

Summary of Thesis submitted for PhD degree

By Ruth Mary Clare Evans

On

‘Negotiating Childhood:

**The Gendered Experiences of Street Children and
Children in Difficult Circumstances in Tanzania’.**

Within the context of national levels of poverty, structural adjustment policies and the AIDS epidemic, this thesis analyses the experiences of children and young people in difficult circumstances in Tanzania from a gender perspective. Using the social construction of ‘childhood’ as the theoretical framework, the study is based on participatory, child-focused ethnographic research, which was conducted in Arusha, northern Tanzania 2000-2002.

Following an overview of the global concept of childhood, the phenomenon of street children, and concepts of childhood in Tanzania, I provide a reflexive account of the research process. Based on the findings, I explore children’s and adults’ perceptions of the socio-cultural concept of childhood, children’s different gendered experiences, and attitudes towards education. The study then examines street children’s experiences of ‘home’ and their narratives of why they left their immediate household. In the light of the experiences of some street children who had been orphaned by AIDS and whose

families and communities were unable to support them, I analyse the experiences of children from HIV / AIDS-affected households, and young people's age-related and gendered vulnerabilities to HIV infection. The contradictions and contrasts of life on the street are explored, based on children's experiences, with gender identified as a key differential. I examine the survival strategies and coping mechanisms, both materially and emotionally, that children develop in order to survive independently in the street. Using Moser's framework of 'practical' and 'strategic' needs and interests (1989) I explore ways of responding to the experiences of children and young people. Children's participation in decision-making at the local, regional, national and international levels is analysed, and I draw up a series of policy recommendations which aim to meet children's practical and strategic needs. In the light of the previous chapters, I re-evaluate the concept of street children and offer some ways forward.

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

‘Negotiating Childhood:

**The Gendered Experiences of Street Children and
Children in Difficult Circumstances in Tanzania’**

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of
Doctorate of Philosophy in the University of Hull

by

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Negotiating Childhood:



Figure 1: Drawing by former street boy, aged 15 (Arusha, 2000).

The Gendered Experiences of Street Children and Children in Difficult Circumstances in Tanzania

Ruth Evans

Introduction

The twentieth century was described as the 'century of the child' (James and Prout, 1997:1) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) was hailed as a landmark in the history of childhood (Freeman, 1996:1). There has been a growing international children's rights movement and increasing recognition of the need to involve children as active participants in the development process, reflected in the discourse of international development policy. This mirrors the paradigm shift towards the 'Gender and Development' approach of the 1980s and 1990s, which recognised women's active role in the development process. The importance of children's participation was voiced most recently at the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children (2002), where world leaders declared their commitment to build 'a world fit for children' with their participation. Despite the rhetoric, however, childhood poverty, social exclusion and violence against children are increasing around the world (Edwards, 1996). The AIDS crisis is compounding many of the economic pressures facing many sub-Saharan African countries, and resulting in an estimated 11 million orphaned children due to AIDS (under age 15), whom families and communities are struggling to support (UNAIDS et al., 2002). Within the context of national levels of poverty, structural adjustment and 'cost-sharing' in the health and education sectors, and the AIDS epidemic, poor families in Tanzania are under considerable pressure, and increasing numbers of girls and boys are consequently seeking a living independently on the streets of towns and cities.

There is a dearth of child-focused studies about the impacts of the AIDS epidemic on children at the household level, and in general, about the meaning of childhood and the way it is experienced by children in Africa (Grainger et al., 2001; UNICEF, 1999^a).

This thesis, therefore, attempts to respond to this gap, by giving what bell hooks calls, 'A view from below', which furthers our understanding of the everyday lived realities and aspirations of street children, children orphaned by AIDS and other children in difficult circumstances in Tanzania (bell hooks, cited in Skeggs, 1994:74).

This thesis analyses the experiences of children and young people in difficult circumstances in Tanzania from a gender perspective, using the social construction of 'childhood' as the theoretical framework. It is based on participatory, child-focused ethnographic research, which was conducted in Arusha, northern Tanzania. The study developed from my experiences as a project development worker with a local non-governmental organisation working with street children in Arusha 1999-2000. Through my interactions with children and families at the project, I was able to gain a unique insight into street children's perspectives, visit their families, and follow their gendered life-course trajectories over a three-year period.

This thesis aims to show how children and young people in difficult circumstances demonstrate resilience and exercise their agency in complex ways. I illustrate the ways that children's lives are characterised by a fluidity of movement between difficult home environments, the street, mining sites, NGO projects, rural and urban areas in Tanzania. In order to explore this aim, this thesis considers the impacts of the HIV/ AIDS epidemic on children and families in poor communities. I illustrate the coping strategies that children, young people, parents and carers are adopting at the household level. In particular, the research examines how the burden of care affects different generations of women, and highlights their resilience, together with the importance of social networks and fluidity of movement between rural and urban areas. The study also aims to demonstrate how girls and young women confront dual inequalities and

discrimination based on gender as well as age at multiple levels, in particular in the household, school, street, community and NGO projects.

The first chapter provides an overview of the global concept of childhood, children's rights discourse, and the concept of street children and development policy as discussed in the literature. Chapter 2 uses the theoretical concepts of the newly emerging paradigm of the social construction of childhood to analyse the concept of childhood in Tanzania. I also analyse the phenomenon of street children in Tanzania within the discourse of national social policy, academia, and NGOs working with street children. The third chapter discusses key ethical issues in feminist research methodologies, cross-cultural research and ethnographic research with children. I then provide a reflexive account of the research process which enabled me to gain detailed ethnographic empirical data for this study.

Based on the findings of the ethnographic research, Chapters 4 and 5 give an understanding of children's and adults' perceptions of the socio-cultural concept of childhood, different gendered experiences, attitudes and experiences of education, and children's position within the current socio-economic context in Tanzania. Chapter 5 focuses more specifically on street children's experiences of 'home' and their own narratives of why they left their immediate household, based on focus groups and interviews with the children, their drawings, home visits and the perspectives of adults. When children leave home for the street, they are shown very often to be making a rational choice in favour of one lifestyle over another, illustrating their agency in creating their own social worlds. In the light of the experiences of some street children who had been orphaned by AIDS and whose families and communities were unable or unwilling to support them, and in view of the growing numbers of children being

orphaned by AIDS, it seemed pertinent to explore the experiences of children from HIV/ AIDS-affected households in the community, who were at risk of becoming 'street children'. Contacts with key gatekeepers enabled me to meet some parents living with HIV, and children and adults from AIDS-affected households, who were willing to talk openly about their experiences, which was very rare in view of the pervasive fear, stigma and ostracism attached to HIV within Tanzanian society. Chapter 6 thus discusses the impacts of the epidemic on children and families, their coping strategies, and highlights young people's age-related and gendered vulnerabilities to HIV infection, based on individual interviews with children and families affected by HIV/ AIDS.

Chapters 7 and 8 focus on street children's experiences in the street environment, based on interviews and focus groups with children, their drawings, and photographic representation of their life on the streets. In Chapter 7, street life is shown to be characterised by a series of paradoxes and contrasts, with gender emerging as a key differential in children's experiences. Chapter 8 explores the survival strategies and social networks that children develop which enable them to survive independently within the street environment. It also analyses the different gendered experiences of street girls and boys, the employment opportunities available to them, and their coping mechanisms. Children are shown to be very resilient and capable of surviving independently on the street at an early age.

