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Enhancing Stakeholder Collaboration for Educational Inclusion of Children in Street Situations in Kampala District, Uganda

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Abstract

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal number four target five seeks to eliminate all forms of discrimination in education for marginalized groups and vulnerable groups like street children. However, their inclusion in mainstream education has not been explored. Literature acknowledges collaboration among stakeholders as vital for reflection of practices and knowledge exchange and also used as a strategy to foster creativity and innovation necessary for effective implementation of inclusive education. This study explored perceptions of selected stakeholders towards collaboration as a strategy for enabling inclusion of children in street situations in mainstream education and how such collaboration can be enhanced. A qualitative approach was adopted selecting Kampala as a case. Five officials from government and Non-governmental organizations were selected purposively to participate in this study. The data was generated using semi-structured interviews and analyzed thematically. Respondents perceived collaboration as key to effectively include children in street situations in education. However, there were less meaningful relationships amongst stakeholders and majority of them were not performing their roles regarding the education of a child. The participants' experiences of collaborative practices revealed barriers that hindered their partnership regarding the educational inclusion of children in street situations. The study thus concluded that collaboration can be enhanced through a multi-sectorial approach that brings all actors on board in planning and implementation of education inclusion of children in street situations. The study, therefore, recommended that the government should strengthen collaborative practices amongst stakeholders through policy formulation, sensitization and allocation of funds to implement a well-designed educational program based on the learning needs of children in street situations. These findings are of great importance to the Ministry of Education, Head teachers, teachers, Non-Governmental Organizations and other government bodies responsible for the welfare of children in street situations in planning and policy formulation, guidance for including children in street situations in mainstream education so that they gain from the efforts of inclusive and equitable quality education for all.

Key words: *Collaboration, Stakeholders, Street Children, Inclusion, Mainstream Education*

1.0 Introduction

Inclusive education refers to a system of education that accommodates all, learners with or without disabilities to learn together in a conducive environment. Kumar, (2020) demonstrate how inclusive education requires a multi-stakeholder approach system comprising learners, parents, community, administrators, teachers, and policymakers. Inclusive education does not only target groups of excluded societies and children with special needs in regular classrooms but welcomes the diversities of individuals, creates opportunities for full participation in aspects of schooling, equal opportunities for all, and provide an appropriate environment for certain categories without excluding them so that they can achieve their maximum potential (UNESCO, 2009).

The UNESCO-outlined inclusive education principles serve as the foundation for the framework for inclusive education. These guidelines support equal access to high-quality education for all students, irrespective of their circumstances or background. According to UNESCO (2009), inclusive education fosters a sense of belonging and respect for individual differences by promoting diversity, equity, and involvement within learning contexts. Effective implementation of inclusive policies necessitates collaborative partnerships amongst stakeholders, including governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations, communities, and educational institutions (UNESCO, 2017). As a result, the framework places a strong emphasis on concerted efforts to remove obstacles to education and guarantee that street children have an equal chance to grow and study.

In this regard, understanding stakeholders' perceptions is considered vital to the successful implementation of inclusive education programs in regular schools (Mutungi & Nderitu, 2014). With acknowledgement of collaboration as a strategy for effective implementation of inclusive education programs (UNESCO, 2020; Kumar, 2020; Lagat, 2019), The main objective of this study was to explore the perceptions of selected stakeholders towards collaboration as a strategy for enabling educational inclusion of children in street situations. This informed the main research question of how collaboration can be enhanced to support educational inclusion of children in street situations.

2.0 Literature Review

Children in street situations like any other child have a right to basic education. Stakeholders should collaborate with researchers to disseminate policy on inclusive education, acknowledge their realities for the development of educational programs, and develop alternative inclusive models for children in street situations which call for collaboration between governments, children in street situations, and NGOs for successful implementation, and sustainability of designed models (Uthayakumar & Vlamings, 2019). The policy is also stressed in research done by Enable-Ed and USDC in 2017 as a key area of advocacy and focus, formulation and development of curriculum, resource mobilization support as well as the need to clearly define children with

disabilities indicative of their physical, multiple and learning difficulties necessary for consistency in documentation (USDC, 2017).

