

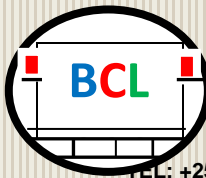
Mogadishu Street Children Needs Assessment Study

THE FORGOTTEN VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE & FAMINE

A SUMMARY OF THE KEY FINDINGS

Prepared for project
NAPAD Child Protection Program

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MOGADISHU STREET CHILDREN NEEDS ASSESSMENT STUDY

I. Introduction and Background Information

Somalia is located in the Horn of Africa with a 2014 population estimated at 10.8 million, up from the 2013 estimate of 10 million. The country is rapidly expanding with almost 3% annual population growth and a high fertility rate of 6.26 children per woman, which is the 4th highest in the world. Around 85% of its people are ethnic Somalis, who have inhabited the region historically. Ethnic minorities make up the rest of the population and are concentrated primarily in the southern areas of Somalia. Most of the people are Muslims, with the majority being Sunni.

Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, is also referred to as the Banadir region. The city is governed by a mayor and it is divided into 16 districts, each headed by a district commissioner. There are no recently verified population figures for Mogadishu, but UNDP's 2005 report estimated it at 900,000, while according to the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), the current population figure is 2.5 million. Forty-three percent of the population lives in extreme poverty. It is the nation's largest city with an area of 640 sq. miles. Seventy-three percent of the overall population lives on less than US\$2 per day, according to the 2002 UNDP/World Bank Socio-economic Survey.

According to UNICEF, there are at least 5,000 homeless children within the city of Mogadishu. These children are between the ages of seven and sixteen, and the majority of them are boys. They sleep in the street or in abandoned buildings. Due to the long history of war in the country, the city is mostly in ruins, and this is where these children make their homes. As forgotten victims of the violence and famine in Somalia, homeless children have been subjected to drug use, diseases, and sexual violence. All of these things threaten social stability in the country. In order to acquire the essentials for survival, street children perform small jobs like car washing and shoe shining. Many others collect items found in the ruins or pieces of old qat (a stimulant drug made from a plant called khat) to sell to addicts in the area.

There is no conclusive data on the number and status of street children in Mogadishu and other major towns in Somalia. It is however known fact that the street children are subjected to a lack of socio-economic support and are exposed to security and safety risks particularly due to the long standing war between the Government and militia groups. Though a big part of the city is currently liberated, the living conditions of local residents, street children included, is far from being stable.

2. Objectives of the Baseline Survey

The objective of the street children study in Mogadishu was to assess the current status of street children in-order to design feasible protection interventions. Little is known about the actual status of street children in Somalia and therefore, this study sought to bring a level of evidence on issues concerning them and help agencies to develop appropriate interventions.

Specifically, the study sought to:

- i) Provide an evidence based baseline position on the conditions and circumstances facing street children
- ii) Find out issues about their social-economic context in light of the general instability in Somalia and Mogadishu in particular
- iii) Identify key risks and challenges facing street children particularly issues of access to education, food, shelter, health, water, medical support, etc.
- iv) Make specific conclusions and recommendations on what needs to be done to improve on the protective environment of street children in the streets or otherwise

3. Baseline Survey Methodology

Due to the data requirements to meet the above objectives, this study was designed to use both qualitative and quantitative methods. The triangulation of the two methods was embraced to generate statistical attributes, perceptions and community level perspectives and pertinent information on the status of street children.

3.1 Sampling

The study targeted Mogadishu City with an estimated population of 900,000 people. Due to various programmatic and logistical challenges it was not possible to target the whole population or substantial significant proportion. However, statistically representative sample was drawn using multi-stage cluster sampling. 7 clusters were selected in proportion to the population size with the study being computerized using Cochran formulae 70 street children being targeted at 95% confidence and a precision of 90%. However, due to design effect associated with cluster sampling, the sample was adjusted by 50%. This resulted to an effective sample of 70. The respondents of the qualitative data collection including key informant and focus group discussions were conveniently selected in line with the data requirements of the study.

3.2 Data Collection

In respect to the above methods, two tools were developed for data collection. For quantitative data collection a household questionnaire was developed and administered to the household heads. For qualitative component interview guides for both key informants and focus group discussions were developed and also administered to target groups, 2 in each respective area. Data was collected from street children in the sampled clusters through face to face manner. In total 70 questionnaires were administered to street children.

3.3 Data Analysis

The mix of both continuous and categorical answered for the administered questionnaire necessitated the use of statistical package for Social Sciences SPSS version 17. The software was exclusively used for quantitative analysis. The findings are organized sequentially in line with the numbers of questions and key themes and patterns of the responses. The results are generally in agreement with various findings of quantitative data analysis, but provide further in-depth information in various areas of investigation.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Respondents Background Characteristics

The study was undertaken in Mogadishu area which is an urban setting. All the respondents were males. It was established that most of the street children were between 9 to 18 years with the age group of 12-14 years taking the bigger share of 40% followed by 9-11 years (34.3%), 15-18 years (17.1%) and an 8.6% being those above 18 years of age.