Chapter 9 explores ways of responding to the experiences of children and young people discussed in the previous chapters. Using Moser's framework of 'practical' and 'strategic' needs and interests (1989), young people's perspectives and aspirations are explored, as are the perspectives of project staff. The level of street children's

participation in development projects set up for their benefit in Arusha is analysed, as well as new initiatives encouraging children and young people's participation at the national and international levels. I discuss ways to prevent children from leaving home for the street at the national and local level. In the light of the previous chapters, I draw up a series of policy recommendations which aim to meet the practical needs of street children, and the more longer term strategic needs of children and young people in Tanzania, which would address oppressive, gender-biased adult-child relations and social structural inequalities facing them. The final chapter synthesises the key findings from the ethnographic study, re-evaluates the concept of street children, in the light of the previous chapters, and raises some questions for further research.

This research study has thus provided me with a unique insight into children's lives in Tanzania, which I found rewarding over the three years I have been privileged to work with them. As well as drawing attention to the difficult circumstances and inequalities facing many children and young people, I hope that this thesis also demonstrates children's resilience, in the ways they cope with poverty, violence, discrimination and marginalisation. Before examining the empirical research based on children's experiences, the first three chapters set out the theoretical standpoint I adopt in this study.

Chapter 1

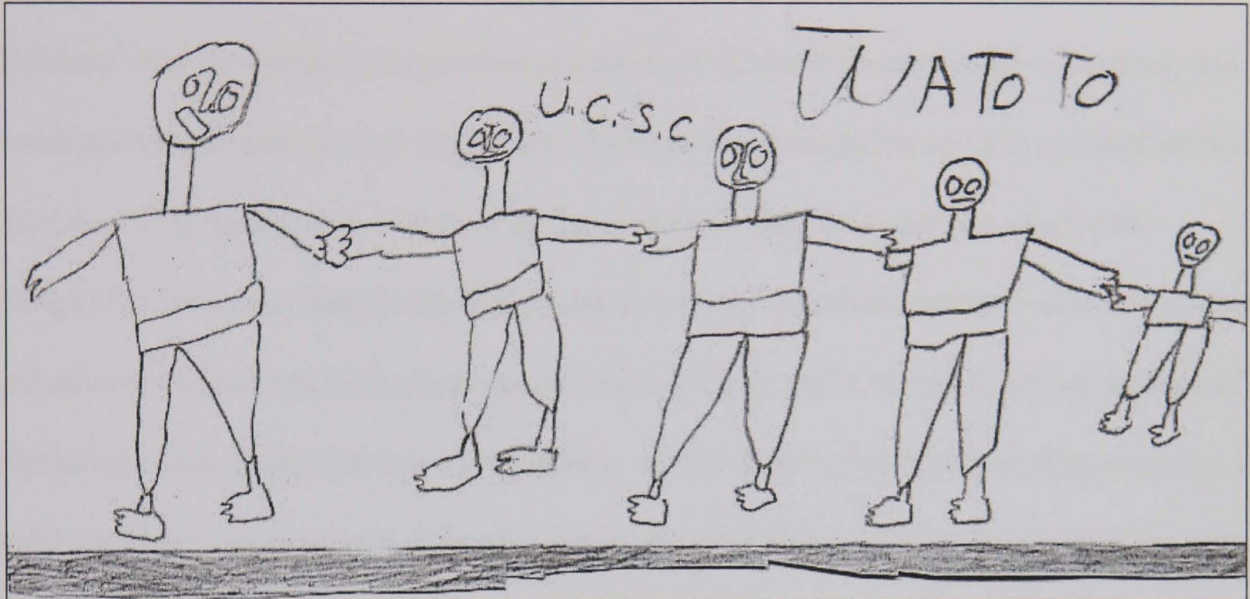


Figure 2 : Drawing by former street boy, aged 14, at UCSC street children project. He wrote, '*UCSC children*' (Arusha, 2000).

Children's Rights and Development Policy

Chapter 1

Children's rights and development policy

Introduction

Children¹ occupy a prominent position in international development policy discourse, and development and anti-poverty targets are often measured explicitly in terms of indicators of child mortality, health and education by the major development agencies (Edwards, 1996:813). However, despite the rhetoric and ideology of 'child-centred society' in Britain and other post-industrialised countries (James and Prout, 1997:1), and the great emotional attachment most adults feel towards children, 'adults do not seem to be creating societies in which children can genuinely flourish' (Edwards, 1996:814). There is evidence that child poverty and violence towards children are both increasing in all types of society, (industrialized, transitional and developing) often at a faster rate than poverty among adults (ibid). Edwards discusses these paradoxes between rhetoric and reality:

We state regularly that children should 'come first' or 'be placed at the heart of development' (UNICEF, 1996; SCF, 1995), but then proceed to organize societies without prioritising, or even being conscious of the distinctive needs of children.

We value children highly in emotional terms but deem them 'useless' in any formal sense, excluding their contributions from measurements of work and production, and making them invisible in statistics, debate and policy-making. We may want to

¹ Children are defined throughout this thesis as all persons under the age of 18 years, though of course actual definitions of 'childhood' vary greatly from one society to another. The term 'children' and 'young people' is used to cover both boys and girls without implying that their interests or roles are always the same. Where appropriate, boys and girls are referred to separately.

educate children to freedom and democracy, but mostly they experience control and discipline (Qvortup, 1994). What is happening here? (ibid).

At the heart of these paradoxes lie adult attitudes towards children which conceptualise them as 'half formed adults with less status and less of a claim on decision-making and resources' (Blurton-Jones, cited in Edwards, 1996:814). Children are seen as passive and dependent, to be protected and nurtured in preparation for their adult lives, rather than valuing them as social actors who contribute to society in their own right. This concept of 'childhood' has led to the marginalisation of children from the 'adult world' of decision-making, from the micro level of the household, through to macro development planning at regional, national and international levels (ibid; Boyden, 1997). Indeed, comparisons have been drawn between the situation of children now and that of women thirty years ago, when they too were rendered 'invisible' by the actions and attitudes of others (Edwards, 1996:814; Green, 1998).

Taking the construct of 'childhood' which dominates development and human rights discourse as the starting point, this chapter situates this hegemonic Western concept socially and historically, and discusses the implications of this for children living and working on the streets of cities in the majority world. I analyse the construction of the category 'street children' and attempt to deconstruct the stereotypes and assumptions made about them, drawing on empirical evidence from research conducted in many countries around the world, particularly Latin America and the Caribbean. Finally, the relationship between street children and development projects set up for their benefit is discussed. This highlights the points made at the beginning, that development policies that affect children and young people rarely start from the reality of their daily lives, their participation in

decision-making processes is very limited, with the consequence that adult society fails to recognise the potential contribution children and young people can make when they are seen as social actors.

