of the study were to (a) determine the norms and values that are applicable in the centres and (b) determine whether their tendency of returning to the streets results from their negative perception of certain factors in the centres, as well as their desire to resume the life that they adopted on the street prior to their placement in the centres.

The sample comprised of sixteen street children who have previously resided in the centres. Focus group interviews were adopted as data collection techniques, and the children were subjected to four focus group interviews. A semi-structured interview was also conducted to one of the caregivers in the centre. A Grounded Theory Approach, which is an integration of the methods proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990), Glaser (1992), Creswell (1998) and Strauss and Corbin (1998), was utilised for the analysis of the interviews.

The findings evinced that the children's departure from the centres and return to the streets culminated from their familiarity with street life, desire to return home, discontentment with some of the living conditions in the centres, ill-treatment by the police and older boys, as well as their desire to resume street life, that is, to partake in income-generation activities and to be reunited with other children who reside on the streets.

Much of their interaction with the caregivers also contributed to their retreat from the centres. The caregivers subjected them to discrimination, ill-treatment, false accusations, humiliation, restriction and threatened to transfer them to another centre.

In addition to the above- mentioned factors, there were unanticipated findings that also emerged during the study. The findings were clustered as follows: factors that influenced the children to leave the centre and return home, factors that influenced the children to leave their homes and reside on the streets, factors that influenced the children to leave the streets and reside in the centre and factors that influenced the children to leave their homes and return to the streets.

Therefore, the children's negative perception of the conditions that they were subjected to in the centres contributed to their return to the streets, as they related well with other street children and were able to earn an income on the streets.

## **KEY WORDS**

Street children

Rehabilitation centre

Streets

Caregivers

Restriction

Ill-treatment

Discrimination

Humiliation

Income-generating activities

Rejection

## OPSOMMING

Baie van die heersende navorsing oor straatkindres beskou hulle ervarings by hulle tuiste voor hulle op die strate begin woon en hulle beproewing op die strate. Slegs 'n paar studie beklemtoon hulle ervarings by die rehabiliteersentrum. Vandaar, geen studie om die faktore wat bevorder hierdie kinders se vertrek by die rehabiliteersentrum terug na die strate was geneem.

Die studie se doelwit was om te bepaal hoekom die rehabiliteersentrum word verlaat deur sommige kinders wat inwoners was en na die straat teruggaan. Dus, die doel van die studie was: (a) die bepaling van die norme en waardes wat toeplaslik is by die sentrums (b) die bepaling hetsy hulle aanleg om terug na die straat te gaan is, as gevolg van hulle negatiewe waarneming van faktore by die sentrums, sowel as hulle verlange om die lewe wat hulle op die strate aangeneem het voor hulle plasing by die sentrum.

Die proefmonster bestaan uit 29 kinders wat by die sentrum gebly het. Fokusgroepe onderhoude was aangeneem as dataversameling tegnieke en die kinders was onderworpe aan vier fokusgroepe onderhoude. 'n Halfstruktureerde onderhoud was gelei met een van die sentrum se versorgers. Die Grounded Theory Approach wat 'n integrasie van die metodes voorgestel deur Strauss en Corbin (1990), Glaser (1992), Creswell (1998) en Strauss en Corbin (1998), was gebruik vir die ontleding van die onderhoude.

Die ontdekking het aangedui dat die kinders se verlatings vanaf die sentrums en hulle teruggaan na dike strate is deur hulle gewoonheid met straat lewe, die verlang om na hulle tuiste terug te gaan, hulle ontevredenheid met sommige lewenstoestande by die sentrums, die mishandeling deur polisie en ouder seuns; sowel as hulle verlang om die straatlewe te hervat sodat hulle kan deelneem in inkomstegeneringaktiwiteite en om saam te wees met ander kinders wat by die strate woon.

Baie van hulle interaksie met die versorgers het ook bygedra na hulle terugtog vanaf die sentrums. Die versorgers het hulle met diskriminasie, mishandeling, valsbeskuldigings, vernedering en bedreigings dat hulle tot ander sentrum sal verplaas word.

Inbyvoeging van die bogenoemde faktore, daar was onverwagte ontdekkings gedurende die studie. Hierdie ontdekkings was as gevolg getros: faktore wat die kinders beïnvloed om die sentrum te verlaat en na hulle tuiste terug gaan, faktore wat die kinders beïnvloed om hulle tuiste verlaat en na die strate te gaan woon, faktore wat die kinders beïnvloed om die strate te verlaat en die sentrum te gaan woon en faktore wat die kinders beïnvloed om hulle tuiste te verlaat en terug na die strate te gaan woon.

Daarom, die kinders se negatiewe insig van die toestande waarneem hulle was onderwerp by die sentrums het die bevoeging na hulle teruggaan na die strate, want hulle het 'n goed verwantskap met die ander kinders op die strate en is bekwaam om inkomste op die strate verdien.



## **SLEUTEL WOORDE**

Straatkinders  
Rehabiliteersentrum  
Strate  
Versorgers  
Beperking  
Inkomstegeneringaktiwiteite  
Mishandeling  
Diskriminasie  
Vernedering  
Verweping

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## CHAPTER 1

"The scene is common and painfully familiar, a busy street lived with shops displaying the latest in fashion and electronic equipment, well-dressed people going in and out, the sound of vehicles whizzing by expensive cars, the flash of neon lights. At night big cities come alive and urban life reaches its peak, but in the background, children huddle in corners, or walk about aimlessly, dirty, dishevelled. Some are selling cigarettes, peddling lottery tickets or flowers, some are just loitering and others are asleep in city arcades. As night progresses, these children are seen gambling, smoking, sniffing solvents, taking up with locals or tourists for a night of 'big money', taking on odd jobs to get some money to ease their grumbling stomachs or to take home to starving family members" (Le Roux, 1996, p. 965).

### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

The above extract highlights the daily activities and experiences of thousands of street children who abide in the cities. These are children who have to contend with, among others, hunger, assault, exploitation and the lack of decent shelter and clothing. As a result of street life, they learn survival skills by trial and error or by observing other children. They master street life and develop a sense of independence and freedom. In an attempt to prevent them from opting for street life, provisions were made for the establishment of soup kitchens, shelters, centres and children's homes. These places were established for the reception, care, custody, observation and examination of these children. The street children are normally provided with basic care in the form of food, clothing, shelter and education. Despite the availability of these services, there are some of them who still opt for street life. Some of them have previously resided in the centres, but have returned to the streets for some unknown reasons.

The street child phenomenon is not recent; for a number of years, children have dwelled on the streets for a variety of reasons. Like other countries in the world, South Africa has not

been immune to the presence of street children.

## 1.2. AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to determine why some of the street children who were previously placed in the rehabilitation centres go back to the streets. Hence, the objectives of the study are as follows:

(a) To determine whether the children's tendency of returning to the streets results from their negative perception of certain factors in the centres. Therefore, the investigator will determine how the children perceived the following factors in the centres:

- The conditions under which they lived,
- Their relationship with the caregivers and
- Their relationship with other children

(b) To determine whether the children left the centres as a result of their desire to resume the life that they adopted in the streets prior to their placement in the centres. Thus, the investigator will determine the children's perception of factors in the streets that influenced them to leave the centres.

(c) To determine the norms and values that are applicable in the centres.

## 1.3. MOTIVATION

Schurink (1993, p. 92) articulates that "street children in the urban landscape have become as common as big buildings, stores, and parks. They are part of the picture and will remain so because we are both unable and unwilling to prevent this phenomenon". The presence of an exceptionally large number of street children draws attention worldwide. These children are

compelled to turn to the streets in an attempt to escape the hardships that are inherent in their social structures.

Barnette (1995) and Chetty (1997) assert that it is very difficult to determine the exact number of children living on the streets in the main cities and towns in South Africa. They declare that this is due largely to the dark or unknown figure, and official estimates are based on the number of street children in places of safety, shelters and other known abodes and hangouts. Furthermore, they indicate that the estimated number of street children is approximately 9000 countrywide. There are over 80 million street children around the world between the ages of 6 and 16 years; of this number 90% are boys. The number is increasing at an alarming rate. In 1985, there was an estimated 30 million street children and in 1990 there was an estimated 80 million.

There is a sharp contrast between their lives in the centres and on the streets. De Miranda and Sartor (1995) put forward that street children who reside in the rehabilitation centres such as the Soweto Day Care Centre are provided with food, shelter, informal education and remedial tuition. They are also provided with activities such as free play, art, recreation, sport and music. There are also rehabilitation programmes for drug abuse and glue sniffing. Cockburn and Crawford-Browne (1998) state that organisations like the African Foundation Inc. offer accommodation and training to street children. The Friends Of Children Association (FOCA) in Uganda is engaged in training street children in carpentry, radio repairs, welding and other activities. It is believed that with these skills, the children can be self-employed and will also be able to employ others. For instance, trained former street children have become workshop instructors and train newly- recruited street children. In addition to skills training, the children attend non- formal schools where they are taught basic literacy and numeracy as well as simple bookkeeping and management skills.

Conversely, they usually lack adequate shelter, food and clothing when they are residing on the streets. Donald and Swart- Kruger (1994) affirm that street children do not have secure shelter, they sleep on the subways, in abandoned buildings and other temporary unsecured

living areas. The dangers which most of them are exposed to are also the lack of safety and security, poor nutrition and health risks associated with untreated illnesses and injuries. As a result of the few alternatives for survival, many of them resort to income-generating activities. Janus, Burgess, Hartman and McCormack (1987) illuminate that street children are engaged in a number of income-generating activities such as hawking, car parking, pottering, car washing, begging and shoe shining. Some resort to pornography and prostitution in order to earn an income. As a result of the harsh conditions on the streets, the majority engage in glue sniffing, alcohol and drug abuse in order to escape the difficulties that they encounter on the streets.

What motivated the investigator to conduct the present study is the desire to determine why these children leave the centres, despite the fact that they are provided with food, clothing, accommodation and informal education. Why do they prefer to struggle in the streets? What went wrong in these centres?

#### **1.4. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES**

In the current study, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory will be adopted as a theoretical framework. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), behaviour evolves as the function of the interplay between the person and the environment; not only do events affect the behaviour of the person, but the individual is an active agent in influencing environmental events. Therefore, human development is a product of the reciprocal interaction between the growing human organism and its environment.

The behaviour of street children occurs in the context of a number of individual and environmental variables. Therefore, in order to determine factors that influence some of them to leave the rehabilitation centres and return to the streets, it is important to determine the reciprocal interaction between them and the various settings within which they interact.

## 1.5. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Chapter 2 provides a detailed explanation of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory as well as a literature review on street children. A review is given of the literature of the following: a conceptual analysis of the street child phenomenon; street children's expressions; the street child as a universal phenomenon; perspectives underlying explanations of runaway behaviour; aetiology of the street child phenomenon; the street subculture and lifestyle; the behavioural patterns of street children; the street child phenomenon as perceived by the general public, policy makers and the people who are involved with street children; street children's programmes in South Africa and other countries; and intervention considerations.

Chapter 3 entails an overview of the research process that was undertaken in the study. Firstly, the nature of the research design is discussed. This is followed by a detailed description of the sampling procedure, sample size, research question, measuring techniques, setting, data collection and data analysis.

Chapter 4 outlines the findings that were generated from the study. Chapter 5 entails the interpretation, discussion and integration of all the information that emerged from the study. Finally, chapter 6 concludes with the main findings of the study, a critical evaluation of the study, recommendations based on the findings as well as implications for further research.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory is delineated in detail. This is followed by a literature review of street children. The following aspects are discussed accordingly: a conceptual analysis of the street child phenomenon; street children's expressions; the street child as a universal phenomenon; perspectives underlying explanations of runaway behaviour; aetiology of the street child phenomenon; the street subculture and lifestyle; the behavioural patterns of street children; the street child phenomenon as perceived by the general public, policy makers and the people who are involved with street children; street children's programmes in South Africa and other countries; and intervention considerations.

#### 2.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: BRONFENBRENNER'S ECOLOGICAL THEORY

Developmental psychologists who adopt an ecological approach systematically study how children interact in the environments in which they grow and live. They are interested in how settings and contexts influence behaviour and development. According to Orford (1992) and Cave (1998) lying at the core of the ecological perspective, is an emphasis on individuals in a state of continuing transaction with the various settings in which they interact. This state of transaction is characterized by reciprocal influence: not only are the experiences and behaviour of individuals affected by the settings in which they interact, but settings are also created and shaped by their occupants. The authors maintain that this was best summarized by Kurt Lewin in the following equation:  $B = f(P, E)$ . This means that "the behaviour of

people can be seen as a function of the interaction between the personalities of the people and the environment in which they live" (Heller, Price, Reinharz, Riger, Wandersman & D'Aunno in Moleko & Visser, 2001, p. 33). Urie Bronfenbrenner was a prime spokesman for this approach; cited below, is a detailed discussion of his theory of human development.

### **2.2.1. Focus on the larger context: systems within systems**

Bronfenbrenner viewed the settings in which children grow up as systems. Each of these systems is embedded within the next larger context. From narrowest to widest, these systems consist of the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem (Shaffer, 1996). These systems can be defined as follows:

(i) Microsystem- is a system of which a developing person has direct experience on a regular basis, it is also a pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a setting with given physical and material characteristics (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Orford, 1992).

(ii) Mesosystem- comprises "the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 25).

(iii) Exosystem- refers to one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect the developing person (Shaffer, 1996; Turner & Helms, 1995).

(iv) Macrosystem- refers to "consistencies in the form and content of lower-order systems (that is, the micro-, meso- and exosystems) that exist at the level of the subculture or culture as a whole, along with any belief systems underlying such consistencies" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 26).

These systems surround the person simultaneously. Influences on behaviour can stem from the immediate setting, from the surrounding context in which that setting is located or from the larger society (Heller, Price, Reinharz, Riger, Wandersman & D'Aunno, 1984). The development of the child is also influenced by the relations between these systems and by the larger contexts in which they are embedded (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

### **2.2.2. Person-environment-interaction**

Social interactions depend not only on the people in them, but also on the milieus in which they occur. Bronfenbrenner (1979), Magnusson (1988) and Walsh, Price and Craik (1992) declare that behavior evolves as the function of the interplay between the person and the environment. This interaction between the person and the environment is characterized by reciprocity. Environmental factors influence individual functioning, but individuals also influence the environment, sometimes by changing it in important respects. Therefore, an individual develops and functions in a dynamic, continuous and reciprocal process of interaction with his or her environment. In this interactional process, the individual is the purposeful active agent. The developing person is not viewed merely as a tabula rasa on which the environment makes its impact, but as a growing dynamic entity that progressively moves into and restructures the milieu in which he resides.

The environment of greatest relevance for the understanding of behaviour and development is not as it exists in the objective world, but as it appears in the mind of the person, in other words, the focus is on the manner in which the environment is perceived by the human being who interacts within or with it. A person's perception of his or her environment tends to influence the manner in which he or she behaves in that particular environment (Walsh *et al.*, 1992). Therefore, development is defined as a lasting change in the way in which a person perceives and deals with his environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Thus, Bronfenbrenner emphasized the studying of the person-environment interaction as a unit, rather than separating them into supposedly distinct and self-contained components. Therefore, the environment cannot be studied separately from behaviour, and behaviour cannot be studied separately from the environment without losing valuable information.

### **2.2.3. Roles, molar activities and relations as contexts of human development**

The activities, roles and relations that children engage in have an impact on their development. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979, pp. 45-83), these roles, activities and relations constitute the elements of the microsystem and are crucial contexts of development. He explicates them further as follows:

#### **(i) Molar activities**

A molar activity is an ongoing behaviour possessing momentum of its own and perceived as having meaning or intent by the participants in the setting. Molar activities constitute the principal and most immediate manifestation, both of the development of the individual and of the most powerful environmental forces that instigate and influence that development.

As exhibited by the developing person, they serve as indicators of the degree and nature of psychological growth. The emerging molar activities of the child reflect the evolving scope and complexity of the perceived ecological environment, both within and beyond the immediate setting, as well as the child's growing capacity to deal with and alter his environment in accordance with his needs and desires. As exhibited by others present in the situation, they constitute the main source for direct effects of the immediate environment and psychological growth. Therefore, it follows from the preceding exposition that the development of the child is a function of the scope and complexity of the molar activities engaged in by others that become part of the child's psychological field either by involving

him in joint participation or by attracting his attention.

(ii) Interpersonal relations

A relation occurs whenever one person in a setting pays attention to or participates in the activities of another. The presence of the relation in both directions establishes the minimal and defining condition for the existence of a dyad. A dyad is formed whenever two people pay attention to or participate in one another's activities. The dyad is important for development because firstly, it constitutes a critical context for development in its own right. Secondly, it serves as the basic building block of the microsystem, making possible the formation of larger interpersonal structures, namely triads, tetrads and so on. In terms of its potential for furthering psychological growth, there are three different functional forms that a dyad may take, namely observation dyad, a joint activity dyad and a primary dyad.

- Observation dyad- occurs when one member is paying close and sustained attention to the activity of the other, who in turn acknowledges the interest being shown.
- Joint activity dyad- is one in which the two participants perceive themselves as doing something together. This does not mean that they are doing the same thing. On the contrary, the activities that each one of them engages in usually tend to be somewhat different, but complementary.
- Primary dyad- is one that continues to exist phenomenologically for both participants even when they are not together. The two members appear in each other's thoughts, are the strong objects of strong emotional feelings and continue to influence each other's behaviour even when apart.

As participants engage in dyadic interaction, they are more likely to develop pronounced feelings towards one another. These feelings may be mutually positive, negative, ambivalent or asymmetrical. Such affective relations seem to become more differentiated and

pronounced in the course of joint activity. To the extent that they are positive and reciprocal to begin with and become more so as the interaction proceeds, the more they are likely to enhance the pace and the probability of the occurrence of the developmental process. They also facilitate the formation of a primary dyad. Therefore, learning and development are facilitated by the participation of the developing person, in progressive and more complex patterns of reciprocal activity, with someone with whom that person has developed a strong and enduring emotional attachment.

### (iii) Roles

A role is a set of activities and relations expected of a person occupying a particular position in society and of others in relation to that person. Placing people in different roles, even in the same setting, can radically influence the kinds of activities and relations in which they engage and thereby presumably alter the course of their development.

Associated with every position in society are role expectations: how the holder of the position is to act and how others are to act towards him. These expectations pertain not only to the content of activities, but also to the relations between the two parties. The placement of people in social roles, in which they are expected to act cooperatively, tend to elicit and intensify activities and interpersonal relations that are compatible with the given expectations. Therefore, human development is facilitated through interaction with people who occupy a variety of roles and through participation in an ever-broadening role repertoire.

The applicability of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory in the present study is abundantly clear. The behaviour of street children does not occur in a vacuum, but it is always inextricably embedded in the concentric environmental structures, namely the micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystems. In order to determine why street children leave the rehabilitation centres and return to the streets, it is important to investigate the reciprocal interaction between them and these systems. Their tendency of leaving the centres and returning to the streets might be influenced by factors within any or all of these systems. Therefore, the focus

of the study is on the reciprocal interaction between them and their micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystems.

In the context of the present study, the children's microsystems are both the rehabilitation centres and the streets that they lived on prior to their placement in the centres. Within these settings, the children actively engage in a pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relations. However, the activities, roles and interpersonal relations that they experience on the streets differ from those that they experience in the centres. The mesosystem is the interrelation between the centres and the streets. It is possible that the lifestyle that they adopted on the streets prior to their placement in the centres had an impact on their behaviour and experiences in the centres. As a result of their life on the streets, they develop a sense of independence and freedom. Hence, when they reside in the centres, they are required to obey the rules, stop substance abuse and attend school regularly. This is to ensure that they are weaned away from street life. Therefore, this implies that in the centres, they are expected to give up the life that they adopted on the streets and adapt to certain conditions in the centres. However, it is possible that they find it difficult to give up street life and adapt to the conditions in the centres. Consequently, they might develop a desire to return to the streets and resume the life that they adopted there prior to their abode in the centres. Thus, the investigator will determine whether the children left the centres as a result of their desire to resume the life that they adopted on the streets prior to their placement in the centres. According to Bronfenbrenner, "the pattern of interrelationships among microsystems influences the child's perceptions and behaviour within any of the settings in which the child is presently located" (Thomas, 1992, p. 441).

There are organisations that cater for the needs of street children. The staff in these organisations regulates and decides on the provision of the children's food, clothes, shelter and programmes. Therefore, the children's exosystems are the settings in which the staff decides upon the provision of the children's food, clothes, shelter and programmes. Although the children are not present in those settings, the decisions, which are taken, might have an effect on their behaviour. The children's behaviour might have also been influenced by



systems on a larger scale, which determine the social structure and the norms based in their micro-, meso- and exosystems. Schurink (1993) puts forward that the Child Care Act No.74 of 1983 was established in South Africa in order to make provision for the establishment of street children's places of safety or care. These places were established for the reception, custody, observation and examination of children. The following conditions are stipulated by the Act in the children's places of safety or care: the conditions under which good order and discipline should be maintained, behaviour which is regarded as undesirable and how punishment should be enforced. With regard to corporal punishment, it should be inflicted selectively depending on the child's age, sex, physical and mental condition. Therefore, the Act serves as the children's macrosystem and lays down the norms and values which are applicable in the children's micro-, meso- and exosystems.

Heller *et al.* (1984, p.139) state that "ecological principles call attention not only to the characteristics of individuals and environments, but also especially to the goodness of fit between those characteristics". Therefore, when determining the reciprocal interaction between the children and their micro-, meso-, exo- and macrosystems, the investigator will also determine whether there was a fit between them and these systems. This in turn, might indicate whether their tendency of leaving the centres and returning to the streets is related to the lack of fit between them and these systems.

## **2.3. STREET CHILDREN**

In response to the presence of the vast number of children who inhabit the streets, there have been many profound studies, pertaining to the phenomenon, which were conducted. Presented below, is a detailed demarcation of literature review on street children.

### **2.3.1. Street child phenomenon: conceptual analysis**

The definitions of street children are multitudinous and diverse, there is no generally



accepted definition of street children. The literature depicts numerous attempts at defining the street child phenomenon, hence, the following definitions emanated from the literature:

Street children are "children who spend a considerable amount of their time in the streets of urban centres to fend for themselves and their families and are inadequately protected, supervised and cared for by responsible adults" (Barnette, 1995, p. 5).

Street children are children who have abandoned (or have been abandoned by) their families, schools and immediate communities before they are sixteen years of age and have drifted into nomadic street life (Richter, 1988).

Furthermore, various street children's categories are being discerned. The following categories are proposed by Schurink (1993, p. 5) and Barnette (1995, pp. 16-17):

(a) Children on the streets

These are primarily working children who still have family connections of a more or less regular nature. Their focus in life is still the home, many attend school, most return home at the end of each working day and most have a sense of belonging in the community in which their home is situated.

(b) Children of the street

This group is smaller but more complex. Children in this group see the street as their home and it is there that they seek shelter, food and a sense of family among companions. Family ties exist, but are remote and their former home is visited infrequently.

(c) Completely abandoned and neglected children

This group seems to form part of the second group and can hardly be distinguished from it in

their daily activities. However, because they have severed all ties with a biological family they are entirely on their own, not just for material, but for psychological survival.

(d) Part-time working children

These are school-going children who go to the streets in the afternoons after school, over the weekends and during holidays in order to make some pocket money or to help their families financially. They stay with their families and usually sleep at home.

(e) Full-time working children

These are children who have left school and work full time on the streets. Some start as part timers and eventually become full timers. They decide to leave school altogether, and then some start sleeping on the streets and have irregular contact with their families.

(f) Runaway children

These are children who decide to leave home and school, and go and make a living on the streets. Their reasons for leaving home may vary. They eat and sleep on the streets. Their parents do not know where they are and they try to take on a new identity. Depending on their age, they will normally join a group for protection and survival.

(g) Abandoned and neglected children

These are children born out of wedlock who become unmanageable, children who are raised by their grandparents and who fend for themselves on the streets. They normally join a group of runaway children and who are completely at the mercy of the group to which they belong. At times they will move to another group if life becomes too difficult for them.

#### (h) Young delinquents

The street is the best for them, this is where they are able to get up to mischief and involve other children in shoplifting, stealing, housebreaking and many other delinquent acts. They do not always seem to live on the streets, but tend to have contact with their homes.

However the current study has adopted the definition cited by Schurink (1993, p. 5). According to the author, a street child is "any boy or girl who has not reached adulthood, for whom the street (in the widest sense of the word, including unoccupied dwellings, wasteland, etc.) has become his or her habitual abode and sources of livelihood, and who is inadequately protected, supervised or directed by responsible adults" .

#### **2.3.2. Street children's expressions**

Despite the dispute over the use of the word, street children, it is used to embrace various categories of children under this umbrella. Chetty (1997) asserts that the term, street children, is in common usage in Africa while in Europe, the United Kingdom, America and Australia they are referred to as homeless children, runaways, throwaways and push outs. Hence, Shanahan (1999) maintains that in Ghana street children are referred to as 'kwames'.

Furthermore, Barnette (1995) argues that the following derogatory terms are used for street children: gamin (urchin) and chinchas (bed bugs) in Colombia, marginais (criminals) in Brazil, pajaro frutero (fruit birds) in Peru, polillas (moths) in Bolivia, resistolero (little rebels) in Honduras, scugnizzi (spinning tops) in Italy, bui doi (dust children) in Vietnam and malala pipe (pipe sleepers) in parts of South Africa.

### **2.3.2.1. The street child phenomenon as perceived by the general public, policy makers and the people who work with street children**

In an attempt to understand the street child phenomenon, various studies were conducted in order to determine the perceptions and views of a number of categories of people. Schurink (1993, pp. 92-136) reports the results of three studies that investigated the street child phenomenon as perceived by the general public, policy makers in the welfare field and by people who work with street children. The findings of the three studies are presented below:

#### **2.3.2.1.1. The street child phenomenon as perceived by people who work with street children**

The sample consisted of eleven social workers, seven volunteers in the welfare field, six child care workers, a co-ordinator, a head of child care services in the field of child care, two university lectures, two teachers, a deputy headmaster, an educational psychologist, three businessmen and a social researcher. The duration of the respondents' involvement with street children ranged from two to six years. The respondents were also involved in various capacities such as vice-chairman of shelter, teacher, co-ordinator, caseworker, volunteer and manager of street children's projects. Contact was mostly established through the respondents' involvement in street children's programmes. Some of them established contact with the children through street outreach, while others' involvement resulted from referrals from community members and the police.

In the following paragraphs, the respondents' perceptions of street children will be discussed with reference to the following aspects: definition of a street child and reasons why the children leave their homes.

(a) Definition of a street child

The respondents defined a street child as follows:

A street child is "a child living away from familial structures without basic needs and erking out an existence alone, typically in urban areas".

A street child is "a child with no fixed address who often does not know where his parents are, who has been on the street for a length of time, sleeping in doorways, eating from soup kitchens and existing by begging".

A street child is "a child on the street who left his parental home due to his uncontrollable behaviour or family background to stay in town".

A street child is "a child who habitually runs away from home and school to stay independently from his or her parents".

(b) Reasons why the children leave their homes

A relatively large group of the respondents regarded problems within the family as reasons for children to leave home for the street. Some of these problems are: conflict in the family due to many factors such as alcoholism, stress and violence; divorce or separation, family disintegration and the presence of a step-parent; lack of proper discipline, broken homes due to disputes prevailing between parents, financial problems and illegitimacy; poor home circumstances such as inefficient housing and overcrowding; lack of parental involvement and lack of response to their needs; lack of adequate care and control combined with abuse of all kinds; and parents unable to meet the child's needs resulting in acting-out behaviour.

### 2.3.2.1.2. The street child phenomenon as perceived by the general public

The sample entailed 424 African and 421 White residents living in the metropolitan areas of Johannesburg, the East Rand, the West Rand, Pretoria, the Vaal Triangle, Cape Peninsula, Port Elizabeth and Durban. The respondents' perceptions will be explained with regard to the following: attitudes towards street children, causes of the problem and possible solutions to the problem.

#### (a) Attitudes towards street children

The majority felt compassion for the children (74.8 % and 70.1 %), but more Africans tended to be very compassionate (62.8 % compared to 34.3 % of Whites). Less than one in ten of the White respondents showed feeling of resentment towards the children, while one in sixteen of the African respondents felt very resentful. Africans tended to feel guiltier about street children than Whites did (17.4 % compared to 0.8 %), while Whites tended to feel more neutral towards them. As much as 83.2 % were of the opinion that street children would become criminals when they grow up. More than a quarter (29.3%) of the African sample were of the opinion that street children would become adult vagrants and outcasts and not be able to conform to society's norms and values.

#### (b) Causes of the problem

On the whole the White respondents identified two main sources of the problem, namely poverty or unemployment in 42.6 % of the cases and family dysfunction in 43% of the cases. The latter comprises of abuse and neglect by parents including abandonment by parents (21.1 %), broken families (12.5%) and a lack of good educational facilities (9.4%).

Africans on the other hand were of the opinion that the root of the problem could be traced to dysfunctional African family life. More than 60% of this group were of the opinion that parental abuse and neglect (48.6%), including abandonment by parents, broken families and

family disintegration (11.8%), and a lack of informal educational facilities (10.9%) were the main reasons for the children being on the streets. Only 18.6% were of the opinion that poverty or unemployment was the reason why the children turned to the street. A small minority of the respondents (5.5% of Africans and 2% of Whites) were of the opinion that the main reason for children leaving their parental homes was naughtiness, juvenile delinquency or the influence of their friends who were already on the streets. Less than 5% (1.5% of Africans and 4.3% of Whites) were of the opinion that political circumstances were to blame for the street child phenomenon.

#### (c) Possible solutions to the problem

More than half (52.3%) of the African respondents regarded substitute care, for example, closed institutional settings such as children's homes (40%) and substitute parents as the best solution to the problem. Nearly a fifth of the Whites (19.6%) thought that better services, such as health care and education, provided to the children on the streets could solve the problem and 10.1% felt that the children should be sent back to their parents. 18.1% of the Whites, compared to only 3% of the Africans did not know how street children should be dealt with.

Just more than a fifth (21.2%) of the African respondents were of the opinion that better services and improved working conditions provided to children on the street could solve the problem. Only a small minority of both the African and the White group felt that the income of the children's families should be supplemented (5.9% of Africans compared to 7.3% of Whites) or that legislation prohibiting child labour should be changed (2.5% of Africans and 2% of Whites).

#### 2.3.2.1.3. The street child phenomenon as perceived by policy makers in the welfare field

The sample entailed 24 institutions which might be involved with welfare policy and which might have experience and knowledge of the street child epidemic. The following institutions

were interviewed: Department of Local Government and National Housing, Department of Correctional Services, Department of Education and Training, Department of National Health and Population Development, Department of Health Services and Welfare: House of Representatives, Department of Health Services and Welfare: House of Delegates, Transvaal Provincial Administration, Natal Provincial Administration, Provincial Administration of the Orange Free State, Cape Provincial Administration, Courts, South African Police, Durban City Police, National Association of Child Workers, NICRO, Mental Health Society, FAMSA, South African National Council for Child and Family Care, The Children's Foundation, SOS Children's Village, Durban African Family and Child Welfare Society, Boys' Town, Addington Hospital and Kalafong Hospital. The perceptions of these institutions regarding a definition of the street child, causes of the problem, street children's way of life, and advantages and disadvantages of street life are as follows:

(a) Definition of the street child

The following definitions emerged from the data:

A street child is "a child who seeks a refuge in order to survive and who has broken all bonds with his family"

A street child is "an unfortunate dirty child who learns to beg, steal and sell his or her body for food and money"

A street child is "someone who depends entirely on all that is found on the street, for example, clothing food and many other things"

A street child is "a child who is deeply unhappy and lonely and has been deprived of the fulfilment of his basic needs"



(b) Causes of the problem

The respondents identified the following factors as the aetiology of the street child phenomenon:

- Macro-level factors - the following factors within the community context were identified: urbanisation, forced resettlement, overcrowding, education that is not compulsory, school boycotts, destruction of teaching facilities, few or no job opportunities, low salaries, high cost of living, lack of recreational facilities and violence.
- Meso-level factors - the following factors within the family context could give rise to the street child phenomenon: parents' relocation to the cities without adequate planning for the provision of sustenance and care for their children; disintegration of marriage and family life; single parent families; inability to feed their children; irresponsible procreation; family violence, physical and psychological maltreatment of children by their parents; lack of parental control and supervision; the presence of step-parents; clashing values of parents and children; the collapse of traditions; dominating father figure with an unbridled temper; the absence of parents due to their long working hours; and children being sent to the cities to beg or look for a missing family member without a fixed abode.
- Micro-level factors - the following personality traits were identified: a feeling of inferiority because parents cannot afford school books or school uniforms; a need for personal attention which is impossible in a large family; school performance; children who are orphans or whose parents or guardians are either in jail or have deserted them; young unmarried mothers without an income; a feeling of uselessness; the desire to survive; a love for adventure, the need to be free and peer pressure.

(c) Street children's way of life

The respondents described the children's way of life as follows:

- Locality of the phenomenon - street children primarily come from townships, self-governing states and neighbouring states in order to live in the cities. The fact that children flock to the cities can be linked to personal conversations that impress upon the children the notion that cities are places that provide opportunities for financial prosperity.
- Social organization - from the data it appears that there is some measure of structure in street life. The group typically adopts a child who enters street life, and has leaders who are typically taller, stronger, cleverer or more streetwise than their mates. The leader ensures that a particular group hierarchy is adhered to. He takes care of the safety of the group, but also claims certain favours.
- Income generation - street children generally attempt to obtain money through begging, pamphlet distribution, gardening, prostitution and theft.
- Personal care - street children generally appear dirty and unkempt and their clothes are often tattered. The respondents averred that the personal care of these children leaves much to be desired and that most of them are exposed to this condition especially at night because they do not return home.
- The misuse of abusive substances - from the data it seems that glue sniffing or the use of other abusive substances is part of life. The respondents contended that most of the children carry a small bottle of glue or a cloth soaked in benzene in their shirt fronts in order to inhale the substances to temporarily escape from hunger, cold and other hardships. Petrol vapours are also inhaled as well as dagga and mandrax.

- Involvement in crime - the general view of the respondents was that the danger of becoming a habitual criminal increases in direct relation to the length of time the child reside on the streets. It appears that the children resort to theft, robbery, and the possession of dagga and begging, but they also commit less serious transgressions like gambling, drunkenness, drinking in public, disturbance of peace, loitering and urinating and defecating in the street.