Table 1: Age of Distribution of street children:

	Age of the respondent	
	Frequency	Percent
9-11	24	34.3
12-14	28	40.0
15-18	12	17.1
Above 18	6	8.6
Total	70	100.0

For those street children above 14 years, 80% are not married, 12.9% are cohabiting while 7.1% were found to be married. There is a likelihood that street children will continue to grow going by the number of those cohabiting and married in the streets. Only 1.4% of those married were found to have between 1 and 3 children.

Table 2: Marital status of street children

	Marital Status	
	Frequency	Percent
Single	56	80.0
Married	5	7.1
Cohabiting	9	12.9
Total	70	100.0

4.2 Education background:

The study found out that 70% of the street children interviewed had no education at all while 28.6% had dropped out of primary school. Only 1 respondent had proceeded to secondary education and later dropped out. The analysis indicates clearly that a majority of street children are either illiterate or with very low education level.

Table 3: Level of Education of street children

Respondents level of Education		
	Frequency	Percent
No Education	49	70.0
Primary Education	20	28.6
Secondary	1	1.4
Total	70	100.0

Of those who attended school 19.2% attended special schools, 11.5% Quranic schools and 65% attended ordinary primary schools. One respondent had attended secondary school. This means that education of street children largely ends in primary school but there are some few opportunities for special education for street children. No tertiary education opportunities have been accorded.

Table 4: Types of schools previously attended by street children

School attended		
	Frequency	Percent
Special School for street children	5	19.2
Quranic School	3	11.5
Ordinary Primary school	17	65.4
Ordinary secondary school	1	3.8
Total	26	100.0

The two main medium of instruction in schools where the street children attended is Somali language (58.3%) and English (37.5%). One respondent attended a Turkish medium school.

Table 5: Medium of instructions in schools

Medium of instruction in the school		
	Frequency	Percent
Somali	14	58.3
English	9	37.5
Turkish	1	4.2
Total	24	100.0

Of those that had attended school, 37.5% indicated that they can read and write while 62.5% could not. A 37.5% were conversant with basic arithmetic. All the 70 respondents interviewed were not attending any form of education as at the time of the study.

Table 6: Level of literacy (reading and writing skills)

Whether respondent can read and Write		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	24	37.5
No	40	62.5
Total	64	100.0

On being asked why they abandoned school, the respondent indicated that the most common reasons for abandoning school were clan conflict, lack of school fees, poverty and punishment by teachers.

Of those that previously dropped out of school, 14% would like to go back to school while 86% have no interest to rejoin any school. This indicates that most have given up on education as a means to a better future. The main reasons as to why the street children hated going back to school included lack of school uniform, fees and other education materials, lack of home and parents, punishment by teachers, and the school routine of waking up early.

Table 7: Street children interest to go back to school

Whether would like to go back to school		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	7	14.0
No	43	86.0
Total	50	100.0

On being asked where they reside, a majority of the street children (77.6%) indicated they lived in the location they were found by the interviewer while a 22.4% lived in distances other than the immediate area. The duration of stay in the same location was 1 year to five years.

4.3 Residence and Origins

A majority of the street children (50%) live by themselves in the streets while 23.5% live with their parents in the neighborhood. 2.9% live with their brothers and sisters while 10.3% live with their relatives. A significant 13.2% live with their friends. The analysis indicates that a majority of the street children basically are surviving in the streets on their own or with their siblings and friends.

Table 8: Those that street children live with currently

Whom do you live with		
	Frequency	Percent
No one	34	50.0
Parents	16	23.5
Brother/ Sister	2	2.9
Relatives	7	10.3
Friends	9	13.2
Total	68	100.0

Prior to becoming street children in Mogadishu, the previous places of residence varied widely but included the Afgooye corridor (1.4%), Baydhoa (5.7%), Kismayo (2.9%), lower shabelle (2.9%) and Turobarwaqo (1.4%). A lot of the street children were not originally from Mogadishu but had migrated into the city from various places. The main reasons for moving into the street in Mogadishu included conflict and fear of conflict, drought, poverty and starvation. Drought and conflict were highlighted as the main factors driving the street children out of their original residences accounting for over 95% of the cases.

Table 9: Areas of residence

Respondent's residence		
	Frequency	Percent
In this location	45	77.6
Some distance from here but within town	13	22.4
Total	58	100.0

As shown on the table below, though the street children in Mogadishu originate from over 39 districts across Somalia, the large majority come from the districts of Kismayo, Garbaharrey, Afgooye, Balcad, Burkahaba, Bardhere and Baxdo. These are districts that are associated with a lot of instability particularly due to clan and militia groups as well as negative effects of drought. The study notes that 41.8% of parents live where the street child was born while 35.8% live in a different place. However, 22.4% of the street children did not know where their parents are living currently. When asked if the respondents know their father, 87% said they did while 13% did not. Out of these, 68.6% indicated that they know their father is alive, 17.1% said their father was not alive and 14.3% did not know. Similarly, in the case of their mothers, 97.1% know their mothers with 2.9% not knowing whether their mothers were alive or not.