WHO (2011) reports that increased partnerships amongst stakeholders help to supplement government efforts and also enhance collaboration. This is important for effective management of the school's resources as well as for promoting good accountability and transparency (the Republic of Kenya, 2018b). Inclusive education comprises a complete systems approach, complete education environment, full person approach, reinforced teachers, value and respect for diversity, a learning-friendly environment, effective transformation, monitoring, and acknowledgment of collaborative partnerships (USDC, 2017). This justifies the need to enhance collaboration necessary for educational inclusion of children in street situations.

Partnerships are essential to inclusion because, as Todd (2006) argues, education cannot be inclusive unless parents and kids are engaged in ways that allow their perspectives to inform the design of schools and systems and encourage participation that will advance this goal. The pursuit of common objectives by all stakeholders is the foundation for effective collaboration (Hargreaves & O'connor, 2018). Working together is crucial for sharing knowledge and reflecting on practices. It has also been shown to be a key tactic for inspiring creativity and innovation in the development of successful educational initiatives (Harris, Jones& Huffman, 2017).

3.0 Materials and Methods

This study adopted phenomenology research design under the qualitative research approach to enable the in-depth understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). This approach enables the researcher to understand how participants interpret the experiences of a phenomenon. This approach and the design enabled the researcher to unearth how collaborative practices could be enhanced to enable the inclusion of children in street situations in mainstream education. This made it possible to collect the views of officials from the government and non-governmental organizations who are responsible and in direct contact with children in street situations.

Approval of the study was obtained from Uganda Christian University Research Ethics Committee and later on permission was sought from the commissioner youth and children affairs at ministry of gender, labour and social development responsible for the welfare of children in street situations. Since the study was to be conducted in Kampala district, further permission was sought from the director education and social services Kampala Capital City Authority. Informed consent was sought from each of the participant, as well as anonymity and confidentiality of the participant and the information provided. The researcher adopted the four principles of trustworthiness of credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability through personal data collection, member checks, reflexivity and use of rich thick descriptions to ascertain rigor and reliable findings.

The study was carried out in Kampala District, central Uganda and 5 participants (two government officials and three non-governmental officials) were purposively selected as summarized in table one.

Table 1: Sample selection

Description	Total Number	Selection procedure
Government officials	2	Purposive sampling
Non-Government officials	3	Purposive sampling
Total	5	

Semi-structured interviews were used to generate data in this study. Data was analyzed using Braun & Clarke's six-phase framework for doing a thematic analysis.

4.0 Results and Discussion

Following Braun & Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework for doing a thematic analysis, participants perceived collaboration as key to initiating and advancing education inclusion of children in street situations. Three major themes were identified where participants first expressed their views regarding the nature of collaborative practices that exist, then mentioned barriers that hinder successful collaboration and all this led to answers to the main research question of how this collaboration can be enhanced to enable the inclusion of children in street situations in mainstream education.

4.1 Nature of collaborative practices

In this study, collaborative practices refer to an inclusive joint working on the inclusion of children in street situations in mainstream education in a contemplated manner. Participants in this study expressed their views on disenabling practices of their collaboration with relevant stakeholders. It was revealed in this study, that a weak collaboration exists among relevant stakeholders in the process of initiating and advancing the inclusion of children in street situations in mainstream schools. Below are the main categories discussed in detail that constructed this theme, stakeholder relationships, and role performance.