Children's rights discourse

Since the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989), international thinking on children has become steered by human rights discourse (Stephens, 1995). While the Convention provides a 'touchstone' for many children's rights advocates (Hill and Tisdall, 1997:217), setting a framework of universally applicable standards to safeguard children's rights internationally, sociologists and others have criticised the Convention for universalising the experience of children from many diverse cultures and globalising explicitly Western constructs of childhood (Stephens, 1995; Boyden, 1997; Edwards, 1996). The Convention does make significant advances in the recognition of children's rights internationally, incorporating ideas about children's specific needs, about protecting children from risks and harm, along with ideas about children as social actors (Hill and Tisdall, 1997:255). However, as a theoretical and conceptual framework, the Convention draws on explicitly Western constructs of childhood - of the innocent child victim on the one hand, or as the young deviant on the other - which have been exported to developing countries and have shaped international development interventions and national social policy (Boyden, 1997:197). The UN Convention largely does not dispute the dependency concept of childhood (Hill and Tisdall, 1997:254). It is based on Western notions of the nuclear family, emphasising the parents' primary responsibility to meet the child's needs and the primacy of the child's best interests as an individual (ibid). While the preamble carefully uses the term 'family' which recognises

non-nuclear family units in many cultures, the articles themselves often slip into using 'parents', for example, Article 9 about separation from parents (ibid, 32) and Article 18:

State Parties shall use their best efforts to ensure the recognition of the principle that both parents have common responsibilities for the upbringing and development of the child. Parents or, as the case may be, legal guardians, have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child. The best interests of the child will be their basic concern (UNCRC, 1989: Article 18).

The Convention has also been critiqued by feminists for being 'gender blind', thereby concealing or even reinforcing sex discrimination (Olsen, cited in Hill and Tisdall, 1997:31). Feminists have problematised the unequivocal promotion of the family as the primary setting in which children should be brought up, since feminist analysis has revealed that 'traditional family life is typically patriarchal, and can further socialise girl children into subordinate roles' (ibid). 'Gender blindness' also leads to omissions, for example, while the Convention addresses child military service, which mostly affects boys, it fails to mention child marriage, which mostly affects girls² (ibid). Olsen comments that the Convention is thus gender-centric as well as ethnocentric: 'To the extent that the Convention deals with children as unspecified, unsituated people, it tends in fact to deal with white, male, relatively privileged children' (ibid).

² Article 16 (2) of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (ratified by 173 countries) does, however, address the issue of child marriage (UN, 2003).

Boyden notes that one of the main links between international rights legislation and traditional child welfare thinking is that 'both have been deeply influenced by the ideologies of the social work and legal professions', which is:

extremely significant for the development of a global standard of childhood because both tend to play down the impact of wider social, economic, political and cultural conditions in the shaping of social phenomena and therefore to advocate individual, remedial solutions to social problems (Boyden, 1997:197).

This tendency to emphasise individual, remedial solutions to social problems, and play down social structural inequalities, has a major impact on how children are conceptualised as the targets for social policy and development interventions in countries of the South.

Historical evolution of the concept of 'childhood'

In the 1970s, Western notions of childhood as 'the mythic walled garden of happy, safe, protected, innocent childhood' (Green, 1998:2) were brought into sharp relief by images of 'the world's children', as conceptualised by UNICEF and WHO, affected by famine, war and poverty (James and Prout, 1997:1). The rapid ratification (almost universally) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) illustrates the growing concern over the widespread disparities between such ideals of 'childhood' and the lived realities for many children in the North and South. Public unease about concepts of childhood was accompanied in academia by a growing critique of traditional portrayals of children in the social sciences (James and Prout, 1997). Conventional developmental approaches conceptualised children as passive recipients of socialisation, and as 'objects' of

study in research rather than taking seriously the subjective meanings of children's viewpoints (Hill and Tisdall, 1997:12).

Phillipe Ariès' book *Centuries of Childhood* [1962] (1973) is largely credited with first drawing academic interest to the study of 'childhood' and heightening awareness that 'childhood' itself was a construct whose meaning may not necessarily stay the same or even exist over time (ibid; James and Prout, 1997; Green, 1998). Many authors have now traced the emergence of the current Western model of childhood 'from the eighteenth century European Enlightenment, through and beyond the rise of industrial capitalism to its globalisation in the twentieth century as Western norms and models were exported across the world, latterly by international development agencies' (Edwards, 1996:815). In medieval societies, young people shared most of the tasks with their elders and children were not viewed as a separate category (ibid; Green, 1998:2). However, from the eighteenth century, children gradually came to be seen as different from adults, associated with the qualities of innocence and nobility, and 'the desire to foster these qualities through conscious parenting emerged' (Boyden, 1997:192). Edwards and Boyden note that the Industrial Revolution initially increased the demand for child labour, but as the need for a skilled and educated workforce became paramount, children were progressively withdrawn from the labour force and restricted to the school and the home (ibid; Edwards, 1996:815). Thus, in the contemporary era of late capitalism:

The instrumental value of children has been largely replaced by their expressive value. Children have become relatively worthless (economically) to their parents, but priceless in terms of their psychological worth (Scheper-Hughes and Sargent, 1998:12).

Under capitalism in industrialising nations, the foundation for productive work in the family was eroded, leading to the decline of the extended family, particularly in urban areas, and 'the smaller nuclear family emerged as the predominant household form within which child-rearing took place' (Boyden, 1997:193). Boyden notes that in the Victorian and Edwardian period in Britain, the abnormal development of children and juvenile delinquency in cities became one of the main public concerns and 'the fear was that childhood innocence if not properly directed and trained at home and in school could give way to riotous and immoral behaviour' (ibid). As Edwards summarises:

Ideas of a 'good childhood' became increasingly focused on the nuclear family, the safety of life at home, the value of full-time education, and the passage from childhood innocence to a (useful and active) adult life. Children whose lives did not conform to these patterns were deemed to be 'deviant' and were liable to be punished, 'rehabilitated' and/ or institutionalised (Edwards, 1996:816).

Thus, alongside the image of innocent child victims, there also exists a very different perception of the 'unsocialised or anti-social child, the deviant, or trouble-maker' (Boyden, 1997:194). As Green notes, this dichotomy between children as 'barbarians who must be controlled', or as 'innocents in need of protection' is reflected in their portrayal in literature, such as the vulnerable figure of *Oliver Twist* on the one hand, and on the other, the instinctive savagery of the children in *Lord of the Flies* (Green, 1998:3). Both of these notions of childhood effectively disempowered children and denied their agency:

The modern conception of childhood – which dates from the sixteenth century and stresses the innocence and frailty of children – forcefully ejected children from the worlds of work, sexuality and politics, and designated the classroom as the major focus of children’s lives. Children were no longer allowed to earn money or to decide how to spend their time; they were forced into dependency on adults and obliged to study or play (Franklin, 1995:7).

Edwards and Boyden suggest that much current policy toward children in developing countries can clearly be traced back to the historical evolution of notions of ‘the good childhood’ in the industrialized world (Edwards, 1996:816; Boyden, 1997:193).