Table 10: Districts of origin

	District	
	Frequency	Percent
Kismayo	5	7.2
Hudur	2	2.9
Garbaharrey	4	5.8
Afgooye	4	5.8
Baxdo	3	4.3
Wanlawayn	2	2.9
Abduwak	1	1.4
Awdinle	2	2.9
Bardhere	4	5.8
Balcad	5	7.2
Baraawe	2	2.9
Baydhabo	1	1.4
Boonkaay	1	1.4
Burkahaba	5	7.2
Burdubo	1	1.4
Ceelbur	1	1.4
Dhobley	1	1.4
Dolow	2	2.9
Galdobaaleey	2	2.9
Halgan	1	1.4
Janale	1	1.4
Jilib	1	1.4
Jowhar	1	1.4
Kuturwaarey	1	1.4
Luuq	2	2.9
Marka	1	1.4
Qorlyooley	3	4.3
Qudus	1	1.4
QuracJoome	1	1.4
Rabdhure	1	1.4
Shalan'od	1	1.4
Tayeg'low	2	2.9
Ufurow	1	1.4
Yurkut	1	1.4
Biyoley	1	1.4
Ticsile	1	1.4
Total	69	100.0

In terms of period of separation, the study noted that 14.7% had separated with their parents within the last 1 year, 35.3% had separated over the last 1-5 years while those that separated between 5-10 years constituted 50% of the respondents. This period is largely associated with increased insecurity, drought and displacements which explain the large numbers separated over the last 10 years of Somalia crisis.

Table 11: Period of street children separation with parents/siblings

	Period of separation	
	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1 year	5	14.7
1-5 years	12	35.3
5-10 years	17	50.0
Total	34	100.0

The reasons that resulted in separation from parents ranged from drought (34.4%), poverty (26.2%), conflict displacements (19.7%), divorce or separation (13.1%), nomadic pastoralists lifestyle (4.9%) and indiscipline (1.6%). The mix of drought and conflict could have exacerbated the other factors resulting in children separating with parents.

Table 12: Reasons for separation with parents

	What led to separation with parents	
	Frequency	Percent
Differed over indiscipline	1	1.6
Displaced by conflict	12	19.7
Drought	21	34.4
Poverty	16	26.2
Nomadic pastoralists	3	4.9
Divorce or separation	8	13.1
Total	61	100.0

The study confirmed that 68.1% of parents of street children were internally displaced while 31.9% came from respective host communities. Displaced families are more vulnerable in many parts of Somalia and are often unable to consistently provide for their children hence the outcome of more of such children ending up in the streets.

Table 13: Parents internally displaced or from local host communities

	Whether parents are internally displaced	
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	47	68.1
No	22	31.9
Total	69	100.0

4.4 Street Life and Living Conditions

In terms of kinds of shelter that respondents live in, 40.6% live in Somali Hoori, 11.6% in neglected compounds, 10.1% in street verandahs and a significant 36.2% have no shelter at all. During the rainy season, street children spend the night in incomplete or neglected compounds, Somali hoori, tunnels and verandahs.

Table 14: Kinds of shelter where street children live

Kind of shelter respondent lives in		
	Frequency	Percent
No shelter	25	36.2
Streets verandah	7	10.1
Tunnels	1	1.4
Somali Hoori	28	40.6
Neglected compounds	3	11.6
Total	69	100.0

The study noted that 27.9% of the street children have made a choice to live in the streets while 72.1% were forced by circumstances such as lack of education opportunities, conflict and displacement. Those who prefer life in the streets cited reasons such as easy access to food, access to khat and other drugs, free life, garbage collection, lack of control by teachers and parents and relatives among others.

Table 15: Choices made to live in the streets or with parents

Is it your choice to live in the streets		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	19	27.9
No	49	72.1
Total	68	100.0

A significant 31.4% of the respondents moved to the streets with their parents while 45.1% were pushed by conflict. 9.8% were pushed out of their homes as a result of parental neglect. Conflict in Somalia has contributed significantly to pushing children into the street while both conflict and drought has brought about voluntary moving into urban areas with many children ending up in the streets.

Table 16: Push factors for going to the streets

What pushed the respondent to the streets		
	Frequency	Percent
Moved to the streets with parents	16	31.4
Displaced by conflict	23	45.1
Lost/ Cant trace my home	2	3.9
Chased from home	2	3.9
Eloped from home	3	5.9
Neglected	5	9.8
Total	51	100.0

A significant 48.5% of the street children would like to be re-united with their families while 30.3% have gotten used to street life and prefer to remain there. 21.2% were undecided on either. Living in the streets brings some form of freedom but it is a difficult and hard life that many children would want to escape if conditions back home were better.

Table 17: Preferences between living in the streets or at home

Prefer living in the streets or back home		
	Frequency	Percent
Prefer life in the streets	20	30.3
Prefer to be re-united with family	32	48.5
Not decided	14	21.2
Total	66	100.0

When asked to rate the life in the streets, a significant 59.4% rated it as being very poor, 23.2% said it was poor while 10.1% and 5.8% said it was normal and very good respectively. This indicates that over 91% of the street children would prefer place outside the streets if accorded a chance. This was attested to when the street children were asked the kind of support they would require to improve their living conditions. A majority of them mentioned education, food, water, shelter a good job and psychosocial support through a rehabilitation center or orphanage.