4.1.1 Stakeholder relationships

Stakeholder relationships refer to the practice of constructing mutually beneficial connections amongst stakeholders with a common interest. It also refers to how different individuals and groups work and cooperate for the mutual benefit of all. In this study, the stakeholder relationships involve the cooperation and communication between the school community, Non-Governmental Organizations, and the Government working jointly to enable the inclusion of children in street

situations in mainstream education. Participants in this study reported different views on the relationships they hold with different stakeholders. A section of them revealed that there were less meaningful relationships amongst stakeholders in effecting the inclusion of children in street situations in mainstream education. Specifically, the Ministry of Education and Sports as the main ministry has limited relations with the NGOs and school communities in addressing the education of children in street situations. Some of them said:

> "As an NGO dealing with street children, we have never been in contact with the ministry of education and sports or reached out to them because this group of children seems to be out of their interest". (Individual interview, EO, Brendah, p.10, line 28-30, {2022-02-7})

> "The Ministry of Education and sports is not concerned about young children on streets and out of school, their attention is driven to learners with special needs whereas this category of vulnerable children is neglected". (Individual interview, PO- KCCA, Deborah, p.12, line 16-18, {2022-02-25})

Communication is important for gathering multiple ideas and perspectives toward the successful implementation of inclusive practices. The genesis for initiating and advancing inclusive practices is the sharing of existing approaches through collaboration amongst relevant stakeholders leading to experimentation with new practices that will reach out to all learners (Omede, 2016; Ainscow, 2020).

> Participants in this study also reported positive stakeholder relationships in terms of some cooperation although they acknowledged that it was to a lesser extent with specific actors. This was evidenced by the following quotations:

> > "we do some training in the community, police, judges, caregivers, lawyers, teachers, magistrates, courts, children against the law, social workers, child protection actors, and religious leaders. We have worked with police to set up child-friendly spaces and even for sleeping especially those in conflict with the law. Train most of the actors". (Individual interview, CRANE, Anoline, p.8, line 24-27, {2022-02-12})

The above quotation indicates the relationships NGOs have with some part of the stakeholders in matters regarding children in street situations but this does not mean that they are entirely responsible for the education and well-being of children on street. This shows that other stakeholders in the process are not playing their roles.

4.1.2 Role performance

Inclusive education involves a wide range of stakeholders ranging from administrators, staff members, parents, community members, families, organizations, media outlets, advocacy groups, and cultural institutions among others and each one has a role to play in initiating and advancing inclusive education of a target group. It was revealed in this study, that the inclusion of children in street situations in society and schools is mostly charged with NGOs through voluntary work and little support from the government. The majority of the respondents acknowledged that most relevant stakeholders are neglecting their role in the process of including children in street situations in school whereas a lot of responsibility is left to NGOs who also perform within their

capacity. Participants reported that a few government entities (Kampala Capital City Authority, Ministry of Gender Labor and Social Development) provide a hand in the withdrawal and rescue programs of the children and the education of the children is left to a few NGOs with a similar program. Fatimayin, (2012) recommends that NGOs, philanthropists should assist in addressing the plight of these children by educating, rehabilitating and giving loans for cottage businesses.

Participants also revealed that parents are dull actors in the process and also contribute to the street life of their children. All this is evidenced by the following quotations:

> "These children are on the streets by omission because someone has not done what is required of him or her as a parent, as a community officer, as a politician, as a technical officer and that's why these children are on the streets". (Individual interview, CYC, "Fredrick, p.4, line 27-29, {2022-02-21})

Participants also reported their perceptions towards caregivers of children in street situations. Some of them said:

> "Parents these days transact with their children in return for money and other benefits, they push their children into child labor and see their children as a source of income which is challenging to convince a parent that the education of such a child is very important". (Individual interview, worker-SASCHU, Diana, p.13, line 9-11, {2022-01-28})

> "Some caregivers don't have money or they are just irresponsible ie drunkards and don't mind whether their children go to school". (Individual interview, CRANE, Anoline, p.9, line 20-21, {2022-02-12})

The involvement of parents in the process of educating their children was emphasized because family reintegration contributes more to the academic progress of a learner for example, low family support related to learning has been mentioned in this study and other studies as a hindrance to successful implementation of inclusive education programs (Omede, 2016; Okyere, 2019a).This could be overcame if the government strengthens efforts of collaboration among stakeholders and put a strong suit of laws against child neglect. In addition to this, parents and extended family members ought to uphold the African Traditional culture and kinship ties to cater for orphans and children from broken homes no matter the hard time (Fatimayin, 2012) so that these children benefit from their communities and this would reduce most of the challenges that push them on streets.