Construction of ‘street children’

The two opposing culturally dominant conceptions of childhood, as passive innocent victims, or as deviant, unsocialised or anti-social youths, inform adults’ attitudes towards children: ‘Adult protectiveness towards children [...] is tempered by the perceived need for control’ (Boyden, 1997:194). Adult fears about young people out of control, roaming the streets and involved in acts of vandalism, crime and violence are often confirmed by crime statistics on juvenile crime (ibid). Juvenile crime thus has become linked to adults’ concerns about ‘urban chaos and decay’ in the modern world and the decline of traditional values and morality, with the largest cities with the highest growth rates globally reporting the highest rates of youthful crime per capita (ibid). The globalisation of such Western norms of childhood has meant that children visible on the streets of cities around the world have been portrayed as unsocialised, lacking in moral values and representing a threat to the established social order (Stephens, 1995:12):

In cities as disparate as Abidjan, Bogota, Cairo, Manila and Seoul, children playing in the streets and other public spaces and young teenagers congregating on street corners, outside cinemas or bars, have become synonymous in the mind of the general public with delinquent gangs (Boyden, 1997:194).

Boyden points out that during the first decades of industrialisation in Europe young people who worked on the street - such as street traders, newspaper vendors, match and flower sellers, messengers and van boys - were the most disparaged, and suggests that the idea that the street is morally dangerous for children is a peculiarly northern European concept:

The sharp distinction between the street and the home took place alongside changes on the domestic front and in patterns of property ownership and lifestyle initiated by the urban rich. Among the middle classes of Northern Europe, whose women and children were in retreat from industrial life, the home provided the focal point for all things private. As the fear of crime in public spaces in cities grew, the wealthy built more barriers against the encroachment into their domestic lives of immoral and illegal influences (ibid, 195).

This notion that children should be kept off the streets was accompanied by the view that the family and school are the 'chief legitimate agents for the socialisation of children' (ibid). One of the most important aspects of this construction of childhood, then, is the emphasis on domesticity: 'The place for childhood to take place is inside – inside society, inside a family, inside a private dwelling' (Ennew, 1995:202).

The globalisation of these Western, modern constructions of childhood means that children who live and work primarily on the streets in large cities around the world are perceived as signifying a non-normative, dysfunctional childhood, somehow ‘outside of society’: ‘society’s ultimate outlaws’ (ibid). This has resulted in the widespread public perception in most countries that street children are ‘both the most deprived and the most deprived members of society, living by theft, prostitution, and drug running’ (Boyden, 1997:196). As Stephens notes, such notions of street children as anti-social beings, without families or values of their own, has been used ‘to legitimate radical programmes to eliminate the menace of street children in the interest of the general social good’, the most extreme example being the death squads which randomly shoot street children in Brazil (Stephens, 1995:12). Children on the streets of large urban centres subvert ‘norms’ of childhood and are often subjected to police harassment and detained for being ‘out of place’:

Frequently detained for the nebulous crimes of loitering and vagrancy, [...] young people are most guilty of not conforming to socialization models according to which children are the compliant vehicles for the transmission of stable social worlds (ibid).

Stephens and Scheper-Hughes argue that the phenomenon of ‘street children’ among the urban poor in cities in the majority world can be seen as an integral part of an emerging order of global capitalism (ibid, 11) and the product of neo-liberal individualism and the accompanying rights discourse (Scheper-Hughes and Sargent, 1998:12).

Deconstructing a construct: 'street children'

Glauser, Panter-Brick, Ennew and others discuss the confusion surrounding the vague terms 'street children', 'abandoned' and 'abandoning' children, 'slum children', 'children in especially difficult circumstances', 'urban children at risk' 'children without family contact', which includes 'orphans, runaways, refugees and displaced persons', etc. used by UNICEF and other international development agencies (Glauser, 1997; Panter-Brick, 2000; Ennew, 1994). The terms 'children of the street' and 'children in the street' seem to be the most widely employed by grassroots level social workers, non-governmental organisations, international agencies like UNICEF and social researchers to distinguish between children who live on the street (children *of* the street), as opposed to ones who work on the street, but return home after work (children *in* the street) within the broader category 'street children' (Glauser, 1997). However, social researchers and NGOs working directly with 'street children' agree that in real life the circumstances of 'street children' rarely fit neatly into one or other of these categories (ibid; Panter-Brick, 2000:4).

In addition, the same terms are used in different parts of the world to refer to very different types and situations of children, risking mutual misunderstanding (Glauser, 1997:150).

Glauser notes that African approaches focus differently and more emphatically on the presence and role of girls within the street children context, than has been traditionally the case in Latin America, possibly as a function of 'different social attitudes to gender roles' (ibid). Glauser draws attention to the danger of international organisations, policy makers, social institutions and individuals intervening in the lives of children with problems on the basis of obviously unclear and arbitrary knowledge about the reality of these children's lives, with the result that children who do not fit the official categories could be neglected :

'Being left undefined or even nameless may well mean being invisible to society' (ibid, 151).

The term 'street children' itself draws attention to the conjunction between 'street' and 'children'. Glauser (amongst others) suggests that the concept 'street children' becomes necessary in response to the desire to speak about children who fall outside the frame of what is considered 'normal' (ibid, 152). 'Street children' use the street in different ways than what is considered normal, usual and acceptable: instead of using the street as a place through which one circulates to get from one point to another, they stay on the street to work, eat, sleep and roam around (ibid). This subverts not only 'norms' of childhood, but also ideas about the use of the street or any public space from the point of view of adult and class needs and uses (ibid). 'Street children' thus represent:

deviations from normal standards and it is they who, in a way which cannot be ignored, confront and touch society's dominant sector's views and lives and interfere or threaten to interfere with its major interests (ibid, 153).

Glauser suggests therefore that society has a practical need to conceptualise this phenomenon in order to both express public concern and take action (ibid). UNICEF has declared 'street children' a top priority and countless non-governmental organisations have presented themselves as advocates for 'street children' (Hecht, 1998:3). However, the overwhelming public concern about 'street children', who are selected for priority action, while other children, also deserving care, are unconsciously or not left aside, suggests that this concern stems more from adults' negative assumptions about 'the street', crime, and the visible presence of 'deviant' children:

Those children or categories of children who are ignored (or for whom much less concern is shown) are those whose social situation does not contravene ideas of normality, who are not as visible as street children or who do not impinge uncomfortably on sections of the population. Indeed, sometimes the very opposite is the case: children working as unpaid domestic servants or child prostitutes assure the needs and comforts of adults and society may have little interest in thinking about them in terms of a concern deserving category. In addition to this, they may be hidden, as is the case of child soldiers, children working in factories or children living in permanent institutional care (Glauser, 1997:154).

Whilst street children may be the most visible category of children in especially difficult circumstances, research from many countries has shown that the portrayal of street children as homeless is not representative of the majority of their population. In Columbia, Felsman (1981) found that 61 per cent of street children had close contact with their families, returning home every day (Veale et al., 2000:135). In Latin America, 80-90 per cent of street children have contact with their families (ibid). In a study of four Ethiopian towns, Veale and Adefrisew (1993) found that fewer than 20 per cent of children regularly slept on the streets (ibid). Similarly, in Zimbabwe, Muchini and Nyandiya-Bundy (1991) found that 85 per cent of 'street youth' lived in a family at least some of the time, and in South Africa, Donal and Swart-Kruger (1994) claimed that about 90 per cent of the young people working on the streets return to their homes at night (Mufune, 2000:236). Many researchers comment that the transition from home to street is a gradual process, and that many street children still retain some contact with their family members, as Green describes in Latin America and the Caribbean:

Typically, children who are already working on the streets test the waters, spending a night or two sleeping rough with friends. Slowly they detach themselves from their families, returning less and less often to the home, although many street children still pay occasional visits to see their mothers or brothers and sisters. Often the move to the street is connected with a change in the family circumstances, as children are sent to live with relatives, parents move, or a new stepfather moves in (Green, 1998:67).