#### (d) Advantages and disadvantages of street life

The data gathered entailed the following implicit and explicit references to the advantages and disadvantages of street life:

##### Advantages

- The group provides empathy and security for the child
- The child is safe from maltreatment from his parents
- The child earns more money on the street than he could at home or elsewhere
- The child is not subjected to discipline
- The child learns to think creatively and differently since he continually has to devise plans in order to survive
- The street fulfils the child's need for adventure

##### Disadvantages

The disadvantages can be divided into four categories, namely emotional, health and educational problems, as well as exposure to antisocial practices.

- Emotional problems - these problems include street children's continuous search for

people who will empathize with them, a fear that nobody will ever love them, a fear of being alone, distrust of their fellow man, self image problems, anxiety, depression and hallucinations.

- Health problems - various health problems can be caused by exposure to cold, unhygienic conditions and contagious diseases resulting from street life. Examples are colds, chest and breathing problems, dental problems, skins problems, gastric fever, malaria, food poisoning, cholera, malnutrition, sexually transmitted diseases and bite wounds.
- Educational problems - lack of schooling as well as the deterioration of skills.
- Exposure to antisocial and exploitative activities - the following appeared to be most important: assault, rape, prostitution, illegal trading, street children as cheap labourers, street fights and victimisation.

### **2.3.3. The street child as a universal phenomenon**

The street child phenomenon is encountered by a number of countries worldwide. Children leave their homes for a variety of reasons. Most of the reasons are common to most countries. There are also unique differences in the conditions under which the children find themselves in different countries (Barnette, 1995).

#### **2.3.3.1. African countries**

Schurink (1993) affirms that street and working children are reportedly a widespread phenomenon in most African countries, however it is not well documented and reliable statistics are lacking. During the 46 years since the end of World War II, countries in Africa and Latin America have experienced unprecedented growth in their urban populations. Rapid

urbanisation in Africa has brought about an augmentation in the number of street children on city streets. In Khartoum, for example, there are an estimated 20 000 street children, in Ethiopia 5 000 street children are housed in the Amba village near Lake Zwai, and 13 600 street children stay in the Starehe Boys' Centre in Nairobi. A recent study of street children in three urban centres in Namibia found their number to be as high as 2 300 out of the total population of 150 000, with 700 to 800 street children in Windhoek alone.

Furthermore, the above-mentioned author maintains that there are indications that some of these children are the products of civil war and unrest, and suffer from the consequences of traumatic experiences while others seem to have emerged from fairly normal social conditions. Street children in African cities could, just like street children in other developing countries, be divided into three categories, namely children on the streets, children of the streets and children of homeless people born and bred on the streets. Because of a combination of factors such as poverty, overcrowding, famine, family disorganisation and alcohol or substance abuse, all of them are compelled to work, beg or steal. According to African tradition, the streets have always played an important role in the lives of young people. Meetings and ceremonies are held under the pow-pow tree and traditional initiations take place on the street. Street children are therefore regarded as part of the landscape and the society pays little attention to them and feels no obligation to help them. This is the main reason why efforts to arouse public attention and action in African societies and communities are often met with public resistance. Another reason for the numerous problems encountered in this regard is that members of the public view them as hopeless cases.

#### **2.3.3.2. European countries**

Chetty (1997) provides insight into the presence of street children in Europe. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, following the failure of the children's crusade in the Middle Ages, large numbers of children lived in bands and pillaged in order to survive. These children were allegedly sold into slavery in cities such as Dublin, Glasgow and Naples. In London in the 1800s, children who were filthy and deserted were known as "street arabs". Ireland also has a history of

homelessness due to many years of poverty, evictions, economic deprivation and political conflict. Street children were also a common sight in both Russia and Japan during famine and civil war, and due to high levels of illegitimacy.

### **2.3.3.3 America**

Brennan, Elliot and Huizinga (1978) and Janus *et al.* (1987) put forward that American adolescents are running away from home in unprecedented numbers and runaway behaviour is reaching epidemic proportions. Most of the officially recorded data in law enforcement institutions show a steady increase in the number of runaway youth. Typically, they are the products of broken homes and brutality inflicted by alcoholic and drug addicted parents. They take to the streets and use their bodies for survival. Each year approximately two million children disappear, of these, 1 850 000 are runaways. Seven thousands runaways are picked up by Florida law enforcement officers annually. This is out of an estimated 50 000 children who run away or disappear each year in the state of Florida.

### **2.3.3.4. Latin American countries**

According to Schurink (1993) there are currently more than 170 million people living in absolute poverty in Latin America. This constitutes 40% of the region's population. Of these, about 75 million are children between birth and fifteen years of age. The situation of street children in Latin America thus seems to be more critical than in other developing countries. There is an estimated 40 million children struggling to survive on the streets of all major urban areas. The phenomenon of street children has reached alarming proportions in Brazil, where more than 20 million are growing up on the streets. Brazil has also become well known for the death squads that prey on street children. In Bogota there are between 3 000 and 5 000 street children. Thus, Bogota has an international reputation as the "abandoned child capital of the world".

According to the above-mentioned author, the children in Latin American countries are compelled to become street children because of a combination of factors. There are declining family income, desperate poverty, unemployment, family disintegration, anguish, overcrowding, illegitimacy, abandonment and political violence. Street children use the street in various ways and live there sporadically or permanently. This situation leads to premature work activities, little or no schooling, estrangement from the family, physical abuse, sexual exploitation and delinquency.

#### **2.3.3.5. South Africa**

South Africa is also confronted with an escalating number of street children. Lewis (1998) states that there are about a thousand street children in an area the size of the Cape Peninsula, of which 10% are girls. Children who beg during the day and return home at night, are not included in this figure. Street children come from African, Indian and Coloured communities. The reasons why children turn to the streets are complex and manifold, and include both push factors (poverty, unemployment and overcrowding) and pull factors (the desire to earn money and freedom). Le Roux (1996) asserts that the vast majority of an estimated 9 000 street children in South Africa are black. There are virtually no white street children in South Africa, but there are 10 000 white children in 1 600 state-registered and subsidised children's homes. The present ratio of blacks to whites in South Africa is approximately 5:1.

#### **2.3.4. Perspectives underlying explanations of runaway behaviour**

There are a large number of possible explanations of runaway behaviour. Brennan *et al.* (1978, pp. 42- 44) and Janus *et al.* (1987, pp. 49-50) report that a review of prior research on street children proposes the following perspectives underlying an explanation of runaway behaviour:

- The psychological personal explanation
- The social structural or environmental explanation



- The social - psychological explanation

#### **2.3.4.1. The psychological personal explanation**

According to this perspective, the cause is clearly located in the youth. There is a search for some special trait or psychological characteristic which will explain runaway behaviour. Therefore, the personal psychological dynamics and personality functioning of the child are regarded as being responsible for his or her behaviour. The traditional belief that runaway behaviour originates in personal pathology is documented by the American Psychiatric Association's inclusion of the diagnostic category "runaway reaction" in an earlier version of its 'Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders'. It now identifies runaway behaviour as a component of a personal conduct disorder. An accumulation of clinical evidence over the years apparently serves to support this orientation. The bulk of this evidence is the varied symptomatology found to be over represented in runaway youth. The symptoms include depression, loneliness, low self esteem, lack of internal impulse control, delinquent tendencies and sub delinquent activities. Therefore, the runaway is seen as pathological and delinquent.

#### **2.3.4.2. The social structural or environmental explanation**

In this perspective the cause is not located in the youth, but is seen to inhere in the environmental situation. Compelling social conditions such as cruel parents, neglect, physical violence, rejection and so on, are emphasised. There is an assumption that irrespective of the personal characteristics of the youth, anyone could reasonably be expected to escape from such a dreadful environment. It is not the personality characteristics of the youth that need treatment, but rather the social conditions that should be modified.



#### **2.3.4.3. The social – psychological explanation**

This perspective attempts to synthesise psychological personal and social structural explanations by focusing on the interaction between certain social conditions and the individual personality of the child. This perspective assumes that the two orientations above may contain a part of the truth, but that they are oversimplifications. The basic assumption is that runaway behaviour results from an interaction between certain kinds of social conditions and the individual personality of the child. The cause is emphasised as inhering in the joint interaction between the person and the environment.

#### **2.3.5. Aetiology of the street child phenomenon**

Profound studies conducted on the street children denote that no single factor could be held accountable for the emergence of the phenomenon. The most common cited factors are mainly political, social and individual.

##### **2.3.5.1. Political factors**

Politics play a fundamental role in people's lives. There are regulations which prescribe how people should live. Mentioned below, is the most well-known legislature in South Africa that contributed to the emergence of the street child phenomenon.

##### **(a) The Group Areas Act, Influx Controls and Pass Laws**

According to Swart (1990a) and Chetty (1997), the state policy enshrined in influx control, pass laws and the Group Areas Act contributed indirectly to the proliferation of street children in the country. The Group Areas Act, which was implemented in 1950, saw the creation of separate geographical areas for the various population groups. The Act had dire implications, particularly for Blacks, Coloured and Indian people. From the time of its

implementation in 1950 to the end of 1981, 120 787 families were moved. Only 2 262 of them were White, the rest were Coloured and Indian. The ties binding communities, families and children were loosened, with the result that without social restraints, the children were free to do as they pleased. In terms of the above legislation, black communities were also resettled far from any existing amenities and facilities, and were subjected to frequent bulldozing or burning of dwellings that were considered unfit. Street children were torn from their families when their parents could not prove to the Resettlement Board that they were their children. The Act also prohibited black children from living with parents who worked in white areas. They were consequently left with relatives, friends and even acquaintances. Isolation from parents and poor nurturing as well as the eviction of employees' children by their employers are seen as factors that facilitated entry into street life.

The Influx Control legislature effectively prohibited large-scale settlement of Blacks in urban areas, unless they qualified to live in a white area or were granted permission to work in South Africa under the migrant labour system. Families were not permitted to accompany migrant workers, thereby leading to the disintegration of family life. In the process, migrant labourers found themselves as *outsiders* on their annual visits to their families and lost their authority over their children.

Furthermore, pass laws formed the legal framework for the Group Areas Act and influx control legislation. These laws necessitated the carrying of a passbook at all times and determined the right of the individual to be in White areas. As a result, millions of people were criminalized for actions that in any other country were regarded as normal and acceptable. The above laws led to the disintegration of family bonds, and by implication to the weakening of the duties, responsibilities and controls inherent in these bonds. Furthermore, job reservation and the inferior education system for Blacks precluded most Blacks from receiving a solid education which, in turn, limited the job opportunities available to them. The Institute for Christian National Education formed in 1939 and the Bantu Education Act of 1953 were designed to entrench the inferiority of black education and to ensure the trusteeship of the Whites over the Non-whites. The implementation of these

laws has led to widespread poverty, unemployment, overcrowding, housing shortages and discrepancies in implementing socio-economic policies. These conditions, in turn, have caused stress and strain in interpersonal relationships, especially within the family. Street children are the products of an accumulation of circumstances and events emanating from broader structures and processes.

(b) Political protest

De Miranda and Sartor (1995) emphasise the fact that during the past few years, the youth of South Africa have become more politicised and have sought to identify with the liberation struggle of the adults. As a means of identifying with one or other political party, they have willingly become members of self defence and protection units. Armed with semi automatic weapons, these children seek to be the custodians of community security. At an early age, these children have grown accustomed to killing and the possibility of being killed. In an effort to escape being hunted and killed by their opponents, they have to flee to the city for refuge.

On the other hand, Carr (1995) accentuates that the year 1976 comes to mind as the genesis of “the street child” in South Africa. A generation of black and coloured children gave up their education to fight for their liberation. The 1980s gave birth to the concept that it was all right to openly acknowledge social problems such as drug abuse and alcoholism, and the existence of street children in South Africa.

(c) Township conditions

Chikane (cited in Carr, 1995) reports that the world of the township child is extremely violent. It is a world made up of teargas, bullets, whippings, detention and death on the streets. It is an experience of military operations and night raids as well as roadblocks and body searches. It is a world where people simply disappear, where parents are assassinated and homes are petrol bombed. It was against this background that South Africa began to

encounter the emergence of street children during the late 1970s.

Botha (cited in Schurink, 1993) declares that the following stress symptoms often present themselves in these children:

- Psychosomatic illness
- Disturbed sleep
- Concentration and memory problems
- Increased dependency on tobacco and drugs
- Problems with relationships

Although many children are exposed to the above-mentioned factors, it seems that it is mostly during adolescence that these children cannot cope and then they either leave their homes temporarily or permanently.

#### (d) Education

Barnette (1995) and Chetty (1997) maintain that there is little doubt that the crises in our schools since 1976 have contributed to the phenomenon of street children. The present generation of youngsters have experienced that to get their own way they simply need to boycott and apply pressure. Education that should be regarded as a right, not a privilege, was deliberately designed by the former government to suppress black people and keep them in their place. Education for black people was never meant to be equal, but was designed to frustrate and alienate pupils at every turn. The Bantu Education Act imposed in 1953 was the means by which this ideology could be attained. Resistance to this Act came from teachers, students and communities alike who were well aware of the inferior nature of the education provided. Black education was characterised by a shortage of schools and classrooms, and consequent overcrowding. Teachers were underqualified and schools were severely lacking in facilities and textbooks. The above factors led to young people's rejection of the black education system that they saw as the tool of the state to implement its discriminatory

policies. Children rejected the schools and what they stood for, but did not reject fair, satisfying education. The inferior school system entrenches poverty, which in turn makes a street lifestyle almost inevitable.

### **2.3.5.2. Social factors**

The following factors were identified as contributing to the proliferation of street children: urbanisation and westernisation, poverty as well as unemployment and overcrowding.

#### **(a) Urbanisation and westernisation**

Westernisation and urbanisation are often cited as contributory factors to the origination of street children. Chetty (1997) delineates that westernisation refers to the influence of western culture on indigenous culture when the two cultures meet. The African family is bound by a strict code of conduct and ethics, inextricably entwined with culture and tradition. Every man, woman and child has a place and a role to fulfil in family and community life. Out of this awareness arises stability and security. The African individual in urban society finds himself in conflict. He is isolated from family and community support systems and is confronted by values, norms and laws that become alien to him. Western values, norms and laws are seen as desirable and, by implication, status-conferring. In order to be accepted, there is a tendency to identify with a dominant culture and to denounce the African culture. In the process, important elements of black culture are denied, with the many controls and supports that are an inherent part of the culture. The westernisation of black families is one of the reasons for the higher incidence of black street children since it is responsible for the loss of cultural values and is thus, disruptive of urban family life.

Urbanisation is also a contributory factor to the street child phenomenon. Increasing hardships such as unpredictable climatic conditions, unsuitable farming methods and diminishing profits entice rural dwellers to the city. The city holds out promises for better educational and job opportunities, combined with better facilities and resources. The

expectations of the newcomers to the city are often unrealised as they are faced by cities that simply cannot accommodate the burgeoning population. The result is poverty, unemployment and frustration. Both parents are often obliged to work long hours for low pay. Children are left unsupervised without vital support systems and the family unit disintegrates.

#### (b) Poverty

Barnette (1995) points out that during the years when South Africa was subjected to sanctions, many breadwinners were retrenched from work. As a result, it became more difficult for parents to provide sufficient food to satisfy their children's hunger. Many families were forced to find alternative sources of income and a number of children decided to go to the street in order to get money that would allow them to satisfy their hunger.

Furthermore, Chetty (1997) affirms that in many developing countries, population growth supersedes economic growth due to natural increases and rural to urban migration. Consequently, large numbers of people are barely able to make ends meet. Driven by poverty and need, children in developing countries living and working on the streets are a common sight. Street children in developing countries are the products of unemployment, rural to urban migration, poverty and broken families, and are forced to live on the fringe of the adult world. Poverty in South Africa is linked to urbanisation, job reservation, the inferior education system for Blacks and the inequitable distribution of resources. Poverty creates stress and frustration, which apart from weakening parents' self control, also weakens their ability to control and discipline their children. The stresses and strains emanating from poverty often results in violent and aggressive interchanges between husband and wife, which frequently spill over into violence towards children. Poverty and abuse, singly or in combination, are powerful precipitators for the decision by children to flee from their families and communities and live on the streets. The wide-spread poverty in urban areas necessitates that children contribute to the family income and in many cases they may be the sole contributors.

### (c) Unemployment and overcrowding

Chetty (1997) explicates that economic recession is being experienced in several countries throughout the world. South Africa has been in the grip of recession and rising inflation rates for a number of years. International sanctions and disinvestment have resulted in the closure of businesses, factories and mines, culminating in widespread unemployment hardship. Children are asked to work to supplement the family income through begging or vending, or are told to fend for themselves. Children, therefore, tend to the streets for survival out of sheer desperation or because they are expected to.

On the other hand, overcrowding is perceived to be related to poverty and unemployment. The dearth of affordable housing for Black families and high rentals leads to the situation where a dwelling is occupied by several tenants in efforts to reduce payments. Some children make a choice between the claustrophobic conditions indoors or moving out on the street and usually opt for the latter.

#### **2.3.5.3. Family factors**

All human societies have primary groups that are accountable for socialising the very young. By chance alone a child is born into a certain group of individuals with whom he or she will engage in frequent interactions while learning to value these relations, not as a means to an end, but as ends in themselves. In these primary groups commonly referred to as families, children first learn where they belong in society and what they can anticipate in life. Hence, there are certain factors that are inherent in families that also culminate in the street child phenomenon. These factors are identified as follows: family disintegration, parental abuse, parental instability, family conflict, illegitimacy, alcoholism and parental discipline.



(a) Family disintegration

Chetty (1997) intimates that the structural disruption of the family through death or divorce might also be a cause of the street child phenomenon. When a divorced parent enters a new relationship, his or her children may be abused by the step-parent and this may cause great trauma, isolation and alienation of the child from the family. Such children may end up on the streets begging and engaging in prostitution.

In addition, Barnette (1995) proclaims that following their parents' divorce, many children opt for the streets because they can no longer cope with their family situation. They need a father to identify with. As a result, when unable to find someone to imitate in their own environment they go to the streets in search of a father-figure. Often group (gang) leaders provide this male figure to young ones.

(b) Parental abuse

According to Rothman (1991), Smith (1996) and Chetty (1997) street children have been rejected by many segments of society, including their own families. Their family backgrounds are characterised by violence, abuse, neglect and rejection. Street children have been subjected to exploitation and rejection, especially by fathers; thus, making their lives unbearable at home. Step-parents are particularly hated for the abuse they inflict and the deterioration of care following their arrival into the home. It is against this background that many children run away from their homes. However, De Miranda and Sartor (1995) hold that factors such as the deflated economy and the possibility of retrenchment impact upon society. From a psychological point of view, there must be an outlet for the emotions and frustrations that build up in the lives of these adults. Invariably that release is found by means of alcohol in the local shebben. Frustrations at feeling unable to change one's life, combined with alcohol are a recipe for abuse. The male's frustration is released by the abuse of his spouse and children. As a result, the woman becomes imprisoned by these circumstances and unwillingly gives vent to her feelings by abusing her children. The child as the innocent



victim is not able to understand the reason for an unprovoked or overtly excessive approach towards him and interprets all these actions as signs of being unwanted, and thus, leaves the home for the streets.

Janus *et al.* (1987) aver that in America parents kick or even bite some 1.7 million children per year, beat up 46 000 to 750 000 more, and attack another 46 000 with knives or guns. As more knowledge is gained about the effects of abusive family environments on children, it is becoming more evident that there are many ramifications. They may include displays of aggression, delinquency, anxiety, low self-concept, depression, deviant criminal sexual activity and running away. For children who are sexually or physically abused by family members, the lessons often impressed on them are that they are unwanted and unworthy individuals. Furthermore, the above- mentioned authors report that in their study of 149 street children in America of which 63% were males and 37% were females, 43% of them stated physical abuse in the family as an important reason for their running away. Physically abused children displayed low self concepts; a general dissatisfaction with life and a longing for things to be different; responded positively to items that indicate reduced involvement with the external world and withdrew from friends; reported being afraid of sex and adult men ; felt lonely, unattractive and suicidal; and reported headaches, sleeping problems, flashbacks and crying spells. The results of the study indicated that post-traumatic disorder is a potential outcome for a large proportion of street children who were physically abused by family members.

In addition, the authors report that apart from physical abuse, there were also cases of familial sexual abuse. Of 55 females, 73% reported sexual abuse, compared to the 38% of the 89 males. Their assessment of the relationship between sexual abuse and delinquent activities provided evidence that sexually abused females were more likely to engage in this behaviour than their non-abused counterparts. Sexually abused females were significantly more likely to report having had trouble with the law, and to have participated in acts of physical violence and delinquent activities such as substance abuse, petty theft and prostitution than non-sexually abused females. On the other hand, sexually abused males displayed a different

set of symptoms, which suggested a more insidious reaction. They were depressed, showed patterns of avoidance and had difficulty with all types of interpersonal relations (a difficulty that includes withdrawal and a fear of adult men). They were also less likely than their non-abused counterparts to feel that the events leading to their running away were something that they could have controlled and they were more likely to believe that they were the ones to blame for those events. They found themselves in the difficult position of understanding the events that led to their running away as somewhat out of their control, but as events for which they feel responsible. Their symptoms are consistent with the symptoms associated with unresolved and untreated sexual abuse. More specifically, they appear consistent with the so called silent reaction to sexual abuse. This reaction occurs when sexual victimisation has not been reported or treated.

Brennan *et al.* (1978) also report that in their study of 816 street children in Colorado, violent scenes and arguments with parents were mentioned by approximately 50% of the children as being the immediate compelling reasons for their decision to run away. The parents were reported to have hit the children with an object such as a stick, belt, tree branch, fist or knife.

#### (c) Parental instability

According to Brennan *et al.* (1978) and De Miranda and Sartor (1995), man's greed and desire for achievement and status have in recent years driven him to new heights of cost effectiveness and productivity. Greater demands are made on family time by the work place, in that parents spend more time at work than home. Communication and understanding together with quality time with the family has been eroded away. As the family has been weakened, relationships have deteriorated and are almost valueless. The primary victims are the children who no longer have any values set by their parents. It is not surprising that these children can actually leave home and never return.

(d) Family conflict

Chetty (1997) points out that the most serious conflicts between parents and runaway children arise over school performance and household rules. Children whose grades do not meet their parents' expectations are frequently denied privileges and do additional household chores. The demands of the parents and the restrictions imposed in order to achieve them were viewed by the runaways as rejection and unjust. Runaways felt that their parents would be better off without them and consequently left.

(e) Illegitimacy

Schurink (1993) and Chetty (1997) assert that illegitimacy among South African black families has risen largely because of the policies of migrant labour and influx control. Men who spend only a few weeks each year with their wives form liaisons in the city with other women with whom they father children. Women also engage in temporary unions with men for financial and moral support, and as a result, they have their children. This in turn results in a large number of children who grow up in unstable, insecure, temporary and shifting family relationships. Illegitimate children born under conditions of poverty run the risk of abuse, neglect and abandonment, and may account for a sizeable proportion of children who are residing on the streets.

(f) Alcoholism

Children with alcoholic parents do not mind their drinking as much as they fear its results. After drinking, parents are likely to shout at and to fight one another. They also become less patient with their children and beat them up. They do not provide them with food or fail to cook for them, and do not give them the essentials they want such as clothes, schooling and many others. There comes a time when the children start giving up on their parents and decide to opt out, at first for a day or two and then for longer durations until they eventually settle on the streets for good (Barnette, 1995).

In addition, Schurink (1993) and Chetty (1997) emphasise the fact that alcoholism weakens the bonds between the alcoholic parent and the children. They do not respect the drinker and resent his or her attempt to assert authority and discipline over them. When the alcoholism of the parent is combined with poor living conditions, overcrowding and the lack of food, money, and physical and emotional warmth, the tenuous ties between parents and children may finally be broken. The particular meanings and interpretations that street children develop during their interactions with others determine whether they remain in an unhappy home situation or leave. Children of such parents show a stronger predisposition for anti-social behaviour than other youth.

(g) Parental discipline

De Miranda and Sartor (1995) are of the opinion that from a cultural point of view, it has normally been the man who has been responsible for the discipline of the family, but this has been neutralised as a result of the weakened state of our country's economy. The husband has been forced to search for employment in the city. As a result of a greater amount of time that he spends away from home, he ends up having another wife and children in the city. In the rural area the wife is left to fend for the children and herself, and is greatly dependent on the portion of the husband's salary sent to help her meet the needs of the family. Very often the woman is also compelled to seek employment in the urban areas as a domestic worker. As a result, in many instances the wife has to work away from home for as long as the husband. The child is then left in the care of relatives or friends, and his bonding with his parents is completely destroyed. Any wrong action by the child and the resultant discipline can be interpreted by the child as a form of resentment and rejection on the part of the mother. Consequently, the child leaves the home for the streets.

Hence Schurink (1993) and Barnette (1995) argue that it seems as though excessive discipline was applied in some of the homes of street children. Many parents have good intentions and want their children to grow up the right way. Unfortunately, they have little

understanding of the psychology of a child and how to bring up children. Usually, their point of reference is their own upbringing which could be summarised as follows: a hiding whenever there is a fault, little or no time with children for discussion coupled with an attitude of do as I say and not allowing them to go anywhere except home, school and other selected places. This kind of discipline can result in the following: the development of animosity towards the parent or guardian who applies this kind of discipline, lying for self-protection and running away from home.

#### **2.3.5.4. Individual factors**

Individual factors, namely the personal psychological dynamics and personality functioning of the youth also culminate in runaway behaviour and ultimately in the street child phenomenon. Stated below are some of individual factors that play a significant role in this regard.

##### **(a) High IQ and stress**

Chetty (1997) declares that there are studies that indicate that stress and IQ result in the emergence of street children. Many studies focus on stress as a reason for children running away from their homes. A comparative study of non-runaways and runaways by Roberts indicated that runaways experienced a greater number of stressful events than their non-runaway counterparts. These events included stressful patterns of living such as being beaten by parents, being thrown out of their homes, the death of a parent, being placed in children's shelters and being caught for drug dealing. Therefore, it is evident that street children are subjected to stress that may explain their presence on the streets.

Furthermore, there are studies that indicate that boys with high IQs, born of uneducated and poor parents become frustrated by their family environment at times because their parents do not see the need for them to be educated; all their parents want them to do is to go and earn money so that they can support them financially. Such boys will often be tempted to leave

their homes. Their reason for them being on the street is to 'make money' to continue with their education. However, their dream is seldom, if ever, realised.

(b) Fun, adventure, good times and a better way to live

Brennan *et al.* (1978) depict that many youths are motivated to run away from home by the hope of finding good friends, good times, adventure and fun. These runaways are not thought of as suffering from any pathological or sociopathic syndromes. Their impatience to escape the demands of their parental situation and the constraints of their family home, can be attributed to either a very rapid maturation and drive for independence or over-control and repression on the part of their parents. In this case, the adventuresome runaway might still be described as a psychologically healthy youth who is escaping a repressive family environment.

(c) School experiences

The school experience of most street children is characterized by rejection, conflict, violence, failure and negative stigmatizations. They have psychologically withdrawn from their teachers, school activities and the value system on which the schools are based. Failure in the school leads to a search for more satisfying friends, namely peers who are consoling rather than critical and who do not constantly remind the youth of his failures. Most of their parents are apathetic to the educational progress of their children. In cases where parents have a strong concern for the academic success of the youth, the youth's failure may be a source of conflict (Brennan *et al.*, 1978). The parents who are at a loss as how to deal with the problem resort to administering frequent beatings, sometimes of a savage nature. In trouble at home and school, the children find it easier to avoid both places by going to the streets (Lewis, 1998).

### 2.3.6. The street subculture and lifestyle

As a result of the children's prolonged exposure to adverse conditions on the streets, they ultimately adopt the culture that prevails there. The following paragraphs provide an explication of factors that characterize the street culture and lifestyle.

#### 2.3.6.1. Group life

Children on the streets do not automatically know how to survive. They learn survival skills by trial and error or by observing others. Schurink (1993) asserts that the process of becoming a street child consists of two interrelated phases, namely, that of *newcomer* and that of *streetwise*. Every street child has to go through the phase of being a newcomer. Newcomers who know nothing about street life are welcomed by established street children and taught how to survive. The length of the newcomer phase varies and problems could be eased by befriending children who originate from the same area as the newcomer. The majority of newcomers experience feelings of ambivalence between returning home and staying on the streets. If the newcomers want to raise their status to that of street children, they have to acquire expertise and become streetwise. Depending on their age, they have to master certain skills before they become street children. The younger ones have to learn to beg from prospective customers since this is the major task assigned to them. Older children have to learn to wash cars and assist with parking. To be streetwise they have to experience a set of positive episodes while doing their job and to accept the street child identity. Furthermore, they have to earn the respect of the group and be accepted as a professional member capable of understanding their language, sharing their norms and values, and doing the job assigned to them well.

Swart (1990b), Bourdillon (1995) and Carr (1995) point out that boys on the streets form communities; that is, groupings of up to ten boys who move about together during the day. A community like this would be led by an older boy. The leader is normally strong, wise, protective, generous and physically fit. Any boy seeking out an existence on the streets would



out of necessity become a member of one of these groups. This community alliance provides a system by which the boy can survive, a place to sleep, a mode of collecting money, the knowledge of how to avoid conflict with other communities or the law and general ground rules by which to exist. Within the group the young boys pay for their protection by providing food and in some cases by paying a specific daily fee to the group. The interaction is characterized by protection and support, especially when one of them is sick or injured. Older boys frequently offer young boys friendly support and a place to go to during weekends. Places of abode vary considerably and generally amount to carving out a territory anywhere the boys will not be worried by others. They normally sleep on vacant pieces of land, shop doorways, public toilets, back alleys and underground sewers. In the evening, the group comes together and moves to one place to sleep. When it becomes dark, they need the closeness of each other; they sleep close together to keep warm and for companionship.

Furthermore, Barnette (1995) and Chetty (1997) add that without this vital support group, life on the streets would be difficult, if not impossible. The peer group becomes the primary reference group and performs functions that normally would be undertaken by the family. Under such circumstances, strong bonds of loyalty and allegiance are forged. If they never knew friendship or acceptance before, they surely came to experience it on the streets. The longer children remain on the streets, the more difficult it becomes for them to be reintegrated into their families because they quickly acquire certain habits which they cannot easily dispose of. To survive on the streets within their own group, children soon learn to be fighters and bullies. If they cannot get what they want, they go for it by whatever means they can.

#### **2.3.6.2. Nutrition**

According to Swart (1990a), the children buy bread and chips on certain occasions, but they scavenge for food in rubbish bins most of the time. Carr (1995) confirms that the children's diet consists of handouts from the back doors of restaurants and cafes, or whatever they can beg. On the other hand, Richter (1990) emphasizes the fact that when the nutritional status of



97 street children was investigated, it was discovered that 74% of these children were malnourished, of which 53% were underfed and 21% chronically underfed.

### 2.3.6.3. Work

Street children throughout the continent appear to work. They earn an income by hawking, parking cars, portering, loading, carrying, pushing carts and trading in second hand clothes (Cockburn & Crawford-Browne, 1998). They also engage in car washing, guarding cars when the owner is gone, pushing trolleys, begging and prostitution. Depending on the area where they are found, they would either have their own territory or work on the basis of first come first serve. They have various ways of advertising their services, for instance they attract the potential customer's attention by waving a cloth to indicate available parking space, asking if they could wash or guard the car. They also pat their stomachs and look at the prospective client when asking for food or money. They earn between R5 and R30 per day. Those who engage in prostitution earn between R50 and R100 per session. The most powerful street children with the highest status are the ones who have money the most frequently and who can keep their money in their pockets because they are not afraid that someone will take it away. Less powerful children have to bury theirs in the ground when no one is around or even put it in plastic and swallow it (Schurink, 1993).

Furthermore, Swart (1990a) holds that some of the income-generation activities entail shoe-shining, caddying, sweeping shopkeepers' pavements as well as selling newspapers and flowers. However, many of these activities carry the risk of arrest. For instance prostitution, trading in stolen goods and car-parking are all punishable offences. Richter and Swart-Kruger (1996) add that there is evidence that the children are damaged by the work that they do. Their exploitation is evident in their deprivation of family life, reasonable working hours, time to pursue leisure and social interests, favorable working conditions, dignity, the acknowledgement of the value of their labour, legal protection, membership in effective worker organisations, further acquisition of knowledge and skills and opportunities and scope for advancement. Street vendors complain that their assets and money are stolen by

older children and adults. Those who worked in restaurants reported having to wait until late to eat cold leftovers scraped from the bottom of the pot. However, earning money can also be personally enriching for street children. They take considerable pride in their ability to contribute to the economic support of themselves and their families, apart from enjoying the work itself.

#### **2.3.6.4. Drugs and substance abuse**

Several studies indicate street children's association with substance abuse. Brennan *et al.* (1978) and Lewis (1998) are of the opinion that children alone on the streets, whether they are boys or girls and no matter their ages, all use drugs. Drugging helps them to cope with life on the streets and escape the unpleasant memories and intense feelings of self-hatred. The boys use mandrax and solvents and on occasion, alcohol. Most of them start off with solvents because they are cheap and easy for children to purchase without questions being asked. Solvents act very quickly on the central nervous system and for a small outlay the children can remain intoxicated all day. These solvents result in mood swings, hallucinations, stomach cramps and fits of crying. High on solvents, the boys could pass through traffic as if it did not exist. Solvents and thinners are abused by children in various ways. Petrol is sniffed from a tin, thinners from pieces of cloth stuffed up their sleeves and glue is inhaled through the mouth from small plastic bottles which they keep concealed down their pants. Children who abuse solvents for a long duration develop sores on their mouths and runny noses. The smell of glue and thinners remain on their breath for days after they have stopped sniffing.

Garman (cited in Chetty, 1997) proclaims that in her study of solvent abuse among street children in the Cape, she noted the progression from smoking and drinking to glue sniffing, and finally to dagga and sometimes even to mandrax and cocaine. Other substances that are inhaled include plastic cement, dry-cleaning fluids, nail polish remover, cigarette lighter fluids, dyes, hair lacquer, aerosols and petrol. The novice is initiated into glue sniffing by his peers since this is very much a social activity that promotes understanding of peers. It may

also be used as rebellion against society and as a means to combat hunger, cold and fear.

Jansen, Richter, Griesel and Joubert (1990), Cockburn (1994) and De Miranda and Sartor (1995) state that street children describe glue-sniffing as an easy way of escaping street life. Glue sniffing has the following side effects: memory deficits, visual scanning problems and concentration problems. Children who engage in petrol or glue sniffing usually do not feel hungry or cold when they are intoxicated. In addition, Smart and Walsh (1993) report that the majority of these children become depressed as a result of substance abuse and treatment compliance is very poor. Furthermore, Richter (in Moran, 1994) is of the opinion that nearly 30% of these children who experiment with solvents become chronic users.