For effective contribution to inclusive education, stakeholders need to understand their roles and responsibilities (Hwang & Evans, 2011). This should be backed up by a good working relationship and effective communication if collaboration is to thrive and communication is crucial to a good working relationship (Hammer et al, 2017).

4.2 Barriers to collaborative practices

Barriers are obstacles that make it difficult for something to be achieved. In this study, barriers to collaborative experiences are hindrances that limit stakeholders from working together in harmony to educate children in street situations. Participants in this study reported different opinions about

collaborative practices. These barriers are categorized as, policy-related, inadequate research, inadequate resources, and self-centered objective. Below the categories are discussed in detail;

4.2.1 Policy related

The policy is formulated at all levels of the education system notably at the school and classroom levels. (Ball, 2010). Accordingly, policies address pertinent issues including acceptable behavior by employees, create an operational framework and ensure compliance with standards. In this study, the participants especially the key informants perceive the policy and procedures on equal access to education as not explicit about including children in street situations in mainstream education. Participants expressed their views on the absence of a clear policy for education of children in street situations which compromises collaboration amongst stakeholders in effecting their education.

In this study, the participants revealed programmatic and action gaps that exist due to the lack of a policy on children in street situations. They reported that government directs resources only if they prioritize a policy or program. As such, government programs related to inclusion have the least resource envelopes which push the government to operate on a hierarchy of priority in terms of excluded groups. Participants continued to report that government programs on inclusion have their focus on people with disabilities whereas some groups of children who are in vulnerable situations are neglected. It was clear that some programs targeting children on the street are initiated by Non-Governmental Organizations and government extends a hand of support, especially during rescue programs for children on the street. However, participants revealed that there exist programmatic and action gaps in rehabilitating and re-integration of children from the street so that they can be able to join mainstream education. One of the participants was quoted saying:

> "The government mainly supports rescue programs for children from the street as well as offering technical guidance to Non-Governmental Organizations that take over other programs. This is because of government priorities which leave some of the programs with fixed budget lines to implement". (Individual interview, CYC, Fredrick, p.6, line 22-24, {2022-02-21})

> "It is upon the NGOs and Civil Society Organizations that take over the rehabilitation of children in street situations and also educate the children within their capacity and means therefore several children in street situations are left with no opportunity to join mainstream education". (Individual interview, worker-SASCHU, Diana, p.13, line 28-30, {2022-01-28})

Besides little government support for children in street situations related programs, participants also revealed that the Ministry of Education and Sports is not fully effecting their role to account for "education for all" programs. It was revealed by participants that during the efforts of including children in street situations in mainstream education by NGOs, the Ministry of Education and Sports do not support the programs as part of their responsibility to effect "Education for All" programs. A participant was quoted saying:

> "If the Ministry of Education and Sports is accountable for Universal Primary Education but a section of young school-going children are loitering on the street, even those who try to attend schools are chased away because of school fees, yet in public primary schools according to the Education Act, primary education is free and schools are prohibited from sending away children for school fees, who is then supposed to take action, This means that Universal Primary Education is not entirely free and children in street situations find it difficult to join main stream education because they can't afford the school demands". (Individual interview, EO, Brendah, p.11, line 1-3, {2022-02-7})

In this study, participants reported that there is no direct policy on the inclusion of children in street situations. The policy is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of a program. It provides general guidance toward implementing strategies to achieve a given mission. In this study, participants expressed their opinions towards the absence of a policy on children in street situations as a major barrier to the inclusion of these children in mainstream education. According to the participants, the absence of policy limits accountability of actions among different stakeholder roles and responsibilities. The policy limits the participation of different stakeholders in enabling the inclusion of children in street situations in mainstream education.