On the basis of his research with street children in Paraguay, Glauser develops a model to portray the varying relationships children have with the 'street' in the form of a triangle, divided into an upper realm representing children who stay away from their families on the street and a lower realm, representing the majority of children who lead a daily life in close relationship with their natal families, separated by an imaginary and mobile line, 'the threshold' (Glauser, 1997:157). He explains that crossing the threshold marks the beginning of a life characterised by increasing instability, and notes that 'most of the children do seek a stable alternative to their family but these are not usually successful' (ibid, 160). Transition occurs over time:

As time goes by the intervals between stable periods become longer and more frequent. The street becomes the only resort for periods in-between time spent in institutions, prisons, own family's home during unsuccessful attempts to become re-established, or other substitute homes. Socialization, apprenticeship for life and the development of affectionate relationships occur according to the constraints and possibilities of the situations in which children find themselves. Often these

situations set children onto trajectories which may prove to be quite irreversible (ibid).

In contrast to the popular image of the ‘untamed’ and ‘feral’ street child, research from many countries has shown that children who live on the streets develop their own social organisations, a relatively stable attachment to territories and support networks and solidarity, in sharing food and other goods and for protection (Boyden, 1997:196, Stephens, 1995:12; Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman, 1998; Hecht, 1998; Glauser, 1997). Their experiences are diverse and multifaceted, defying the stereotypes: ‘Street children argue, laugh, play, have sex, steal and sniff glue, as well as lie awake at night in fear of their lives’ (Green, 1998:5). Boyden comments that ‘the street child is very often more intelligent, more creative, more aware and more independent than the child at home’ (Boyden, 1997:197), although there is also a danger of ‘romanticising’ them. Activities such as shoplifting or picking pockets which society designates as criminal are essential survival strategies on the street (ibid).

Street children, like all children, are a highly differentiated group of people, with differences of age, gender, ethnicity, class, disability and other characteristics crucially affecting their experiences, self-perceptions and treatment by others (Hill and Tisdall, 1997:3). In particular, age and gender emerge as key influences in street children’s experiences. Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman found in their fieldwork in Brazil that there is a direct link between age and increasing criminal behaviour:

As soon as ‘cute’ street children begin to show signs of physical maturity, they are chased away from public spaces and rarely elicit compassion or a handout. There is

a gradual and perhaps inevitable evolution from begging to stealing and stealing is generally the second phase in the moral career of the street child (Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman, 1998: 365).

This illustrates the public perception of younger street children as 'innocent victims' while older children and young people on the streets represent a threat and are seen as 'deviant' youths engaging in criminal acts. These cultural attitudes linked to the children's age seem to partly dictate the survival strategies street children are able to adopt.

Green notes that many studies conducted in Latin America and the Caribbean show that there are at least eight or nine street boys for every street girl, and suggests that street girls face a higher level of vulnerability and risk than boys (Green, 1998:78). Similarly, studies conducted in Africa suggest that 70-90 per cent of 'street youth' are boys (Mufune, 2000:236). Reasons suggested for the small population of street girls in Africa include the fact that girls are needed in the family to perform reproductive duties of childminding and domestic work, and when seen on the street, are often taken in by others in the community who exploit their labour (ibid). Green suggests that, in Latin America and the Caribbean, cultural attitudes towards boys and girls make it easier for boys from poor households to leave home for the streets:

Becoming a street girl violates the social conventions of poor households far more than when boys leave for the streets. Boys are expected to be independent and cope with life on the streets, while girls are expected (and expect) to stay closer to home. (Green, 1998:79)

This is supported by Hecht's (1998) and Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman's (1998) research in Brazil. Thus, while boys usually leave home from a combination of physical violence, boredom and a desire for early independence, girls are only likely to leave after traumatic experiences of sexual abuse at the hands of fathers, other male relatives or stepfathers (Green, 1998:79). Street child workers in several countries in Latin America and the Caribbean report that girls are more prone to low self-esteem and often practice self-mutilation, sometimes to avoid arrest because it obliges the police to take them to hospital (ibid). They frequently become pregnant, and often have little idea about how their bodies function or how to avoid sexually transmitted diseases (ibid). They are at risk of back-street abortion methods, or at other times, the babies are adopted by a relative, given away to local women, or passed to a state institution, since it is very difficult for young girls to keep their babies with them on the street (ibid). According to the girls themselves, however, if a girl does manage to keep her baby, it can bring status and self-esteem, both of which are severely lacking (ibid).

Many researchers have found that despite the risks involved with life on the streets, many children opt for the streets in preference to the abuse they suffer at home:

Research shows that street children may well live with insecurity, danger and crime, but they are usually runaways and street life is an option they choose over the frequent subjugation and violence within the home. There is particularly strong evidence, for example, that a large proportion of runaways have experienced incest or sexual or physical abuse prior to leaving home (Boyden, 1997:197).

This is supported by evidence from Green (1998), Hecht (1998), Veale et al (2000) among others. Indeed, Green notes that in Latin America and the Caribbean, street children's own accounts of why they left home 'differ strikingly from the conventional accounts of helplessness, abandonment and poverty': 'There are cases of orphans or abandoned children, but for the majority, leaving for the street is a conscious choice of one life over another' (Green, 1998:64).

Aptekar's fieldwork in Colombia (1988) led to his conclusion that most street children were not abandoned, a conclusion supported by Veale's (1992; 1996) research in Sudan and Ethiopia, where children looked to the street for the fulfilment of needs that were unmet in the home (Veale et al., 2000:135). Veale reveals that for the children, managing for themselves was an escape from home, where the parents themselves were unable to provide for all: they cited less regular abuse on the street, a 'greater variety of food to be gained from the street, strong friendships, and the satisfaction they got from being able to manage for themselves without having to put up with strict parental discipline' (ibid, 136). Indeed, on the basis of key research findings from empirical literature on street children in Colombia, South Africa, Brazil, Honduras, Ethiopia, Sudan, Nepal and Indonesia, Veale et al. conclude that:

Rather than being the most victimized, the most destitute, the most psychologically vulnerable group of children, street children may be resilient and display creative coping strategies for growing up in difficult environments. Without discounting the deprivations and hazards that exist in the street, children often cite what can only be described as positive features of the street environment that offer solutions to problems in their lives at home (ibid, 137).

Street children and development projects

As previously mentioned, UNICEF has declared street children a top priority, and a host of NGOs presenting themselves as advocates for street children has appeared (Hecht, 1998:3). Hecht found that the number of adults working with street children in Recife, Northeast Brazil, totalled at least 298, which is 64 more than the combined number of children found sleeping in the streets of Recife and Olinda (ibid, 152). Indeed, Hecht notes that street children have become something of a Brazilian cultural emblem, providing a focus for media attention and for lucrative direct mail campaigns in the United States to raise money for the host of street children projects which have appeared throughout the late 1980s and 1990s. As Hecht cynically comments, it seems that street children have come to occupy a prominent place in the 'social problems marketplace' (ibid, 3).