#### **2.3.6.5. Crime: violence and theft**

Past research on street children suggests that these children are involved in criminal violence. Apart from criminal violence, there is great concern that some of them are also engaged in theft. Lewis (1998) affirms that on the streets the children own nothing, not even the clothes that they wear. They see no value in cluttering up their own lives with possessions that demand a large amount of their time in terms of care, maintenance and protection. Their firm belief in "easy come, easy go" contributes to their ability to steal from others without genuine remorse. Peacock (1992) further states that the children's tendency of stealing is related to inadequate cultural conveyance in their families, churches and schools. According to theorists such as Freud and Jung, this inadequate cultural conveyance can lead to inadequate super-ego development, which in turn leads to stealing.

In addition, Baron and Hartnagel (1998) propose that economic deprivation and being the victim of aggravated assault contribute to the children's engagement in violence and theft.

(a) Economic deprivation

Children with limited financial resources are more likely to be involved in high incidences of robbery, aggravated assault, group fight and violence. Getting into a fight helps them to relieve stress and frustration that is possibly related to their financial resources. They engage in robbery in order to obtain money and other material articles.

In addition to a lack of income, attitudes towards economic deprivation also prove to be a significant predictor of some violent behaviour. Those youths who perceive the social structure to be blocked are more likely to rob people. From a traditional strain perspective, those youths who think they could not get a fair share in the legitimate labour market use violent and illegitimate means to secure monetary resources. Thus, the lack of resources and perceptions of inequality appear to stimulate impulses expressed as utilitarian violence.

(b) Victimization

It appears that being a victim of aggravated assault in particular or to a lesser degree simple assault, helps to explain incidences of violent behaviour. Those youths who have been victims of aggravated assault are more likely to participate in aggravated assault and group fights. They learn a greater variety of violent behaviour, and may learn from their victimization experiences on the street that extreme violence is an effective method of dispute settlement and conflict management. Therefore, the environment of angry aggression may have left these youths seeking out their victimizers to settle the score regardless of learning experiences and subcultural expectation.

#### **2.3.6.6. Police brutality**

Chetty (1997) reports that the children experience police brutality in the form of beatings, threats and intimidation. The corporal punishment, removal and round-up of street children by the police, and dumping them far out of town are considered excessive measures. Hence,

Schurink (1993) confirms that most children tended to think that police were negative towards them, catching them for nothing because they always suspected the children of committing crimes instead of regarding them as people who delivered service by washing and guarding cars. They reported various kinds of abuse by the police, ranging from being cursed, chased, tear-gassed and having water poured over them while asleep.

#### **2.3.6.7. Sexual abuse and sexuality**

Street children are easy targets for sexual abuse, particularly by white paedophilic clients. Their inferior status as Blacks, children and street children exposes them to perverse sexual practices, for a very low income. Rectal hemorrhaging due to sexual abuse concomitant with prostitution is also listed as a major cause of death among street children. However, in some instances the boys' rendering of sexual services to their clients is satisfying to them since it boosts their sense of manhood and their sense of self-worth (Chetty, 1997).

Lewis (1998) put forward that boys and girls on the street have the same strong sexual urges as other adolescents. Without the restraints imposed by adult supervision, they tended to satisfy themselves when, where and in whatever manner they choose. On the street sex is used in two ways: to make money and as a weapon. Sex was sometimes used by older boys to subjugate boys who were new on the streets. Violent sexual acts were not the sole prerogative of males on the streets, girls were sexually aggressive as well. When no men were available they took pleasure from each other. If the prospective partner was not willing, they were also capable of rape. Older street girls were not above tarting up their younger sisters, acting as their pimps and taking the greater share of the earnings. Boys, on the other hand, had older women who offered them work and took them home for a shower and sex.

#### **2.3.6.8. Illnesses**

Due to the unavailability of sufficient nutrition and inadequate health facilities, the children contract diseases on the streets. Street children suffer from diseases such as tuberculosis,

bronchitis, venereal disease and the withering mental effects of drug abuse (Chetty, 1997). Apart from stunted growth, they also suffer from lice, worms and scabies (Lewis, 1998). Children in Ghana were suffering from malaria, respiratory problems and diarrhoea diseases. In Accra, they have a high rate of sexually transmitted diseases (Shanahan, 1999).

Street children are also at risk of contracting and spreading AIDS. Richter and Swart-Kruger (1995) argue that as young people, these children have as much in common as other adolescents, but some of their risk behaviors are extreme. They tend to become sexually active sooner, on average at about 12,5 years and have more sexual partners than home-based adolescents. Many of them are raped and the sexual abuse of street girls is twenty times higher than that of women in general. They normally distinguish between two forms of sex, namely *survival sex* and *sex with chosen partners*. Survival sex is perceived as sex that they have to do, whilst sex with chosen partners is perceived as sex that they want to do. They are forced in most cases to engage in survival sex, and find that their clients often prefer and pay more for penetrative sex without condoms. Apart from survival sex, they tend to have sexual partners of either or both sexes who may also be engaging in survival sex and who do not use condoms. Furthermore, because condoms are rarely used, there is a high rate of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases among them. Sexually transmitted diseases increase vulnerability to the HIV infection. In Latin America, street children are involved in drug networks and there is an added danger of them becoming HIV infected through the use of contaminated needles. In South Africa, adolescent street girls frequently engage in anal sex as a contraceptive measure.

#### **2.3.6.9. Prostitution**

Prostitution is very common among street boys and girls. Chetty (1997) articulates that prostitution is referred to by the children as "chip chop". In Schurf's study of 28 children, 24 of them contributed to their income by means of prostitution and boasted about their contacts with *bunnies* (white men) and *sugar mummies* (white women).



Shanahan (1999) reports that girls who are street children have to adopt extra survival strategies. Once the age of puberty has been reached, many of them will have boy minders who will demand sexual favours as payment for protection. Many small girls will use sex for survival in terms of supplementing their income. Cockburn (1994, p.11) provides the following description of one such encounter by a Hillbrow street child:

"The quickest way of getting fast money is with chip-chop (prostitution). But people can hurt you. It's best to go home with ladies who have no men-folk because they are lonely and they pay well. Not all the boys do chip-chop. Some of them run away if they see people they think are looking for sex. Especially the smaller boys are scared. The usual thing for them is to let you shower, give you some food, then show you a movie and ask you to do the same things. Then you might get anything from ten rands to fifty rands"

### **2.3.7. The behavioural pattern of street children**

According to Janus *et al.* (1987) many children return home and run away again and again, this is particularly true for those children who ran away from abusive home environments. Their decision to return home implies that they had undergone some emotional changes and that they were ready to attempt reconciliation with their parents. However, Richter (in Chapman, 1997) reports that those children who have maintained contact with their families displayed more emotional disturbances than those who did not. She stipulates that this might stem from the fact that the conditions that persuaded the children to retreat from their homes in the first place, resurface when they meet their families. Therefore, they are exposed to the same conditions that they encountered prior to their abode on the streets.

#### **2.3.7.1. Patterns of runaway behaviour**

Street children portray various patterns of runaway behaviour. Brennan *et al.* (1978) propose the following patterns of runaway behaviour: short-term crisis escapist, causal hedonists,

short-term crisis escapists or unhappy runaways, long-term runaway episodes and independent runaways.

(a) Type A: Short-term crisis escapists

In this pattern, the runaway youth leaves home in a spontaneous escape. There is a minimum of prior thought or planning. The child has no clear idea of his or her destination, nor how long he or she intends to stay away from home. The child does not seem to think of such issues. The departure is motivated by the need to escape the crisis rather than by compelling fantasies about fun or adventure.

(b) Type B: Causal hedonist

In this pattern, the runaway youths plan their runaway escapade fairly well. They take extra amounts of clothing, money and organise car rides. They are good time seekers and are not sure they are running away, but they are merely looking for a good time. They return on their own within one or two weeks with positive experiences.

(c) Type C: Short-term crisis escapists or unhappy runaways

In this pattern, the runaways are home within three days. They are primarily with friends while away from home. Their departure is sudden, reflecting an immediate crisis. They deliberately leave home in order to run away, have clear intentions and manage special provisions for their journey.

(d) Type D: Long-term runaway episodes

The departure of these youths is highly intentional. They deliberately plan their departure and have the intention of staying away permanently. They do not return on their own and usually leave home because of negative home situations. They have very low incidences of choosing



fun or exotic places as runaway destinations and they tend to run to houses of friends or relatives.

(e) Type E: Independent runaways

In this pattern, the youths deliberately leave home with the intention of staying away permanently. They carefully plan their departure, are well prepared with money, clothes and food, and usually organise a ride with friends. They are successful in reaching their chosen destination and are successful in surviving for a long time away from home. A majority of them manage to stay away from home for periods between one and six months, and a few stay away even longer.

### 2.3.7.2. Pathways and cycles of running away

Janus *et al.* (1987) articulate that street children repeat runaway behaviour or return home in a cyclical pattern through four pathways, namely the family, the institution, the street and the shelter. The family can be the youth's family of origin or a reconstituted family. The street represents an open environment that is protective, enticing and exploitative. It includes subways, abandoned buildings and other temporary, unsecured living areas. Institutions are pseudo home facilities, such as foster or group homes. They may include legal or health facilities, such as juvenile halls, mental institutions, correctional services or jails. The shelter is a protective, temporary arrangement that provides food, beds, and some form of companionship. A friend, church group and other human service organisations may provide it. These cyclical patterns can be presented as follows:

- Family → street or shelter → family
- Street → institution or shelter → street
- Institution → family or shelter → street

(i) Institution → Family or Shelter → Street

Initially, the children dwelled in an institution (which may have been a foster home, juvenile hall, mental institution or jail), then they either returned home, sought abode in a shelter or returned to the streets.

(ii) Street → Institution or Shelter → Street

In this pattern, they left the streets and resided in an institution or shelter, only to return to the streets once more.

(iii) Family → Street or Shelter → Family

In this case, some of them left their homes and inhabited the streets. Then they dwelled in a shelter and returned home afterwards.

### **2.3.8. Helping street children: Intervention considerations**

In an attempt to tackle the street child phenomenon, a variety of intervention strategies have been introduced. Stated below, are some of the intervention strategies that might be considered.

#### **2.3.8.1. Micro and macro intervention programmes**

Schurink (1993, pp. 243-259) suggests the following micro and macro programmes:

##### **2.3.8.1.1. Micro programmes**

At micro-level the following suggested programmes will be reviewed: contact and outreach,

immediate care, intake and assessment, and intervention sub-programmes which are further divided into child care services, education and training.

(a) Contact and outreach programme

A number of non-government organizations that offer services to street children in South Africa have an outreach programme where a street worker (referred to as a street educator in most overseas programmes) goes out to those places frequented by street children and tries to become acquainted with them. In South Africa there is at yet no specialized training for personnel who deal exclusively with street children. People such as social workers, child care workers and youth leaders receive general training which to some extent equips them to deal with the phenomenon of street children. Socio-educative institutions such as schools, youth organizations and welfare service offices expect young people to come to them whereas the opposite should be encouraged: Trained outreach workers should go out to those places where young people can be found (e.g. parking lots, business areas, disused buildings) and try to establish rapport or act as resources. The contact and outreach programme should aim to reach young people (who are normally suspicious of adults, authority and agencies), try to understand their situations and offer long-term support, attention and care through a variety of programmes with appropriately trained or experienced staff.

(b) Immediate care programme

The basic needs of street children are food, clothing and safer shelter, and this is where a programme should start. It has been indicated that most children seem to need medical attention for septic wounds, cuts, flu, infections and serious illnesses such as epilepsy and heart defects. In offering immediate care a programme needs to have sanitation, a bath and some medical facilities. The children should also have someone to talk to if they have such a need, and some form of recreation would help provide a relaxed atmosphere. Some of the children need, besides protection and shelter, expert psychological help to adjust to their “new life” after the trauma and brutalisation they have experienced at home and subsequently

on the street. A soup kitchen or a drop-in centre in various parts of a city would be ideal for this type of programme/service where not only referred children can come, but any child who wishes to come for a meal, a shower or just to play with peers. Existing community structures such as church halls and community centres can be used to run these facilities. The opportunity to utilise the services of such a programme should be given to all willing children (including those who still have daily contact with their families) in order to get to know them better and find out if they need a referral to another programme. While they are in this programme the children should be protected from each other as well as from outsiders. The programme should be managed by trained staff that should include outreach workers, social workers, health staff and child care workers. When the staff of the programme has decided that a child needs further attention, he/she should be referred to the intake programme where further information on the child will be obtained so that the child can be referred to an appropriate and relevant programme.

#### (c) Intake and assessment programme

In order for decisions to be made by the children and people helping them some information is necessary. The people helping the children should try and observe the latter's social and interpersonal functioning in order to know what to expect in respect of the children's behaviour and how to deal with it. Most of the present assessment techniques are aimed at children in need of care in general and not at street children as such. From interviews held with people involved in programmes/projects for street children, it would seem that with regard to street children assessment procedures that are followed in the assessment of children in need of care are, to a large extent, not tolerated by street children who often view this as an invasion of their privacy. The following are some of the issues that should be considered when decisions about street children have to be made:

- Identification of strengths and weaknesses in the child
- The child's perception of self and others
- Assessment of the child's stability to a programme is most important; a child's high

IQ and wish to go to school do not guarantee that he /she will survive in the school environment for long

- Assessment of the child's consistency (e.g. child comes home /to the shelter regularly, sleeps in regularly and keeps track of his /her belongings) will give some indication of whether a child is ready for a specific programme or not
- How he /she is going to adapt to the school environment (where applicable).

#### (d) Intervention sub-programmes

Local and intervention approaches used in other countries aim to assist children to meet their needs in respect of education, vocational preparation and income generation. The two approaches that seem to accommodate the needs of street children are an emphasis on the importance of allowing the children voluntary entrance to programmes and the prevention of family disintegration. Following is a discussion of programmes that children can be referred to or choose from after intake and assessment. These programmes are child care services, education and training.

(i) Child care services - the role of each individual taking care of the children should be that of change agent and enabler in respect of the children's individual needs. With regard to the children's care services, the following aspects must be borne in mind:

- The services should be offered at a place with which a child can identify. It is in such a place that consistent, stable and predictable relationships with the children can be developed, while helping them realise their personal identity.
- Efforts should be made to interest the children in the programme's activities up to a point where they are able to make joint decisions with the staff.
- The child should be allowed to develop by allowing him to experience the consequences of choices made by him. It is essential to give the children the maximum opportunity to make choices about their plan of action. An increasing

knowledge of children together with new information could bring about necessary adjustments to the plan of action.

(ii) Formal and Informal Education - because of the implications of the schooling patterns in respect of street children, both formal and non-formal education must be considered. Many street children attend local schools while resident in a shelter or a children's home. Because the ultimate aim of the residential resource is to get the child back into the community as soon as possible, street children should attend schools in the community to help facilitate the reconstruction process. The staff members' role will include liaison with school social workers in the community in order to take care of the identified problem areas in respect of the children resident in a residential resource. It has been observed that street children cannot concentrate on any one thing for long periods at a time. In order for these children to cope in a formal education setting, some remedial techniques need to be applied. Non-formal education emphasises the learning of specific knowledge and skills, has benefits that include improved self awareness and the ability to control the environment, has substantial autonomy at programme and local levels and emphasises initiative, self health and innovation. Unlike the curriculum of formal education which is based on theory and certain rules of acceptance, the non-formal curriculum is determined by the learning needs of individuals.

(iii) Training - some of the programmes in South Africa provide training according to the children's needs. An observation made by one programme staff member at a children's home was that while young the children are more likely to settle into a programme whereas most of the older ones displayed the need to work. Apart from the need for vocational training, most street children come from families where there is little concern for the child and his needs. These problems may hinder the socialisation process through which a child learns about self, others, relationships and moral values. This suggests that street children may benefit not only from job skills training, but training in social skills as well.

#### 2.3.8.1.2. Macro programmes

Presently a variety of services are being offered locally to street children, but so far there has been no known national attempt at preventing the problem. Prevention does not seem to have been achieved by the programmes that already offer services to street children. The basic step as far as prevention is concerned, is to extend the street programmes to communities. The community can be developed through community awareness, community resources, and parental training and support.

##### (a) Community awareness and participation

One way of tackling the street child phenomenon is contact with communities of origin and to work with them towards prevention through, for instance, the recreation of workshops for parenting training and support. All the key people should be made aware of their moral and social responsibility towards street children. Awareness of the problem can be achieved through community workshops, dramatic life interpretations at schools and on the streets, press coverage as well as nationwide campaigns. A greater awareness of the problems that affect these children may help to facilitate acceptance and help eliminate the fear, rejection and disdainful charity that they presently experience.

##### (b) Community resources

The majority of street children could remain in their own homes if effective and supportive services within the community were available. There is a great need for the generation of community resources which include childcare and after school care facilities, job recreation programmes, parent training and support programmes, and social work at schools. The community should constantly be made aware of services and facilities that could be utilised. School social workers offer help to the children's families by educating them about community resources. At school, the social worker can also offer remedial education and counselling to children and parents.



(c) Parental training and support

Parental training should be encouraged in order to decrease the incidence of conflict between parents and their children and to ultimately prevent children from leaving their homes for the streets. One way of making provision for this is to involve parents in the treatment plan. Apart from carrying out certain tasks and responsibilities, the parents could also be trained in child management skills.

**2.3.8.2. Short-term and long-term intervention programmes**

Janus *et al.* (1987, pp.106 -114) propose the following short-term and long-term intervention strategies:

(a) Levels of intervention for short-term programmes

The first priority for the front-line professional, namely the police officer, shelter or crisis centre worker, social worker, nurse or physician who initially comes in contact with the runaway is to provide safety and meet the youth's physical needs for food, shelter and health care. The youth needs to know that the basis of this contact is only to provide immediate care and help. Appropriate consultants or agencies (such as departments of youth services or mental health) can then be brought in to begin to work with the youth. Because the early involvement of helping agencies is important in any form of effective assistance, front-line personnel need to know which agencies to contact. Once the immediate physical needs of the runaway are met, helping professionals can begin to assess the runaway's problems. One way of doing so is to use the following levels of intervention. These approaches are based on how long the runaway has been away from home:

(i) Level one - this approach is aimed at the new runaway who has been away from home for less than one month and who has potential for being returned home. Careful assessment concerning the youth's safety in the home needs to be made, particularly if the youth is



female and thus, at high risk of having been both physically and sexually abused. It is necessary to take time to find out the reason for the youth's running away, the youth's choice of a stable environment and the viewpoint of the runaway's family. With the preteen runaway, undisclosed sexual abuse must be suspected.

(ii) Level two - the multiple runaway who has run away several times and who has been away from home for between one month to one year is not only at high risk of having been physically abused in the home, but also having abused while on the streets. In addition to level one assessment, these runaways need to be evaluated for general physical and sexual health, drug and alcohol use, and predatory criminal behaviour while on their own.

(iii) Level three - deals with the youth's homelessness as well as with the problems that caused him to flee. These youths are generally older and lack satisfactory school and work experience. This group of runaways often contains the "tough kids", the youths who carry weapons and survive on the streets by criminal means. They may be under the influence of another person, such as a pimp or drug boss and thus, require special protection from these exploiters. In addition to level two assessment, these youths need to be stabilized in a safe environment; helped to use existing skills for work; treated to decrease their tension and anxiety; detoxified for drug and alcohol abuse; and assessed for potential aggression towards themselves as well as towards others.

#### (b) Long-term intervention programmes

It is important to conceptualise treatment programmes that fit in with the runaway's social setting. Three basic settings in which runaways generally will remain for some time can be identified: the family, an institution, and a community-based setting.

##### (i) The runaway and the family

The target of intervention in the first setting is the runaway youth and his family system. The

primary resources for therapeutic efforts and planning are the family itself, the neighbourhood and the school. The sources of programme guidance can be the local mental health clinic, a family service agency, a church-sponsored programme or a contemporary self-help programme. The objectives of therapeutic programming are best derived from careful assessment and evaluation, made in conjunction with the family and the runaway, of the issues that prompted the running away behaviour. From research on reasons for running away, the area of verbal and psychological abuse has been shown to require the skill of a clinician who is familiar with assessing dysfunctional communication patterns within a family context. Patterns of verbal and psychological abuse are subtle. A skilled family clinician is needed to identify the structure of the family dynamics. This dynamic and structural approach to communication patterns has an immediate outcome of changing the negative experiences among people in the family to more positive and productive ones. Once this has been achieved, family members can address more personal causative factors with sensitivity, compassion and understanding.

(ii) The runaway in an institution

Institutionalisation of a runaway occurs for three major reasons: firstly, the youth cannot be returned to a functional family home; secondly, the youth's behaviour is so disorganised and disturbing that it is dangerous and non-functional to the youngster; or thirdly, the youth's behaviour is so deviant that the youngster becomes dangerous to others. For the runaway who cannot be returned to a functional family and who is placed in a mental facility or in a juvenile detention facility, the immediate therapeutic objective is to assess the youth and move him to a safe, community-based residence. Unfortunately, the placement of youths in mental institutions or juvenile detention settings occurs because community-based centres have not been adequately developed.

For the young person in a mental institution, assessment and the reduction of major symptoms are the first objectives. Therapeutic efforts are aimed at utilising the crisis for a more constructive alignment of psychological defences and resources. Next, the social

context of the institution is used to assess as well as to strengthen positive social interaction. Aspects of education and work are to be supported to whatever reasonable degree. In conjunction with ongoing therapeutic support, and educational and work opportunities, a format for evaluating the relative strengths and gains of each youth is needed.

(iii) The runaway in the community

Perhaps the largest population of runaways is to be found residing within the community. Our crowded institutions address only one percent of the population that has been abused in some manner. Consequently, our greatest challenge is to establish programmes within the community, programmes that are aimed at various levels of runaways who are trying to cope through drugs and prostitution as well as those who are surviving by being predators themselves. Existing shelters need to be supported by a system of alternative long-term placements. It is recommended that these long-term placements utilise self-sufficient, self-supporting living environments whose objective is to provide a haven while the individual pursues those tasks necessary to live an independent life. These tasks may involve seeking therapy for overwhelming symptoms and substances abuse as well as for exploitive and abusive patterns. Voluntary clinics that address sexually violent acting-out behaviour need to be available.

**2.3.8.3. Strengthening of weak social integration bonds and internal commitment bonds of the youth**

Brennan *et al.* (1978, pp. 311-316) further propose the following intervention strategies:

(a) The strengthening of weak or attenuated social integration bonds

Intervention of this type would focus on the patterned interaction of the youth with the main social institutions in which he is involved (primarily the family and the school). The empirical evidence indicates that many youths are severely rejected, stigmatised and blocked

from having rewarding roles. Therefore, the main point of intervention would be to tackle this rejection process and to open up more opportunities for the positive participation of the youth in these institutions. Institutional practices such as stereotyping, labelling and denial of access to rewarding social roles would have to be dealt with by some restructuring of the institutional process. Two general approaches are possible: firstly, modification of the internal process which denies youth positive role; and secondly, the opening of new opportunities for rewarding social roles.

Within the family, the main objective would be to thoroughly integrate the youth into the family. Objectives would be to provide success experiences as opposed to failure experiences and to emphasise integration rather than rejection. There could be an attempt to open up more reasonable disciplinary practices and rewarding roles for the youth as well as providing higher levels of companionship with their parents.

#### (b) Strengthening the internal commitment bonds of the youth

This strategy is aimed at modifying the attitudes, beliefs, normative values and other internal commitments of the youth. The *Soft* versus *Hard* intervention approach is highly recommended in this regard. Individual counselling and psychotherapy aimed at the development of stronger internal commitment bonds are often referred to as soft services, while the provision of new roles, new modes of participation, institutional restructuring and advocacy are often known as hard services. These latter intervention strategies are primarily aimed at strengthening external social integration bonds. A careful mix of these two approaches would be the most appropriate in the treatment of pre-runaway and runaway youth. If anything, a greater emphasis on external social integration bonds would be a more appropriate intervention strategy.

#### **2.3.8.4. Care programmes and rehabilitation**

On the other hand, De Miranda and Sator (1995) state that it is imperative that the following

should be considered as vital facets in rectifying the street child phenomenon:

(a) Development of a care programme

Friendship needs to be expressed in a constructive way. All our actions should be geared towards encouraging and developing children. Whilst it is important to have fun and play, it is more important to channel the child into a programme that embodies all the ingredients related to care.

(b) Rehabilitation of prejudices

Social and community workers need to work with children and it is possible that with them separated from their parents, initial rehabilitation can be implemented. It is also possible for this rehabilitation to be intensive and include educationists and psychologists. An effective method of addressing this issue would be the involvement of the shelters as the home-away-from-home for these children while they are being educated. Furthermore, while the children are being helped, the parents should have intensive counselling as well.

(c) Drug rehabilitation

Smoking and glue-sniffing are part of the street subculture. Over the years while the children were on the streets, they became dependent on drugs. All concerned people must acknowledge that children who become drug dependent will be a disruptive element in the community. Therefore, a drug rehabilitation programme must be developed in order to help these children.

### **2.3.9. Street children's programmes in South Africa and other countries**

The aim of the study is to determine why some of the street children who were previously placed in the rehabilitation centres go back to the streets. Consequently, the investigator

conducted a literature review on street children's programmes in South Africa and other countries. The aim of the literature review is to depict the kinds of facilities that the children are offered in the centres and thus, provide a distinct picture of the children's lives in the centres in contrast to their lives on the streets.

In an attempt to prevent them from opting for life on the streets, a variety of programmes were developed in order to cater for most of their needs. They offer basic care in the form of food, clothing, accommodation and education. Schurink (1993) asserts that the needs of street children were especially noticed during the 1980s by groups and individuals in the community, and were addressed by private initiative. Churches and voluntary organisations started programmes in the interests of street children. These programmes are mostly urban-based and tend to be operated by voluntary service organisations or by governmental sector and deal with street children on two levels of intervention, namely temporary care and permanent placement.

#### (a) Temporary care

This is typically a shelter aimed at meeting the children's needs by providing them with food, shelter and basic skills or education and preparing the child for more permanent placement. These types of shelters are easily accessible for street children working in the immediate vicinity. The staff usually does not require any commitment from the children, except to refrain from glue sniffing while at the shelter. Children can come and go as they please, but are encouraged to stay in the shelter for a longer duration. Social workers, childcare workers and educationists try to prepare the children for ordinary school, trace the children's families and if possible, reunite them with their families.

#### (b) Permanent placement

Programmes in this category are aimed at providing permanent placement of children who for one reason or another cannot be returned home. These programmes are run along the lines

of children's homes. The children are required to obey the rules, stop substance abuse and attend school regularly in the community.

The above-mentioned author further states that the five-phase model of Professor Baizerman is commonly implemented in the local programmes. Although not all five phases are found in all programmes, all the programmes include the elements of the model. The model entails the following phases:

(a) Phase 1 - only the most basic needs of street children are satisfied. They are provided, for instance, with food, a place to sleep and allowed to use the bath and toilet.

(b) Phase 2 - the children's specific needs are fulfilled such as medical, health, training and religious needs. Meaningful recreation and therapeutic services may also receive attention during this phase.

(c) Phase 3 - children are prepared for a life which is better than one on the streets. They acquire specific skills and training relevant to their needs.

(d) Phase 4 - is an attempt to satisfy the needs of the children. Contact is made with other institutions and organisations.

(e) Phase 5 - preventative measures are attended to. For example, children are discouraged to regard street life as a solution to their problems.

### **2.3.9.1. Street children's programmes in South Africa**

In South Africa there are a vast number of programmes that cater for the needs of street children. Barnette (1995, pp. 130 -143) provides insight into the following programmes that cater for the needs of street children in South Africa:



(a) Street Wise

Street Wise was founded in 1986 in order to: help street children return to formal schooling; prepare those who are unable to return to formal schooling vocationally; provide basic child care in the form of shelter, food and clothing; and to co-ordinate welfare, psychological, medical and legal services.

Their staff includes professional and non-professional people, paid staff and volunteers as well as students. Their street outreach programme has two objectives: firstly, providing street children with clothes, blankets, food and medical attention, as well as protecting them from abuse; and secondly, making the children aware of their education programme. The shelters are open throughout the year and the staff creates a substitute home environment for the children and offers them information and guidance. Their assessment of the children includes their family background and their reason for leaving home, the effects of street life on the children, their possible placement in alternate care or their re-integration with their families, and the placing of the children on an appropriate level of education. It includes remedial education, formal education, life and job skills and work ethics. Other activities include assisting other organisations to provide services to street children, negotiations with the police, provision of health check-ups, and social and psychological support. It is important to note that shelter, food, clothing and care are provided only for boys who make a commitment to go to school. Care is also taken not to make children on the street too comfortable (by taking care of all their needs while on the street), in order to attract them to the services offered by the programme.

(b) Molo Songololo

Molo Songololo is located in Cape Town and is a community project that aims to improve the quality of life of street children and help them become productive citizens, mainly through a preventative approach. It initiated a project for street children with the aims of: building awareness of the street child phenomenon; setting up an outreach programme on the



streets; and looking at the possibility of setting up a non-formal residential centre. Since its inception in 1990, research on street children, streetwork, legal and community involvement as well as community awareness and prevention of the street child phenomenon have taken place. The purpose of the research is to highlight, among other things, the children's communities of origin, their ages, educational standard and their contact with their families. A soup kitchen also forms part of the programme and legal assistance is sought for children charged with petty crimes. In such cases, contact is made with their families and parents are encouraged to visit their children in prison. Apart from this, community-based organisations from which the children come are contacted to involve them and to facilitate a comprehensive awareness and prevention campaign. T-shirts and posters are also used to create community awareness of the street child phenomenon.

#### (c) The Homestead

The Homestead was opened in 1982 in Cape Town to provide a centre for street children. It is a branch of the Cape Child Welfare Society and is affiliated to the National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW). It serves as a shelter for street children before they are transferred to the second phase of the programme at Patrick's House, foster care and places of safety or schools of industry.

The staff at Homestead consists of a principal, a social worker, two house-mothers and an outreach worker. The Homestead accepts children brought in by concerned people as well as children who present themselves or who are referred by the courts or brought in by the police. While at the Homestead, children are allowed to visit their parents when they so wish. Some children alternate between living on the street and at the centre for some time. No formal programme is followed, but an assessment of the children is made using the Problem Profile Approach. As soon as a child is 'settled', he is referred to other centres or homes for further treatment. When residing in the centre, children are provided with meals, clothing and basic childcare facilities. The children can choose between going to school at Learn-to-Live or formal school in town, or they can use their free time as they please after doing their

chores at the centre. These include making the beds, cleaning the premises and washing the dishes and their clothes. All the children are expected to be back at the centre by a stipulated time everyday. The services provided by the social worker together with child care workers focus, among others, on: building a relationship between the child care staff (together with the social worker) and the child; assessing the child's specific problems and needs; stabilizing the child by using a number of treatment models (e.g. behaviour modification and contract setting); processing detention orders and attending to court enquiries; tracing the children's families; and referring children to appropriate agency social workers. The shelter only admits boys between the ages of 6 and 16 years, and at the time of admission no child should be under the influence of solvents or drugs, unless there is a danger of physical harm. The prospective resident should not be accompanied by parents and should preferably come of his own accord rather than being referred by a social worker. Some of the Homestead children, especially runaways who were on the street for a short time, have been successfully reconciled with their families. This pinpoints the importance of preventative care, namely reconciling children and their families before the children become street-wise.

#### (d) Patrick's House

In 1986, the Homestead expanded to incorporate a second phase: Patrick's House. This was registered as a children's home in 1987 and caters for boys considered to be 'settled' or 'stabilized' (after their life on the street) through social work intervention. The social work services address four main areas, namely direct services to the children, liaison with the principal, liaison with the governing body and liaison with the community. The activities of the house include: obtaining and evaluating the information on the child prior to admission; guiding the integration of new children through the child care workers; providing casework and groupwork services to the children (using a multi-disciplinary approach); co-ordinating services with professional services outside the house (e.g. Drug Counseling Centre); liaising with state departments in respect of services to be rendered to the children's families; and creating and using opportunities to involve children who are staying in the house in community activities, with a view to enhancing their spiritual and mental development and

future adjustment. While at Patrick's House, children either attend school at Learn-to-Live or go to other schools in the community. To be admitted, children from the Homestead must be boys who attend school regularly, are reasonably stable in their behaviour, are not prone to wandering around the streets and who have ceased solvent abuse.

(e) Learn-to-Live

Established in 1987 in Cape Town, Learn-to-Live provides remedial education to street children and supplements the work of established residential care centres. This project, a joint effort of the Salesian Institute and the Homestead shelter for street children, is a non-formal education programme designed to prepare former street children for a better lifestyle. The programme, run by the Salesians (a Catholic order), remedies their lack of schooling, offers them a chance of rehabilitation into local communities and enables them to earn an honest living. Learn-to-Live is effectively providing non-formal education to street children from several shelters as well as to those who still live on the streets. It caters for 10 to 20 year olds. The programme has adopted the Street-Wise education programme and classes begin at 09:00 and end at 13:00; the Western Cape school terms are observed. It also provides meals as well as remedial tuition which allows basic literacy and numeracy to be achieved. Once a certain level of literacy has been reached the pupils join a small study group in order to broaden their knowledge and acquire skills necessary for a more fulfilling way of life. After a year or two, those on the remedial programme are assessed for formal schooling.

(f) Highway Home

Highway Home, also in Cape Town, served as a soup kitchen for four years before becoming a registered children's home in 1989. It aims at providing a temporary home for boys while preparing them for the return to their families. The home is managed by a social worker with the help of two house-mothers, one house-father and a community social worker. No children are admitted directly from the street and most of those admitted are referred from the Homestead. Before a child may be admitted, the length of his school attendance is taken into

consideration. The home caters only for children aged between 4 and 18 years. All the children attend school on weekdays. Apart from school there is no formal programme, but the children are expected to make their beds and do household chores such as cleaning the house on a rotational basis. After school they can choose either to attend after-school classes (English, Maths, Afrikaans, Art etc) which are run by volunteers or to engage in recreational activities like swimming and soccer. After supper, the children have Bible study, watch television, play the guitar or read books. Over weekends they often visit their families, are taken out to the beach, the park, the ice-rink or soccer field. They receive free medical attention, swimming lessons and sponsorship to attend a pre-school at Sea Point. When the children are at school, the social worker attends to their court inquiries, takes them to hospital when necessary and visits their families to promote reconciliation between parents and children in preparation for their return home.