> "Some of the children in street situations are in school at the mercy of sponsors and NGOs that come in to support them. The government including the Ministry of Education and Sports has not advanced any education policy to guide their inclusion in mainstream schools. For example, there is a policy on children with disabilities and special needs but there is no policy directed toward street-connected children and their education". (Individual interview, EO, Brendah, p.10, line 22-26, {2022-02-7})

Pellini et al., (2021) reports that governments advance a higher level of education policy recognition to children in remote and rural areas, marginalized linguistic groups, girls, and children with special needs and disabilities whereas lower levels of educational policy attention are advanced to orphans, children without registration and street-connected children. Even with introduction of laws and policies to ensure hitch-free inclusive education, this process should be considered as ongoing in order to keep the inclusive education program current with the times. This involves evaluating the laws and regulations frequently (Omede, 2016) A favorable external policy environment on inclusive education is required to support inclusive developments rather than undermine the school's efforts with a clear and wide definition of what inclusion and equity mean (Ainscow, 2020).

4.2.2 Inadequate research

In this study, participants reported that there is a lack of evidence-based research on the dynamics of children in street situations. Evidence-based research facilitates evidence-based planning as well as formulation of a comprehensive policy based on the ground research. Participants revealed that practitioners and researchers give little attention to children in street situations hence there is inadequate information about them and a knowledge gap in matters concerning children in street situations education inclusive. Participants noted that:

"Lack of evidence-based research studies to evaluate the impact of these policies on the action, no mechanism of sharing what is working and not working in regards to tested practices and models, no forum that unites actors, to share the successful procedures". (Individual interview, CYC, Fredrick, p.6, line 5-8, {2022-02-21})

"There is a lack of clear information regarding matters of street children".(Individual interview, worker-SASCHU, Diana, p.13, line 28-29, {2022-01-28})

"The main challenge faced, is the knowledge gap, even when policies are there, people are not aware of them, they don't know where to find information, and they lack awareness". (Individual interview, worker-SASCHU, Diana, p.14, line 9-10, {2022-01-28})

"A knowledge gap exists in a matter concerning the education of children in street situations". (Individual interview, CRANE, Anoline, p.8, line 23-24, {2022-02-12}).

The lack of evidence-based information on the dynamics of children in street situations limited the interaction amongst stakeholders and which ministries, departments, and agencies should get involved. Participants channeled the lack of information to poor responsibility and accountability as well as a lack of resources to conduct research studies. The problem of children in street situations is recognized globally however there is little knowledge about it evidenced by a lack of relevant data and research. (Mlinarević, & Antonija, 2019). This calls for a need for evidence to monitor the progress of children, evaluate the impact of interventions, review the effectiveness of policies and processes and plan new initiatives. (Ainscow,2020). This evidence should inform strategies and the impact of existing practices on access, engagement, and quality of all children.

4.2.3 Inadequate resources

Participants reported different perceptions of the availability of resources not only as a barrier to the inclusion of children in street situations in mainstream education but also as a hindrance to collaborative partnerships among stakeholders on the same issue. In this study, it was reported that resources are largely mobilized from NGOs whereas government allocation of funds to vulnerable children is often inadequate and not prioritized. Some of the participants said:

"Currently, the biggest money mobilized over 1.5bn is from CSOs not from the government not that it is not interesting but because government budget lines are so lean So there is a lack of adequate resources". (Individual interview, CYC, Fredrick, p.6, line 1-3, {2022-02-21}).

"Most policies end on paper and are not implemented which goes back to government priorities plus funding, for example, if the government prioritizes something, they can advance money towards it". (Individual interview, CRANE, Anoline, p.8, line 19-21, {2022-02-12}).

"Street-related activities like commemorations, Funding is got from NGOs although we still have to work with the government like the Ministry of Gender because they still have the mandate to street children's say though they are constrained therefore there is a gap of resources". (Individual interview, CRANE, Anoline, p.8, line 21-23, {2022-02-12}).