Many researchers have found, however, that the host of NGO projects intent on 'rescuing' the children from the streets are viewed by the children as just another contact, which they incorporate into their network of places to rest, wash their clothes and eat (ibid; Green, 1998). As Green notes, this suggests that the children have:

at best, a limited interest in the longer term purposes of the projects: health and education and their eventual removal from the street. If they are only interested in the immediate help the institutions can offer, this leaves many of the projects without a viable underlying strategy, reducing them instead to a subsidiary role, albeit greatly appreciated, in the street children's wider support network (Green, 1998:70).

One of the commonest problems with the projects is that they are concerned with remedial assistance to individual street children, usually committing them to institutions and shelters, 'rescuing them from the street', rather than tackling the root causes of why children are on the street in the first place (ibid, 84). The projects concentrate on the 'rehabilitation' of street children, explicitly relying on the hegemonic concept of 'childhood', which conceptualises children either as passive innocent victims who need to be saved from the moral decay of the 'street', or as anti-social, deviant, unruly youths, whose behaviour needs to be 'corrected' and controlled for the benefit and security of society. Children's lack of participation in designing the policies and projects which are supposed to help them has meant that 'many programmes are built on ignorance of children's real lives and aspirations' and has resulted in a high level of failure in street children's projects (ibid, 61).

Green notes that in response to the poor record and high expense in terms of spending per child, some projects are developing which are aimed more at prevention work to try to stop children leaving home (ibid, 85). More innovative projects abandon the 'salvation' approach of making the children leave the streets or stop work, concentrating instead on increasing the range of choices available to them (ibid). A project in Honduras, which works with shoeshine and other working children, initiated a child bank, to give loans and help the children save money. This shows how a more empowering approach which starts from the children's lives can assist them in their daily struggle to survive and enable them to move towards a trade, bringing higher income, self-respect and education (ibid).

Roger Hart (1992) developed the concept of a ladder of participation which lists the steps in so-called child participation from the first rungs of non-participation – 'manipulation', 'decoration' and 'tokenism' to what he suggests is the ideal: activities that are initiated by

children but in which decisions are shared with adults (Hart, cited in Ennew, 1994; Ennew, 1995:207) Ennew suggests that since the 1980s, some street children projects have claimed to involve the children as participants in planning and implementing projects, and also in campaigning and political action on their own and society's behalf (ibid). The most frequently cited example is the National Movement of Street Boys and Girls (MNMMR) in Brazil which Green claims has led the way in involving street and working children in a common organisation of, rather than for, children, organising children into groups engaged in the same kind of work to secure their rights (Green, 1998:86). As a national movement, MNMMR has successfully raised public awareness about children's rights and the death squad assassinations of street children in Brazil, and talks about changing Brazilian society, recognising the agency of children as social actors with the potential to affect change (ibid; Hecht, 1998:168). While recognising that the Brazilian activities have led to some child involvement at levels previously unexplored, Ennew however advises caution at the national level, where 'a tendency towards tokenism and decoration remains' (Ennew, 1995:209) and concludes:

It seems true to say that children have little release from adult supervision, even when they are outside childhood and the name of the game is participation. In the words of a sceptical observer of the children's rights movement, 'Post-modern paternalism no longer says, 'Shut up kids, I know what is good for you' but prefers to say 'Speak up kids, I am your voice' (ibid, 210).

Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter has shown that children are largely excluded from the 'adult' world of decision-making from the household level through to the macro levels of development planning at regional, national and international levels. In the same way as gender analysis has revealed the 'gender-blindness' of much development policy, new approaches to children and development are now highlighting 'child-blindness', that is the invisibility of children as social actors in development policy and practice (Edwards, 1996). Development policy and human rights discourses of 'childhood' are based on explicitly Western constructions of the 'child', which evolved in accordance with the historical development of industrialisation and have become globalised through the emerging order of global capitalism. The contemporary Western concept of 'childhood' positions children's 'proper' place in the home or in school, or some other environment in which they can be guided and protected (Panter-Brick, 2000:5). This hegemonic concept of 'childhood' is based on stereotypical images of the 'child' as an 'innocent, passive victim' on the one hand, or as an 'anti-social deviant' on the other. This has resulted in the criminalisation, in terms of public perceptions and police harassment, of children and young people who live and work on the streets in large urban centres of the majority world. The visibility of children on the streets subverts 'norms' of childhood and of the use of public space in urban areas, becoming the focus of concern amongst the public, in media portrayals, and among NGOs and international development agencies, at the risk of overlooking the majority of poor children in especially difficult circumstances who may be less visible but equally deserving of assistance and support. The host of NGO projects set up to tackle the 'problem' of 'street children' mainly rely on hegemonic constructs of 'the child' to solicit funds from Western donors, through emotive pictures of vulnerable, innocent child victims and paternalistic notions of child sponsorship. Projects aim primarily to 'rehabilitate' street children, usually through offering them education and places in shelters and residential

institutions. While grassroots NGO workers themselves are more likely to recognise the resiliency and agency of street children, they may, in some ways understandably, endorse stereotypical depictions of the children in order to gain the necessary funds to run projects, aware of the advertising potential of street children within the current epoch of the globalised, competitive 'marketplace' of 'social problems' (Hecht, 1998:3).

The children's experiences are, however, multifaceted and much more complex than the public perceptions and stereotypes about them, which are effectively disempowering and deny children's agency. They are, like all children, characterised by great diversity and difference, with age and gender representing key influences in their experiences and self-perceptions. Research conducted in many countries shows that street children demonstrate remarkable resiliency, adopt creative survival strategies, and are making rational choices in their best interests, in view of the limited options available to them. The challenge for adult society is to move beyond the rhetoric of 'child participation' and make the goal of child-initiated shared decisions with adults a meaningful reality. The next chapter takes up many of the themes discussed here within the context of Tanzania, focusing on African concepts of childhood and the tensions with human rights discourse, the position of children and young people in Tanzania today, and the conceptualisation of 'street children' and street children projects in Tanzania.

Chapter 2



Figure 3: Map of the regions of Tanzania, drawn by former street boy, aged 15 (Arusha, 2000).