(g) Ons Plek

Ons Plek is a registered children's home that opened in Cape Town in 1988 in response to a need for services for female street children. Their aim is to help female street children to get used to home life again, to get a feeling of belonging and to accept responsibility. Their main objectives are to get the children off the street, help them in any appropriate direction that they choose (depending on ability and personality) and empower them socially and economically. Ons Plek has one social worker and two house-mothers who have been trained as child care workers. The girls are involved in activities aimed at training them to be responsible and independent. This is done, for example, by allowing the girls to sell second-hand clothes and deciding whether the money is to be spent on the home, on school or holiday. The girls themselves run the home by performing household duties such as cleaning the house and planning the menu, as well as setting the rules. Girls with babies are allowed to keep them and the staff teaches them how to look after their little ones (e.g. bathing, feeding and handling). The house-mothers supervise, arbitrate and ensure that the rules are observed. Those who can continue with formal education which has been disrupted by street life, are prepared for their return to formal school by activities that improve concentration such as art,

dancing and sewing. In preparation for a girl's return home, the social worker concentrates on conflict resolution between the child and her family, getting rid of unrealistic expectations on the part of the child and creating an environment which is not too different from home.

(h) Pietermaritzburg Street Children Project

This project was developed in 1987 by a committee consisting of a social worker, teachers, a lawyer and other interested persons. It was formed out of concern for the number of children begging and sleeping on the street. The shelter is run by a house-mother and a teacher who care for the boys, and train them formally and informally with the help of a number of volunteers. The boys conduct their morning routine and thereafter go to the schoolroom for two to three hours everyday. They themselves have drawn up a set of rules about behaviour, (such as not sniffing glue) which they try to adhere to. They play games, watch television or go out in the afternoons and are expected to be back by 20H00. They are taught hymns and the word of God by the Youth for Christ team who also take them on outings. The programme enables the boys to learn social rules and to trust others – both youngsters and adults. The project cannot afford the services of social workers to provide intensive ongoing care and volunteers come to assist in various aspects. The team running the project perceive it as a long-term venture needing much dedication and sacrifice from the staff.

(i) Twilight

Twilight started as a voluntary organisation to provide for the needs of street children in Hillbrow (Johannesburg). It operated independently until 1990 when Johannesburg Child Welfare took over its management. Its main objectives are to develop the children's educational capabilities, connect them with the community, provide vocational training and re-integrate them into the community by providing long-term care if possible. The programme is run by a manager, six childcare workers and a number of volunteers. It is divided into two phases. The first phase basically orients the child to the programme and once the child is stabilized, he is promoted to the second phase which has more privileges

such as pocket money, going to the cinema and so forth. Such privileges can be maintained or withdrawn depending on the child's behaviour. The activities include an outreach programme, a soup kitchen, a bridging programme, remedial education provided by Street-Wise, health services, social work services, spiritual inspiration, recreation, case conferences, behaviour modification, vocational training and a holiday programme.

(j) Lakehaven

Lakehaven is a registered children's home in Durban and in 1989 its management established a street child programme as a special project to provide care and shelter for children after the Khayaletu Shelter was burned down and closed. Its main objectives are to keep children off the street, to equip them with necessary life skills and to reunite them with their families. Admission is voluntary, and the children come and go as they wish; they recruit each other by word of mouth. The staff consists of a project manager, a social worker, two childcare workers and two educational co-ordinators. In providing services to the children, the programme has the following activities:

- An enrichment programme for life skills
- A formal school programme using schools in Kwa-Mashu and Umlazi
- A social work programme for individual counselling and reuniting children with their families
- A drug programme which is run by social workers from SANCA
- A recreation programme
- A behaviour modification programme with incentives for acceptable behaviour such as television, videos and outside visits.

(k) Jabulani Place of Safety

Situated in Soshanguve, near Pretoria, Jabulani was opened in 1987 and caters for children in need of care in terms of the Child Care Act of 1983 and the Criminal Procedure Act of 1977.



Children from birth to 18 years are taken in. For street children, Jabulani serves as a transit before being taken to a school of industry, a children's home or foster care, or before they are returned home. Their programme is designed for all children, including street children. The assessment of children is done by a multi-disciplinary team that decides on a treatment programme for each child two weeks after admission. Treatment includes basic childcare, social work services, nursing services and formal education. Social workers train street children in social skills, attend to their adjustment to the place of safety, link up with outside social workers in respect of pending court cases and progress reports, provide social workers engaged in the reconstruction of the children's families with feedback when the children leave Jabulani, and promote acceptance and adjustment on release. Nurses examine the children on admission, take care of their routine check-ups and attend to all their other medical needs. The children are given a choice in respect of school attendance and those who choose to go to school are immediately admitted. There is a school readiness programme for those who had been out of school prior to their arrival at Jabulani. All the children are expected to remain on the premises.

#### (l) Ethokomala School of Industry

Situated in Kinross in Mpumalanga, Ethokomala was established in 1989 in terms of the Child Care Act and caters for boys aged between 11 and 19 years. Children are referred there by a detention order from the children's court which stipulates a staying period of two years. Staff-wise, Ethokomala, has a principal, three remedial teachers, ten academic and technical teachers, one educational psychologist, six house-parents, five supervisors and a professional nurse. Education is provided through an academic as well as a technical curriculum. The subjects taught only aim at providing social proficiency to pupils and are thus, not taught on Higher Grade. School readiness and social skills training are some of the sub-programmes. The prefect and group systems are used to promote social skills. Some of the subjects are based on a market-related proficiency which includes metal, wood, painting and motor training and other related courses. Physical training is part of the school programme and is conducted during school hours. Soccer games are organised between the school and local



teams. Gumboot dances and concerts are held from time to time as a form of recreation. On Saturdays, pupils are allowed to go to town and in the evening television and videos occupy the pupils' time. The children do not have a choice in respect of what they would like to do. Only circumstances and readiness determine which training is appropriate. Permission is needed before a child can leave the premises. The absence of a social worker makes it difficult for the school to have contact with children's families; this is the responsibility of the social workers in the children's respective home areas.

#### (m) Bayhead Place Society

Bayhead was established as a result of a government effort to alleviate and combat child neglect in Natal. It provides temporary shelter and care for children who have no parents or guardians, children whose parents or guardians are unable or unfit to have custody, children held before and during a court inquiry, and children held for offences before being sentenced. It can accommodate 375 male and female children aged between 12 and 18 years. Street children are brought to Bayhead by the police or by social workers from the Child Welfare Society. On arrival, they are given a medical examination before being allocated rooms according to their ages. A bed, a locker, bedding, toiletries and extra clothing are given to each child. A day after admission, each child is sent to a social worker for orientation and assessment. The social worker then draws up a programme for individual treatment. Other services offered by social workers in preparation for the children's return to their own homes or communities or transfer to other institutions, include individual and group therapy, according to the needs and age groups of the children. The therapy involves family reconstruction, the development of learning skills, behaviour modification and responsibility training, teaching the girls how to sew, knit and cook and engaging the children in recreational activities such as football, volleyball, lawn/table tennis, boxing and concerts.

### 2.3.9.2. Street children's programmes in other countries

Apart from South Africa, there are countries that also developed programmes that cater for the needs of street children. Schurink (1993, pp. 226-236) cites the following programmes in Colombia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Chile, Zimbabwe, Brazil and Haiti:

#### (a) Colombia: Forging New Men

This project was started in 1970 in order to wean children away from the streets in a series of carefully designed, separate stages in geographically separate localities. The project is divided into the following phases: operation friendship, Patio de la Once, Liberia Dormitory, Bosconia, Arcadia, Chibchalá, Camarin, La Florida, and Ciudad Industrial Juvenile.

- Operation Friendship - during this stage, street educators visit common haunts of street children in order to establish links and learn more about them. Little treats like hot chocolates are distributed as a way of establishing rapport. Once the street educator is sure of being accepted and trusted, activities like walks in the parks, games and some other excursions are organised.
- Patio de la Once - a large rectangular courtyard is the venue of the second stage and is opened daily between 08H00 and 16H30. Street children and youths of all ages are allowed to come and go as they please. The children are offered breakfast in the morning, a good meal at midday, free medical attention, hot showers and organised games. Those who come on a regular basis are subjected to a commitment test. They must persistently demand to be admitted to the programme despite initial rejection.
- Liberia Dormitory - is a dormitory that has the capacity to accommodate twenty to thirty children. Children who pass the commitment test at the Patio de la Once are authorised to spend 30 nights at the dormitory. Liberia is opened from 18H00 to 08H00. In the morning the children either go to the street or back to the Patio. When

the children come to Liberia for the night they shower, play games, have dinner, wash their clothes and are given pyjamas. Every evening the street educator arranges a meeting with the group to go over the day's events and gradually work out the house rules. These meetings also give the educator an opportunity to probe into family situations and explore re-unification. At the end of this stage the demands of the next stage are explained to the boys and there is a celebration. Before being admitted to the next stage, the boys are turned onto the streets once more for three days.

- Bosconia - offers a more elaborate programme which operates for 24 hours a day. Its objective is to develop an independent personality. The boys go through a formal rite of passage which includes a public announcement of admittance, declaration of commitment to a new life and the burning of old clothes after new ones have been given. It caters for 150 children and has three annexes, namely Arcadia, Chibchalá, and Camarin.

Arcadia - acts as an educational centre and is located 120 kilometres from Bogotá. The programme management believes that a street child who is used to a nomadic way of life cannot simply be placed in a home and be expected to stay. The centre caters for 11 and 12 year olds, is situated in a rural area and offers basic literacy. Learning sessions are informal and the state educational syllabus has to be adjusted to be more acceptable to the boys. History and Biology, for example, are taught with the aid of comic strips. Motivation is enhanced by limiting the boys to groups of 15.

Chibchalá - is a vocational training programme which offers pre-apprenticeship courses in an industrial area. Street children learn how to use tools and make useful objects using wood, wool, paper and card for use in the programme itself.

Camarin - towards the end of their stay at Bosconia, the candidates for the next stage pass through a Leadership Training Course which lasts for a month. With 25 children in each group, they sleep in a separate building (the Camarin) while continuing with

activities at Arcadia and Chibchalá. The objectives of this programme are to foster leadership, strengthen commitment to the philosophy of the project and accelerate the education process. When the boys leave Bosconia a party is held which includes speeches, dinner, acting and singing.

- La Florida - was built in 1974 and has the capacity to accommodate 450 boys. The complex has small two-storey housing units grouped in four neighbourhoods, classrooms, workshops, a multi-purpose hall and a chapel. While Bosconia emphasizes 'personalization', La Florida emphasizes 'socialization' (social man living within a community). The governing people are assisted by a council of group leaders who are responsible for 15 children. The general assembly is the highest authority and is composed of all the boy citizens, the council and some adults. The programme inculcates principles of good citizenship and is intended to reflect the outer world by operating its own government.

- Ciudad Industrial Juvenile - two sections, namely an industrial section and an agricultural section, form the final stage of the programme. It represents integration into the adult world of work and employs 300 youths. The industrial section consists of a well-equipped factory that produces a wide variety of metal components. The youths are taught on the job and offered a stable job on graduating. The agricultural section is intended for those who have not succeeded in other forms of employment and concentrates on stock-raising.

#### (b) Ethiopia: Redd Barna Street Children Project

This programme was established in 1988 among street children who depend entirely on their street earnings and among their families. It was developed after 47 out of 200 children were selected to be part of a re-unification and rehabilitation programme. The children, 137 siblings, and 64 parents and relatives made up a project population of 248. The objective of the programme is to improve the quality of life of the children and their families through re-

unification and rehabilitation, finding foster parents or community based foster homes, placing children back into schools, assisting families in establishing income generating activities and improving housing conditions by new constructions or upgrading.

(c) Sudan: Amal Society

The Amal Society initiated curative and preventive programmes in order to deal with child vagrancy which is a consequence of war and famine. The objectives of the society are to contain urban street vagrancy among children, provide the local community with a number of skilled workers, encourage the local community to tackle serious problems and to foster an attitude of understanding, compassion and active involvement in the local community in the effort to solve street vagrancy. The society involves itself in the following projects:

- Rehabilitation and family re-unification projects in various areas, with 150 children in each of the centres
- Running a residential home for children whose parents cannot be traced
- Provision of medical care, therapy and basic education to children who are collected from the street
- Children younger than ten years are returned to school and those that are older than ten go into apprenticeship or vocational training
- Job placements and regular follow up visits to the work place

(d) Sierra Leone: Boys' Society

The society was founded by a group of national and expatriate residents in 1966, with the aim to further the rehabilitation of rejected, underprivileged and delinquent street boys aged between 8 and 18 years. The objectives of the society are to provide behavioural guidance and promote good health as well as social, educational, vocational and character development. A temporary home is provided and the society facilitates worthwhile out-of-school activities in a local setting. In 1976 an agricultural programme was added to provide

further training in useful skills. The society's activities are divided into city zones and the Reserve Centre.

- City zones

Several city zones are run by a youth leader and his aides. These zones are open to school goers and drop-outs. The children are involved in activities such as sports and athletics which enable the youth to use their physical energy in a positive way.

- The Reserve Centre

The centre is run by prefects under the supervision of a coordinator. The centre accommodates 14 boys who are clothed, fed and counselled. The boys either enrol in schools or go to work.

(e) Chile: Chilean Association of Scouts and Guides

This programme is run by a full-time coordinator, two full-time educators, one trainee educator and a house-mother. A number of boys have been enrolled in a number of state-run courses in bicycle mechanics and carpentry. Supervision and encouragement are offered to those attending school or studying part time. The project provides medical and dental care free of charge as well as health education.

(f) Zimbabwe: Harare Shelter for the Destitute

The programme provides for both urban children and adult destitutes. It runs a soup kitchen five days a week, provides relief parcels to families, pays home visits for educational assistance and gives spiritual and social counselling. The programme for street children involves the provision of clothes, education, individual counselling, skills training and income generation by selling small welded items. The children's homes are visited, the children are reintegrated into formal schooling and special cases are referred to the Department of Social Welfare.

(g) Colombia: Ciudad Don Bosco

The programme was established in 1960 and offers a comprehensive rehabilitation programme which starts with street outreach and ends with vocational training. Contact with street children and youths are initiated by a team of street educators in cooperation with local agencies. At the drop-in centre the children are provided with a meal and shower, and those who would like to can take part in organised football and other games. Regular attendance over a period of months entitles the boys to enter the residential home, the Hogar. Such an intake is done twice a year. At the Hogar the boys initially study for two hours per day until they get used to the routine and the required period of study is gradually increased. When literacy and numeracy have been achieved, vocational training in the workshops is introduced.

(h) Brazil: The Man of Tomorrow

The project was started in 1977 in order to integrate shoe-shine and newspaper boys as well as other street youth aged between 5 and 14 years into the community, improve their health and working conditions, and reduce street crime. The project staff is engaged in the following activities:

- Information, discussion and guidance meetings
- Gymnastics, swimming and games
- Visits are paid to the boys' homes
- Group dynamics are employed for socialisation purposes
- Vocational training in typing

(i) Haiti: Tout Timoun se Moun

The objectives of the programme are focused on the child's right to exist and survive, to be recognised and loved, and to be helped to grow up in a more human environment, in a trusting and respectful way. The programme caters for over 500 children aged between 8 and



13 years. The children are taught to read and write four afternoons per week. Classes are held between 16H00 and 18H00 and they start with a meal.

It is of great concern that despite the availability of these programmes, many children still shun the centres and opt for street life. Thus, the researcher will determine why they leave behind all these facilities in the centres and prefer to inhabit the streets.

## **2.4. CONCLUSION**

This chapter entailed a detailed discussion of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory. This was followed by a literature review of street children and the following aspects were discussed: a conceptual analysis of the street child phenomenon; street children's expressions; the street child as a universal phenomenon; perspectives underlying explanations of runaway behaviour; aetiology of the street child phenomenon; the street subculture and lifestyle; the behavioural pattern of street children; intervention considerations, and the street children's programmes in South Africa and other countries.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter entails a discussion of the method of investigation with reference to the following aspects: research design, sampling procedure, sample size, research question, measuring techniques, setting, data collection and data analysis.

#### 3.2. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

There are multitudinous methods that can be utilised by researchers when investigating diverse phenomena. The methods can be purely qualitative or quantitative, or a combination of both. In the current study, the method of investigation was purely qualitative. This method facilitated an understanding and description of hitherto relatively unknown phenomena

Dooley (1990), Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor and Tindali (1994), Creswell (1994), Williams, Tutty and Grinnel (1995) and Tutty, Rothery and Grinnel (1996) assert that qualitative research is characterised by the following:

- Qualitative researchers look at the settings and people they study holistically. They consider their objects of study as a whole and do not reduce them to variables. The main goal is to study people in their natural settings in order to understand the dynamics of human beings as fully as possible. Therefore, they are primarily interested in the development of social processes.
- The qualitative researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Data is mediated through this human instrument, rather than through inventories,

questionnaires and machines. The researcher goes to the people, setting, site or institution to observe or record behaviour in its natural setting.

- The process of qualitative research is inductive in that the researcher builds abstractions, concepts and theories from details. Qualitative researchers rarely collect data to test theories, hypotheses or other preconceived models.
- Qualitative research cannot be neatly demarcated into well-planned consecutive phases that must be adhered to from the inception of the study to its final publication, since each phase typically overlaps with the next one. The researcher does not follow refined and standardised rules, but decides what to do next as problems arise in the course of the fieldwork. They formulate and reformulate their work, may be less committed to perspectives which may have been misconceptualised at the beginning of a project, and may modify concepts as the collection and analysis of data proceeds.
- Qualitative research is descriptive in that the researcher is interested in the process, meaning and understanding gained through words or pictures. The written results of the research contain quotations from the data to illustrate and substantiate the presentation. The data includes interview transcripts, field notes, photographs, videotapes and other official records. In their search to understand meanings, qualitative researchers do not reduce the pages upon pages of narration and other data to numerical symbols. They try to analyse the data with all its richness as closely as possible to the form in which it was recorded or transcribed.

Furthermore, qualitative research has its own advantages and disadvantages. Louw and Edwards (1997) highlight the following advantages and disadvantages of qualitative research:

## Advantages

- It enables the researcher to study human experience in a great deal of depth.
- The method stays closer to the experiences of the participants and the researcher.
- People who read the research report can obtain a deeper and more human understanding of what has been discovered.

## Disadvantages

- It is time - consuming consequently, fewer participants are studied.
- It is not always possible to make comparisons and draw general conclusions.
- Mathematical or statistical procedures cannot be used to process findings.
- Results may be biased by the researcher's subjective interpretation of what the participants said.

### 3.2.1. The research design

A research design answers the question: How are the aims of the research project to be attained? Marais and Mouton (1990) and Barlow and Durand (1995) put forward that a research design is an exposition or a plan of how the researcher decides to execute the formulated research problem. It is affected by the question addressed, hypothesis and practical considerations.

In this study, qualitative research methods were utilised to explore a new topic. Therefore, the design employed in the present study was the qualitative, exploratory method. Exploratory research refers to a design that is used when little or no research has been undertaken on the phenomenon (Babbie, 1989; Kothari, 1991; Mc Guigan, 1997; Neuman, 1994; Royce, 1991; Sarantakos, 1993). It is valuable in situations where not enough is known to formulate specific hypotheses. Ideally speaking, it should lead to the development of

hypotheses, models and even theories that can be tested in the future (Louw, 1991).

As the basis of this study, the researcher opted for an exploratory research design since during her search for literature on street children, she learned that the majority of the research conducted focused on their background and life on the streets. Only a few studies focused on their experiences in rehabilitation centres. Hence, the investigator conducted exploratory research.

Most research is undertaken to describe, explain or explore certain social phenomena. According to Neuman (1997), exploratory research aims to: develop a well-grounded mental picture of what is occurring; generate many ideas and develop tentative theories and conjectures; determine the feasibility of doing additional research; formulate questions and refine issues for more systematic inquiry; and develop techniques and a sense of direction for future research.

### **3.2.2. Sampling procedure**

The type of sample that was utilised in this study is called a purposive sample. A purposive sample is described as a non-random sample that is chosen for some characteristic that it possesses (Neuman, 1994; 1997). Subjects were selected according to the following criteria:

- Subjects were black males ranging in age between 9 and 19 years.
- Subjects had previously resided in a centre for at least a month.
- Subjects left the centre and returned to the streets or subjects left the centre, went home and then returned to the streets again.

### 3.2.3. Sample size

According to Patton (1990), there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. The sample size is determined by redundancy. In other words, the sampling is terminated when no new information is forthcoming from new sampled units.

In view of the above, it was decided to collect information by means of interviews until the point of redundancy had been reached. After the completion of interviews with 29 children who had previously resided in centres X and Y, it was decided that sufficient information had been collected in order to procure a meaningful analysis of the data. Fourteen of them were from centre X, whereas 15 of them were from centre Y. There were six respondents in the first focus group and seven in the second group. The third and fourth groups consisted of eight respondents each.

### 3.2.4. Research question

The interview question is vital, as it sets the tone for the entire research project. Essentially, it should be sufficiently broad and flexible to allow the subject optimal freedom to relate his or her own personal experiences and to articulate what he or she feels.

It is quite possible that there could be more than one question that the researcher wants to pursue in a qualitative interview. A series of topics or broad interview questions, which the researcher is free to explore and probe with the interviewee, is usually referred to as an interview guide (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

In this study, there was more than one key question that was explored by the investigator. There was a series of questions that were posed to the children. In addition, there was also a set of questions that were directed to one of the caregivers of centre X. Thus, the researcher conducted qualitative interviews with both the children and one of the caregivers of centre X.

There was a need to match the research questions with the children's ability to understand and discuss them. Thus, it was decided that the questions should not be posed to them in English, instead they were posed in Zulu. This was to ensure that they gained a deeper understanding of the research questions in a language that they were proficient in and thus, able to express themselves clearly in.

The following questions were posed to the children in order to gain a deeper understanding of factors that influenced them to leave the centres and return to the streets:

(a) "What was it like for you to reside in the centre?"

- "How did you feel about the living conditions?"
- "How did you relate to the caregivers?"
- "How did you relate to other children?"

(b) "How did you perceive the lifestyle that you adopted in the streets prior to your placement in the centre?"

(c) "Could you please explain, why you left the centre and returned to the streets?"

The investigator also determined from the caregiver, the norms and values that are applicable in the centre. In contrast to the questions that were asked to the children, these questions were asked in English. The following questions were posed to the caregiver:

(a) "Could you please explain in as much detail as possible, the norms and values that are applicable in this centre?"

(b) "Who decided on the norms and values?"



### **3.2.5. Measuring techniques**

As measuring techniques, qualitative data collection methods, namely focus groups and an individual interview, were decided upon since they best elucidate what people experience, how they interpret their experiences and how they structure the world in which they live. Berg (1998) maintains that qualitative techniques allow researchers to share in the understandings and perceptions of others, and allow them to explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives. Researchers examine how people learn and make sense of themselves and others.

#### **3.2.5.1. The individual interview**

The type of interview that was employed in the current study is referred to as the interview guide approach, that is, an unstructured interview using an interview guide. Patton (1980), Walker (1985), Robson (1993) and Kvale (1996) put forward that when the interview guide approach is employed in a study, the interviewee shares his feelings, experiences and beliefs with the interviewer whose purpose it is to understand the interviewee's life experience or situation. When conducting the interview, the investigator uses an interview guide. The guide serves as a guideline for the interviewer, and contains questions and themes that are important to the study. Although the questions do not usually have to be asked in a particular sequence, they do ensure that all the relevant topics are covered during an interview.

Ferreira, Schurink, Mouton, Puth and Schurink (1988) articulate that the main advantage of an unstructured interview using a schedule is that it provides for a relatively systematic collection of data and at the same time it ensures that crucial information is not forgotten. The main disadvantage of these interviews is that they require a highly trained and proficient interviewer to conduct the interviews.

### 3.2.5.2. Focus groups

#### 3.2.5.2.1. Definition of a focus group

Byers and Wilcox (1991), Beck, Trombetta and Share (1986), Krueger (1986), Morgan (1988), Breakwell, Hammond and Fife-Schaw (1995) and Kerlinger and Lee (2000) delineate a focus group as an informal and carefully planned discussion, designed to obtain perceptions among selected individuals on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment.

#### 3.2.5.2.2. Features of focus groups

Focus groups have certain features that distinguish them from other data collection techniques. According to Kruger (1988), Stewart (1988) and Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) focus groups are characterized by the following features:

- They are composed of seven to ten people, but the number can range from as few as four to as many as twelve. The size of the group is determined by the following factors: it must be small enough for everyone to have the opportunity to share insights and large enough to provide a diversity of perceptions.
- They are composed of people who are similar to each other. This similarity is a basis for recruitment and participants are informed of these common factors at the beginning of the discussion.
- They represent a data-gathering method and produce qualitative data, namely words, categorizations and expressions that are used by the participants themselves.
- They produce qualitative data that provide insights into the attitudes, perceptions and

opinions of participants. These results are solicited through open-ended questions where respondents are able to choose the manner in which they wish to respond.

- The topics are carefully predetermined and sequenced, based on an analysis of the situation. The moderator uses predetermined open-ended question.

#### 3.2.5.2.3. Advantages and disadvantages of focus groups

Bless and Higson-Smith (1995) and De Vos (1998) state the following advantages and disadvantages of focus groups:

##### Advantages

- The format allows the moderator to probe. This flexibility to explore unanticipated issues is not possible with a structured questioning sequence.
- They can produce speedy results because the moderator interviews a group of people simultaneously.

##### Disadvantages

- The researcher has less control in the interview when compared to the individual interview. It allows the participants to influence and interact with each other, and as a result, group members are able to influence the course of the discussion.
- The data is more difficult to analyze as group interaction provides a social environment and comments must be interpreted within that context.
- Groups are difficult to assemble. People are required to meet at a designated place and at a prescribed time to share their perceptions.
- The discussion must be conducted in an environment that is conducive to a conversation.
- They do not allow all individuals to express themselves freely and this is likely to

increase the effects of social desirability.

### 3.2.6. Setting

A setting is "a place where people can readily engage in face-to-face interactions" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 22). It is also viewed as a naturally occurring spatial and temporal feature that surrounds behaviour and the appropriate behavioural match (Heller *et al.*, 1984).

The study was conducted in a setting in Pretoria in order to comprehend, as fully as possible, why some street children leave rehabilitation centres and return to the streets. Sunnyside is a setting where most street children are located; it is where they spend time as part of their everyday lives. Therefore, the children were investigated within the context of their own setting. The main objective of qualitative research is to study people in their habitat or natural setting in order to understand how, where and when human meanings are formed (Creswell, 1994).

The investigator was granted permission by the caretaker at the Gauteng Youth College to conduct research. A large number of street children go to this institution from Mondays to Thursdays for Mathematics and English lessons. The majority of these children have previously resided in the rehabilitation centres but have returned to the streets. They go to the above institution in the mornings and after school they return to the streets. The investigator also asked the caretaker of centre X to assist her to locate some of the children on the streets. These were children who did not go to the Gauteng Youth College, but who merely resided on the streets. The investigator along with one of the caretakers of centre X located some of the children from the streets. All the children as well as the caregiver were interviewed in centre X.

### **3.2.7. Data collection**

The investigator conducted an interview with one of the caregivers of centre X. The interview was conducted by following an interview guide containing specific questions that are significant to the study (see 3.2.4). The data procured during the interview was tape-recorded.

A variety of interview styles are found in focus groups. De Vos (1998) puts forward that focus group interviews fluctuate between directive and non-directive approaches. The directive approach generally permits for a greater coverage of topics or more detailed coverage of specific topics of interest. Nondirective approaches provide more opportunity for group interaction and discovery. The investigator also adopted the interview guide approach when conducting the focus groups. Therefore, the focus group interviews that were conducted with the children were also carried out by following an interview guide containing specific questions that are imperative to the study. The data procured during the interviews was also tape-recorded. De Vos (1998, p.315) state that "focus group interviews are designed to do exactly what the name implies, that is, focus. Far from free wheeling conversations among group members, focus groups have focuses and clear agendas. In fact, the topics of discussion are carefully predetermined and sequenced in an understandable and logical way. As such they facilitate the natural, spontaneous discussion of events or experiences by the participants".

### **3.2.8. Data analysis: grounded theory approach**

#### **3.2.8.1. Introducing the grounded theory approach**

Qualitative analysis proceeds by extracting themes or generalisations from evidence and organising data to present a coherent, consistent picture (Neuman, 1997). In this study, the method that was employed for the qualitative analysis of the data is referred to as the

Grounded Theory Approach. Grounded theory is a detached grounding by systematically and intensively analyzing data, often sentence-by-sentence or phrase-by-phrase of the field notes, interview or other documents. By constant comparison, the data is extensively collected and coded. The researcher codes, compares and analyzes the data constantly. Therefore, the emphasis is on theory development, that is, theory that is grounded on data (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; 2000; Schwandt, 1997; Strauss, 1987).

Strauss and Corbin (1990) highlight that the grounded theory approach provides a researcher with theoretical sensitivity. Theoretical sensitivity refers to an approach to research which indicates an awareness of the subtleties of meaning of data and also refers to the attribute of having the ability to recognize what is significant in data and to give it meaning.

In addition, Glaser (1992) proposes that a well-constructed grounded theory will meet its four most central criteria, namely fitness, work, relevance and modifiability

(i) Fitness- if a grounded theory is carefully induced from the substantive area, its properties will fit the realities under study in the eyes of subjects, practitioners and researchers in the area.

(ii) Work- if it works, it will explain the major variations on behaviour in the area with respect to the processing of the main concerns of the subjects.

(iii) Relevance - if the grounded theory fits and works, then it has achieved relevance.

(iv) Modifiability - the theory should be readily modifiable when new data present variations in emergent properties and categories. The theory is neither verified nor thrown out, it is modified to accommodate by integration, the new concepts.

### 3.2.8.2. The stages of grounded theory

The raw data from the tape-recorded interviews was transcribed verbatim. Except for the interview that was conducted with the caregiver, all the focus group interviews were translated into English. Once all the data was transcribed and translated, it was subjected to a rigorous analysis comprising the following phases proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990), Glaser (1992), Creswell (1998) and Strauss and Corbin (1998):

- Open coding
- Axial coding
- Selective coding

#### (i) Open coding

During open coding, the researcher goes through the data and identifies meaningful units. These can be words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs reflecting an identifiable theme conveying a specific meaning. Meaningful units that pertain to the same phenomenon are then grouped into categories and labeled.

#### (ii) Axial coding

In axial coding, intense analysis is undertaken of the central aspects of categories in order to identify any relationships that might link them together. During axial coding, subcategories are related to their categories by what is called the paradigm model. This model, in which subcategories are related to their categories, can be portrayed as follows:

(A) Causal conditions → (B) Phenomenon → (C) Context → (D) Intervening conditions →  
(E) Action or interactional strategies → (F) Consequences



(a) Phenomenon

Refers to a central idea, event or happening about which a set of actions or interactions is directed.

(b) Causal conditions

Refer to the events or incidents that lead to the occurrence or development of the phenomenon.

(c) Context

Refers to the particular set of conditions within which the action or interactional strategies are taken to manage, handle and respond to the specific phenomenon.

(d) Intervening conditions

Refer to the broad and general conditions that could have an influence on a phenomenon. They act either to facilitate or to constrain the action or interactional strategies which are taken within a specific context.

(e) Action or interactional strategies

Refer to actions or interactions which are directed at managing, handling and responding to a phenomenon, as it exists in context.

(f) Consequences

Are the outcomes that result from the action or interactional strategies which were taken in response to a phenomenon.

The model links subcategories to a category in a set of relationships denoting causal conditions, phenomenon, context, intervening conditions, action or interactional strategies and consequences. Therefore, the focus is on specifying a category (that is, a phenomenon) in terms of the conditions that give rise to it, the context in which it is embedded, the action or interactional strategies by which it is handled, managed, carried out and the consequences of the strategies. These specifying features of a category give it precision: thus, they are referred to as subcategories. In essence, they too are categories, but because they are related to a category in some form of a relationship, they are referred to as subcategories.

### (iii) Selective coding

Selective coding involves the task of integrating the categories that have been identified at that point. This integration is not that different from axial coding, but it is done at a higher, more abstract level of analysis. The procedures involved are summarised below in four steps:

(a) The first step is to explicate the story line, which is a conceptualisation of a descriptive story about the phenomenon of the study. Once the story line is identified, the core category is then given a name. Here one looks at the list of categories to see if any one of them is abstract enough to encompass everything that has been described in the story. Once the core category is labelled, its properties are also identified.

(b) The second step consists of relating the other categories to the core category, thereby making them subsidiary categories. This is done by means of the paradigm: conditions, context, intervening conditions, actions or interactional strategies and consequences. Using the story as a guideline, the researcher can begin to arrange the categories in terms of the paradigm until they seem to fit the story and provide an analytic version of the story. The storytelling and its sequential order are the keys to ordering the categories in a clear fashion.

(c) The third step entails the validation of the relationships against the data. This entails the writing of a hypothetical statement about the relationships among the categories.

(d) The last step consists of filling in the categories that may need further refinement or development.

When adopting the grounded-theory approach "it is important to understand that these steps are not necessarily taken in linear sequence, nor are they distinct in practice. In reality one moves back and forth between them" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 118).

### **3.3. CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided a detailed discussion of the research process that was undertaken in the study. A detailed description of the research design, sampling procedure, sample size, research question, measuring techniques, setting, data collection and data analysis was provided.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research findings that were generated from the four focus group interviews that were conducted with the children, as well as an interview that was conducted with one of the caregivers of centre X. There will be an exposition of the direct verbatim quotations from the transcribed interviews that will substantiate the findings. A comparison and integration of the findings is the subject of the subsequent chapter.

#### 4.2. THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The first and third focus group interviews pertained to centre X, while the second and fourth ones pertained to centre Y. The respondents' ages ranged between fourteen and eighteen years, and their names as well as the people and places that they mentioned have been changed in order to maintain anonymity.

The main categories that have been identified in the open coding stages of analysis are given below in the form of the axial coding paradigm. The subcategories were linked to a category in a set of relationships denoting causal conditions, phenomenon, context, intervening conditions, action or interactional strategies and consequences. This level of analysis is utilized as a final product in this study, that is, as its results. Appendix A entails the open, axial and selective coding of the first focus group interview and thereby, illustrates the method of data analysis that was adopted in the study.