> "The challenge of resources to implement the inclusive practices, the inadequate human resource, and inadequate capacity to train and execute inclusive education". (Individual interview, worker-SASCHU, Diana, p.14, line 15-17, {2022-01-28})

Participants reported that inadequate availability of resources limits planning for collaboration as well as practice for collaboration. This is because resources can facilitate meetings, debates, and conferences that may build the capacity of relevant stakeholders to understand the issue and what roles they play in implementing the issue. In this study, it was clear from the participants' views that resources are inadequate to enhance collaboration among stakeholders. This was also reported by United Nations Organization (2015) that resources may be insufficient in some contexts. However, with clearly defined goals, roles, and responsibilities, the few resources available could be put to effective use and promote good accountability among stakeholders (Hernandez et al, 2013) and also lay strategies for mobilizing more resources necessary for supporting collaboration among stakeholders in the process of initiating and advancing the inclusion of children in street situations in education.

4.2.3 Self-centered objective

The objective of stakeholders in the process of initiating and advancing inclusive education of children in street situations is to provide the children with an opportunity with the most appropriate learning environment to achieve their full potential regardless of their status. But this seems not to be the case because different stakeholders aim at fulfilling their objectives which further their agendas. This is clearly shown in the following quotations:

> "NGOs are not aligned to work in line with government policies, they focus on their mission and vision and most of them are skewed towards accessing resources and funding. A few of them approach line ministries for guidance". (Individual interview, CYC, Fredrick, p.6, line 3-5, {2022-02-21})

> "The Ministry of Education and sports is not concerned about young children on the streets and out of school, their attention is driven to learners with special needs whereas this category of vulnerable children is neglected". (Individual interview, PO- KCCA, Deborah, p.12, line 16-18, {2022-02-25})

> "Government bodies that are concerned about these children on street look majorly at the funding window which limits their activities to what is affordable to them, and when this category of vulnerable children is not among the priorities of the government, then funding is not allocated to the cause". (Individual interview, CRANE, Anoline, p.8, line 22-23, {2022-02-12}).

More so, participants expressed their views on the objectives of the school community as focusing on performance and neglecting the vulnerable young children who are denied an opportunity to learn because of different circumstances. Some of them said:

> The school community seems not to be bothered by the children in street situations, their role is within the school environment, but the educators are part of the general community and are parents who should be concerned about young children on the street because these children drop out of these

schools and go back to the street. (Individual interview, PO- KCCA, Deborah, p.12, line 11-14, {2022-02-25})

> The head teachers sometimes receive funds from Non-Governmental Organizations aimed at helping such children but head teachers use them to better their interests. They also keep sending away such vulnerable children for school fees well knowing they are vulnerable. (Individual interview, EO, Brendah, p.11, line 13-15, {2022-02-7})

Different stakeholders in the process have different motives to further their agendas other than the education of children in street situations. These motives could be monetary, and visionary among others. In this case, the government officials, school leaders, and NGOs who receive funding for the children's education do not direct them to their original purpose which calls for organizations to engage in continuous monitoring and documentation of progress towards the set targets of achieving SDG 4 (ISER, 2019). This hinders collaboration among stakeholders for the same cause. This agrees with Bouillet, (2013) who emphasizes that collaboration can only thrive among members with an established goal and clearly defined roles.

4.3 Support for collaborative practices

With the acknowledgment of collaboration as the strategy for enhancing the inclusion of children in street situations in education, participants reported different views on how collaboration could be strengthened. The following categories support this theme:

4.3.1 Need for a multi-sectorial approach

Findings in this study revealed that there is a need for a multi-sectoral approach that engages all the line ministries and relevant stakeholders to comprehensively understand the dynamics of children in street situations as well as improve the entire education system that fosters more child-centered learning. Participant's perceptions involved:

> "A collective effort of ideas from all relevant actors and inter-ministerial committees that brings all line ministries together to understand the dynamics of these street children to come up with new strategic guidelines for parents and children to believe that they can go back to school and access education". (Individual interview, CYC, Fredrick, p.6, line 32-37, {2022-02-21})