Childhood in Tanzania

Chapter 2

Childhood in Tanzania

Introduction

The discussion in Chapter 1 highlighted that the concept of 'childhood' that underlies much development policy and children's rights discourse is a historically contingent, socio-cultural construct. Before examining the concept of 'childhood' in Tanzania, it seems useful at this point to outline the key features of the emerging paradigm in the sociology of childhood. James and Prout identify the central tenets of this new paradigm, which social constructionist theorists have come to recognise since the 1970s:

1. Childhood is understood as a social construction. [...] Childhood, as distinct from biological immaturity is neither a natural nor a universal feature of human groups but appears as a specific structural and cultural component of many societies.
2. Childhood is a variable of social analysis. It can never be entirely divorced from other variables such as class, gender, or ethnicity. Comparative and cross-cultural analysis reveals a variety of childhoods rather than a single and universal phenomenon.
3. Children's social relationships and cultures are worthy of study in their own right, independent of the perspective and concerns of adults.
4. Children are and must be seen as active in the construction and determination of their own social lives, the lives of those around them, and of the societies in which they live. Children are not just the passive recipients of social structures and processes. (James and Prout, 1997:8)

Sociologists of childhood thus recognise that 'childhood' is a socially constructed concept which varies according to historical and socio-cultural perceptions of 'the child', as well as according to the socio-economic and political context in which children's lives are situated. They also recognise the agency of children in constructing their lives within their social environments. Taking this theoretical framework as the starting point, this chapter analyses the socio-cultural concept of 'childhood' within the Tanzanian context from a gender perspective and in relation to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. I will then analyse the position of Tanzanian children and young people in relation to the current socio-economic context. There follows a discussion of the conceptualisation of street children in the discourse of national social policy, academia and non-governmental organisations working with street children in Tanzania, and an outline of the background setting within which I conducted my fieldwork for this study.

Socio-cultural concept of 'childhood' within the Tanzanian context

Researchers involved in the UNICEF study, *Children in Need of Special Protection Measures: a Tanzanian case study*, (1999) point out that the literature on African childhoods in general is sparse and the same is true of Tanzanian childhoods (UNICEF, 1999^a:45). While statistical information on children, particularly on children's health and education, is available, and there have been many studies conducted on specific issues such as street and working children, there have been few studies of the meaning of childhood and the way it is experienced by children (ibid). The few studies that have been published tend to be limited to ethnographic accounts of specific ethnic groups, such as Otto Raum's anthropological classic, *Chagga Childhood* (1940) (ibid). As the UNICEF researchers point out, these accounts often concentrate on issues related to initiation, 'implicitly treating

childhood as a state before adulthood that is not worthy of study in its own right' (ibid). Omari and Mbilinyi's book, *African Values and Child Rights: some cases from Tanzania* (1997) seems to be the only published work that attempts a comprehensive overview of Tanzanian childhoods, focusing largely on violations of children's rights (ibid).

Within the available literature, it is often noted that socio-cultural concepts of childhood in Africa view children and communities as having reciprocal rights and responsibilities, based on a community values system:

In an African society, a child is normally a member of a community and cannot be separated from it. Even the entitlement that a child deserves, is a community matter. [...] The reciprocal relation that exists between the child and society is an important point to understand when discussing the child's rights. Certain roles, duties and behaviour are expected of a child while the society is expected to fulfil some roles in relation to the growth and development of the child (Omari and Mbilinyi, 1997:3).

Thus, children are not seen as the exclusive property or responsibility of their biological parents, but integral to extended families and the communities in which they live (UNICEF, 1999^a:46). Furthermore, anthropologists and sociologists, such as Bekombo (1980) and Omari and Mbilinyi (1997) make a distinction between Western individualism and African collectivism with respect to human rights and argue that the western concept of human rights vested in individuals is not relevant in Africa where rights should more properly be seen as vested in communities (UNICEF, 1999^a:46). Indeed, disenchantment with the Western bias of UN human rights discourse led to the drawing up of the African

Charter on Human and People's Rights and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990) (ibid). African socio-cultural concepts of 'childhood' clearly conflict with the globalized construction of the individual child with her/his own rights as portrayed in UN children's rights discourse. According to Stephens, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) not only 'relies on a naturalized and individualised notion of the child', but also 'implies that biologically based relations between parents and children are more fundamental than other sorts of family relations', constructing as 'deviant' the many other non-nuclear family forms (Stephens, 1995:37). According to one African anthropologist:

While the reproductive function can only be carried out by two individuals, many people can play the role of parents to the same child and at the same time. The result is that the child may often be cared for by the family and by the village community; in Europe on the other hand, care is provided by the parental couple, who may receive assistance from society through the state (Bekombo, cited in UNICEF, 1999^a:115).

The western concept of the nuclear family underlying the principles of the CRC is inappropriate in many African societies, which are characterised by a rich diversity of household structures, kinship responsibilities and traditional child fosterage within the extended family (Creighton and Omari, 1995; Panter-Brick, 2000:6). In Tanzania, the nuclear family is far from dominant – according to official statistics, there are more households containing three or more related adults than households containing two related adults of the opposite sex (except in Zanzibar), and in 1993, 28 per cent of married women had co-wives, which has important implications for decision-making within the household (Omari, 1995:210). Many authors comment that in Africa, Tanzania included, it is

common for families to send one or more children to live with relatives for various reasons including schooling and coping with economic crisis, with extended family members predominately meeting the child's needs for extended periods (Koda, 2000:256; Omari, 1995; Panter-Brick, 2000). Thus, the tradition of African fosterage disputes the Western view that children need one stable set of parental figures throughout childhood (Panter-Brick, 2000:6).

African concepts of the reciprocal duties and responsibilities of children and communities are explicitly reflected in some of the provisions of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child:

Not only are children recognised as having duties to their communities and nations (Article 31: 'The Responsibilities of the Child'), they are also seen as having a vital role in preserving and maintaining African culture (Article 11:2 (d); Article 31 (d)) (UNICEF, 1999^a:46).

A Tanzanian member of the African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) involved in the drafting of the African Charter comments on the difficulty of making distinctions between individual rights and communal responsibilities:

[...] we had a problem in separating between the individual rights from the communally expected role and assignment. It was also a difficult exercise in identifying which [tasks] constitute child labour and which tasks are done as part of the training process (Omari and Mbilinyi, 1997:5).

The tasks and chores assigned to children at the household level are seen as part of the child's responsibilities and duties, and represent an integral part of the socialisation process. Gender plays a key factor in this process, with girls and boys assigned different roles and tasks from an early age at the household level, based on the traditional division of labour (Koda, 2000:250). Girls are assigned many reproductive activities within the home to assist their mother, leaving little time for recreation and leisure, considered essential for children's 'physical, mental and emotional "growth" ' (UNICEF cited in Koda, 2000:250). Koda comments that girls' recreational needs are often repressed 'to the extent that taking care of a younger sibling is even considered to be "playing" (with the child), hence further defining the context within which a girls can meet her recreational needs' (ibid, 249). Boys, on the other hand, are usually assigned outdoor agricultural tasks, such as grazing cattle, which give them more freedom, both in terms of time and space, to 'play' and explore the outside environment, as well as to study and complete their school work (Omari and Mbilinyi, 1997:14, 42). As Koda comments, girls and boys are socialised in preparation for their adult gender roles within patriarchal society, with the result that girls are disadvantaged in many ways, including in the allocation of resources (Koda, 2000:247). However, boys also receive commands from adult males, and parents tend to be ignorant of children's personal interests, ideas and aspirations, which leads to the marginalized position of children and young people in decision-making processes (ibid).

While communities and children have reciprocal rights and responsibilities, children also have a central role as the 'point of intersection, or alliance, between kinship groups, whether these are families, lineages or clans' (UNICEF, 1999^a:47). This becomes particularly important for children when one, or both, parents die, for:

Rights over children [are] vested in men by customary, religious and statutory law so that in the event of divorce, separation or husband's death, the custody of children remains with the father or his clan members (South Africa Research and Documentation Centre, cited in UNICEF, 1999^a:47).