#### **4.2.1. The first focus group interview**

##### **(A) Causal conditions**

The causal conditions are located in three milieus in which the children interacted, namely the streets, their homes and the centres. Therefore, they are grouped into the following prime factors:

- Factors that influenced the children to leave their homes and reside on the streets
- Factors that influenced the children to leave the streets and reside in the centre
- Factors that influenced the children to leave the centre and return to the streets
- Factors that influenced the children to leave the centre and return home

##### **(i) Factors that influenced the children to leave their homes and reside on the streets**

One of the respondents was influenced by his friend to leave his home and go to the city in order to generate income. Initially, they went to Johannesburg then they moved to Pretoria where they wound up residing on the streets. Fortunately, they met one of the children who was already residing in the centre and he accompanied them to the centre:

Francis: “My friend took me and told me to go with him to town in order to look for money. Initially, we went to Johannesburg then moved to Pretoria where we inhabited the streets. We stayed on the streets for a very long time. Then we met a boy who was already residing in centre X and he took us there.”

##### **(ii) Factors that influenced the children to leave the streets and reside in the centre**

When they were residing on the streets, they were unable to wash and shave, and there were people who kicked and stabbed them with bottles. When this ensued, they sought shelter in the centre:

Godfrey: “When you are on the streets, you don’t wash and you don’t shave.”

Francis: “... they beat you with sticks and they even stab you with bottles. That is why we left the streets and went to the centre.”

### **(iii) Factors that influenced the children to leave the centre and return to the streets**

There were multitudinous factors that influenced them to depart from the centre and return to the streets. Firstly, they felt restricted in the centre. The caregivers did not give them consent to go out at night and they also had to ask for their permission each time they wanted to go to a particular place. When they were permitted to go out, they were expected to return to the centre after five minutes:

George: “... they (the caregivers) did not want us to go out at night.”

Bobby: “ ... we were supposed to ask for their permission if we wanted to go somewhere.”

Francis: “...they said that we must go out and come back after five minutes. You cannot make twenty rands in five minutes...you can’t.”

Secondly, since they were accustomed to income-generation activities on the streets, such as parking cars, pushing trolleys and aiding white people to carry their belongings when they moved to other places or flats, they developed a desire to make money on the streets while they were still in the centre. Unfortunately, when they resided in the centre they were unable to generate sufficient income. This stemmed from the fact that in the centre they were only allowed to go out during a specific period. However, they found that at that stage, it was no longer possible for them to generate income. Ultimately, they returned to the streets in order to make money:

Bobby: “Um...the thing is...we are used to money on the streets. We are used to getting money on the streets.”

Francis: “At centre X they allowed us to go out during a specific period and you find that at

that stage it is no longer possible for us to make money. The timing was wrong...they said that we must go out and come back after five minutes.”

Lucky: “I can’t live without money... I’m not saying that I thought about the streets whilst I was in the centre. I just thought about the money on the streets.”

Dennis: “I left the centre because of money...I wanted to make money on the streets.”

Thirdly, one of them missed home while he was in the centre. As a result, he left the centre and returned to the streets with the intention of generating sufficient money that he could use for transport. He was unable to do so and he remained on the streets:

Francis: “To tell you the truth...I just wanted to go home, I missed home. I thought of going to the streets and get money so that I can go home, but I could not get enough money.”

Fourthly, one of them left the centre because he fought with one child and the caregivers did not intervene. Instead, they accused him of instigating the fight, but they were not even present when they started fighting:

Godfrey: “I fought with one of the children in the centre and *meneer* (sir) ...the *meneers* (sirs)... did not intervene. They said I started the whole thing, but they were not even present when we started fighting. They accused me of starting the fight, but they were not even present when we started fighting. After that, I left the centre and returned to the streets.”

#### **(iv) Factors that influenced the children to leave the centre and return home**

One of the caregivers, Mr. William, removed one of the children from the centre and returned him home. He informed him that children who are older than sixteen years are not permitted to reside in the centre:

George: “Um...what did he say? He said that children who were older than sixteen years are



not allowed to stay in the centre, then he took me home with a Toyota Venture.”

## **(B) Phenomenon**

The respondents moved between their homes, streets and the centre. Initially, they dwelled on the streets but sought shelter in the centre after they were exposed to adverse conditions on the streets. While they were in the centre, Mr. William returned one of them home. He remained at home for approximately eight months, but returned to the streets once more. The rest of the group also retreated from the centre and returned to the streets:

Bobby: “Yes, we went to the centre because of the beatings, kicks...”

George: “I was removed from centre X and returned home. I think I stayed at home for about eight months, then I returned to the streets.”

Dennis: “...I stayed in the centre but I kept on running away...”

Godfrey: “We left the centre and returned to the streets.”

## **(C) Context**

The context entailed the following conditions:

(i) Limited financial resources – as a result of the restrictions that were imposed by the caregivers, they were unable to generate sufficient income when they were residing in the centre. The respondent who was returned home due to his age stayed with his mother and younger brother at home. However, he was unhappy because his mother was unemployed. The fact that she was unemployed suggests that she might not have had sufficient financial resources to cater for both of them:

Dennis: “We were unable to make enough money in the centre because we were restricted by the caregivers...”

George: “...I was still staying with my mother and younger brother and I was unhappy

because my mother was unemployed.”

(ii) Insecurity- they did not feel secure on the streets because their lives were endangered by people who battered, kicked and stabbed them with bottles:

Godfrey: “Yes, they used the sticks to beat us...and stab with bottles...and they kicked us.”

(iii) Rejection - one of them felt rejected by his father because he was not staying with them and did not care about them. He also felt rejected by Mr. William since he returned him home because he was older than sixteen years. Yet, he let other children who were also older than sixteen years reside in the centre. Furthermore, he transferred some of these children to other centres and excluded him. Consequently, he was convinced that they did not want him in the centre:

George: “We were not staying with our father at home...he does not care. Mr. William escorted me home, but they used to take other children who were older than sixteen years, for instance, Thabo. They used to stay in centre X last year and they were old, they even had identity documents. I was surprised...because they said that they were not accommodating children who were older than sixteen years. He even took other children who were older than sixteen years to other centres and excluded me. There was nothing I could do...they did not want me.”

(iv) Threats - one of them was bothered by other children and he reported them to the caregivers, and they were punished. Then they threatened to beat him up if he reported them again; consequently, he ceased reporting them:

Francis: “I was also bothered by other children, but I reported them to *meneers*, and they punished them. They even threatened me...they said that they were going to beat me if I reported them again to the *meneers*. As a result, I stopped reporting them.”

(v) Theft – apart from the respondents, there were children who engaged in criminal activities in the centre. They stole two telephones and ran away when they heard that the police were coming to the centre:

Lucky: “On top of that...they also brought other children from the streets....they were criminals...and they used to reside in centre X. They stole two telephones and ran away when they heard that the police were coming, they never came back.”

(vi) Fright – the respondent who reported the children who bothered him to the caregivers, was afraid to report other children who also bothered him. He opted to remain silent because he did not want them to kill him:

Francis: “I was afraid to tell *meneer* about other children, I chose not to say anything. I did not want them to kill me...”

#### **(D) Intervening conditions**

Mr. William fetched one of them from the streets and placed him in the centre. There was also one child who was already residing in the centre who met one of the respondents and his friends on the streets, and he escorted them to the centre. Thus, their exposure to the loathsome experiences on the streets was constrained:

George: “I was fetched by *meneer* William from the streets, he showed me his welfare card and took me to centre X...it was at night.”

Francis: “We were accompanied to centre X by a boy that we met on the streets...he was residing in the centre.”

### **(E) Action or interactional strategies**

As they moved from one setting to another, they devised certain strategies in the respective settings in which they were located. When they were residing on the streets, they devised specific strategies in order to handle the conditions there. Firstly, as a means of sustaining themselves financially, they engaged in income generating activities such as parking cars, pushing trolleys and helping people to carry their luggage when they were moving to other places or flats:

Francis: “We engaged in car-parking.”

Dennis: “We also helped people to push trolleys in Sunnypark.”

Bobby: “Sometimes...we were given jobs by people. We used to assist them to carry their goods when they were moving to other places or flats.”

Secondly, since they were kicked, stabbed and battered by other people, they reported the matter to the police:

Dennis: “We told the police...we did not want them to beat, kick or stab us...”

Their movement from the streets to the centre resulted in a change of settings. This in turn, resulted in a change of activities, relations and roles. They moved from an environment that they were familiar with (the streets) to an environment that they were not familiar with (the centre). As a result, when they got to the centre they adopted its lifestyle. They were punished by being ordered to clean the rooms, they were provided with food and clothes, they got acquainted with the caregivers and other children, and they participated in household chores and attended school. They attended school in the centre from Monday to Friday and were taught by the caregivers and a lady who visited the centre. They learnt Mathematics, Science and English. However, some of them might have found it difficult to adjust to the lifestyle of the centre. They gambled in the centre and found it extremely difficult to be restricted by the caregivers. One of them even attended a party at the Union Buildings without the caregivers’

permission. He attended the party with his friends who were staying in flats and he returned to the centre the next day:

Bobby: "They gave us food."

Lucky: "We were given clothes...and we also related well with the caregivers and other children"

Godfrey: "... we were all responsible for certain household chores and were also punished. The punishment...um...they punished us by ordering us to clean the rooms"

Dennis: "...we attended school here at centre X...we attended from Monday to Friday. We were taught English, Mathematics and Science. Though on certain occasions we gambled with other children."

George: "I went to a party with my friends at the Union Buildings in Church Street. We returned to the centre the following day.... my friends stayed in the flats and I was the only one who stayed in centre X. We were supposed to ask for the caregivers' permission if we wanted to go to a particular placee."

Finally, when the respondent who was returned home was notified by Mr. William that he was going to be returned home, he pleaded with him to transfer him to another centre that shelters children of his age. He did not want to return home because his mother was unemployed. His mother also, begged Mr. William to permit him to stay in the centre or at the very least, transfer him to another centre that took children of his age. She did not want him to interact with his friends at home because they were naughty and smoked dagga. She longed for him to stay in the centre and attend school:

George: "I did not want to return home because my mother is unemployed. I asked him to take me to another centre that accommodates children of my age ...and my mother asked him too. My mother begged him to permit me to stay in centre X, so that I can go to school. Most of my friends at home are naughty, they smoke dagga and my mother does not want me to interact with them. That is why she said I must stay in centre X and go to school."

## (F) Consequences

As a result of their participation in income-generation activities, they were able to purchase clothes:

Francis: “We used the money to buy clothes.”

The fact that they reported the matter of being battered, kicked and stabbed by the police resulted in more insecurity. They felt more insecure on the streets because the police were unable to arrest the perpetrators. They hid from the police and returned at night when the police were gone, and fought or stabbed them with knives:

George: “... but they used to hide from the police and the police could not find them. They came back again when the police were gone...they came back at night...they fought or stabbed us with knives.”

The punishment that was enforced, the provision of food and clothes, their engagement in household chores and their acquaintance with the caregivers and other children resulted in contentment. Some of them did not fight with other children and the caregivers’ response was satisfactory when they confided in them. However, others were dissatisfied with the clothes and school. They disliked the clothes because they were all identical and were also not happy with the fact that they were taught together, regardless of the different grades that they were in. Although some of them related well with other children, one of them was pestered by other children and he fought them. However, he did not report them to the caregivers because he was not accustomed to reporting other people:

Francis: “Yes, we were satisfied with the punishment, clothes, food and the manner in which we related to the caregivers and other children.”

George: “We were assigned household chores and were happy about it.”

Lucky: “Yes, we related well with other children...we did not fight... and we were able to

confide in the caregivers.”

George: “The caregivers responded well when we told them about our problems.”

Dennis: “School was not okay... the thing is, they mixed us...there were those who had never been to school and those who did go to school. They taught children who were in different grades together.”

Bobby: “I was not happy about the clothes, we all wore identical clothes. I did not like that, I was not satisfied.”

Godfrey: “I used to fight with other children. There are some children who just like bothering other people... and I’m not used to reporting other people.”

Their gambling in the centre resulted in a feud. They cheated each other when they were gambling, and ended up fighting:

Dennis: “...and sometimes we cheated each other when gambling and ended up fighting.”

One of them went to a party without Mr. William’s permission. Mr. William became angry and punished him. He instructed him to dig a hole and close it and he ordered him to do all the children’s laundry in the centre. The respondent also became angry for being punished. Conflict ensued and things were never the same between them. Their relationship changed and they just greeted each other. The fact that they greeted each other implies that they were not on good speaking terms. Furthermore, the respondent stated that he thought that Mr. William was happy because he made him dig and close a hole, implying that he thought that Mr. William relished seeing him suffering. A few days later Mr. William returned him home. Since the conflict between them was never resolved, he assumed that Mr. William returned him home for two reasons. On the one hand, Mr. William may have thought that he was happy at home because he used to go there during weekends when he was residing in the centre. On the other hand, he might have returned him home because he was angry that he attended a party without his permission:

George: “I was punished... Mr. William ordered me to dig a hole and then close it. After I



dug and closed it, he told me to wash all the children's clothes. I washed them with the machine and hanged them on the washing line. I was angry because I was punished and I think he was happy because he made me dig and close a hole. Our relationship changed... we greeted each other. I told myself that I am going to respect him ...I have always respected him because he was my *meneer*. After some few days...I think it was after a week... he told me that he was taking me home, I think it was on Tuesday or Wednesday. The thing is...I did go home during weekends while I was staying in the centre. Maybe he thought that things were okay at home and that I was happy there. Maybe he also took me home because he was angry that I went to the party without his permission.”

After the respondent and his mother pleaded with Mr. William, he failed to welcome him back to the centre or transfer him to another one. He informed the respondent's mother that he was unable to transfer him because the children were usually turned away in other centres. As a result, when he learnt that he was neither permitted to return to the centre nor was he going to be transferred to another one, he left home and returned to the streets. Now that he has returned to the streets, he feels really bad. He had no intention of returning to the streets. He wanted to return to the centre, but he was not allowed to do so. He declared that when he compared his home, the centre and the streets, he was most content when he was residing in the centre:

George: “He told my mother that children are normally turned away from those centres. He said that the centres refuse to take the children. Um...it is October now...I went home last year during the school holidays. I just came back from home...I think I came at the beginning of October this year. I was not happy when I was at home or on the streets, I was only happy when I was in the centre. I feel very bad now that I have returned to the streets...”

On a whole, their exposure to a life in a centre resulted in their realization that their life is far better in the centre than on the streets. They accentuated that life on the streets is dreadful. They compared the streets to the centre and highlighted the good life that they encountered in

the centre. The respondent who was returned home declared that he would agree to be removed from the streets and placed in another centre:

Lucky: “Life on the streets is not good...”

Godfrey: “I did not like street life...the centre was good.”

Francis: “The street was bad for me...I never thought I would return there.”

George: “The streets were bad, I won’t refuse to be taken to another centre.”

Bobby: “...in the centre you get everything.”

#### **4.2.2. The second focus group interview**

##### **(A) Causal conditions**

The causal conditions are located in the respondents’ homes, on the streets and in the centre. Therefore, they could be grouped as follows:

- Factors that influenced the children to leave their homes and return to the streets
- Factors that influenced the children to leave the centre and return to the streets
- Factors that influenced the children to leave the centre and return home

##### **(i) Factors that influenced the children to leave the centre and return home**

One of the respondents left centre X and returned home because he missed his home:

Danzal: “...I missed home. I left centre X and returned home.”

**(ii) Factors that influenced the children to leave their homes and return to the streets**

The respondent mentioned above, namely the one who left centre X and returned home, asserted that he did not have enough money while he was staying at home. Consequently, he departed from his home and returned to the streets in order to make money since he was accustomed to having his own money:

Danzal: “Um... the thing is... I didn’t have enough money when I was staying at home... I was used to having my own money. I left home because I wanted to make money on the streets.”

**(iii) Factors that influenced the children to leave the centre and return to the streets**

There were two factors that influenced the respondents to leave the centre and return to the streets. Firstly, one of them was unable to stay in centre X because he was too accustomed to street life. He was driven back to the streets by his desire to make money. He stated that money was the sole thing that gratified him the most on the streets. By generating his own income, he was able to purchase plenty of things for himself. This was not possible when he was residing in the centre:

Paul: “I was not able to stay in centre X because I am used to the streets. Money is one thing that satisfies me the most on the streets. When you have money... you can buy a lot of things but when you are in centre X, you cannot get a lot of things that you want.”

Secondly, they were ill-treated by one of the caregivers in centre Y. He had the tendency of making remarks about their parents and they got hurt:

Gift: “We were ill -treated by a certain *meneer* ...he did not treat us well.”

Sam: “He used to tell us about our parents and it hurt us.”

## **(B) Phenomenon**

The respondents moved between the centres, the streets and their homes. They departed from the streets and dwelled in centre X. While they were staying in centre X, one of them left the centre and returned home. He stayed at home for a while and returned to the streets once more. Those who remained in the centre also left the centre but they returned to the streets. After they had spent a specific period on the streets, they sought shelter in centre Y. Then they left the centre and returned to the streets for a variety of reasons. Out of all the respondents, there was only one of them who had never resided in centre X:

David: "I first resided in centre X and went back to the streets. After that I went to centre Y..."

Paul: "...we resided both in centre X and centre Y. We stayed in centre X, then returned to the streets...then went to centre Y."

Danzal: "I left centre X and returned home, then I went to the streets, then to centre Y."

Peer: "I never resided in centre X..."

## **(C) Context**

The context entailed the following conditions:

(i) Lack of restriction - the caregivers permitted them to go out and generate money on the streets. They went out to the streets daily and on certain occasions they were only allowed to go out at night. The caregivers who looked after them at night did not tell them when they are supposed to return to the centre. The gate was locked at ten o'clock, but they were permitted into the centre when they returned after ten o'clock. On certain occasions they returned to the centre the following day and they were not interrogated nor punished by the caregivers:

Zane: "We went to the streets everyday when we were in centre Y, they did not tell us when we must come back."

David: "Sometimes... they permitted us to go to the streets only at night and the gate was locked at 10 o'clock"

Sam: "When we returned after 10 o'clock ...sometimes we used to knock and they opened the gates. Sometimes we came back the following day."

Paul: "They also did nothing when we returned the following day."

(ii) Threats - after they had appealed to one of the caregivers not to remark about their parents, he threatened to fight them:

Paul: "We asked him not to tell us about our parents."

Peer: "He threatened us... and told us that he was going to fight us."

(iii) Silence- they were ill-treated by one of the caregivers, but they did not report him to the other caregivers. One of them was also ill-treated by his step- mother at home, but he did not inform his father:

David: "No, we did not tell the other caregivers that he was ill-treating us."

Gift: "The thing is ...I'm not used to talking much... I just keep quiet ...I did not inform the other caregivers that he was ill-treating us."

Danzal: "No. I did not tell my father that my stepmother was ill-treating me."

#### **(D) Action or interactional strategies**

When they were residing in centre Y, they devised specific strategies in order to deal with the conditions there. Firstly, they adopted the lifestyle of the centre. From Monday to Friday they attended school at Pretoria College, where they learned to read and to do handwork. They were provided with clothes as well as food three times a day. They got acquainted with the caregivers and other children, and were subjected to the punishment and the rules of the centre. The rules consisted of cleaning the centre as well as listening to and respecting the caregivers. The punishment consisted of cleaning the yard and the house:

Paul: “We went to school...we went to Pretoria College. We went there from Monday to Friday. They taught us handwork...we used to read sometimes.”

Gift: “... they gave us food three times a day...they even brought us clothes.”

Zane: “The rules...the rules were similar to those of centre X. We were supposed to clean...to respect and listen to the *meneers*.”

Peer: “Sometimes they punished us by instructing us to clean the yard...but we related well with the caregivers.”

Danzal: “The punishment...you cleaned inside the house.”

David: “The children were fine, I had a good relationship with them.”

Secondly, since the caregivers allowed them to go out, they went out to the streets and engaged in income-generating activities:

Peer: “... at centre Y... they allowed us to stroll on the streets. They allowed us to go to the streets and make money.”

Thirdly, in an attempt to remedy their repulsive interaction with one of the caregivers in the centre, (namely the one who had made remark about their parents) they pleaded with him not to do so because they got hurt:

Sam: “We used to tell him that he must not to talk about our parents because we got hurt...”

Finally, the respondent who left centre X and returned home was ill-treated by his step-mother when he was at home. In order to spare himself from pain, he ignored her:

Danzal: “I ignored her and kept it to myself.”

### **(E) Intervening conditions**

Firstly, all of them went to the centre personally in order to seek shelter. Thus, they were able to escape the hardships that they encountered on the streets:

Gift: “We all went to the centre by ourselves.”

David: “...I went to the centre by myself.”

Secondly, the caregivers’ inclination to allow them to go to the streets and make money sustained their dwelling in the centre to a certain extent. There was no need for them to reside on the streets in order to engage in income-generating activities. They were able to engage in these activities and return to the centre. Thus, at a certain stage they were encouraged to dwell in the centre and their tendency of residing on the streets lessened:

Zane: “We were allowed to go out and we went to make money on the streets, but we returned to the centre.”

### **(F) Consequences**

When they adapted the lifestyle of the centre, they were discontent with the punishment that was enforced. Conversely, they were content with the provision of food and clothes, the rules, school and the manner in which they related to some of the caregivers and other children. They were also able to confide in the caregivers when they encountered any problems and the caregivers accompanied them to hospital when they were sick. However, their interaction with one of the caregivers resulted in ill-treatment. After they had appealed to him not to remark about their parents, he threatened to fight them. Consequently, they informed him that they were going to fight back if he instigated the fight:

Danzal: “We were satisfied with the rules and school, but we were not satisfied with the punishment.”



Paul: “We were satisfied with food and clothes.”

Zane: “Yes, I confided in the caregivers.”

Sam: “They (the caregivers) responded well... I had problems... when I was sick they took me to the hospital.”

Gift: “I related well with the caregivers and other children.”

Peer: “He threatened us and told us that he was going to fight us. Then we also told him that we were going to fight back, if he fought us.”

For some of them, their engagement in income-generating activities while they were residing in centre Y resulted in contentment because they were able to make money and were not restricted by the caregivers. On the contrary, one of them perceived these activities as driving one to move about frequently and return to the centre when it is late:

Paul: “We were able to make money, especially because they did not tell us when are we supposed to be back.”

Peer: “When you have money you don’t relax... you go up and down. You don’t come back on time in the centre, you go anywhere you want to go. You return to the centre when it’s dark.”

Generally, their exposure to both centres Y and X resulted in a negative perception of street life. They affirmed that they preferred life in the centre, not on the streets. However, since the majority resided in both centres, they also realized that they were most gratified when they resided in centre X, not in centre Y. Hence one of them proclaimed that he enjoyed attending school the most when he was residing in centre X. There was only one of them who chose his home instead of the centres and the streets. He declared that compared to the centres and the streets, he was most satisfied when he was staying at home:

Zane: “Street life is terrible...”

Paul: “... centre Y was better than the streets.”

David: “... we were most satisfied when we resided in centre X. We were more satisfied in

centre X than in centre Y.”

Gift: “...I enjoyed school the most in centre X.”

Sam: “...life in the centre is good, not the streets.”

Peer: “I preferred life in the centre... not on the streets.”

Danzal: “I was satisfied at home.”

Finally, the respondent who was ill-treated by his stepmother was not affected as he ignored her:

Danzal: “I did not get hurt because I ignored her...”

#### **4.2.3. The third focus group interview**

##### **(A) Causal conditions**

The causal conditions are located in three environments, namely the streets, the centre and the respondents’ homes. They are classified as follows:

- Factors that influenced the children to leave their homes and reside on the streets
- Factors that influenced the children to leave the streets and reside in the centre
- Factors that influenced the children to leave the centre and return to the streets

##### **(i) Factors that influenced the children to leave their homes and reside on the streets**

There are factors in the respondents’ domestic environments that compelled them to seek abode on the streets. One of them winded up residing on the streets because his parents passed away and he had no brother or sister. This implies that he might not have had anyone who could look after him at home. As a result, he went to the streets in order to fend for himself:

Nicholas: "... like myself, my parents passed away. I am residing on the streets because I have no parents...no brother or sister."

**(ii) Factors that influenced the children to leave the streets and reside in the centre**

They were subjected to the following conditions when they inhabited the streets: they lacked blankets to sleep with, they consumed food from the rubbish bins, they were unable to generate income on certain occasions, and some of them died as a result of the diseases that they contracted. Consequently, they resided in the centre in order to escape these conditions:

Nelson: "... life on the streets is very bad. We eat food from the rubbish bins..."

Isaac: "We don't have blankets on the streets..."

Keith: "... and we don't always get money."

Selwyn: "... most of the children have died here."

Thomas: "Some of them just develop diseases... some of them used to fall. They tried to stand up, and then they became dizzy and fell. We just went to bury someone at Atteridgeville."

**(iii) Factors that influenced the children to leave the centre and return to the streets**

The following factors influenced them to retreat from the centre and return to the streets. Firstly, they were restricted and were not permitted by Jack, Mildred and other caregivers to saunter on the streets. This made it impractical for them to see their friends and generate income on the streets. Eventually, they realized that they did not have money and they returned to the streets in order to make money:

Nicholas: "Her name was Mildred, she cooked and looked after us at night. On certain

occasions, we asked her to give us permission to stroll on the streets, so that we could also generate some income. She refused, and told us that the law did not permit us to do so. She kept on saying that we were not permitted by the law to go out to the streets. As a result, we left for good. We left the centre and returned to the streets.”

Donald: “...*meneer* Jack did not allow us to stroll on the streets. We could not go out to see our friends on the streets, so I left.”

Isaac: “Then we went and lived there for a while, but then we realized that we don’t have money and then we decided to return to the streets.”

Secondly, when they came back from sauntering on the streets, a caregiver named Jack humiliated them. He dressed them in towels and made fun of them in front of other children:

Keith: “...*meneer* Jack made fun of us in front of other children. When we came back from strolling on the streets, he dressed us in towels and made fun of us in front of other children.”

Thirdly, one of them opted for street life because he was ill-treated in all the centres that he resided in:

Nicholas: “I was ill-treated in all the centres that I was sent to. That is why I’m residing on the streets.”

## **(B) Phenomenon**

The respondents moved between their homes, the streets and the centre. They resided on the streets and were subjected to loathsome experiences. For example, they consumed food from the rubbish bins. When this happened, they moved to the centre in order to shun these experiences. While they were staying in the centre, one of them visited his home, but returned to the centre once more. After a while, all of them left the centre and returned to the streets:

Nelson: “Then I left the centre and went back home, but when I returned to the centre...”

Donald: “Then we escaped through the hole and went back to the streets.”

Nicholas: “As a result, we left the centre for good.”

### (C) Context

The context entailed the following conditions:

(i) Lack of trust - they perceived Mildred as not trusting them enough to allow them to stroll on the streets:

Selwyn: “What I mean is that she did not trust us enough to allow us to go out to the streets.”

(ii) Limited financial resources – they were unable to make money on certain occasions when they were residing in the centre as well as on the streets:

Nicholas: “Yes, we did not have money when we were staying in the centre.”

Keith: “...and we don’t always get money on the streets.”

(iii) Loss of clothes - some of them lost their clothes in the centre. One of them was unable to find his tracksuit after storing it on a shelf. There was also another respondent who lost his clothes because Jack gave them to other children while he was away from the centre and visiting his home:

Victor: “... I remember I had a tracksuit... I decided not to wear it because it was hot, I put it on the shelf. The next morning when I wanted to change clothes, I realized that my tracksuit was missing...”

Donald: “When I came back from home, I came with my clothes. Then I returned home, but when I came back to the centre, I did not find them. *Meneer* Jack gave them to other children.”

(iv) Lack of restriction - despite the fact that they were not permitted by some caregivers to go out to the streets, other caregivers allowed them to go to the streets at night. Consequently, they went out to the streets at night in order to generate income:

Thomas: “Yes, they allowed us to go out to the streets but asked us not to sniff glue.”

Nicholas: “We used to go out every night and look for money on the streets.”

#### **(D) Action or interactional strategies**

There were various strategies that they formulated in order to deal with the conditions that they encountered in the centre. Firstly, they engaged in an assortment of activities in the centre such as attending school, playing soccer, taking part in dancing competitions with the white people who visited the centre, taking baths every morning and evening, cleaning the centre, as well as washing and ironing their clothes. They also engaged in other activities outside the centre such as visiting some of the white people from overseas, going to the University of Pretoria for multiple activities and spending quality time with the caregivers at the swimming pool. Secondly, they were provided with food and clothes, they adopted the codes of conduct and got acquainted with the caregivers and other children. Thirdly, since they were accustomed to street life, they requested the caregivers to allow them to stroll on the streets so that they could make money.

Isaac: “We used to take baths every morning and every evening. We also cleaned... and did many other things. We also washed our clothes when they were dirty.”

Victor: “Those white people spent quality time with us, we had fun. They used to hold dancing competitions with us. They used their cars to take us to Tukkies (University of Pretoria) where we did and enjoyed plenty things.”

Nicholas: “There were white people from overseas who used to come to the centre. They even bought us food and invited us to many places. The *meneers* took us anywhere where we were invited. When we got to places where we were invited, those white people entertained

us. They also gave us food and many other things.”

Victor: “We washed our clothes on the lawn and ironed it. We also had fun and played soccer.”

Thomas: “We also went to school, there was a lady who used to teach us. The *meneers* also taught us, and checked who learned well ...”

Keith: “... they gave us food...they gave us everything that we desired. We got chocolates...”

Thomas: “We had rules...”

Nelson: “... we had a good relationship with the caregivers, for instance in summer when it was hot, they used to take us to the central swimming pool. We used to swim and return to the centre afterwards.”

Selwyn: “We also related well with other children in centre X.”

Donald: “We asked the caregivers to allow us to go out to the streets... we wanted to make money.”

As they have left the centre and returned to the streets, they also have to deal with the difficult conditions on the streets. Consequently, they have devised the following strategies in order to tackle these conditions: Firstly, since they do not have blankets, they sleep close together. Secondly, some of them go to Mamelodi in order to get money and to change, wash and iron their clothes. Thirdly, one of them is fending for himself since the lady who used to give him money was no longer selling fruit at Sunnypark. The security ordered her to leave because she did not possess a license to sell there. Consequently, she was no longer able to give him money. Fourthly, they also went to the centre in order to procure food, a shower and sleep and consequently, used some of the facilities that they lacked on the streets:

Victor: “On the streets we slept close together...but we went to the centre anytime if we wanted food... and to shower and sleep.”

Nicholas: “She used to sell fruits at Sunnypark, but she is no longer selling. The security officers ordered her to leave, they said that she did not have the license to sell there. At the present moment she is unemployed and she is staying at home. So I do some of the things for

myself, I buy myself clothes. I go to her house to change, wash and iron all my dirty clothes. After that, I return to the streets. I am welcome there anytime... I go there anytime. I met her on the streets, and she permits me to go to her house anytime. Michael also goes to Mamelodi East to fetch money from other people.”

### **(E) Intervening conditions**

Since the children have returned to the streets, they have acquired assistance from other people. Firstly, there were white people who furnished them with clothes. Secondly, the caregivers fetched them from the streets and placed them in the centre where they were provided with food, clothes and so forth. Thirdly, there is a lady who stays in a nearby flat who gave one of them her contact number and told him to call her if there was anything that he needed. This assistance seems to have helped the children cope with the abominable conditions on the streets:

Nicholas: “...but there are white people who volunteered to give us clothes. Like yesterday... they gave us clothes. There is another lady who stays in a flat, she gave me her contact number and told me to call her if I need anything.”

Keith: “The caregivers found us on the streets and asked us to come with them to centre X ...”

Selwyn: “... after the caregivers removed us from the streets and placed us in the centre...”

In the centre too, there were white people who furnished them with food and clothes. Shoprite also donated groceries and the caregivers were able to prepare food for them. As a result, their need for food and clothes was gratified. This in turn, facilitated their frequent movement to the centre:

Thomas: “They even arranged with Shoprite...the *meneers* used to go and fetch some groceries, and prepared food for us.”

Victor: “There were some white people who used to come in the centre... they gave us



clothes. The *meneers* called us and gave us the clothes...”

## (F) Consequences

When they adopted the lifestyle of the centre they became content with their involvement in activities such as attending school, going to the University of Pretoria, cleaning the centre as well as washing and ironing their clothes. They also experienced joy, contentment, gratitude and acceptance when they played soccer and took part in dancing competitions with the white people who visited the centre. They felt the same way when they went to the swimming pool with the caregivers and when they quality spent time with the white people from overseas. Their adoption of the code of conduct as well as their acquaintance to the caregivers and other children also culminated in contentment. They did not fight with other children and the caregivers responded well when they confided in them. Their good relationship with other children is exemplified by an occasion when one of them developed sores on his hands and was unable to wash his clothes. When he washed them, they did not become clean. As a result, the children in the centre volunteered to wash his clothes. Their tendency of going to the streets at night in order to generate money resulted in contentment and a sense of independence:

Nicholas: “The food was also good...”

Thomas: “...the rules were satisfying, they were suitable for us.”

Nelson: “Like Suzette and other white people from overseas, they came. We enjoyed spending time with them. We sat with them on the lawn and were grateful for anything that they gave us.”

Selwyn: “One white man sat with me at the corner and asked me why was I on the streets. I told him everything and he understood, and I became very satisfied. He even prayed for me and I felt much better and I thanked him.”

Thomas: “Some of the white people did not mind to sit with us on the same table. We sat and ate with them at the same table. We also played soccer with them... there was no problem.”

Donald: “We were satisfied with the caregivers...we confided in them.”

Nicholas: “Every time we were with the *meneers*, we were happy. They did wonderful things for us, all the time. They never did things that they only liked, no! They did things that we appreciated. When we were at the swimming pool they... you know that there are many things that are sold at the swimming pool. They bought us a lot of things at the swimming pool. We used to say “Thank you” each time they bought us something. If I was working, I was going to thank the *meneers* for treating us like that. They looked after us...”

Isaac: “... I was satisfied because we had a good relationship with other children.”

Keith: “Like myself... I once developed sores on my hands and I had difficulty in washing my clothes. When I washed them, they did not become clean. Then the children in the centre volunteered to wash them for me.”

When one of them goes to Mamelodi frequently he feels grateful and accepted by the lady who he visits. Furthermore, as he is currently fending for himself on the streets now that she is no longer selling fruits, he is able to purchase clothes for himself. Hence, when they slept close together due to a lack of blankets, they were able to keep themselves warm. Their regular visits to the centre resulted in great contentment since they were able to use some of the facilities there. Now that they have returned to the streets, they feel guilty because they failed to inform the caregivers that they were departing from the centre. They wished that they had informed them that they were leaving the centre:

Nicholas: “That lady from Mandela village looks after me very well. She has six children, and I am the seventh one. At the present moment she is unemployed and she is staying at home. So I do some of the things for myself, I buy clothes.”