> "There is a need for a multi-sectoral approach, strengthen the National Children's Authority, provide with resources to plan for al".l (Individual interview, worker-SASCHU, Diana, p.15, line 7-9, {2022-01-28})

World Bank, (2018) suggests the main policy actions which policy makers and relevant bodies should embark on to address the crisis and that is to align all actors to make the system work for learning. The collective effort and ideas from different stakeholders in various agencies and institutions could solve the challenge of children on the street and education can be used as a

strategy to eliminate children on street as well as improve their lives. This finding is in line with Genovesi et al, (2021) who suggests involving all relevant stakeholders as the best strategy for inclusive education and feedback ideas of different stakeholders need to be debated about to gain political and societal consensus which requires morality, responsibility, and accountability (Khabar, 2020; Okyere, (2019a)).

4.3.2 Comprehensive research

This is research that involves various aspects that affect the life of a child on street. Participants acknowledged that there is a need to conduct a comprehensive study that is imperative for the formulation of a comprehensive policy on children in street situations and also guide practices and test working and non-working models. They reported research studies in collaboration with line ministries and relevant stakeholders could also enhance the collaboration needed to initiate and advance street inclusive education of children in situations. Some of the participants said:

> "Supporting other districts to pass ordinances and by-laws address the root causes of street children, especially the districts where these children come from through comprehensive research to study the push factors and ground research". (Individual interview, CYC, Fredrick, p.7, line 4-6, {2022-02-21})

Evidence-based information informs policies and decisions regarding the practical strategies for including children on the street in education. Participants reported that scholars, educationists, and government planners should invest and draw emphasis on inclusive education of children in street situations if effective programs are to be designed to solve the issue of little knowledge, lack of relevant data and research on children in street situations (Mlinarević, & Dubovicki, 2019). World Bank, (2018) suggests policy actions to address the crisis and emphasizes actions on evidence to make schools work for learners.

4.3.3 Formulation of children in street situations policy

Participants expressed the need for coming up with a policy on children in street situations to develop a well-considered response mechanism for dealing with children living in street situations. If the education of children on street is to be affected, there is a need for a policy guideline to be formulated to understand the dynamics of children on the street beginning with identification, the rescue of the child, provision of relief services to the child, linking the child to social services and monitoring for policy implementation. In this way, stakeholder roles and responsibilities in the collaborative effort will be streamlined and different stakeholders will be held accountable in the entire process of initiating and advancing inclusive education of children in street situations. One of the participants was quoted saying:

> "We need a whole drive towards formulating a policy on the reintegration of street children in mainstream education". (Individual interview, CYC, Fredrick, p.7, line 6-7, {2022-02-21})

The policy gap was mentioned as a barrier to the inclusion of children in street situations in education as well as collaboration. In this sense, the participant indicated that the formulation of a comprehensive policy would be the genesis for the education of children in street situations. This is because stakeholders would understand their responsibilities and endeavor to deliver as per their roles.

The 25th anniversary of the Salamanca declaration which happened in September 2019, stressed the need for policy changes to include an effective strategy for implementation focusing on barriers faced by some children that marginalize them because of contextual factors. In addition, overcoming such barriers becomes a way for developing forms of education that are effective for all children hence an overall improvement of education systems as a result of inclusion. In addition, Government at all levels should put in place structures for the rehabilitation, education and training of streets children (Fatimayin, 2012)

The analysis done by Genovesi et al, (2021) on educational policies in Europe mentioned that inclusive education policies should include a clear definition of special education needs, parental engagement, support for teachers, guidance for individual learning outcomes if inclusive education for pupils with developmental disabilities is to be promoted. (van Kessel et al., 2020). However, in most African countries Uganda inclusive has not initiated efforts to formulate a national policy on children in street situations, it has not been effective in aiding the implementation of inclusive education programs and fails to implement the mandated free education (Mutungi & Nderitu, 2014). This could justify little attention towards the education of children in street situations.