Table 18: Rating life in the streets

Rating of the life in the streets		
	Frequency	Percent
Very Good	4	5.8
Good	1	1.4
Normal	7	10.1
Poor	16	23.2
Very Poor	41	59.4
Total	69	100.0

4.5 Street Children Livelihoods:

The street children in Mogadishu are not able to take three meals a day. The study found out that 25.7% were taking meals infrequently and only when such is available while 70% ended up taking one meal a day. A meagre 4.3% take 2 meals in a day. This is a clear indication that the level of malnutrition in the streets is very high in addition to the low food hygiene standards of the food consumed by the street children.

Table 19: Frequency of taking meals

	All Meals	
	Frequency	Percent
.00	18	25.7
1.00	49	70.0
2.00	3	4.3
Total	70	100.0

The assessment indicated that the main sources of food for children in the streets are mainly rummaging from garbage (46%), leftovers from hotels (41.3%), preparing and cooking (7.9%) and a few beg money and buy from restaurants (4.8%).

Table 20: Sources of food taken by street children

	Source of food	
	Frequency	Percent
Prepare/Cook	5	7.9
Buy from restaurant	3	4.8
Garbage	29	46.0
Left over from hotels	26	41.3
Total	63	100.0

The study further confirmed that household food security is very poor (70%) and poor 21.4%.

Table 21: Household food security

	Assessment of household food security	
	Frequency	Percent
Very poor	49	70.0
Poor	15	21.4
Fair	2	2.9
Very good	4	5.7
Total	70	100.0

A majority of the street children feel food insecure while in the streets with 8.8% worry about food access always, 22.1% worrying often while 45.6% worry sometimes. The study postulates that 75% of the children would prefer a more sustainable access to food and other livelihood needs if given a chance.

Table 22: Worry about access to enough food in last one month

Worry that you did not have enough food in the past four weeks		
	Frequency	Percent
Rarely	16	23.5
Sometimes	31	45.6
Often	15	22.1
Always	6	8.8
Total	68	100.0

It was noted that of the respondents interviewed, 33.3% slept hungry sometimes, and 47.8% slept hungry often, while 7.2% always slept hungry. Access to food for the street children is clearly a major challenge. It was further noted that diet diversity was a major issue with 10.3% having no dietary diversity in the last four weeks, 52.9% did not have it often, 22.1% sometimes.

Table 23: Street children who slept hungry in the last four weeks

Slept hungry in the last four weeks for lack of food		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
Rarely	8	11.6
Sometimes	23	33.3
Often	33	47.8
Always	5	7.2
Total	69	100.0

The study further found that street children are rarely a target of relief food assistance with 69% indicating that they had not received any food relief over the last one year. 31% however benefited from such distributions but mainly by aggressively going to locations where such food was being distributed to communities and some by stealing during such exercises.

Table 24: Street children that benefited from relief food

Received relief in the last one year		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	13	31.0
No	29	69.0
Total	42	100.0

Street children earn their livelihoods mainly from shoe shining (40.6%), washing cars (29.7%), garbage collection (20.3%). Other sources of income are porting work, begging and stealing at 3.1%. It was however noted that out of the earning sources stated, 86.2% did not make enough income for self-sustenance and therefore not only food insecure but vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and recruitment by militia groups with lure of food or cash.

Table 25: Source of livelihoods for street children

Respondents source of earnings		
	Frequency	Percent
Shoe shining	26	40.6
Porting work	2	3.1
Washing cars	19	29.7
Garbage Collection	13	20.3
Begging	2	3.1
Stealing	2	3.1
Total	64	100.0

In times of scarcity, the main sources of food are begging (35.3%), scavenging (10.3%), stealing (11.8%) or getting food from well-wishers (4.4%) and food for work (5.9%). However, a significant 32.4% go hungry or fast in times of extreme scarcity.

Table 26: Sources of food in times of scarcity

Means for sourcing food in times of scarcity		
	Frequency	Percent
Go hungry/ Fast	22	32.4
Beg for food	24	35.3
Scavenge	7	10.3
Get food from well-wishers	3	4.4
Get food for work	4	5.9
Steal	8	11.8
Total	68	100.0

The street children had no marketable skills. If given a chance 12.9% would prefer carpentry, 5.7% electrical, 18.6% mechanics, 10% plumbing and 15.7% tailoring, among others.

Table 27: Preferred marketable skills by street children

Preferred skills to be supported for acquisition		
	Frequency	Percent
Carpentry	9	12.9
Electrician	4	5.7
Electronic	1	1.4
Mechanics	13	18.6
Music	3	3.8
Plumbing	7	10.0
Tailoring	11	15.7
Total	48	100.0

4.6 Hygiene and Sanitation:

The frequency of bathing varied considerably with 18.8% of the street children indicating they do not take a bathe at all. 14.5% said they bathe daily, 55.1% weekly, with 8.7% and 2.9% taking a bath monthly and after more than three months respectively. Access to clean and safe water by street children is a rare occurrence though some may go to swim in the ocean. For those who took a bathe, it was noted that they usually do it in building aisles, destroyed homes, toilet and tunnels. The main source of water was boreholes and, during rains, stagnant water.