Victor: “...when we slept close together, we were able to keep ourselves warm.”

Thomas: “At centre X they treated us very well, we went there to shower... they gave us food and afterwards we ate and slept. They asked us the following morning how did we sleep and we told them that we slept well. We told them when we had problems.”

Donald: “We did not like the manner in which we left the centre, because we did not tell them that we were leaving. If only we told them that we were leaving...”

Finally, their exposure to a life in the centre resulted in the realisation that they led a better life when they dwelt in the centre, not on the streets. They expressed the desire to lead a better life. They asserted that they would agree to return to the centre if they could be employed and given wages there:

Nicholas: "...life on the streets is bad. At centre X, life is good because they treat us very well. When we request things, they don't tell us when are they going to give them to us, they just surprise us."

Selwyn: "... life on the streets is very bad. I did not intend or wish to return to the streets. You see... me... I don't enjoy asking people for money. I want to do things for myself, I want to have a brighter future. I want to be able to buy things... buy clothes for myself. I want to look after myself, just like my parents did."

Donald: "I was very satisfied in the centre than on the streets, the *meneers* looked after us very well."

Keith: "Life is great in centre X, there is no life on the streets."

Victor: "... I have realized now that life is extremely difficult nowadays, especially when you are not employed. You wish you were like those who work and live in ordinary houses. I pray to God to help me to have a brighter future. I want to dress like other people, I don't like the way I dress..."

Isaac: "... but the problem is that we don't have identity documents. If they get us jobs in the centre, we will work and save our money. We will also buy ourselves clothes, and we won't buy glue or anything bad. We will save our money, and one day you might see me driving a beautiful car, just by saving. We will also reward our *meneers* for the wonderful things that they have done for us."

#### **4.2.4. The fourth focus group interview**

##### **(A) Causal conditions**

The causal factors are located in the respondents' homes, in the centres and on the streets. Therefore they are clustered into the following factors:

- Factors that influenced the children to leave their homes and reside on the streets.
- Factors that influenced the children to leave the streets and reside in the centre.
- Factors that influenced the children to leave the centre and return to the streets.

##### **(i) Factors that influenced the children to leave their homes and to reside on the streets**

One of the respondents is currently dwelling on the streets because his parents are deceased. This suggests that he might not have had anyone who could look after him at home and thus, he took off and went to the streets:

Theo: "I'm presently on the streets because...I have no parents...they passed away."

##### **(ii) Factors that influenced the children to leave the streets and reside in the centre**

Unlike in the centre, there are things that they lack when they dwell on the streets. They affirmed that life on the streets is appalling. Unlike in the centre, they lack adequate care or facilities when they dwell on the streets. They consumed food from the rubbish bins and their food was also at the risk of being poisoned by strangers. Consequently, they sought shelter in the centres in an attempt to divorce themselves from these conditions on the streets:

Bill: "A stranger can put poison in your food without you knowing."

Zack: "We used to eat food from the rubbish bins..."

**(iii) Factors that influenced the children to leave the centres and return to the streets**

There were a number of factors that contributed to the children's departure from the centre and return to the streets. Firstly, they were ill-treated by the caregivers, police and older boys in the centre. Both the older boys and the police assaulted them. In addition, the older boys also attempted to drown them in the swimming pool and insisted that they should pretend to ride invisible bicycles. The caregivers ill-treated them. Firstly, one of them battered one of the children for no apparent reason and when he enquired about his beating, they did not answer him. Secondly, on one occasion one of them failed to provide the children with food for the entire day. Hence, the respondents were discontent with the manner in which the caregivers and other children in the centre related to them:

Tim: "Police used to come in centre Y... they kicked us with their boots..."

Jim: "Um...the older boys treated us very bad (coughs). They attempted to drown us in the swimming pool... I realized then that I would not tolerate such life."

Johnny: "... those boys treated us extremely bad. They were not even boys, they were 'men.' ...and they ill-treated us."

Zack: "...we were bullied by older boys... they hit us... they treated us badly"

Chris: "George was from Warmbad... one day I was sitting at the corner and I wanted to cry, and then he just came to me. He hit me... he hit me for no apparent reason. What could I do? He was an elder, I did not ask him anything. I told myself that I would ask him the following day. I asked him the following morning, I asked them why was I beaten for no apparent reason. They said nothing, and then I left the centre and returned to the streets."

Freddy: "We asked George for food... he did not give us anything to eat for the entire day. We spent the whole day without food..."

Jim: "... I was punched on the nose and bled...I returned to the streets, and I was crying."

Secondly, they were also disgruntled with the food, clothes, school, video payment, absence of a doctor and the lack of blankets in the centre:

(i) Food

They fetched cakes and bread rolls from Shoprite, but they were never given any cakes, they were only given bread rolls:

Chris: "... we went to Shoprite to fetch mainly bread rolls and cakes. We were not given the cakes, we only got the bread rolls..."

(ii) Clothes

They were not provided with clothes. They continued to wear the ones that they wore on the streets. The caregivers did not furnish them with the clothes that were donated to the centre. They stored them and informed them to wash the ones that they were wearing. In certain instances they were compelled to wear the same clothes for a duration of two weeks as they did not have clothes to change into:

Theo: "Even the clothes... we did not have the clothes! Like myself... I did not have clothes, I did not even have a jersey!"

Freddy: "We came there with the clothes that we were wearing on the streets. These were the same clothes that we wore in centre Y, they did not give us any clothes. When they were given clothes, they did not give them to us. Instead, they stored them and told us to wash the ones that we were wearing, that is, the ones that we were wearing on the streets. We did not get nice clothes."

Bill: "We used to wear the same clothes for two weeks."

(iii) School

They did not attend school, but sat in the centre throughout the day and cleaned the swimming pool:

Tim: “No, we did not go to school.”

Theo: “We just sat there in the yard... we did absolutely nothing during the day. We just sat in the centre...”

Johnny: “They used to tell us to clean the swimming pool...”

(iv) Payment of videos

The caregivers insisted that the children must pay for viewing the videos that were in the centre already:

Jim: “They said that we must pay for the video... but they were already there.”

(v) The absence of a doctor

The centre lacked a doctor and neither were the children taken to a doctor when they were sick:

Zack: “Nobody came when we were sick... no doctor came.”

Johnny: “There was no doctor in centre Y...”

(vi) Lack of blankets

They slept on the floor and did not have blankets to sleep with. Instead, they used carpets as blankets:

Johnny: “... we did not have blankets.”

Chris: “We slept on the floor and we slept with carpets...”

Theo: “... the carpets were our blankets.”

Thirdly, the caregivers and the police accused them falsely. The caregivers accused them of stealing and breaking things in the centre. The police accused them of smoking dagga and stealing people's handbags and necklaces:

Zack: "They said that we were stealing things and we have also broken other things, but we did not steal anything..."

Theo: "...they (the police) said that we smoked dagga, and took people's necklaces and handbags. We did not do that..."

Fourthly, the caregivers discriminated against them with regard to clothes. There were clothes that were donated to the centre, but the caregivers failed to give them these clothes. They chose to give them to their own children. They also favoured other children and permitted them to bath with hot water. Those who were not favoured were not permitted to do so and they had to bath with cold water:

Tim: "Suzan and Daniel discriminated us..."

Chris: "Even the white people noticed that we were wearing the same clothes everyday, and then they donated clothes. We were not given the clothes, the caregivers gave them to their children."

Johnny: "They did not treat us equally, they had their favourites. Some of us washed with cold water..."

Freddy: "...favourites washed with hot water."

Fifthly, they were content with the manner in which they lived together on the streets. When they stayed on the streets, they related well to other street children. They helped each other with money, and ate and played together. On the contrary, during their stay in the centre, they were ill treated by the older boys and the caregivers did not intervene. Therefore, they opted to return to the streets where their relationships were better:

Bill: "On the streets we live together...we eat together. We help each other with money,



because we grew up together on the streets. We play together...and wrestle on the lawn.”

Finally, some of them left the centre and returned to the streets because the caregivers notified them that they were going to be transferred to centre Q:

Theo: “They said that they were taking us to centre Q...”

### **(B) Phenomenon**

The respondents moved between the streets, centre Y and centre X in a cyclical manner. Some of them left the streets and resided in centre Y, then returned to the streets, then resided in centre X and then went back to the streets once more. Some of them left the streets and resided in centre X, then returned to the streets, then resided in centre Y and then returned to the streets again. At a certain stage, all of them ceased going to centre Y. Now that they have returned to the streets, they go to centre X frequently. Therefore, they are currently moving between the streets and centre X:

Johnny: “...I was happy when I was brought to centre X.”

Chris: “ then I left the centre and returned to the streets.”

Zack: “ We resided in centre Y first, then went to centre X.”

Theo: “Then we left centre Y and went to the streets.”

Freddy: “ ...we’re on the streets but we go to centre X anytime.”

### **(C) Context**

The context entailed the following conditions:

(i) Hatred – the children believed that some of the caregivers, that is, George and Suzan hated them:

Chris: “Suzan hated me!”

Johnny: “George too hated us...”

(ii) Insecurity - they were not protected by the caregivers from the ill treatment that was inflicted by the police and older boys in the centre:

Tim: “When we told the caregivers... Suzan and the others... they did nothing. They said that these boys were our own age group, therefore we must deal with them ourselves.”

Bill: “The caregivers did not protect us from the police!”

Freddy: “They allowed them (the police) to kick us...”

(iii) Lack of sympathy – the caregivers of centre Y did not show them any sympathy. Firstly, they became furious when George (the caregiver) failed to give them any food the entire day. Secondly, one of them realised that he would not endure the conditions in the centre, and he regretted going there in the first place and thus, he wished he had remained on the streets. Thirdly, one of them became worried when they were not supplied with the clothes that were donated to them by the whites. Fourthly, they got hurt when the caregivers informed other people that they ran away from their parents:

Freddy: “...George did not give us food for the whole day. Then we became angry...”

Theo: “I regretted why I went to centre Y, I wished I remained on the streets.”

Tim: “Life in centre Y! I just had a feeling that I was not going to last for a long time there.”

Bill: “... I realized then that I would not tolerate such life.”

Chris: “We were there when the clothes were donated, and we became excited that at least we were going to get new clothes. But we never did! We kept on wearing the ones that we wore on the streets. I became very worried...”

Zack: “ At centre Y they used to tell people that we ran away from our parents. Some of us got hurt...”

#### **(D) Intervening conditions**

When they were residing in centre Y, they fetched groceries from Shoprite. This alleviated their hunger in the centre. In addition, the caregivers of centre X fetched them from the streets and placed them in the centre. For instance in winter, they also fetch them from the streets and take them to the centre where they provide them with, among other things, food and blankets to sleep with. This in turn save them from the unhygienic conditions on the streets:

Chris: “We went to fetch food from Shoprite...”

Theo: “... *meneer* found me sleeping next to Shoprite, and took me with his car. I asked him where were we going to, and he told me that he was taking me to the centre. When we arrived at centre X... I was dirty and stinking, then I took a bath. Then they introduced me to other children and I talked with them, and we got acquainted.”

Jim: “The *meneers* look after us, for instance in winter they fetch us from the streets and take us to the centre. Where we take baths and sleep in warm blankets. They also give us food in the morning, they don’t ask us where are we going from there. They just tell us that the gate closes at six o’clock in the evening.”

#### **(E) Action or interactional strategies**

As they moved between the streets, centre Y and centre X, they devised certain tactics in order to handle the conditions that they were confronted with in these settings. In centre Y they developed the tactics detailed below: Firstly, they adopted the rules that were enforced:

Chris: “The rules were okay.”

Secondly, because they were not provided with any clothes, they went to centre X and asked the caregivers for clothes, jerseys in particular. One of them even went to centre X and removed a pair of trousers and a shirt from the washing line, without getting permission

because he was desperate to keep himself warm:

Theo: “We used to go to centre X... we asked the *meneers* for clothes... for the jerseys. We were not afraid to go to centre X to ask for clothes...”

Tim: “Then I went to centre X, and found a shirt and a pair of trousers on the washing line and wore them. I just took them... I wore them and I felt warm.”

Thirdly, on one occasion they were not supplied with food for the entire day and they went to fetch food from Shoprite, but they ate some of it on their way to the centre. By eating some of the food on their way to the centre, it implied that they did not have faith in the caregivers. They might have expected them not to give them any food, hence they ate some of it in case they were not given any:

Freddy: “ ...we went to Shoprite where they gave us a trolley full of food. We ate some of the food on our way to centre Y... in case they told us that we are not getting any food.”

Fourthly, since they were ill treated, discriminated against, hated and falsely accused by the caregivers, they pleaded with the caregivers to treat them in the same manner that they treated their own children and to offer them anything that they had. Therefore, they attempted to make the caregivers to accept them:

Johnny: “I told George in the office that I don’t enjoy life on the streets, and that I experienced something very painful. And I told him that they must give us anything that they have, and he said ‘you are not getting anything’.”

Theo: “I told them that they must treat us in the same manner that they treat their children, because some of us have undergone painful things, but some of us did not. People are not the same...”

Fifthly, in an attempt to generate income, they engaged in the activity of taking banana boxes to the scrapyards:

Freddy: “There was a scrapyard there, we used to take banana boxes there.”

On the contrary, when they live on the streets they stick together as street children. They live close together and relate very well with each other, thereby forming their own family on the streets. They also go to centre X frequently in order to gain access to the facilities therein:

Jim: “...we live close together on the streets, and we relate very well with each other.”

Johnny: “We go to centre X anytime and they don’t chase us away...”

### **(F) Consequences**

When they took banana boxes to the scrapyard, they were able to get money:

Freddy: “At least we got those few cents... when we took those boxes to the scrap yard.”

Their strategy of going to centre X and asking for clothes resulted in them having faith in the caregivers. They felt accepted and knew that they could count on them anytime. Consequently, they developed a desire to refrain from street life. They described street life as being bad and one of them even stated that he would agree to be placed back in centre X, provided that they permit him to partake in income-generating activities on the streets throughout the day and return to the centre in the evening. They also realised that they were most content and well cared for when they had resided in centre X, not centre Y. Consequently, they are motivated to go to centre X occasionally now that they have returned to the streets:

Bill: “... we knew that they (the caregivers of centre X) would give us what they have, and they will also inform us if they had nothing. We knew that if they did not have anything, they would do their best to get us something.”

Theo: “We were treated extremely well at centre X, not at centre Y. At centre Y, they treated

us as they pleased.”

Tim: “The *meneers* (the caregivers of centre X) did not like our lifestyle on the streets, they treated us like their own children.”

Jim: “The *meneers* of centre X look after us...”

Zack: “I will return to centre X, but I will ask the *meneers* to allow me to go to the streets now and again in order to generate some income. I want to go to the streets and make money, but come back to the centre every evening to sleep.”

Freddy: “...we’re on the streets but we go to centre X anytime.”

Finally, their living together on the streets result in a sense of belonging. They feel that they belong with someone, namely the other street children that they grew up with on the streets. The fact that they grew up together on the streets shows that they had been living together for a long time and during that time, they had become emotionally attached to each other. Contrary to the way they felt in centre Y, they did not feel unwanted when they were with other children on the streets:

Chris: “We live together on the streets, we grew up together.”

### **4.3. THE INTERVIEW WITH ONE OF THE CAREGIVERS OF CENTRE X**

#### **(A) Causal conditions**

The causal condition was the prevention of chaos in the centre, so as to maintain control and order:

Martin: “The rules were established so that there could be order in the centre, without order there will be chaos. They were established so that there could be control...so that the centre can be governable.”

## **(B) Phenomenon**

The project of centre X was formed by the Pretoria Child Welfare. The welfare lays down the standard rules that the caregivers have to comply with. The caregivers in turn, lay down the rules for the children, volunteers and people who visit the centre. The rules that the children are subjected to are classified into inflexible and flexible rules:

Martin: “Centre X is a project that was established by the Pretoria Child Welfare. The welfare develops standard rules that govern the employees. The employees in turn, implement rules that govern the people that they work with. We make rules for the children, the volunteers in the centre and anyone who comes to the centre. We have rules that the children are supposed to obey in the centre. Um...we have flexible and inflexible rules.”

Inflexible rules are basic rules that they never change. On the contrary, flexible rules are changeable. This depends entirely on which child the caregivers are dealing with as well as the circumstances at that stage. The rules are changed in order to make them suitable for the children and the caregivers:

Martin: “...the inflexible rules are basic rules. These are the rules that we do not change at all. On the other hand, the flexible rules are rules that we change. We consider who are we dealing with, that is, which child are we dealing with and the circumstances at that stage. Taking these two into account, then we determine how can we change the rule in question so that it becomes suitable for the child and us.”

The children are subjected to the following inflexible rules:

(a) They sign a contract after absconding three times from the centre. The contract stipulates clearly what will happen to them if they abscond again. When they sign it, they agree that they have understood its contents and the consequences of absconding again. They are normally expelled from the centre if they abscond after they have signed the contract:

Martin: "...when a child has absconded three times from the centre, and he was also warned verbally on certain occasions, we make him to sign a contract. The contract states clearly what will happen to him if he absconds again. By signing it, he consents that he understands what does the contract say and what will happen to him if he absconds once more. He is expelled from the centre if he absconds after signing the contract."

(b) They must engage in domestic chores such as cleaning:

Martin: "The children must basically engage in domestic chores, for instance, cleaning."

(c) They are permitted to go out for an hour or two during weekdays and weekends. Their privileges are also taken away if they violate this rule:

Martin: "They are permitted to go out for about an hour or two, especially during weekends. We permit them to go out during weekends most of the time. Their privileges are taken away when they transgress this rule."

(d) They are not permitted to smoke anything in the centre; this includes glue and cigarettes:

Martin: "They are not allowed to smoke anything in the centre. Be it glue, cigarettes... you name it."

(e) The excursions are for those who are obedient:

Martin: "Another rule that we have, is that the outings are for those who behave."

(f) They are not allowed to bring their girlfriends to the centre:

Martin: "...the children are not allowed to bring their girlfriends to the centre..."



(g) All of them must attend school:

Martin: "... all of them should go to school..."

(h) They should all be given an equal amount of food:

Martin: "... they must be fed equally..."

(i) They must not fight:

Martin: "They are not allowed to fight..."

(j) They are not allowed to reside in the centre when they are older than sixteen years:

Martin: "...those that are older than sixteen years are not allowed to reside in the centre."

(k) They are not supposed to be removed from the centre by anyone without the caregivers' permission:

Martin: "...no one is allowed to take them from the centre without our permission."

Presently, there is only one flexible rule and it entails how punishment is inflicted. The manner in which punishment is put into effect also depends on the child to be punished and the circumstances during that time. The punishment entails the denial of certain privileges to the children. The caregivers know the children well enough to determine what does each child take pleasure in. Hence, they are able to deny them privileges that they really enjoy. This ensures that the children find it difficult to live without these privileges. It also ensures that the punishment becomes effective and deters them from further misconduct. In certain instances there are additional rules that are incorporated as flexible, but they are never incorporated as inflexible rules. However, when they turn out to be unworkable, they are

omitted:

Martin: “What I can tell you is that presently, the rule that is flexible... is that which entails how punishment is inflicted. The enforcement of punishment depends on the child that we could be dealing with at any given moment. The punishment that we believe in, is that of denying children certain privileges. We believe that when you enforce it, you have to ensure that it is going to have an impact on the child. You have to determine whether it is going to be effective enough. You have to determine whether he is going to learn something from it. It must be enforced in such a way that it can stop him from repeating the same behavior that he was punished for. For example, you can have a child who does not enjoy watching television. Let me use Isaac as an example... he does not enjoy watching television, he watches it rarely. If it happens that he disobeys any rule, we cannot punish him by ordering him not to watch television. Why? Because the punishment won't have great impact on him. He does not enjoy watching television in any case. Which is why we first determine which child are we dealing with, and the conditions at that stage, then enforce the punishment afterwards. We know the children very well... we know their habits. It is extremely crucial to inflict the punishment that will have an impact on the child. It must be something that will deter him from disobeying any rule. There are rules that are added sometimes, and we incorporate them as flexible rules. We also omit them if they are not workable.”

### **(C) Context**

The context entails the following conditions:

(i) Recruitment- the caregivers go out to the streets and motivate the children to reside in the centre. On certain occasions, the children are fetched by the caregivers and placed in the centre. The caregivers do not lock the gate during the day, they keep it open so that the children can arrive anytime:

Martin: “The thing is, we recruit these children from the streets. We go out to the streets and

ask them to come to the centre. On certain occasions we fetch them from the streets and bring them to the centre. As you can see, the gate is not locked during the day, it is open all the time. They are welcomed here anytime. You know... we really encourage them to come to the centre. We encourage them to come and stay in the centre.”

(ii) Sheltering children who have come to the centre alone through their own choice:

Martin: “On certain occasions they come to the centre by themselves... they come to the centre out of free will.”

(iii) Placing children in foster care- as soon as the children get older than sixteen years, they are placed in foster care. This happens when the caregivers have evaluated their domestic conditions and deemed them unfavourable. The caregivers encounter difficulties when they have to place them in foster homes. Most people refuse to take in children of their age because they fear that the children might have already developed their own value systems which might be in conflict with their values. Most foster parents prefer younger children who they can raise and to whom they can teach their own values. However, some of the children who were placed in foster homes return to the centre because they are accustomed to it and enjoy staying there:

Martin: “What we do is, we assess their homes first and determine if they can be returned there. If we determine that the conditions at home are not favourable, then we place them in foster care. We normally experience problems with regard to placing them in foster care. The problem is that most people do not want to take in children who are older than sixteen years. The problem is that these children have already grown up, and might have already developed their own value systems... that might clash with the foster parents values. They prefer smaller kids that they can raise on their own... and teach them their own values. Some of them are placed in foster care but return here again. For example Moses, I took him and placed him in foster care in Bushbuckridge, but he returned the following morning. He returned so quickly, he did not want to go back. They are used to this place and they like it. Therefore, they find it hard to stay in foster homes.”

(iv) Dead-end - it becomes a dead-end when the children get older than sixteen years, especially if they cannot be returned to their homes or placed in foster homes. They have nowhere to go and eventually return to the streets:

Martin: "...it becomes a dead-end when they become older than sixteen years... we don't allow them to stay in the centre. It becomes very difficult to find them an alternative place. As a result, some of them return to the streets."

(v) Hatred- the children hate the caregivers for enforcing the rules:

Martin: "The only drawback is that the rules make some of the children to hate us. They really hate us for enforcing the rules. That is certainly the only disadvantage..."

(vi) Reformation- some of the children who have previously resided in the centre have been returned home. They are reformed, responsible and doing well:

Martin: "The rules also turn the children into responsible people that we return back to their communities and families. Most of them are returned to their families and are doing well...they are extremely reformed and responsible."

(vii) Sustainability- the rules that are implemented in the centre contribute to its ability to continue to survive and not close down:

Martin: "We strongly believe that having such rules has made this centre to continue surviving. Many centres were closed down..."

#### **(D) Intervening conditions**

The children's willingness to cooperate results in the facilitation of the implementation of the rules. Their cooperation is motivated by various benefits that they acquire when they are compliant. Their benefits entail getting nice food, sleeping with duvets and going on excursions:

Martin: "What makes them easier to implement, is the children's willingness to cooperate. They cooperate because there are certain benefits that they obtain when they obey the rules. The benefits include sleeping with duvets, outings and delicious food."

The following factors serve as barriers to the successful implementation of the rules. Firstly, the children are subjected to outside temptations such as the longing to generate money on the streets. They are tempted to go out and make money on the streets so that they can purchase their girlfriends splendid things. Secondly, sometimes the rules are in conflict with the children's needs. For instance, some of them feel that they are old enough to take their girlfriends to the centre, but this is against the rules of the centre. Thirdly, the children are accustomed to street life and independence. Therefore, they detest the rules because they are not used to control:

Martin: "What makes the rules difficult to implement is that sometimes they clash with their needs, for example some of them are older and they have girlfriends. Sometimes they feel that they are old enough to bring their girlfriends to the centre. Sometimes it is outside temptations, for example, they are tempted to go out and make money on the streets so that they can buy their girlfriends nice things."

#### **(E) Action or interactional strategies**

In an effort to resolve factors that culminate in the hindrance of the implementation of the rules, the caregivers hold group sessions with the children. During the sessions, they discuss

with the children why there are rules, why they must obey them and why they violate them:

Martin: “We hold group sessions where we discuss with them why there are rules, why they must obey them and why are they disobedient.”

The caregivers use the Social Worker's Evaluation Form to encourage the children to be compliant. In this form, they record any crucial information about the children. They record the children's age, gender and conduct. They also record, among other things, what they did and when and where they did it. After the form is completed, it is then evaluated by the social worker:

Martin: “We have a form that we call the Social worker's Evaluation Form. This form contains all the information about the child. For instance, it contains information about his age and gender. It has all the information about the child, including his behavior in the centre. The caregiver that is responsible for the children writes everything in the form and gives it to the social worker for evaluation.”

### **(F) Consequences**

As a result of the group sessions, both the caregivers and the children are able to express their views about the rules. This results in some of the children's ideas being incorporated as flexible rules:

Martin: “Sometimes we take into account some of their views and change some of the rules, based on their views...but we never change the basic rules. We only change the flexible ones.”

By studying the form, the social worker is able to determine the children's general conduct in the centre and also determine what they have been doing for the past few days. Due to the limited number of children who they take on excursions, they use the forms to determine which of them have been obedient. They only take those who have been compliant. The number of

children that they take on excursions varies. It depends how many of them can fit in the Venture, and how many of them were obedient:

Martin: “The social worker then evaluates the form, and is able to determine the child's general behavior...and can also see what was the child doing for the past few days. If there is an outing, we can't take all of them. We have to choose which ones are we going to take. We cannot fit all of them in the venture. Therefore, we use the form to check which ones were well behaved and we take them. It depends how many can we fit in the venture and how many of them behaved.”

#### **4.4. CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented the research findings that were generated from the four focus group interviews that were conducted with the children, as well as the interview that was conducted with one of the caregivers of centre X. The findings were presented in the form of the axial coding paradigm. Direct verbatim quotations substantiated the findings.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND INTEGRATION OF FINDINGS

#### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the discussion, interpretation and integration of the research findings expounded in the previous chapter. The findings will be explicated in the form of the axial coding paradigm outlined in the previous chapter, namely causal conditions, phenomenon, context, intervening conditions, action or interactional strategies and consequences. The literature review delineated in chapter 2 will be utilised for the interpretation of the findings.

#### 5.2. CAUSAL CONDITIONS

Causal conditions refer to incidents that result in the occurrence of the phenomenon (Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The aim of the study was to determine why some of the street children who were formerly placed in the rehabilitation centres return to the streets. Thus, the objectives of the study were as follows:

(a) To determine whether the children's tendency of returning to the streets results from their negative perception of certain factors in the centres. Therefore, the investigator had to determine how the children perceived the following factors in the centres:

- The conditions under which they lived,
- Their relationship with the caregivers and
- Their relationship with other children



(b) To determine whether the children left the centres as a result of their desire to resume the life that they adopted in the streets prior to their placement in the centres. Thus, the investigator had to determine the children's perception of factors in the streets that influenced them to leave the centres.

(c) To determine the norms and values that are applicable in the centres.

Cited below, are factors that were identified as contributing to street children leaving the rehabilitation centres and returning to the streets.

### **5.2.1. Factors that influenced the children to leave the centres and return to the streets**

The following factors influenced the respondents to leave the centres and return to the streets: ill-treatment, restriction, familiarity with street life, humiliation, discrimination, accusations, the companionship on the streets, discontentment, the desire to make money on the streets, the desire to return home and being informed about the transfer to centre Q.

#### **5.2.1.1. Ill-treatment**

The respondents were ill treated by the older boys, caregivers and the police in the centre. Both the police and the older boys assaulted them. The older boys went even further by attempting to drown them in the swimming pool and demanding that they should pretend to ride invisible bicycles. The caregivers, on the other hand, denied them food, beat them up, remarked about their parents constantly and threatened to fight them. There was also one respondent who was ill-treated in all the centres that he resided in, but it was not clear as to who ill-treated him and how.

Central to Maslow's theory, is an elucidation of human behaviour in terms of need gratification. Bigner (1983), Burger (1993), Louw and Edwards (1993), Louw, Van Ede and Louw (1998) and Sternberg (1998; 2001) assert that Maslow viewed man as having needs that

are hierarchically arranged. He distinguished two general categories of needs, namely, deficiency and growth needs. Deficiency needs are lower level needs and include physiological, safety, belongingness and love as well as self-esteem needs. Growth needs, on the other hand, are higher level needs and refer to self-actualization needs. According to Irwin and Simons (1994) and Rice (1995), deficiency needs must first be gratified before the need for self-actualization becomes apparent. Therefore, development advances through successive stages of need gratification towards the goal of self-actualization.

Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (1997) and Thomas (1999) define physiological needs as survival needs such as the need for sleep, air, food and thirst; safety needs as needs for security, stability and freedom from fear, anxiety, chaos and so forth; and belongingness and love needs as the need to belong with someone, to receive and give love. Therefore, the respondents' denial of food by the caregivers depicts the lack of gratification of their physiological needs. The fact that they were assaulted, threatened and nearly drowned in the swimming pool, illustrates a lack of gratification of their safety needs. Furthermore, the caregivers' tendency of remarking about their parents depicts their insensitivity towards the respondents' emotions. This, in turn, culminated in the lack of gratification of the respondents' belongingness and love needs.

#### **5.2.1.2. Restriction**

The respondents declared that they were restricted in the centre. Firstly, they were not permitted by the caregivers to go out at night. Secondly, they were supposed to ask for the caregivers' permission if they wanted to go anywhere and were expected to return after five minutes if they were allowed to go out. Their restriction culminated in their inability to generate income and to see their friends on the streets. Inevitably, they realized that they lacked money when they resided in the centres and they returned to the streets in order to generate income

The exosystem refers to one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect the developing person (Shaffer, 1996;

Turner & Helms, 1995). The exosystem is the setting in which the caregivers decided upon the children's restriction in the centre. Although the respondents were not present in that setting, the decisions that were taken by the caregivers had an impact on them. Heller *et al.* (1984, p.139) articulate that "ecological principles call attention not only to the characteristics of individuals and environments, but also especially to the goodness of fit between those characteristics". Therefore, their return to the streets illustrates that there was a lack of fit between them and their exosystem.

#### **5.2.1.3. Humiliation**

The respondents were humiliated by a caregiver named Jack when they came back from strolling on the streets. He dressed them in towels and made fun of them in front of other children. Levine and Perkins (1997) and Moleko and Visser (2001) maintain that Moos described settings as having unique personalities. According to him, some are perceived as supportive whereas others are perceived as competitive and so forth. Therefore, the respondents' expression of their humiliation by the caregiver signifies their subjective perception of the climate in the centre. They perceived the climate in the centre as humiliating.

#### **5.2.1.4. Discrimination**

The caregivers did not furnish them with the clothes that were donated to the centre, but they gave them to their own children. They also favoured other children and let them bath with hot water. Those who were not favoured used cold water. The withholding of hot water and clothes from them depicts a lack of gratification of their physiological needs.

#### **5.2.1.5. Accusation**

It emerged that the respondents were falsely accused by the caregivers and the police. On the one hand, the caregivers accused them of stealing and breaking things in the centre. On the other hand, the police accused them of smoking dagga and stealing people's handbags and

necklaces. In terms of Moos's theory, their expression of their humiliation provided insight into their shared perception of the climate in the centre. Meaning that they perceived the climate of the centre as accusatory.

#### **5.2.1.6. Companionship on the streets**

The respondents expressed their contentment with the manner in which they live close together on the streets. When they inhabit the streets, they relate well with other street children. They assist each other financially, and eat and play together. However, when they resided in the centre they did not relate well with other children. They were ill-treated by the older boys. Consequently, they preferred to return to the streets because they related well with other street children.

A microsystem is a system of which a developing person has direct experience on a regular basis, it is also a pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a setting with given physical and material characteristics (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Orford, 1992). The respondents' microsystems are the centres that they resided in and the streets. A relation obtains whenever one person in a setting pays attention to or participates in the activities of another (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Thus, their companionship on the streets indicates that a relation obtains between them since they pay attention to and engage in each other's activities. Learning and development are facilitated by the participation of the developing person in progressive, more complex patterns of reciprocal activity with someone with whom that person has developed a strong and enduring emotional attachment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Since there is a relation between them, it implies that their learning and developmental processes might be facilitated.

Shumaker and Brownell (in Duffy & Wong, 1996, p. 104) define social support as "an exchange of resources between two individuals perceived by the provider or recipient to be intended to enhance the well-being of the recipient". It also refers to helpful functions performed for an individual by significant others such as family members, friends, co-workers

and relatives (Emmons & Colby, 1995). The main functions of social support are cited by O'Reilly (1995) as follows: instrumental support, emotional support, esteem support, informational support and social companionship. Orford (1992) defines instrumental support as the provision of goods and services that help to solve practical problems; emotional support as assistance in the form of encouragement, love, caring and empathy; and social companionship as spending time with others in leisure and recreational activities. Therefore, the respondents' interaction with other children on the streets enable them to procure instrumental support in the form of financial assistance, emotional support in the form of love and care, and social companionship in the form of playing together. Halpern (1995) adds that social support is widely thought of as acting as a buffer, protecting one against the harmful effects of one's life events and on-going difficulties. Therefore, it is possible that the social support that they procure from other children on the streets ameliorated their unpleasant experiences on the streets.

Swart (1990b), Barnette (1995), Bourdillon (1995), Carr (1995) and Chetty (1997) confirm that boys on the streets live in groups that consist of a maximum of ten members. The group provides them with a survival system, a place to sleep, knowledge of how to avoid conflict with other groups or the law and a mode of collecting money. Without this support from the group, life would be extremely difficult for them. The group becomes the primary reference and performs functions that normally would be performed by their families. As a result, strong bonds of loyalty are formed.

#### **5.2.1.7. Being informed about the transfer to centre Q**

As soon as the respondents were informed that they were going to be transferred to centre Q, they departed from the centre and returned to the streets. The caregivers might have threatened them about the transfer to centre Q when they were in the centre. With reference to Moos's theory, this illustrates that they also perceived the atmosphere as intimidating.

### 5.2.1.8. Discontentment

The respondents conveyed their disgruntlement with the following conditions in the centre: food, clothes, school, the payment for viewing the video, the absence of a doctor as well as the manner in which they related to the caregivers and other children.