4.3.4 Sensitization of the policy

Participants were of the view that even with policy formulation, there remains a great need to sensitize all relevant stakeholders about the policy. Accordingly, policies are formulated and end on paper, they are more theoretical because the intended implementers lack knowledge about them. Sensitization is also necessary for training actors on their roles which would make the entire process flexible. Participants were quoted saying:

> "The main challenge faced, is the knowledge gap, even when policies are there, people are not aware of them, they don't know where to find information, they lack awareness., For example, the ministry pulled out guidelines on parenting, but I tell If you went to the community and asked how many people have just seen it, you will be surprised, about 2% would be in the know, and no one is there to educate the stakeholders about the new policy". (Individual interview, worker-SASCHU, Diana, p.14, line 9-13, {2022-01-28})

Participants reported that a policy in place would be effective if relevant stakeholders are aware of the policy and its working. This is because policymakers design the best policies but they end on paper because the intended user lack awareness of the designed policies. Therefore, it was suggested that the government should plan and conduct capacity-building programs together with other actors to equip relevant stakeholders with a clear understanding of the policy. A favorable external policy environment on inclusive education is required to support inclusive developments

rather than undermine the school's efforts with a clear and wide definition of what inclusion and equity mean (Ainscow, 2020). In addition, these policies should be based on the competencies and experiences of all actors who are involved in the lives of children and the children themselves.

4.3.5 Adequate financing

Financing is the process of raising funds to facilitate inclusive practices and processes for children in street situations. In this study, participants reported that adequate financing is essential in enhancing collaboration amongst stakeholders. This financing would facilitate the sensitization of guidelines and policies formulated among stakeholders, regular meetings and communication, planning, staffing, and management as well as advancing school resources required to enable the children to attend regular classes. This is evidenced by the following quotations:

> "Even with the introduction of policies, funding should be provided to enable their effective implementation". (Individual interview, PO- KCCA, Deborah, p.12, line 26-27, {2022-02-25})

> "Required is financial support for collaboration, solving the issue of the least resource envelope for vulnerable groups". (Individual interview, PO- KCCA, Deborah, p.12, line 23-25, {2022-02-25})

Participants suggested that allocation of resources should be taken as key by government planners whereas other means of resource mobilization could be adopted to enhance collaboration. This finding corroborates with Ainscow (2020) who stipulates that governments are required to mobilize both financial and human resources if they are to foster inclusive education (Mwangi, 2014). This may not be under their direct control therefore there is a need for training and on-job mentoring to support teachers and schools whereas (Bannink, 2016; UNESCO, 2020) recommends earmarking funds for inclusiveness in schools if inclusive education is to be achieved but through forming partnerships with relevant stakeholders who can own and support the change process.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

To include children in street situations in education, the education system has to be aligned which requires the involvement of all stakeholders. In addition, to successfully implement inclusive education, stakeholders have to be prepared suitably to embrace inclusive education. This is because almost all sectors of society have a stake in a child's education. These stakeholders include; regular classroom teachers, special education teachers, school administrators, government, community, Non-Governmental organizations, parents, peers, the children themselves, foundation bodies, the church, media, and private companies among others directly or indirectly interested in the education and welfare of a child. It is upon the well-coordinated and collaborated efforts of these stakeholders that successful inclusive education is to be manifested.

The current policy frameworks in Uganda that relate to inclusive education and child well-being are not specific regarding the inclusion of children in street situations and do not include

clearer actions on how to include children in street situations in education. Therefore, the policymakers ought to develop a comprehensive policy for children in street situations that puts into consideration all aspects of their well-being, and education and clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in the life of children in vulnerable circumstances.

This study recommends that line ministries should adopt a multi-sectoral approach that is well positioned to effect the education of children in street situations, which would direct the formulation of a policy on their education, sensitize and finance the policy for effective implementation of educational inclusion of children in street situations. Furthermore, a monitoring and Evaluation system would be put in place to measure the impact of educational programs in children's' lives.

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