Table 28: Frequency of bathing by street children

Frequency for bathing		
	Frequency	Percent
Do not bathe at all	13	18.8
Daily	10	14.5
Weekly	38	55.1
Monthly	6	8.7
More than three months	2	2.9
Total	69	100.0

The study noted that 52.2% of the respondents were able to access a toilet facility in the neighborhood of the streets. 47.8% did not have access and therefore ended up defecating in the open or between houses, tunnels, etc.

Table 29: Street children access to latrines

Respondents access to latrines / toilet		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	36	52.2
No	33	47.8
Total	69	100.0

The study found that there were no proper places for solid waste disposal. Disposal of such waste was taking place on building aisles (15.4%), destroyed houses (46.2%), passages (3.8%) and road sides (11.5%).

Table 30: Places for solid waste disposal

Place for solid waste disposal		
	Frequency	Percent
Building aisle	4	15.4
Destroyed Houses	12	46.2
Passages	1	3.8
Road side	3	11.5
Total	26	100.0

The study further established that street children in Mogadishu get their clothes from dead people (35.2%), from the garbage (22.2%), buy from local markets and streets (18.5%) while others are assisted with old clothes by relatives and family members (13%). The friends in the streets share their clothes (9.3%) as well. It was further established that street children in Mogadishu try to maintain hygiene by washing their cloths. Those who do not wash their clothes at all were 20.3%, those who wash daily, weekly and monthly, respectively, were 4.3%, 62.3% and 13%.

Table 31: Sources of clothes for street children

Source of clothes		
	Frequency	Percent
Dead people	19	35.2
relatives & family	7	13.0
bought from market	10	18.5
Garbage	12	22.2
stealing	1	1.9
friends	5	9.3
Total	54	100.0

4.7 Protection Environment for Street Children

A large majority of street children in Mogadishu (60%) feel very insecure while a considerable 34.3% feel insecure. The main reasons for feeling insecure include anxiety due to militia and government forces confrontations with guns on the streets, explosions, opening of gunfire indiscriminately by various warring forces, instability of the country, beatings and theft of items by older and bigger street children, lack of shelter and fear of police who harass them regularly or accuse them of being militia group members.

Table 32: Feelings of insecurity in the streets

Feeling of security in the streets		
	Frequency	Percent
Very secure	3	4.3
Secure	1	1.4
Insecure	24	34.3
Very insecure	42	60.0
Total	70	100.0

Many street children (78.6%) have been involved in theft at one time or another while in the streets which implies that the larger community is unhappy with them. This makes the street a target and prime suspect of all crimes happening in the city in addition to being labelled as militia even when they do not take part in such activities.

Table 33: Involvement in theft cases

Whether been ever involved in Stealing		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	55	78.6
No	15	21.4
Total	70	100.0

Over 80.8% of the street children have been involved in peddling of drugs mainly perpetuated by organized drug trafficking networks. The study found that they are mainly used as conduits to transport the drugs from one part of the city to another at very little pay and at times by force.

Table 34: Involvement in cases of drug peddling

Whether been ever involved in drug peddling		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	42	80.8
No	10	19.2
Total	52	100.0

It was established that 20% of street children have been involved in weapon trafficking while none from the sample taken were involved in any form of kidnapping. 30.4% were however involved in other smaller crimes with over 91% having experienced one form of physical violence or another such as sexual violence (6.4%), mistreatment (84%), and arrest by police (67.4%). Further, the study notes that 72.1% of the respondents had their friends sustain bodily injuries or even lost their lives due to physical violence meted out on them as a result.

Table 35: Involvement in weapon trafficking

Whether been ever involved in weapon trafficking		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	10	20.0
No	40	80.0
Total	50	100.0

Out of the respondents interviewed, it was established that they had experienced a close friend either get injured or lose their life. It was found that street children had faced injuries or loss of life ranging from a few days ago (15.7%), a week ago (17.6%), a month ago (41.2%) and over two months ago (25.5%). Essentially, the street children on very regularly basis experience injuries of themselves or colleagues or even injuries and loss of life of other residents of Mogadishu. This is largely due to the attacks and counter-attacks of both the Government forces, including AMISOM forces and militia groups. Private security and clan militia are also known to be involved in such turf control fights that result in major loss of life and morbidities.

Table 36: Experiences of injuries and loss of life

When injuries or loss of life happened		
	Frequency	Percent
A few days ago	8	15.7
A week ago	9	17.6
A month ago	21	41.2
Two months ago	13	25.5
Total	51	100.0

In the streets of Mogadishu the study found that 20% of the street children are actually armed and are at the service of private security, clan gatekeepers or militia groups posing a serious threat locally and even on the wider Somalia stabilization effort.