#### (i) Food

They fetched cakes and bread rolls from Shoprite, but they were only given bread rolls, not the cakes. There was also an occasion when one of the caregivers denied them food for the whole day.

#### (ii) Clothes

The caregivers did not supply them with the clothes that were donated to the centre. They continued wearing those that they wore on the streets. They instructed them to wash the ones that they were wearing. As a result, they were compelled to wear the same clothes for a period of two weeks because they did not have clothes to change into.

#### (iii) School

They did not go to school, but spent the entire day cleaning the swimming pool in the centre.

#### (iv) Payment for viewing the video

The caregivers asked them to pay for viewing videos that were already in the centre.

#### (v) Absence of the doctor

There was no doctor in the centre and they were not taken to a doctor when they were ill.

(vi) Their relationship with the caregivers and other children in the centre

They did not have a good relationship with the caregivers and older children, as they were ill-treated by them.

Thus, the respondents' discontentment with food, school, clothes, payment for viewing the video and the absence of a doctor demonstrates the caregivers' inability to offer them instrumental support. Their subjection to ill-treatment implies that the caregivers and older boys were not caring and empathetic. In other words they did not procure emotional support from both the caregivers and other children in the centre.

#### **5.2.1.9. Desire to make money on the streets**

The respondents developed the desire to make money on the streets when they were still residing in the centres. This stemmed from the fact that they were accustomed to street life and making money on the streets. When they resided on the streets, they generated income by parking cars, pushing trolleys and assisting white people who were moving to other places or flats by carrying their goods. However, when they were residing in the centre, they were restricted and were unable to make enough income. Therefore, they developed a desire to make money on the streets. This, in turn, resulted in their departure from the centres and return to the streets in order to make money.

An ecological transition occurs whenever a person's position in an ecological environment is changed as a result of a change in role, setting or both (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Thus, the respondents underwent an ecological transition when they initially moved from the streets and resided in the centres, and then moved from the centres and returned to the streets. Different kinds of settings give rise to distinctive patterns of roles, activities and relations for people who become participants in these settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Thus, when they started residing in the centres, they were subjected to a setting that was completely different from the streets. Their shift from the streets to the centres was accompanied by a change of



roles, activities and relations. When they started residing in the centre, they encountered roles, activities and relations that differed from the ones that they were accustomed to on the streets. Their challenge was to adjust to conditions in the centre, namely to adopt the roles, activities and relations there. Thus, their return to the streets depicts that they were in the habit of generating income and were unable to adopt the roles and activities that they encountered in the centre. Consequently, they returned to the streets in order to resume the activities and roles that they were accustomed to.

#### **5.2.1.10. Yearning to return home**

One of them yearned to return home when he was dwelling in the centre. Consequently, he left the centre and returned to the streets with the intention of making enough money that he could use for transport. However, he was unsuccessful and was compelled to remain on the streets. Meyer *et al.* (1997) proclaim that once the physiological and safety needs are gratified regularly, an individual becomes aware of his need to belong somewhere, to belong with someone, and to receive and give love. Unlike on the streets, the respondent was provided, among other things, with food and clothes when he started residing in the centre. This, in turn, resulted in the gratification of his physiological needs. He was also provided with shelter which led to the fulfilment of his safety needs. As a result, he became aware of his need to belong somewhere, with someone, and to receive and give love. In other words, he developed the need to be at home with his family, and to give and receive love there.

Therefore, in view of the above it can be deduced that the respondents' departure from the centres and return to the streets is related to their negative perception of certain factors in the centres, as well as their desire to resume the life that they had adopted on the streets prior to their placement in the centres. The environment that is of great relevance for the comprehension of behaviour and development is not as it exists in objective reality, but as it is perceived by the human being who interacts with it. A person's perception of his environment tends to influence the manner in which he behaves in that particular environment (Walsh, *et al.*, 1992). It can also be concluded that the respondents' return to the



streets resulted from a lack of fit between them and their micro- and exosystems. These systems surround the person simultaneously. Influences on behavior can stem from the immediate setting, from the surrounding context in which that setting is located or from the larger society. The development of the child is also influenced by the relations between these systems and by the larger contexts in which they are embedded (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Heller *et al.*, 1984).

Furthermore, it can also be deduced that their retreat from the centres stemmed from their negative perception of the social climate, the lack of instrumental and emotional support as well as the lack of gratification of their physiological, safety, and belonging and love needs.

In addition to the identification of factors that contribute to street children leaving the centres and returning to the streets, there were unanticipated factors that emerged that were also of great significance to the study. The factors were grouped as follows: factors that influenced the children to leave their homes and reside on the streets; factors that influenced the children to leave the streets and reside in the centre; factors that influenced the children to leave their homes and return to the streets; and factors that influenced the children to leave the centre and return home. A detailed explanation of these factors follows.

### **5.2.2. Factors that influenced the children to leave their homes and reside on the streets**

One of the respondents left his home with a friend and their departure was planned in order to generate income in the city. From the outset, they resided in Johannesburg and then they relocated to Pretoria where they inhabited the streets. Whilst they were on the streets, they were accompanied to the centre by one of the children who was already sheltered there.

On the contrary, some of the respondents' dwelling on the streets resulted from the death of their parents. This suggests that they might not have had anyone who could look after them at home. Consequently, they took off and dwelled on the streets so as to fend for themselves. Researchers such as Schurink (1993) and Chetty (1997) report that there are indications that

some of these children have experienced a great number of stressful events such as the death of a parent. Therefore, the structural disruption of the family through death, might contribute to the street child phenomenon

### **5.2.3. Factors that influenced the children to leave the streets and reside in the centre**

All the respondents described street life as extremely unpleasant. They accentuated that they were subjected to the following excruciating conditions on the streets: consuming food from the rubbish bins, not being able to wash and shave, a lack of blankets, not being able to generate money on certain occasions, witnessing the death of other children which resulted from the diseases that they had contracted on the streets, a fear of food poisoning, and being beaten with sticks, stabbed with bottles and kicked. Consequently, in an attempt to escape these dreadful conditions on the streets they sought shelter in the centres; therefore, their exposure to such conditions on the streets and their movement to the centres implies that there was a lack of fit between them and their microsystem, namely the streets.

Street children appear dirty, unkempt and their clothes are tattered. They are also exposed to antisocial activities such as assault (Schurink, 1993). Their diet consists of handouts from the back doors of restaurants and cafes or whatever they can beg (Carr, 1995). Due to the unavailability of sufficient nutrition and inadequate health facilities, they contract diseases on the streets. They contract diseases such as tuberculosis, bronchitis, lice, scabies, diarrhoea and sexually transmitted diseases (Chetty, 1997; Lewis, 1998; Shanahan, 1999)

### **5.2.4. Factors that influenced the children to leave the centre and return home**

One of the respondents yearned to return home when he was residing in the centre. Eventually, he departed from the centre and returned home. Another respondent was not permitted to dwell in the centre because he was older than sixteen years. One of the caregivers, Mr. William, notified him that children of his age were not permitted to dwell in

the centre and he escorted him back home.

The phenomenon of age restriction was confirmed during an interview with one of the caregivers. He declared that one of the rules of the centre state that children who are older than sixteen years are not to be permitted to stay there. As soon as the children pass the age of sixteen years, they are either returned home or placed in foster care. Their placement in foster care occurs when the caregivers have evaluated their domestic conditions and deemed them undesirable. However, it becomes problematic when they cannot be returned home or placed in foster homes. As a result, they have nowhere to go to and ultimately they return to the streets. The caregivers also encounter difficulties when they have to place them in foster homes. Most people refuse to take them in because they assume that because the children have already grown up, they have developed their own values as well. Therefore, they fear that the children's values will clash with their own. Most of them prefer younger children who they can rear and instil with their values. However, some of the children who were placed in foster homes returned to the centre because they were accustomed to it and enjoyed staying there. Therefore, the children's microsystems comprised of foster homes, the centre and their homes. When they returned to the streets due to the fact that they could not be placed in their homes nor in foster homes, it implied that there was a lack of fit between them and their microsystems. Furthermore, since they also left the centre as a result of the age restriction that was imposed in the centre, it indicated that there was a lack of fit between them and their exosystem. The exosystem is the setting in which the rule that pertains to age restriction was decided upon. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979, p. 25), a mesosystem "comprises the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates". Therefore, when some of them left the foster homes and returned to the centre, it can be deduced that there was also a lack of fit between them and their mesosystem. The mesosystem is the relation between their experiences in the centre prior to their placement in foster homes as well as their actual experiences in the foster homes. When they started staying in foster homes, they were unable to adjust to the condition there as they were accustomed to life in the centre. As a result, they decided to leave the homes and return to the centre. Thomas (1992, p. 441) states that according to Bronfenbrenner "the pattern of

interrelationships among microsystems influences the child's perceptions and behaviour within any of the settings in which the child is presently located".

Furthermore, the caregiver articulated that, apart from the rule that pertains to age restriction, there are additional rules that are also implemented in the centre. These rules are implemented to prevent chaos, and maintain control and order in the centre. According to Barker, settings themselves generate a set of rules which are needed for their maintenance and survival. Therefore, behaviour settings are created by the physical environment and social norms (Moleko & Visser, 2001). The caregivers indicated that since the centre was established by the Pretoria Child Welfare, this organization stipulates standard rules that the caregivers have to abide. The caregivers, in turn, stipulate a number of rules for the volunteers, the children and people who visit the centre. A Macrosystem refers to "consistencies in the form and content of lower-order systems, that is, the micro-, meso- and exosystems that exist at the level of the subculture or culture as a whole, along with any belief systems underlying such consistencies" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 26). Therefore, the Pretoria Child Welfare serves as the children's macrosystem.

The rules that are imposed on the children are divided into flexible and inflexible rules. The flexible rules are subject to change and there are other rules that are incorporated in them. Currently, there is only one flexible rule that is implemented and it entails the manner in which punishment is to be enforced in the centre. The punishment entails the denial of some of the children's privileges. The manner in which it is enforced depends on the child in question, as well the circumstances at a given time. Since the caregivers know the children well, they are able to deny them privileges from which they derive pleasure. Hence, this results in effective punishment, deterring them from further misdemeanor.

On the other hand, the inflexible rules are never changed and nothing is ever added or omitted from them. Consequently, the children need to obey the following rules:

- (a) They are not allowed to fight.
- (b) The excursions are for those who are obedient.
- (c) They are permitted to go out for an hour or two during weekdays and weekends: Their privileges are taken away if they violate this rule.
- (d) They are not permitted to smoke anything in the centre; this includes glue and cigarettes.
- (e) All of them must attend school.
- (f) They are not allowed to bring their girlfriends to the centre.
- (g) They must engage in domestic chores such as cleaning
- (h) They should all be given an equal amount of food.
- (i) They sign a contract after absconding three times from the centre. The contract stipulates clearly what will happen to them if they abscond once more. When they sign it, they agree that they have understood its contents and the consequences of absconding again. They are expelled from the centre if they abscond after they have signed the contract.
- (j) They are not allowed to reside in the centre when they are older than sixteen years.
- (k) They are not supposed to be removed from the centre by anyone without the caregivers' permission.

There are factors that result in the facilitation as well as the hindrance of the implementation of the rules. The children's willingness to cooperate results in the easy implementation of the rules. Their cooperation is motivated by the benefits that they procure when they are obedient. They receive benefits such as sleeping with duvets, eating delicious food and going on excursions. On the other hand, the implementation process is hindered by the children's familiarity with street life as they are used to independence and not control; the conflict that arises between their needs and the rules of the centre; and outside temptations such as the temptation to go to the streets and generate income. In an attempt to overcome the obstacles in the implementation process, the caregivers opt for the use of the Social Worker's Evaluation forms as well as group sessions. In the forms, the caregivers record what the children have been doing in the centre. Then they hand the forms over to the social workers for evaluation. The social workers evaluate the forms and get a global picture of the children's conduct in the centre. They are able to determine specifically which children have

been obedient and which ones have not. When there are excursions, they take only those who have been obedient. Furthermore, there is a limited number of children that they can accommodate in the car. Thus, the forms help them to select the children that they can take on excursions. The forms also help to motivate the children to be obedient. The caregivers use group sessions to address crucial matters that pertain to the implementation of the rules. They inform the children why there are rules, why they must obey them and they also enquire from the children why they violate the rules. The caregivers listen to the issues that are raised by the children and some of their ideas are incorporated as flexible rules. The aim of this is to incorporate rules that are suitable for both the children and the caregivers.

There are also positive and negative outcomes of implementing the rules. On a positive note, the implementation of the rules results in the sustainability of the centre, namely its continued existence. Furthermore, some of the children have been reformed as a result of the rules. Some of them have been returned home and they are reported as doing well and being responsible. This in turn, implies that there was a fit between them and their mesosystem. The mesosystem is the relation between their experiences in the centre prior to their return home as well as their current experiences at home. Their exposure to control and order in the centre contributed to their reformation. This made them responsible when they lived at home. Thus they were able to fit back into their communities and families. The only drawback is that the enforcement of these rules resulted in some of the children hating the caregivers. They detested the caregivers for subjecting them to control and order in the centre.

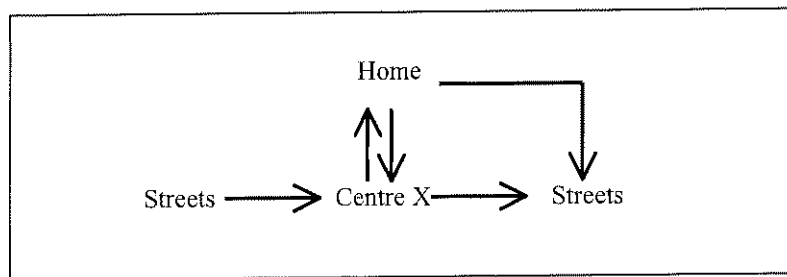
#### **5.2.5. Factors that influenced the children to leave their homes and return to the streets**

The respondent stated in 5.2.4.(that is, the one who departed from the centre because he missed home) was unable to remain at home because he did not have sufficient money. This stemmed from the fact that he was accustomed to having his own money as he generated his own income when he was residing on the streets. Eventually, he left his home and returned to the streets in order to make money. Meaning that he was unable to wean himself away from

street life when he was at home. This in turn, signifies that there was lack of fit between him and his mesosystem.

### 5.3. PHENOMENON

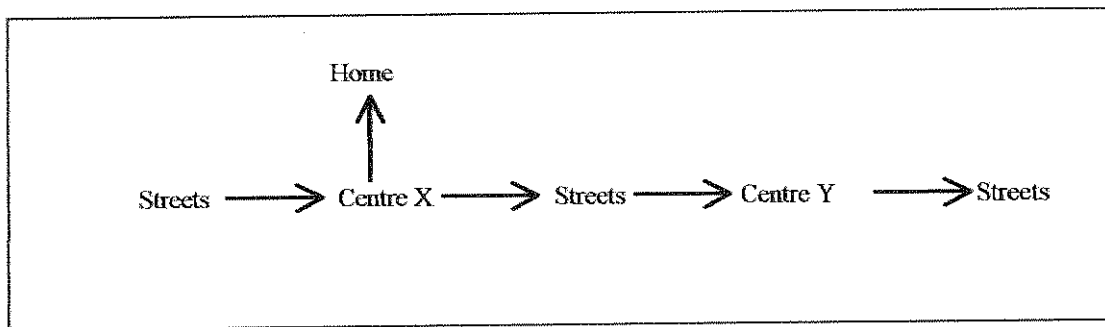
The phenomenon refers to a central idea, event or happening at which a set of actions or interactions is directed (Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin 1990). The respondents depicted a tendency of moving from one milieu to another. They moved between their homes, the streets and centres X and Y. Their switch of milieus is illustrated in figures 5.3.1.; 5.3.2.; and 5.3.3. respectively.



**Figure 5.3.1. A schematic model of street children's switch of milieus.**

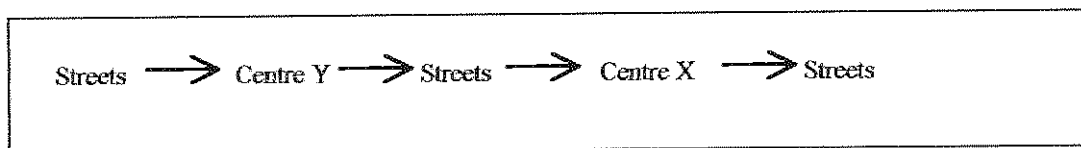
In this pattern, some of the respondents left the streets and sought abode in centre X. While they were in the centre, two of them returned home. One of them resided at home for a while and returned to the streets. The other one dwelled at home for some time, but returned to the centre. Subsequently, after a specific period all the respondents departed from the centre and returned to the streets.





**Figure 5.3.2. A schematic model of street children's switch of milieus.**

In this case, some of the respondents departed from the streets and abided in centre X. While they were in the centre, one of them left the centre and returned home. The rest of the group also left the centre, but returned to the streets. They lived on the streets for a specific period and then they moved to centre Y. However, they also left centre Y and returned to the streets.



**Figure 5.3.3. A schematic model of street children's switch of milieus.**

In this instance, part of the group moved from the streets and stayed in centre Y. They dwelled there for a while and returned to the streets. Then they departed from the streets and dwelled in centre X, only to return to the streets once more.

Now that all of them have returned to the streets, the majority goes to centre X now and again in order to use the facilities there. Thus, currently some of them are moving between the streets and centre X.



A similar report is documented by Janus *et al.* (1987). In their intensive study of the behavioural patterns of street children, they discovered that street children repeat runaway behaviour or return home in a cyclical pattern through four pathways, namely the shelter, the streets, the institution and the family. These patterns can be demonstrated as follows:

- Institution → Family or Shelter → Street
- Street → Institution or Shelter → Street
- Family → Street or Shelter → Family

(i) Institution → Family or Shelter → Street

In this pattern, initially, they resided in an institution which might have been a foster home, juvenile hall, mental institution or jail. Then they either returned home or sought abode in a shelter, and then returned to the streets.

(ii) Street → Institution or Shelter → Street

In this pattern, they left the streets and dwelled in an institution or shelter, only to return to the streets once more.

(iii) Family → Street or Shelter → Family

Finally, some of them left their homes and inhabited the streets. Then they dwelled in a shelter and returned home afterwards.

## **5.4. CONTEXT**

The context refers to the particular set of conditions within which the action or interactional strategies are taken to manage, handle and respond to a specific phenomenon (Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The context entailed the following conditions: lack of trust, limited financial resources, loss of clothes, insecurity, rejection, threats, hatred, lack of restriction, silence, theft, lack of sympathy and fright.

### **5.4.1. Lack of trust**

The respondents were not trusted by a caregiver named Mildred as she did not permit them to go out to the streets. Therefore, they perceived the atmosphere that they were subjected to as distrustful.

### **5.4.2. Limited financial resources**

The respondents were subjected to limited financial resources at home, on the streets and in the centre. They were unable to generate income on certain occasions when they were living on the streets. However, their inability to generate income when they were residing in the centre resulted from the caregivers' refusal to give them permission to go out to the streets.

Furthermore, the respondent who was returned home because of his age was unhappy at home because his mother was unemployed. He stayed with her and his younger brother. Her unemployment suggests that she might not have had adequate financial resources to fend for both of them. Barnette (1995) and Chetty (1997) state that street children in developing countries like South Africa are the products of poverty and unemployment. During the years when South Africa was subjected to sanctions, a number of breadwinners were retrenched from work. Consequently, it became difficult for some of the parents to fend for their children, and thus, a number of children opted to go to the streets so as to fend for themselves.

### **5.4.3. Loss of possessions**

Some of the respondents lost their clothes in the centre. One of them failed to recover his tracksuit after putting it on a shelf. Another respondent discovered that one of the caregivers, namely Jack, gave his clothes to other children while he was visiting his home.

### **5.4.4. Insecurity**

The respondents felt insecure both on the streets and in the centre. Their insecurity on the streets stemmed from their exposure to the possibility of food poisoning and physical violence. Examples of this violence included being battered, kicked and stabbed with bottles and knives. In the centre they were ill-treated by the older boys and the police, and the caregivers did not intervene. Therefore, their safety needs were not met in either the centre or on the streets.

### **5.4.5. Rejection**

One of the respondents felt rejected by his father and Mr. William. He explained that his father was not staying with them, and he did not care. On the other hand, the respondent also felt rejected by Mr. William because he had to return him home because he was older than sixteen years. Yet, he allowed other children who were the same age to continue to reside in the centre. He also transferred some of them to other centres, but left him out. As a result he was convinced that he was not wanted in the centre. Chetty (1997) confirms that street children have been exploited and rejected, especially by their fathers. Life became intolerable at home and they ran away.

### **5.4.6. Threats**

One of the caregivers threatened to fight the respondents when they asked him not to make remarks about their parents. Contrary, when one of them was pestered by other children, he

reported them to the caregivers and they were punished. Subsequent to their punishment, they threatened to beat him up if he reported them again. Thus, he refrained from reporting them.

#### **5.4.7. Hatred**

The respondents declared that they were hated by some of the caregivers, namely George and Suzan. Thus, they did not receive emotional support from these caregivers.

#### **5.4.8. Lack of restriction**

Some of the caregivers permitted the respondents to go out and generate money on the streets. They went to the streets daily but on certain occasions they were permitted to go out only at night. The caregivers who looked after them at night did not notify them when they were expected back at the centre. They knew that the gate was locked at 10 o'clock, but sometimes they returned after 10 o'clock or the next day. The caregivers did nothing, they just let them in.

#### **5.4.9. Silence**

The respondents were ill-treated by one of the caregivers (namely the one who used to remark about their parents) but they failed to alert the other caregivers. One of them was also ill-treated by his step-mother at home and he opted not to inform his father.

#### **5.4.10. Theft**

Apart from the respondents, there were other children who were also accommodated in the centre. Some of them stole two telephones and fled when they realised that the police were called to the centre. The children's tendency to steal is illuminated by Peacock (1992) and Lewis (1998). Both authors attribute the children's inclination to theft to inadequate cultural conveyance in their families, churches and schools as well as their firm belief in "easy come,

easy go” which contributes to their ability to steal from others without genuine remorse.

#### **5.4.11. Fright**

The respondent who was threatened by some of the children after he had reported them to the caregivers was also bothered by other children. He was afraid to inform the caregivers because he thought that these children would kill him. Therefore, his safety needs were not met.

#### **5.4.12. Lack of compassion**

Some of the caregivers were not compassionate. This resulted in respondents experiencing the following: one of them became worried when they were denied the clothes that were donated to the centre; they became furious when they were not provided with food for the whole day; they got hurt when the caregivers told other people that they ran away from their parents; and one of them regretted leaving the streets to reside in the centre.

### **5.5. INTERVENING CONDITIONS**

Intervening conditions refer to the broad and general conditions that could have an influence on a phenomenon. They act either to facilitate or to constrain the action or interactional strategies that are taken within a specific context (Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The intervening conditions entailed the following:

#### **5.5.1. The caregivers fetched them from the streets and placed them in the centre**

The caregivers fetched the respondents from the streets and accommodated them in the centre where they catered for their needs. This was in accordance with what the caregiver had said during the interview. He declared that the caregivers go out to the streets and persuade

the children to depart from the streets and reside in the centre. On certain occasions they fetch some of them from the streets and accommodate them in the centre. During the day they keep the gate of the centre open so that the children can arrive anytime.

#### **5.5.2. The respondents sought shelter in the centre personally**

Some of them went to the centre by themselves, and sought abode. The caregiver also proclaimed that despite their engagement in recruiting the children from the streets, some of them come to the centre on their own, out of their own free will.

#### **5.5.3. The caregivers permitted them to go out to the streets**

Some of the caregivers allowed the respondents to go out to the streets in order to generate income. This encouraged them to a certain extent, to continue staying in the centre because they were able to generate income on the streets and return to the centre. This resulted in the inhibition of their tendency to live on the streets in order to shun the restrictions that were imposed in the centre.

#### **5.5.4. They procured assistance from the public**

While the respondents were dwelling in the centres, Shoprite supplied them with groceries and there were also white people who also provided them with food and clothes. When they returned to the streets, white people volunteered to give them clothes. A lady who stayed in a nearby flat gave one of them her contact numbers. She told him to call her if there was anything that he required.

### **5.5.5. One of them was escorted to the centre by one of the children who were already accommodated there**

When one of the respondents was still residing on the streets with his friend, they met one of the children who was already sheltered in the centre and he took them to the centre.

Thus, the intervening conditions depict that a relation obtained between the respondents and the people who assisted them. They were concerned with the respondents' well being, and hence, they assisted them in different ways. They helped make their lives better by gratifying some of their basic needs.

## **5.6. ACTION OR INTERACTIONAL STRATEGIES**

Action or interactional strategies are actions or interactions that are directed at managing, handling and responding to a phenomenon as it exists in context (Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Since the respondents moved between the centres, the streets and their homes, they devised manifold strategies in order to handle the conditions that they encountered there.

### **5.6.1. Action or interactional strategies devised on the streets**

The respondents devised the following strategies when they resided on the streets: firstly, they partook in income generation activities such as parking cars, pushing trolleys and assisting white people carry their belongings when they were relocating to other places or flats. The studies that were conducted by Swart (1990a), Schurink (1993), Richter and Swart-Kruger (1996) and Cockburn (1994) indicate that there are additional income-generation activities that the children engage in on the streets. They also earn income by sweeping shopkeepers' pavements, hawking, selling newspapers and flowers, pushing carts, trading in second hand clothes, begging and prostitution. However, they could be apprehended when they engage in some of these activities such as parking cars and prostitution. In addition,

there is evidence that their engagement in these activities also results in exploitation. They are deprived legal protection as well as reasonable and favourable working conditions.

Secondly, when they lived on the streets the majority went to the centre frequently in order to sleep, shower and procure food. Thirdly, their subjection to physical violence, namely being booted, stabbed and beaten compelled them to report the perpetrators to the police in an attempt to restore their security on the streets.

Fourthly, as they did not have blankets to sleep with, they slept close together. According to Holahan (1982) Barker maintained that behaviour is not randomly distributed across time and space, but occurs in consistent patterns of regularly scheduled activities called 'behaviour settings'. A behaviour setting is described by Bechtel, Marans and Michelson (1987) and Viljoen, Van Staden, Grieve and Van Deventer (1987) as a structure that is defined in time and space, and which contains a network of physical, social and cultural characteristics which elicit regular patterns of behaviour. Bell, Fisher, Baum and Greene (1990), Fiedeldej (1991), Orford (1992), Bell, Fisher, Baum and Green (1996) and Dalton, Elias and Wandersman (2001) put forward that a behaviour setting is comprised of two interlocking factors, namely standing patterns of behaviour and a physical milieu. Standing patterns of behaviour represent the collective behaviour of the group within clear boundaries of time and space. The physical milieu, on the other hand, consists of physical entities like chairs, tables and so forth. Therefore, any milieu is circumjacent to behaviour. In other words, it encompasses and encloses behaviour. Thus, the children's behaviour was also embedded in a behaviour setting, namely the street where they slept. This behaviour setting also comprised a standing pattern of behaviour and the physical milieu. The standing pattern of behaviour entailed their collective behaviour as a group, that is, sleeping close together. The physical milieu entailed blankets and other physical entities present on the street.

Fifthly, as a result of deficient resources, two of them go to Mamelodi frequently. One of them goes to Mamelodi East in order to get money from certain people. While the other one goes to Mandela Village to the woman that he had met on the streets, and with whom he got



acquainted. He goes to her house in order to wash, iron and change his clothes. She used to give him money when she was selling fruits at Sunnypark. Unfortunately, the securities ordered her to leave as she did not possess a licence to sell there. As a result, she is unable to give him money and thus fends for himself on the streets. After their visits, both of them return to the streets.

### **5.6.2. Action or interactional strategies devised in the centres**

Since they also moved from the streets to the centres, they had to familiarise themselves with the living conditions in the centres, especially since some of them grew up on the streets and were accustomed to street life. Therefore, they contrived the tactics listed below when they started residing in the centres: Firstly, in an attempt to wean themselves away from street life, they adopted the lifestyle of the centres and undertook the following:

- (a) They engaged in household chores such as cleaning; got acquainted with the caregivers and other children; played soccer and took part in dancing competitions that were arranged by the white people who used to visit them; and washed and ironed their clothes.
- (b) They attended school at Pretoria College or in the centre. In Pretoria College they learnt to read and how to do handwork. While in the centre the caregivers and a lady who visited the centre taught them English, Mathematics and Science.
- (c) They adopted the codes of conduct and accepted the punishment of the centres. The codes of conduct entailed listening and respecting the caregivers while the punishment comprised cleaning the house and the yard.
- (d) They partook in excursions such as going to the swimming pool, visiting white people from overseas who also visited the centre and going to the University of Pretoria for a diversity of activities.

(e) They became used to other services in the centres such as the provision of food and clothes. Some of them were provided with food three times a day and were also given the clothes that were donated to the centre. However, some of them were not given sufficient food and were denied clothes.

According to Barker (in Moleko & Visser, 2001), behaviour is dictated by the setting in which it occurs. Thus, people tend to act in response to the dictates of a behaviour setting. When the respondents adopted the lifestyle of the centres, they led a life what was completely different to street life. Unlike when they were on the streets, they were under the supervision of the caregivers when they resided in the centres and they had to attend school, engage in household chores and so forth. Therefore, their behaviour in the centres was dictated by the centres themselves.

On the contrary, some of them might have found it difficult to adopt the lifestyle of the centres. As a result, they gambled in the centre and were unable to cope with the restrictions that were imposed by the caregivers. One of them attended a party with his friends at the Union Buildings without the caregivers' consent and returned to the centre the following day. His friends were staying in the flats and he was the only one who was residing in the centre. Furthermore, since they were also accustomed to income generating activities on the streets, they went to the streets and generated their own income. Some of them took banana boxes to a nearby scrapyards. Thus, in order to compensate for their difficulty in adopting the lifestyle of the centres, they attempted to resume some of the habits that they were used to on the streets.

Secondly, since they were hated, discriminated against, ill-treated and falsely accused by the caregivers, they pleaded with them to treat them in the same manner that they treated their own children. Some of them pleaded with one of the caregivers not to make remarks about their parents. Thirdly, they were not supplied with clothes when they were residing in one of the centres. Consequently, they went to the other centre and asked the caregivers for clothes, especially jerseys. One of them even went to the other centre and took a pair of trousers and a

shirt from the washing line without permission because he just wanted to keep himself warm. Fourthly, on one occasion one of the caregivers denied them food for the entire day. As a result, they went to Shoprite personally and fetched food. Finally, when one of them was informed by Mr. William that he was going to be escorted home because he is older than sixteen years, he pleaded with him to transfer him to another centre that catered for children of his age. He had no desire to return home because his mother was unemployed.

### **5.6.3. Action or interactional strategies devised at home**

It was hinted at earlier that some of the respondents departed from the centres and returned home. When one of them was still at home he was ill-treated by his stepmother, but he ignored her. Furthermore, as soon as one of them was returned home due to age restriction, his mother went to the centre and begged Mr. William to allow him to move back to the centre so that he could go to school or transfer him to another centre that could accommodate him. She was concerned about him because his friends were naughty and smoked dagga and she did not want him to interact with them.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) put forward that a molar activity is an ongoing behaviour possessing momentum of its own and perceived as having meaning or intent by the participants in the setting. In other words, the action or interactional strategies that were contrived by the respondents are termed molar activities. They devised the activities intentionally in order to handle the conditions on the streets, in the centres and at home. Environmental factors influence individual functioning, but individuals also influence the environment, sometimes by changing it in important respects. The developing person is not viewed merely as a *tabula rasa* on which the environment makes its impact, but as a growing, dynamic entity that progressively moves into and restructures the milieu in which he resides. Therefore, an individual develops and functions in a dynamic, continuous and reciprocal process of interaction with his environment. In this interactional process the individual is the purposeful, active agent (Magnusson, 1988; Walsh *et al.*, 1992). Thus they were subjected to certain environmental factors in those settings, and responded by devising the above

strategies in order to restructure the settings. Molar activities constitute the principal and most immediate manifestation both of the development of the individual and of the most powerful environmental forces that instigate and influence that development. As exhibited by the developing person, they serve as indicators of the degree and nature of psychological growth. The emerging molar activities of the child reflect the evolving scope and complexity of the perceived ecological environment, both within and beyond the immediate setting, as well as the child's growing capacity to deal with and alter this environment in accordance with his needs and desires (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Thus, the strategies also depict their growing capacity to alter and deal with the environments in accordance with their needs.

## **5.7. CONSEQUENCES**

Consequences are the outcomes that result from the action or interactional strategies that were taken in response to a phenomenon (Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The strategies that the respondents devised in order to handle the conditions that they were subjected to at home, on the streets and in the centres culminated in positive and negative outcomes.

### **5.7.1. Consequences of strategies that were devised on the streets**

The strategies that they formulated on the streets culminated in the following consequences: firstly, as result of their participation in income-generation activities, they became accustomed to street life as well as having their own money. Money played a significant role in their lives and for some of them, it became the sole thing that gratified them the most on the streets. This made it extremely difficult for most of them to reside in the centres or at home. On a positive note, their engagement in these activities enabled them to purchase themselves clothes. This gratified their physiological need of clothing.

Secondly, their frequent visits to the centre resulted in great contentment because they were able to escape the hardships on the streets and could obtain food and other things in the centre. This also made them realise that their life was satisfactory when they lived in the centres, not on the streets. Furthermore, their frequent movement to the centre also resulted in the desire to refrain from street life. They asserted that they would agree to be placed back in the centre provided that they were either employed and paid, or allowed to engage in income generating activities on the streets during the day and return to the centre in the evening in order to sleep. Their exposure to the centres landed them an opportunity of gratifying most of their needs that were not met on the streets. Consequently, they perceived the centres as more fulfilling and developed the desire to refrain from street life. Therefore, their desire to refrain from street life signifies a fit between them and their mesosystem.

Thirdly, they felt more insecure after they reported the physical violence to the police. Their insecurity resulted from the fact that the police were unable to arrest the perpetrators. They hid from the police and returned when the police were gone and harassed them further by fighting or stabbing them with knives. Thus, their safety needs were still not met. Fourthly, when they live close together they experience a sense of belonging. They feel that they belong somewhere with someone. They feel that they belong on the streets with other children with whom grew up on the streets. They do not feel unwanted when they are with other children on the streets as they did when in the centres. As a result, their belongingness and love needs are met.