Table 37: Cases of armed street children

Are there armed street children		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	13	20.0
No	52	80.0
Total	65	100.0

Beyond possessing guns in the streets, 17.2% of the street children were also found to be members of various warring groups including Government forces (5.6%), Al shaabab (22.2%), private security (11.1%) and clan militia (61.1%). It became apparent from the study that the need to protect and guard the interest of one's clan is of paramount importance and street children feel it is their responsibility to do so despite the risks involved. The study also noted that at least 15.2% of the street children in Mogadishu would be willing to join an armed group sitting

various reasons such as; for self-defense, defending my clan, financial opportunity, money and gun, brutal life in the streets and to fight for his family.

Table38: Armed groups that street children have joined

Groups that they joined		
	Frequency	Percent
Government Offices	1	5.6
Al Shabaab	4	22.2
Private security	2	11.1
Clan militia	11	61.1
Total	18	100.0

As noted, threats of physical violence are very high (98.6%). As noted in other parts of the findings, the street children were found to face, not only threats of physical violence, but many incidences of actual violence at times resulting in serious injuries and even death.

Table 39: Threats of physical violence on street children

Threats of physical violence		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	68	98.6
No	1	1.4
Total	69	100.0

When threats are experienced in the streets, protection is usually sought from among others; police stations (20.6%), mosque (27.9%), IDP camps (11.8%), among elders (26.5%) and religious leaders (4.4%). Civil society also contributes to their protection (1.5%).

Table 40: Places where street children seek protection from violence

Places protection sought		
	Frequency	Percent
Police Station	14	20.6
Mosque	19	27.9
IDP camp	8	11.8
No place/ Persevere	1	1.5
Relocate to another location	4	5.9
Elders	18	26.5
Religious leaders	3	4.4
Civil society	1	1.5
Total	68	100.0

The study noted that the frequency of street children falling sick ranged from within the last one week (7.2%) to between 3-6 months (26.1%). It was however noted that some reported to having never fallen sick in the streets (7.2%). The cases of sickness in the streets are quite high and an indication of the poor living conditions.

Table 41: Incidences of sickness among street children

Last time respondent was sick		
	Frequency	Percent
Within last week	5	7.2
Within last month	11	15.9
Within last 3 months	18	26.1
Between 3-6 months	18	26.1
Over 6 months	12	17.4
Never fallen sick	5	7.2
Total	69	100.0

Further, the study noted that for those that had fallen sick, 23.3% had sought medical attention while the rest had not. Among those that sought medical attention, this was sought from hospital (13.3%), health center/dispensary (20%), drug shops/ chemists (36.7%), traditional healers (20%) and herbalists (10%). By and large, the street children do not seek professional medical care in hospitals but mainly use over the counter services and traditional treatment.

Table 42: Places where medical attention is sought

Where medical attention was sought		
	Frequency	Percent
Hospital	4	13.3
Health Centre/ Dispensary	6	20.0
Bought drugs from shop/ Chemist	11	36.7
Traditional healer	6	20.0
Herbalist	3	10.0
Total	30	100.0

A majority of the street children in Mogadishu (83.3%) have not received basic protection and economic support from any agency as at the time of the study. 16.7% however had received such support that included; food, books, clothes, shelter, psychosocial support and legal support.

Table 43: Street children that received basic protection and economic support

Basic protection and economic support received		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	11	16.7
No	55	83.3
Total	66	100.0

For those that received such forms of protection and economic support, the frequency varied from weekly (29.4%), monthly (11.8%), between 3 – 6 months (35.3%) and between 6 – 12 months (23.5%). The organization and agencies that provided such support included Al-khayraad Hormuud Foundation, Albirri Foundation, Save the children, WFP, Muslim charities, Government, Hiro Foundation, HIRDA, WFP, WHO and Muslim aid. The support was also extended by the good people of Somali as well.

Table 44: Frequency of economic and protection support

Frequency of assistance		
	Frequency	Percent
Weekly	5	29.4
Monthly	2	11.8
3-6 months	6	35.3
6-12 months	4	23.5
Total	17	100.0

Over 90% of the street children in Mogadishu were found to be abusing drugs and other substances. 76.9% were using tobacco, while other drugs and substances being used included; glue (72.5%), bhang (2.4%), khat (92.2%), and other hard drugs such as cocaine and heroin (2.9%).

Table 45: Drugs and substance abuse among street children

		Count	Subtable N %
Substances used - Tobacco	Yes	40	76.9%
	No	12	23.1%
Substances used - Bhang	Yes	1	2.4%
	No	40	97.6%
Substances used - Glue	Yes	37	72.5%
	No	14	27.5%
Substances used - Khat	Yes	59	92.2%
	No	5	7.8%
Substances used- cocaine, heroin, Hard drugs etc	Yes	1	2.9%
	No	33	97.1%

The street children enumerated and flagged the three key support areas that an intervening agency would prioritize. Access to food, education and shelter was found to be the most critical mix of support at 48%; food water and shelter (32%); and food and shelter was significant at 8%. Some of the street children felt education (4%) was the most important assistance while others would prefer jobs, education and shelter (4%). This is in consideration of the finding that a significant number of the street children (62.9%) did not feel good about themselves and nor about living in the streets. A significant 85% would like to re-unite with their families. The study further established that the hopes of the street children over the next five years ranged from being bad, dark, and status quo, and possibly getting worse.

Table 46: Three support areas recommended by street children

Three support areas recommended for street children		
	Frequency	Percent
Education	1	4.0
Food and shelter	2	8.0
Food, education and shelter	12	48.0
Food, shelter and medical care	1	4.0
Food, water and shelter	8	32.0
Job, education and shelter	1	4.0
Total	25	100.0

5 Summary Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Summary and Conclusions

The following section enumerates the key conclusions based on the foregoing analysis:

Socio-economic context:

The overall socio-economic context of the street children in Mogadishu is to say the least deplorable. Street children in Mogadishu, who are 100% males, live under stressful, difficult and risky conditions that expose them to vulnerability ranging from lack of food, water and clothing to security risks such as shooting and various forms of child abuse and exploitation. In terms of background characteristics, the study noted that a large majority of the street children are actually young ranging from age 9 to 18 years making over 74% of the entire sample population. This is a population cohort that ideally would be pursuing their education in order for them to contribute positively to nation building in the future. Due to the difficult conditions in the streets combined with general security instability, a lot of the street children are not married and those that are married or cohabiting have no children at all of their own. Few (1.4%) however do have between one and three children this, though small may in the long term increase the number of street families in the streets of Mogadishu.

The social-economic and protection support provided to the street children is very minimal and inconsistent and this can partly be attributed to the war conditions that make it difficult for support to be provided regularly by intervening agencies such as NGOs and UN agencies. Also, the study concludes that street children in Mogadishu have quite limited opportunities for self-growth and development such as no trade skills and no education. Many are exposed to disease pathogens due to poor hygienic and health conditions and lack of shelter. The use of street children as some form of militia back up by either having guns or joining militia is an indication that the streets of Mogadishu and indeed Somalia will continue to be unsafe. Crimes and other social ills such as drug trafficking are expected to increase as well.

Education situation:

In consideration of the fact that most street children have no formal education at all and with a significant having dropped out of the current system of education in Somalia, the study concludes that there is a need for alternative education particularly non formal education for the street children. This form of education could inculcate in them a level of literacy and numeracy that could help them rejoin mainstream education or tertiary / vocational education. The study does not see any chance of any street child acquiring higher education at this point unless they are able to restart learning at the very basic level and this can more successfully be provided in an environment that integrates other elements of psychosocial support and rehabilitation.

Origins and Residence:

The study also concludes that for many of the street children, it would be difficult for them to rejoin their families after spending between 1 and 5 years in the streets without some form of a rehabilitation program. Equally a lot of the underlying causes pushing them to the streets have not been addressed such as drought, endemic poverty and fighting between militia and government forces. Also, some of the parents of street children are either separated or divorced or been pushed out of their original dwellings by conflict or drought and are thus internally displaced people in other relatively better parts of the Country. The study also concludes that a significant number of the street children really have no home to go back to after their parents died due to various reasons including the protracted clan and militia conflict and disease. In some areas of Somalia where a significant number of street children originated from, the study concludes that the places are still under siege either by militia groups or being liberated by Somalia forces with the help of AMISOM. As such a reunification with parents in such places would be difficult and / or impossible in such circumstances.

Street life and living conditions:

The study concludes that street life in Mogadishu is deplorable and dehumanizing with a 36.2% of the street children having no shelter at all. It therefore cannot be gainsaid that alternative shelter and living conditions are required and this should be provided with some urgency. Based

on the study statistics that clearly indicate that most street children did not make a choice to live and stay in the streets of Mogadishu, it is a reasonable to conclude that 'any other' live away from the streets could be preferred. The study however also concluded that some street children have fully acclimatized, nay, accepted life in the streets, and it would be difficult to change their attitude after spending so much of their young life in the streets. However, all street children in Mogadishu that were sampled by a large percent (over 91%) rate life in the streets as deplorable but would prefer alternative or improvements in their current living conditions. The study concludes further that a majority of street children would require assistance ranging from education, food, water, shelter, jobs or an income source and psychosocial support through a rehabilitation center or orphanage. Street children that are 'part-time' in the streets, i.e. those that go back to parents and relatives in the evening can be assist to fully re-integrate back home possibly after a rehabilitation program.

Street children livelihoods:

The study concludes that the livelihood options for street children are very limited starting from lack of access to food, food security and sources of incomes or income generating skills. Due to poor access to meals and lack of dietary diversity, the study concludes that the level of malnutrition and hygiene-related ill-health is very high among the street children. Access to food in particular is a major concern with practically no street child having 3 meals per day and most subsisting on only 1 meal per day which is infrequently offered. The statistic that only 4.3% take two meals in a day is quite telling. Similarly, the sources of food for street children are unreliable and mostly unhygienic such as garbage, hotel leftovers and begging. Such sources clearly impact negative on their health. The study further notes that the sources of livelihoods for street children are not sustainable or stable by any measure but can be developed further. Sources such as washing cars, shoe shine and garbage collection are largely unstructured and are often exploitative. In all, the study concludes that at most of street children are not able to get enough income for self-sustenance and largely have no marketable skills considering their low level of education and lack of any trade skills such as carpentry, auto-mechanics, plumbing and tailoring. This makes it difficult for street children to even fit within the informal sector trade activities that ideally require lower level of professional skills.