Fifthly, when they slept close together on the streets due to a lack of blankets, they were able to keep themselves warm. This in turn, led to the gratification of their physiological need of keeping warm. Finally, by going to Mamelodi, one of them felt grateful, accepted and cared for by the lady that he frequently visited in Mandela Village. He perceived himself as being part of her family, and this resulted in the gratification of his love and belongingness needs. Maslow accentuated that a person not only needs to belong to others, but identification with a home and neighbourhood also contribute to the fulfilment of affiliation needs (Meyer *et al.*, 1997). Consequently, when he fended for himself because she was unemployed, he was able

to buy himself clothes, thereby fulfilling his basic need for clothes.

### **5.7.2. Consequences of strategies that were devised in the centres**

There were also consequences that ensued as a result of the strategies that they devised in the centres. Firstly, their adoption of the lifestyle of the centres yielded the following outcomes:

(a) Some of them were discontent with the punishment and some of them were content. Cleaning, washing and ironing their clothes, as well as the codes of conduct resulted in contentment.

(b) The majority was also content with the provision of food and clothes. The minority was discontent because they were denied clothes and there was insufficient food. Therefore, some of them procured instrumental support from the caregivers but others did not.

(c) Those who attended school in the centre were not satisfied. They did not like the fact that all of them were taught together, regardless of the different grades that they were in. On the contrary, those who attended at Pretoria College were content.

(d) For some of them it was fulfilling to get acquainted with the caregivers and other children. They did not fight with other children and the caregivers responded well when they informed them about any problems that they encountered. Therefore, they were offered emotional support by both the caregivers and other children. However, some of them fought with other children and did not relate well with the caregivers. It was concluded that they were not offered emotional support by the caregivers and other children.

(e) They felt content, grateful, happy and accepted when they went to the swimming pool with the caregivers, played soccer and took part in the dancing competitions, went to the University of Pretoria and when they spent quality time with the white people from overseas who invited them to various places. Thus, they procured social companionship from the

caregivers and the white people who visited the centre.

(f) They cheated each other while gambling, and winded up fighting.

(g) When one of them went to a party without the caregivers' consent, Mr. William got angry and punished him. He instructed him to dig a hole and close it. Afterwards, he instructed him to wash all the children's laundry in the centre. Conflict ensued, their relationship changed and they just greeted each other. The fact that they just greeted each other depicted that they were not on good speaking terms. He also declared that Mr. William was happy because he made him dig and close a hole. This implied that he thought that he enjoyed seeing him suffering. A few days later he returned him home. Because the conflict between them was not resolved, he believed that he had to go home because Mr. William was angry that he had attended a party without his permission. He also assumed that the respondent was happy at home as he went there frequently during weekends when he was staying in the centre.

(h) Their engagement in income-generating activities resulted in contentment and a sense of independence. Those who took hanana boxes to the scrapyards were content because the boxes were exchanged for money. The drawback was that the more they engaged in these activities, the more they longed to make their own money and the more they longed to be independent. This contributed a great deal to their departure from the centres and their homes and their return to the streets. However, not all of them desired money or these activities. One of them, in particular, accentuated that as result of money, one could move about a lot and return to the centre when it was late.

(i) Their plea with the caregivers was futile and their relationship with them deteriorated. One of the caregivers threatened them further. He threatened to fight with them, and they, in turn, informed him that they were going to fight back if he instigated the fight. This contributed to the lack of fulfilment of their safety needs.



(j) Their tendency of going to the other centre and asking for clothes, resulted in them feeling accepted and cared for by the caregivers. They became emotionally attached to them and felt that they could rely on them. This led to their frequent movement to the centre when they were residing on the streets. Now that they have returned to the streets, they still go to the centre.

(k) When they fetched food from Shoprite they became content as they were able to consume some of it. In that manner, they were able to satisfy their physiological need of hunger.

(l) The respondent's plead with Mr. William to transfer him to another centre, was futile. Mr. William insisted that children who are older sixteen years are not allowed to stay in the centre, as a result, he took him back home.

### **5.7.3. Consequences of strategies that were devised at home**

When one of the respondents ignored the ill-treatment that was inflicted on him by his step-mother, he did not get hurt. Furthermore, when the mother of the respondent mentioned above appealed to Mr. William to allow him to reside in the centre or transfer him to another centre, he refused. He informed her that children were usually turned away in other centres. As a result, the respondent returned to the streets since he was unhappy at home and was no longer permitted to reside in the centre. He affirmed that he had no desire to return to the streets, and he feels bad now that he had returned to the streets.

## **5.8. CONCLUSION**

It can be deduced that when the respondents were orphans, discontent, longing to return home, living close together on the streets, ill-treated, discriminated against, falsely accused, pining to make money on the streets, restricted, accustomed to street life, humiliated, subjected to the adverse conditions on the streets and hindered by the age restriction of the centres they adopted the tendency of moving from one milieu to another. They became



accustomed to moving between the streets, the centres and their homes. As soon as they were unable to handle the conditions in one setting, they moved to the next and so on.

This culminated in a context which entailed lack of sympathy, theft, fear, silence, lack of restriction, hatred, threats, rejection, insecurity, loss of clothes, limited financial resources, lack of trust and sympathy. Hence, the intervening conditions were characterised by the caregivers fetching them from the streets and accommodating them in the centre, their assistance by certain community members, their movement to the centre and seeking shelter personally, the caregivers permitting them to go out to the streets and make money, and their being escorted to the centre by one of the children who was already staying in the centre.

Consequently, they contrived different strategies that they applied in the centres, on the streets and at home. On the streets they: slept close together, engaged in income-generating activities, reported the physical violence to the police, a number of them went to the centre frequently and a few of them go to Mamelodi. In the centres, they pleaded with the caregivers to treat them like their own children and not to make remarks about their parents, adopted the lifestyle there, fetched food from Shoprite and one of them asked Mr. William not to return him home but transfer him to another centre. When at home, one of them ignored his step-mother's ill-treatment. In addition, when one of them was returned home his mother approached Mr. William and begged him to take him back to the centre or transfer him to another centre. As result of these strategies, the following consequences ensued anger, conflict, fighting, joy, a sense of independence, contentment, discontentment, the desire to make money on the streets, being accustomed to street life, purchase of clothes, being accustomed to having money, faith in the caregivers, the desire to refrain from street life, emotional attachment to the caregivers, perception of street life as undesirable, guilt, insecurity, a sense of belonging, an ability to keep each other warm on the streets, gratitude, acceptance and an ability to spare oneself from pain.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION, EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 6.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the main findings of the study, a critical evaluation of the study, recommendations based on the findings and implications for further research.

#### 6.2. SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

The findings indicate that the causal conditions embedded on the streets, in the centres and in the respondents' homes, individually or in combination, resulted in the respondents moving from one setting to another. The majority moved between the centres and the streets while the minority moved between the centres, the streets and their homes.

The aim of the study was to determine factors that contribute to their departure from the centres and return to the streets. Hence the study's objectives were as follows: to determine the norms and values that are applicable in the centres and to establish whether their tendency of returning to the streets results from their negative perception of certain factors in the centres as well as their desire to resume the life that they adopted on the streets prior to their placement in the centres. The findings show that their return to the streets resulted from their negative perception of certain factors in the centres. They had a negative perception of the conditions under which they lived as well as the manner in which they related to the caregivers and other children. They articulated that they were subjected to the following conditions: insufficient provision of food, absence of a doctor, denial of clothes, lack of schooling and paying for viewing videos. Their interaction with the caregivers was characterized by ill-treatment, discrimination, humiliation, restriction, false accusations and threats. Their interaction with older boys was also characterized by ill-treatment. The boys

attempted to drown them in the swimming pool and insisted that they should ride invisible bicycles. In addition, their retreat from the centres stemmed from the assault and false accusations by the police as well as their desire to return home.

However, it also emerged that their departure from the centres also resulted from their desire to resume the life that they had adopted on the streets prior to their placement in the centres. The majority was unable to remain in the centres as they were already accustomed to street life. Consequently, they returned to the streets in order to resume their engagement in income-generating activities and to be reunited with other street children. Therefore, they preferred to dwell on the streets because they were independent, able to generate income, not restricted and were emotionally attached to other children on the streets. Through their interaction with other street children they procured the love, care, acceptance and companionship that they were denied by some of the caregivers and other children in the centres.

Furthermore, the interview with one of the caregivers provided a detailed explanation of the norms and values that are applicable in one of the centres, that is centre X. The caregiver stated that the norms and values that the children are subjected to are decided upon by the caregivers themselves. There are specific rules that the children have to obey and they are punished when they are disobedient. The rules include, among others, compulsory school attendance and the prohibition of smoking and fighting. The punishment includes the children's denial of certain privileges. There were indications that the enforcement of these rules had negative and positive outcomes. On the one hand, their enforcement contributes to the sustainability of the centre as well as the children's reformation. On the other hand, their enforcement resulted in children despising the caregivers. They despised the caregivers for subjecting them to control and order as they were accustomed to independence on the streets.

Apart from the identification of factors that contributed to their departure from the centres and return to the streets, there were additional and unforeseen factors which were identified and categorized as follows: factors that influenced the children to leave their homes and

reside on the streets; factors that influenced the children to leave the streets and reside in the centre; factors that influenced the children to leave the centre and return home; and factors that influenced the children to leave their homes and return to the streets. The respondents' decision to depart from their homes and to seek abode on the streets resulted from the death of their parents and their desire to generate income. Their decision to leave the streets and to reside in the centre was a result of their exposure to unpleasant conditions on the streets like consuming food from the rubbish bins. Therefore, they resided in the centre in order to avoid the unpleasant atmosphere on the streets. Furthermore, they left the centre and returned home because they missed home, and some of them were older than sixteen years and were no longer permitted to reside there. Finally, their departure from their homes and return to the streets was also because they wanted to make money on the streets and they were unable to do so at home. Therefore, some of them preferred the streets to their homes because they were able to generate income on the streets.

### **6.3. SHORTCOMINGS OF THE STUDY**

#### **6.3.1. The design**

It is extremely difficult to conduct research on street children because they are not easily located. The investigator had difficulty in locating the children in their well-known abodes on the streets.

#### **6.3.2. Sampling procedure**

Due to the limited number of children on the streets, those who were aged between nine and thirteen years could not be located. As a result, the interviews were conducted with those who were aged between fourteen and eighteen years.

### 6.3.3. Sample size

The sample comprised of 29 children, thus, the phenomenon needs to be investigated further in order to arrive at a more firm conclusion.

### 6.3.4. Measuring technique

It was difficult to assemble the children in a designated place and at a prescribed time, as they engage in a diversity of activities during the day. They do not necessarily engage in the same activities at the same time and place.

### 6.3.5. Data collection

The investigator was unable to conduct focus group interviews with the caregivers of both centre X and centre Y. Firstly, centre Y was already closed down when the investigator started collecting data. Secondly, the investigator encountered difficulties when she attempted to arrange a focus group interview with the caregivers of centre X. As a result, she resorted to a semi-structured interview with one of them only. Therefore, the study would have been more informative if the norms and values of centre Y had also been incorporated.

Furthermore, when the focus group interviews were conducted on the children, some of them talked less and did not participate much. The majority participated, but on certain occasions they did not elaborate on some of the information when they were asked for clarification. For instance, they stated that one of the caregivers remarked about their parents, but failed to clarify what exactly he said about their parents. According to Janus *et al.* (1987) and Chetty (1997) the majority of these children have undergone traumatic experiences such as rejection, exploitation as well as familial physical and sexual abuse. As a result, they display low self-concepts, depression, anxiety, avoidant patterns and so forth. Therefore, it is postulated that perhaps these explain their reluctance to relate some of the experiences that they encountered at home, on the streets and in the centres.

## **6.4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.4.1. Training of caregivers**

The literature review demarcated in chapter 2 also provides a detailed discussion by Barnette (1995) of programmes that cater for street children in South Africa. Accordingly, when the children reside in the centres the caregivers ensure that their basic needs are met. They provide the children with food, clothes, education (both formal and informal) as well as medical, legal and psychological services. On the contrary, the findings of the study showed that some of the caregivers failed to meet some of the respondents' needs in the centres. Instead, they subjected the respondents to ill-treatment, a lack of medical services, discrimination, inadequate food provision, humiliation and so on. It is disturbing that the respondents prefer to struggle on the streets than to be in the centres. There could be an increase in the number of children who continue to shun the centres unless the caregivers receive intensive training on the needs, aspirations, experiences and handling of these children

### **6.4.2. Education**

Some of the respondents did not attend school while they were residing in one of the centres. They were not content with the fact that they cleaned the swimming pool during the day, instead of going to school. On the other hand, those who attended school in the other centre were not content with the fact that the caregivers taught all of them together, regardless of the different grades that they were. This implies that they preferred to be taught separately, according to their grades. Therefore it must be ensured that the children in the centres attend school, and are grouped according to their grades or capabilities if possible.

### **6.4.3. Age restriction in the centre**

It also emerged that according to the rules and regulations of one of the centres, children who

are older than sixteen years are not allowed to reside in the centre. As soon as they reach sixteen, the caregivers assess their domestic conditions and if they deem them unfavourable then attempts are made to place them in foster care. Unfortunately, the caregivers struggle when they have to place them in foster care as most foster parents prefer younger children. As a result, most of them end up returning to the streets as they can neither reside in foster homes nor return home or to the centre. Therefore, this shows that there were a number of children who returned to the streets out of free will. This could have given them the impression that they were unwanted or unworthy individuals. Moreover, some of them had already been rejected by the families and members of the community. This might have served as confirmation that nobody cares about them and that they really belong on the streets. The study also confirmed that the more time they spent on the streets, the more difficult it was for them to adjust to the lifestyle in the centres or at home. Therefore, the norm that pertains to age restriction should be reviewed as it has dire outcomes.

As an alternative, additional rehabilitation centres which cater for older children, namely those who are sixteen years and older could be established. It was evident in the study that it was crucial for the respondents to earn an income. Hence, some of the left the centres in order to earn an income on the streets. In order to address this matter in these centres, provisions could also be made to train the children in technical skills such as carpentry, welding and so forth. As a result, they could be self-employed and be able to earn a living without having to inhabit the streets.

## **6.5. IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

It is recommended that similar studies be undertaken in order to explore the following:

- The impact that the centres' norms and values have on street children. The study should be aimed at determining whether these norms and values contribute to the children's departure from the centres and return to the streets.

- The street life experiences of children who are compelled to depart from the centre as a result of the age restriction. In other words, it must be determined how they feel once they have returned to the streets, what impact that has on them and how they cope.
- The motivation of the centres to opt to accommodate younger children, but to exclude those who are sixteen years and older.
- The nature and level of training that street children's caregivers obtain.

## 6.6. CONCLUSION

Based on the grounded theory, it can be deduced that the respondents moved between the centres, streets and their homes. Their decision to depart from any of these settings rested upon the manner in which they perceived the conditions therein. Once they perceived the conditions as unpleasant or dissatisfactory, they moved to another setting and so on. Although the study confirmed that the respondents left the centres and returned to the streets as a result of their negative perception of certain factors in the centres, the majority condemned street life and appreciated the services that they were provided with by the caregivers. Their perception of the two centres depicted that they were most content in one of the centres. Their contentment in the centre inspired some of them to consider refraining from street life and starting a new life in the centers, provided that they would be employed and remunerated or allowed to engage in income-generating activities on the streets during the day and return in the evening to sleep. Thus, despite the negative aspects that were highlighted by the respondents, it is clear that their exposure to the centres yielded positive outcomes as well.



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## APPENDIX A

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

#### Questions that were posed to the children

(a) “What was it like for you, to reside in the centre?”

- How did you feel about the living conditions?
- How did you relate to the caregivers?
- How did you relate to other children?

(b) “How did you perceive the lifestyle that you adopted in the streets prior to your placement in the centre?”

(b) “Could you please explain, why you left the centre and returned to the streets?”

#### Questions that were posed to the caregivers

(a) “Could you please explain in as much detail as possible, the norms and values that are applicable in this centre.”

(b) “Who decided on the norms and values?”

## APPENDIX B

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS (ZULU VERSION)

#### Questions that were posed to the children

(a) “Ingabe bekunjani ukuhlala esenteni?”

- “Benizizwa kanjani ngesimo sezenhlalo?”
- “Beniphathene kanjani nabanakekeli benu na?”
- “Beniphathene kanjani nezinye izingane na?”

(b) “Nani zizwa kanjani ngempilo enaniyiphila ezitaladini ngaphambi kokuba nihlale esenteni?”

(c) “Bengicela ukuthi ningichazele ukuthi kungani nasuka esenteni naphindela ezitaladini?”

## APPENDIX C

### DATA ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

#### OPEN CODING: GENERATION OF CONCEPTS AND CATEGORIES

##### (a) Desire to make money

One of the respondents was persuaded by his friend to depart from home and go to town in order to seek money. They took off and went to Johannesburg, and then they moved to Pretoria and inhabited the streets. Fortunately, they met one of the children who was already residing in the centre and he escorted them to the centre.

Some of them were unable to reside in the centre because they were accustomed to making money on the streets. When they resided on the streets, they generated income by parking cars, pushing trolleys, and assisting white people who were moving to other places or flats by carrying their goods. When they started to live in the centre, they developed the desire to make money on the streets. Unfortunately, when they were in the centre they were permitted to only go out for a specific period. At that stage, it was impossible for them to make money. Consequently, they left the centre and returned to the streets in order to generate money.

##### (b) Gratification

The respondents asserted that they were treated well in the centre. They were gratified with the food, clothes and the punishment that was enforced. The punishment entailed the cleaning of the rooms. Some of them conveyed their gratification by the manner in which they related to the caregivers and other children. They did not fight with other children and were able to inform the caregivers about any difficulties that they encountered, and the caregivers responded well. On the streets they also derived gratification by engaging in income-generation activities. They used the money to purchase clothes for themselves.

**(c) Anger**

One of them attended a party at the Union Buildings without the caregivers' consent and returned to the centre the following day. He attended the party with some of his friends who were staying in flats. As a result, Mr. William became furious and punished him. He instructed him to dig and close a hole, then he ordered him to wash all the children's laundry in the centre. Hence, he also got furious for being punished.

**(d) Conflict**

Subsequent to the punishment for attending the party, the relationship between the respondent indicated above and Mr. William was marked by conflict. He stated that Mr. William was happy when he ordered him to dig and close a hole, which implied that he thought that Mr. William relished seeing him in anguish. A few days later Mr. William took him home and the conflict between them was never resolved. In view of that, he assumed that Mr. William took him home because he was angry with him as he attended the party without his permission. He also assumed that since he visited his home during weekends when he was residing in the centre, he might have taken him there because he thought he was happy.

**(e) Change of settings**

The respondents moved between their homes, the centres and the streets. Initially, they dwelled on the streets where they were subjected to unpleasant conditions. As a result, they sought abode in the centre so as to escape these conditions. When they were in the centre, one of them was taken home by Mr. William. He stayed at home for approximately eight months and returned to the streets. The rest of the group also left the centre, but returned to the streets.

**(f) Yearning**

One of them yearned to return home when he was in the centre. As a result, he left the centre and returned to the streets in order to generate sufficient money that he could use to go home with. Unfortunately, he was unable to do so, he remained on the streets, but attended school at Pretoria Technical College.

Mr. William informed the respondent indicated in (c) that since he was older than sixteen years, he was going to be returned home as children of his age were not permitted to reside in the centre. The respondent appealed to him not to take him home, but to transfer him to another centre that took in children of his age. He did not want to return home because his mother was unemployed. However, his appeal was futile as Mr. William took him home. His mother also appealed to Mr. William to allow him to move back to the centre or transfer him to another one. He told her that he could not transfer him as children were normally turned away from other centres. When he discovered that Mr. William refused to take him back to the centre or transfer him to another one, he departed from his home and returned to the streets. Therefore, both of them longed for his placement in centre X or any other centre that sheltered children of his age.

**(g) Discontentment**

The respondents were disgruntled with certain conditions at home, in the centre and on the streets. On the streets, their main difficulties were the inability to wash and shave as well as the lack of safety. Their lives were endangered as there were people who kicked them, beat them with sticks and stabbed them with knives. They reported the matter to the police, but the culprits hid from the police. They returned at night when the police were gone, and fought and stabbed them with bottles.

In the centre, they were discontent with school and clothes. They did not like the clothes because they were all identical and they did not want to wear identical clothes. They attended school in the centre and were taught by the caregivers and one lady who used to



visit the centre. They attended from Monday to Friday and learnt Mathematics, Science and English. They were not happy with the fact that all of them were taught together, despite the different grades that they were in.

Finally, after the respondent in (c) was returned home, his mother was concerned about him. She did not want him to interact with his friends because they were mischievous and smoked dagga. She wanted him to reside in the centre so that he could attend school.

#### **(h) Restriction**

The caregivers did not permit them to go out at night and they were also supposed to ask for their consent each time they wanted to go to a particular place. If they were allowed to go out, they were expected to return after five minutes.

#### **(i) Rejection**

The respondent in (c) felt rejected by his father and Mr. William. He stated that when he was at home he stayed with his mother and younger brother. His father did not stay with them and did not care about them. He added that Mr. William did not let him stay in the centre, but he allowed other children who were also older than sixteen years to stay in the centre. He even transferred some of them to other centres and he was excluded. Consequently, he was convinced that he was not wanted in the centre.

#### **(j) The need to refrain from street life**

They described life on the streets as been terrible compared it to the centre and confirmed that they led a good life in the centre. Their desire to refrain from street life became more evident when they actually moved from the streets to the centre. One of them was accompanied to the centre by one of the children who was already residing there. One of them was fetched from the streets by Mr. William and placed in the centre as well.

Furthermore, one of them was prepared to abstain from the streets and be placed in any centre that catered for children of his age.

### **(k) Fighting**

Some of their interaction with other children in the centre was depicted by fighting. Firstly, one of them fought with another child and the caregivers accused him of instigating the fight, but they were not present when the children started fighting. As a result, he departed from the centre and returned to the streets. Secondly, one of them was tormented by other children in the centre and so he fought them. Thirdly, some of them fought when they cheated each other while they were gambling.

### **(l) Feeling bad**

The respondent in (c) proclaimed that since that he had returned to the streets, he feels really bad. He had no desire to return to the streets, he wanted to return to the centre, but Mr. William refused to take him back. He stated that he was most satisfied when he was staying in the centre.

### **(m) Theft**

Apart from the respondents there were other children who were also accommodated in the centre, but who were criminals. They stole two telephones and ran away when they heard that the police were coming to the centre. They left the centre and never returned.

### **(n) Threats**

There was another respondent who was also pestered by other children. He reported them to the caregivers and they were punished. Subsequent to the punishment, they threatened to batter him if he reported them again. As a result, he refrained from reporting them.

### **(o) Fright**

Apart from those who threatened him, the respondent mentioned in (n) was also bothered by other children. He was afraid to report them to the caregivers because he thought they would kill him.

### **(p) Lack of communication**

The respondent referred to in (k), namely, the one who fought the children who tormented him, never disclosed the matter to the caregivers. He failed to report the children to the caregivers as he was not accustomed to reporting other people.

In addition, the respondent in (c) pronounced that subsequent to the party, his relationship with Mr. William changed dramatically, and they just greeted each other. This suggests that they were not in good speaking terms.

## **AXIAL CODING**

The subcategories were linked to a category in a set of relationships denoting causal conditions, phenomenon, context, intervening conditions, action or interactional strategies and consequences.

### **(A) Causal Conditions**

The causal conditions are located in three settings in which the children interact, namely, the centre, the streets and their homes. Therefore, the causal conditions pertain to these three settings and could be grouped as follows:

- Factors that influenced the children to leave their homes and reside on the streets
- Factors that influenced the children to leave the streets and reside in the centre
- Factors that influenced the children to leave the centre and return to the streets

- Factors that influenced the children to leave the centre and return home

**(i) Factors that influenced the children to leave their homes and reside on the streets**

One of the respondents was convinced by his friend to leave his home and go to town in order to make money. They retreated from home and went to Johannesburg, resided there for a while and moved to Pretoria. Regrettably, they wound up living on the streets while in Pretoria. Then they met one of the children who was already residing in the centre, and he escorted them to the centre.

**(ii) Factors that influenced the children to leave the streets and abide in the centre**

The respondents moved to the centre when they were subjected to adverse conditions on the streets. When they resided on the streets, they were unable to wash and shave. There were also people who beat them with sticks, kicked and stabbed them with bottles. Consequently, they departed from the streets and sought abode in the centre.

**(iii) Factors that influenced the children to leave the centre and return to the streets**

The factors below influenced them to leave the centre and return to the streets. Firstly, one of them missed home while in the centre. Hence, he returned to the streets with the intention of generating sufficient money that he could use to go home with. Unfortunately, he failed to do so and he remained on the streets, but attended school at Pretoria Technical College. Secondly, they developed a desire to make money on the streets as they were accustomed to partaking in income-generating activities on the streets. When they lived on the streets, they earned money by parking cars, assisting white people to carry their luggage when they relocated to other places and by pushing trolleys. However, when they resided in the centre they were unable to generate sufficient income because they were only allowed to go out during a specific period. Consequently, during that time it was impossible for them to generate income. Eventually, they left the centre and returned to the streets in order to make money.

Thirdly, one of them fought with one child and the caregivers accused him of starting the fight though they were not present when the fight began. Fourthly, they felt restricted in the centre. They had to ask for the caregivers' permission when they wanted to go anywhere and they were not permitted to go out at night. If they were allowed to go out, they were supposed to return to the centre after five minutes.

**(iv) Factors that influenced the children to leave the centre and return home**

Mr. William told one of them that children who were older than sixteen years were not permitted to reside in the centre. Thus, he took him back home because he was older than sixteen years.

**(B) Phenomenon**

The respondents moved between the streets, their homes and the centre. They dwelled on the streets for a specific period and moved to the centre after their exposure to the unpalatable conditions therein. While they were dwelling in the centre, Mr. William took one of them home. He stayed at home for nearly eight months and then returned to the streets. The remainder of the group also departed from the centre, but returned to the streets.

**(C) Context**

The context entailed the following conditions:

(i) Limited financial resources - they were unable to generate sufficient income when they were residing in the centre as they were restricted by the caregivers. One of them was staying with his mother and younger brother at home and she was unemployed. Her unemployment implies that she might have lacked adequate financial resources to fend for both of them.

(ii) Insecurity- they felt insecure on the streets because they were beaten, kicked and stabbed with bottles.

(iii) Rejection - one of them felt rejected by Mr. William and his father. Mr. William returned him home because he was older than sixteen years, though he let other children of his age carry on residing in the centre. He also transferred some of them to other centres and excluded him. In addition, when he was at home he stayed with his mother and younger brother. However, his father did not stay with them and did not care about them.

(iv) Threats – there were children who bothered one of the respondents, he reported them and they were punished. However, as soon as they were punished, they threatened to beat him. As a result, he ceased reporting them.

(v) Theft – apart from the respondents, there were children who stole two telephones from the centre and fled when they realized that the police were called to the centre.

(vi) Fright – the respondent in (iv) was also pestered by other children and he was afraid to report them because he thought they would kill him.

#### **(D) Intervening conditions**

The intervening conditions entailed the following: firstly, one of the children who were already sheltered in the centre accompanied one of them and his friend to the centre. Secondly, Mr. William fetched one of them from the streets and placed him in the centre. Thus, their removal and placement in the centre constrained their exposure to the difficult conditions on the streets.

### **(E) Action or interactional strategies**

Since they moved between the centre, streets and their homes, they devised certain tactics in order to tackle the conditions that they encountered in these settings. When they were abiding on the streets, they devised certain tactics. Firstly, since they were kicked, stabbed and battered by other people, they reported them to the police, thereby attempting to get the police to protect them from these people, so that they could feel secure on the streets. Secondly, in order to earn a living they engaged in income-generating activities such as parking cars, pushing trolleys and aiding white people to carry their luggage when they were relocating to other places.

After they departed from the streets and moved to the centre, they had to adjust to the conditions there as they were accustomed to street life. When they started residing in the centre, they adopted the lifestyle there in an attempt to wean themselves off street life. They got acquainted with the caregivers and other children, they were subjected to punishment such as cleaning rooms, they were provided with food and clothes, they participated in household chores and attended school. They attended school in the centre from Monday to Friday and were taught by the caregivers and a lady who visited the centre. They were taught English, Mathematics and Science. Conversely, some of them might have found it difficult to adopt the lifestyle of the centre. They gambled in the centre and found it difficult to be restricted by the caregivers. One of them even attended a party at the Union Buildings without the caregivers' permission. He attended a party with his friends who were staying in the flats and he returned to the centre the next day. When Mr. William notified him that he was going to be taken home due to the fact that children who were older than sixteen years were not permitted to abide in the centre, he appealed to him to transfer him to another centre that sheltered children of his age. He had no desire to return home as his mother was unemployed. His mother also appealed to Mr. William to let him stay in the centre or as an alternative, transfer him to another centre that took in children of his age. She wanted him to stay in the centre so that he could attend school. She did not want him to interact with his friends at home because they were naughty and smoked dagga.

## (F) Consequences

As a result of their participation in income-generating activities, they were able to purchase clothes. By reporting the beating, kicking and stabbing to the police, they felt more insecure. The insecurity stemmed from the fact that the police were unable to arrest the perpetrators. They hid from the police and returned at night when the police were gone, and fought or stabbed them with knives.

The punishment that was enforced, the provision of food and clothes, their engagement in household chores and their acquaintance with the caregivers and other children resulted in gratification. Some of them did not fight with other children and the caregivers' response was satisfactory when they confided in them. On the other hand, some of them were discontent with school and the clothes. They disliked the clothes because they were all identical. They also disliked the fact that they were taught together in spite of the different grades that they were in. Hence, some of their interaction with other children was portrayed by fighting. One of them was annoyed by other children, and he fought them. However, he did not report them to the caregivers because he was not accustomed to reporting other people. Their gambling resulted in a feud, as they cheated each other.

Because one of them attended a party without Mr. William's consent, Mr. William became furious and punished him. He instructed him to dig a hole and close it and then he instructed him to do all the children's laundry in the centre. He also became furious for being punished. As a result, conflict ensued between Mr. William and the respondent, and things were never the same between them again. Their relationship changed and they just greeted each other. The fact that they greeted each other illustrates that they were not in good speaking terms. Furthermore, he stated that he thought that Mr. William was happy since he made him dig and close a hole. This suggested that he thought that Mr. William took pleasure in tormenting him. After a few days, Mr. William took him home. As the conflict between them was never resolved, he only presumed that Mr. William took him home for two reasons. Firstly, he assumed that he was happy at home since he



went there during weekends when he was residing in the centre. Secondly, he might have taken him home because he was angry that he attended a party without his permission.

After the respondent and his mother appealed to Mr. William, he refused to take him back to the centre or transfer him to another centre. He informed her that he couldn't transfer him as children are usually turned away in other centres. Consequently, when he learnt that he was not going to be returned to the centre or transferred to another one, he left his home and returned to the streets approximately eight months later. After he had returned to the streets, he felt really bad. He had no desire to return to the streets and longed to return to the centre, but he could not go back due to the age restriction. He said that when comparing his home, the centre and the streets, he was most gratified when he was residing in the centre.

Generally, their exposure to a life in a centre culminated in the realization that their life was far better in the centre and not on the streets. They denounced street life and compared it to the centre, and they highlighted the good life that they encountered in the centre. The respondent who was returned home declared that he would agree to be removed from the streets and placed in another centre.

## **SELECTIVE CODING**

### **(a) Explaining the Storyline**

The main story is about a group of street children who moved between the streets, their homes and the centre. They dwelled on the streets for a specific duration and sought abode in the centre after their exposure to adverse conditions on the streets. While they were in the centre, one of them was taken home by Mr. William due to an age restriction in the centre. He resided at home for nearly eight months and returned to the streets once more. The rest of the group also retreated from the centre, but returned to the streets for a variety of reasons.

The main story is the core category; therefore, it is named “switch of milieus.”

The properties of the core category are as follows:

- The desire to make money
- Gratification
- Fighting
- Yearning
- Discontentment
- The desire to refrain from street life
- Restriction
- Rejection
- Conflict
- Anger
- Feeling bad
- Threats
- Fear
- Theft

**(b) Relating subsidiary categories around the core category by means of the paradigm**

*Causal Conditions:* desire to make money on the streets, restriction, adverse conditions on the streets, desire to return home, age restriction and being accused of instigating the fight. These led to:

*Phenomenon:* which is the children’s tendency of moving between the streets, the centres and their homes. This led to:

*Context:* which entailed rejection, fear, threats, limited financial resources, insecurity and theft. These led to:

*Intervening Conditions:* which comprised fetching some of the children from the streets and placing them in the centre by Mr. William and by one of the children who were already residing in the centre. These led to:

*Action or Interactional Strategies:* which entailed partaking in income-generating activities, reporting the physical violence to the police (that is, the beating, kicking and stabbing on the streets), adopting the lifestyle of the centre, gambling, resisting restriction (by attending the party without the caregivers' consent) and pleading with Mr. William to allow one of the respondents to move back to the centre or to transfer him to another one. These led to:

*Consequences:* purchase of clothes, feeling bad, more insecurity, fighting, contentment, discontentment, anger, conflict, and the departure from home and return to the streets.

### **(c) Validating those relationships against the data**

Under conditions where street children are rejected, fearful, threatened, insecure and subjected to theft and limited financial resources, coupled with their desire to make money on the streets, their desire to return home, adverse conditions on the streets as well as the restriction in the centre; the behavioral tendency of moving between the centres, streets and their homes could result. This could be accompanied by various efforts to deal with the specific conditions encountered in these settings such as partaking in income-generating activities, gambling, adopting the lifestyle of the centres, accepting restrictions and alerting the police about the exposure to physical violence on the streets. This, in turn, could result in more insecurity, fighting, contentment, anger, discontentment and conflict.

**(d) Filling in the categories that need further refinement and / or development:**

The core category is the lack of communication: the relationship between Mr. William and the respondent who attended the party as well as the relationships between some of the respondents and other children in the centre, was marked by a lack of communication.

Subcategories:

- Fighting – the respondents fought when they cheated each other during gambling and one of them fought the children who bothered him, but failed to report them to the caregivers. Thus, they communicated through fighting. They adopted fighting as a mechanism of conflict resolution or settling disagreements.
- Avoidance – after one of the respondents attended a party his relationship with Mr. William changed to such an extent that they only greeted each other. It can be concluded that they might not have communicated at all, except when they greeted each other. Furthermore, Mr. William took him home shortly after the party as he was older than sixteen years. However, prior to the party he said nothing about his age and let him stay in the centre. This illustrates that he might have expressed his anger indirectly by returning him home, thereby avoiding any contact with him permanently.

Thus, both Mr. William and some of the respondents avoided verbal communication when they encountered conflict or disagreements. They opted to resolve these through fighting and avoidance.