Hygiene and Sanitation among Street Children:

The study concludes that access to safe and clean water for consumption and for hygiene is limited. As such a significant number of the street children do not bathe at all while many do not bathe regularly. Similarly the study concludes also that access to latrines is low with nearly half of the street children not using latrines and defecating in the open. This increases the risks of water borne disease as a result of poor hygiene and sanitation conditions. Clothing is a basic need for a life with dignity but clearly, the street children do not have access to cloths and they have to get to an extent of 'unclothing' dead people which is not only dehumanizing but equally traumatizing. Others sources of cloths such as garbage sites are equally unhygienic. The study also concludes that the level of personal hygiene and grooming is very poor with most street children not only not bathing regularly, but also not changing to clean clothes wherever they

wash. The study therefore further concludes that there is definitely a need to provide the street children with better sanitation facilities, and access to clean and safe water and clothes among other priority needs.

Protection Environment for Street Children

The study concludes almost all of the street children in Mogadishu feel insecure with reasons of this ranging from militia and government forces confrontations with guns on the streets, explosions and presence of explosive devices, instability of the country, beatings and theft of items by older and bigger street children, lack of shelter, fear of police, forced recruitment, and, at times, bad weather conditions. Street children are involved in crimes and various vices such as stealing, militia deployments, clan fights, drug peddling and weapon trafficking.

The study established that physical violence is quite rampant (91%) with a lot of traumatizing experiences of bodily harm, injuries and even death. The intensity and frequency of physical violence is quite high with a big number of the street children having never experienced peace and security. The study concludes that the street children, before it is too late, need to be helped to realize there are alternatives to violence lest they grow to perpetuate more violence. In addition, the study also concludes that street children need to be removed from un conducive fighting corridors which are mainly the streets of Mogadishu and taken to safer quarters. This will ensure that even those that are attracted or lured to join militia forces are prevented.

In terms of social and economic protection, the study clearly concludes that such assistance are largely non-existent and where provided, it is often infrequent and provided mainly by development actors who have limited capacity and space as the ongoing fighting disrupts such efforts from time to time. The support that is required according to the study would include food items, shelter, education, jobs opportunities and water. But most important, this assistance should be provided in a more conducive environment and not on the streets.

5.2 Key Recommendations

- Overall the street children in Mogadishu are highly exposed to socio-economic hardships probably only comparable to other fragile states. The level of suffering experienced by the street children requires a firm multi-pronged intervention that would combine elements of residential rehabilitation, and provision of basic needs such as shelter, food, clothing, non-formal education, and vocational skills training, among others.
- Alternative education particularly non formal education for the street children is recommended to inculcate in them a level of literacy and numeracy that could help them rejoin mainstream education or tertiary / vocational education. With basic non-formal education combined with life-skills training, the older street children can join vocational training courses or be supported to start their own businesses.

- A targeted rehabilitation program (institutional) is recommended particularly so that street children can be provided with continuous psychosocial support, counselling and other basic necessities while they are removed from the daily street life.
- Reintegration with relatives and friends for street children part-timers is also recommended particularly for those who live with parents and relatives. Conditions at home however need to be considered and where possible assistance provided on the 'push factors'.
- Street kids that have no home to go back to for various reasons require 'a home away from home'. As such the study recommends that a permanent street children home 'orphanage' be established to host those that cannot be re-united with their families. This is recommended in one of the more secure Government controlled areas of Mogadishu or other safer areas such as in Puntland or Somaliland.
- A program to disengage street children from militia groups is also recommended. This will require good collaboration with security agencies and local administrations
- The study recommends that a *drop-in center* be established as a first step towards removing children from the streets. Such will serve as an alternative stop-gap home, much more appealing than the streets where the kids can spend part of their daily time as a first point of contact with a structured rehab program.
- As part of a rehabilitation program, the street children can be exposed to various trade skills such as carpentry, electrical repair and masonry and those that develop interest can be further supported to advance on those lines of vocational skills. This will need however to be preceded by some form of non-formal education.
- A community level social work support program be established where social workers engage with street children while still in the streets and prepare them to join a structured rehabilitation program. Such social workers can also be involved in counselling of both street children in the streets, during rehabilitation and when reunified to their families.
- It is recommended that street children be provided with better sanitation facilities, and access to water and clothes. Getting clothes from dead people, particularly those who die due to bullet wounds is dehumanizing and traumatizing.
- After the rehabilitation program is concluded, it is recommended that young street children can be supported to unify with their parents or relatives. However older street children will need to be connected to job or business opportunities and assisted to develop business management skills.

- A strong partnership between the security agencies, development actors and street children rehabilitation centers need to be forged to ensure that there are no relapses of street children back to the streets. Also linkages with local education institutions should be explored so that the street children can access such education after the rehabilitation program is completed.
- The study recommends further that the question of street children be flagged as a major protection issue particularly with the UN Somalia Protection Cluster and resources be channeled to such street children rehabilitation programs. The exposure of street children to guns, crimes, recruitment, and 'free' street life is counterproductive to the good of the nation and has accompanying risks and threats to national security.