Indeed, it has been suggested that the rights of the child in Tanzania can only be understood fully in the context of the status of the child's mother, since 'women are effectively the property of men and the children they bear also "belong" to their fathers' (ibid):

The values attached to the child are mirrored by the way the mother is valued, perceived and treated as she plays her role in the society. It is in that context that the rights of the child can be understood and evaluated concretely (Omari and Mbilinyi, 1997:19).

This contributes to the abuse of children's rights and means that children's access to parents' resources is also dependent to a great extent on the nature of the mother-father relationship and upon its legal status (Koda, 2000:255). Koda notes that in most African societies, including Tanzania, marital disruption / dissolution and polygamy have had a considerable impact on how children participate in household decision-making processes on income expenditure, revealing the need to consider children's low social status and lack of participation in decisions affecting them within the wider context of gender relations in Tanzanian society. In general, however, Koda suggests that whatever the household structure and legal status of the parents' marriage, 'children and youth are highly

marginalized when decisions are made on income allocation at household level, even where they have contributed to generating income' (ibid).

In contrast to individualistic perceptions of life, in which each human being is viewed as a singular person who progresses along an individual life path through defined chronological sequences until death, African communal values mean that people draw their identity from membership of a community, and see life as a cycle of stages rather than a succession of ages (UNICEF, 1999^a:48). People are involved in 'a cycle of being that involves not only those alive in the community today, but also the ancestors and those yet to be born' (ibid). Thus, 'in an African society, childhood is a process and cannot be fixed arbitrarily at a certain age specificity' (Omari and Mbilinyi, 1997:2). Omari and Mbilinyi note that, while initiation rites vary among different ethnic groups in Tanzania, in general:

for people to graduate from childhood to adulthood, they either undergo a circumcision ritual or get married and have children. [...] Childhood in this respect is associated with level of endurances related to circumcision for the boy and labour for the girl (ibid).

Thus, in Tanzania, chronological age has less importance and most people, especially in rural areas, do not know their exact age, which is reflected in some of the Tanzanian legislation on childhood, which refers to 'apparent age' rather than chronological age (UNICEF, 1999^a:48). Omari and Mbilinyi point out that the UN Convention's unequivocal definition of the child according to the eighteen year age limit means that implementation of the Convention is problematic in many African societies (Omari and Mbilinyi, 1997:4). This difficulty is clearly illustrated by the gender discrimination apparent in Tanzanian

marriage legislation, which fixes the legal age of marriage for girls at the age of 15 years of age, while that of boys at 18 years of age (Koda, 2000:254). The national child development policy, drawn up by the Ministry of Community Development, Women Affairs, and Children in 1996, recognises these disparities with regard to the definition of the child in Tanzanian laws, and adopts the UN definition of any person under eighteen, as does the National Constitution (Government of Tanzania, 1996:1).

Childhood in Tanzania thus represents a process of transition to adulthood marked by initiation rites, in which knowledge is passed on to young people through informal teaching. Omari and Mbilinyi highlight the importance of informal teaching in imparting moral values in traditional Tanzanian society:

Some specific adults were assigned special roles and duties especially in the initiation rites ceremonies. They were to teach the youngsters certain moral values and sense of direction related to the societal philosophy (Omari and Mbilinyi, 1997:39).

The knowledge passed on in initiation rites (often while the young people were secluded in separate groups according to gender) included not only imparting community values, but also information about sex, sexuality, parenthood, childbirth (for girls), as well as economic skills, such as agriculture (ibid, 40). UNICEF researchers, on reviewing the literature on schooling in Tanzania, note that a contradiction is produced between the informal teaching of the family and community (including knowledge passed on in initiation rites) and the formal knowledge imparted at school, leading to a gap between the generations (UNICEF,

1999^a:52). Indeed, recent studies reveal that this ‘clash of world views persists and affects not only school enrolment but also the community’ (ibid, 53):

School is seen as an alien institution outside the jurisdiction of the community although their children go to learn there. A system of control does exist, through the school committees, but the community has not been able to use this system in the way they wish (Mabala and Kamazima, cited in UNICEF, 1999^a:53).

According to UNICEF, this means that ‘the very nature of schooling and the way it is perceived by the community, produces a situation in which the children are vulnerable’ (ibid). The role of parents in imparting informal teaching to their children is undermined by formal education, leading to a loss of parental authority: ‘[Parents’] capacity to protect children is significantly diminished in their own eyes as well as in those of the children for whom they are responsible’ (ibid).

Socio-cultural constructs of childhood in Tanzania thus conflict in many ways with the hegemonic concept of childhood which underlies much development and human rights discourse, discussed in Chapter 1. At the same time, traditional adult-child relations in Tanzania subordinate children and marginalise them from decision-making processes, creating a contradictory situation. These tensions intersect with economic pressures to further constrain the position of children and young people in contemporary Tanzania.

Socio-economic context in Tanzania

The socio-economic and political context within which children's lives are situated has a considerable impact on family life in Tanzania. The economic situation and levels of national poverty in contemporary Tanzania strain the relationships between household members, and in particular, the generational contracts between adult and children have increasingly come under pressure. The World Bank estimates that 43 per cent of the rural population and 19 per cent of the urban population live below the poverty line (Bendera, 1999: 118). The global economic recession and subsequent SAPs has been felt by both the agricultural and urban sectors, each of which is increasingly unable to provide a livelihood for most households (Koda, 1995). Koda suggests that this has led to 'a great exodus of human labour from the agricultural to, predominantly, the service sector', with young girls and boys, in particular, migrating to urban areas in search of wage labour (ibid, 141).

The resources available to Tanzanian children, both materially and in terms of human care, are stretched very thin. It has been consistently demonstrated that the cost of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank's Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) is disproportionately borne by the poor, women and children (Taylor and Mackenzie, 1992). Even before structural adjustment, there were few, generally lower paid, employment possibilities open to women. One of the features of structural adjustment is to reduce the size of the public sector, which sheds lower-paid, less permanent jobs first, where more women are clustered. Family livelihoods are therefore increasingly dependent on casual income-generating opportunities in the informal sector.

Children are also increasingly engaging in income-generation activities in both rural and urban areas, and especially in the informal sector. They bring in cash to meet the needs of their families and themselves. Children's own needs include school uniforms, pens, exercise books, school fees and even food and clothing (Koda, 2000). A recent study in Bagamoyo revealed that 55 per cent of boys and 37.5 per cent of girls were contributing to schooling costs through casual work (Bendera, 1999:124). Children are used on both a part-time and full-time basis as casual farm workers, hawkers of food stuffs, clothing, and miscellaneous items, housegirls, assistants in home beer brewing, and also in manufacturing and the mining industry, while the feminisation of child labour is mostly found in domestic labour and commercial sexual exploitation (Koda, 2000). Koda concludes that, in contemporary Tanzania:

Depending on the degree of poverty, the educational level of parents and the general policy environment, most children are forced to sacrifice much of their recreational, schooling and social needs in order to meet the broader needs of the family unit (domestic chores, child care, productive work etc.) (ibid, 250).

The introduction of cost-sharing measures has had a devastating effect on social services in Tanzania. Cost-sharing in the education sector has resulted in sharply declining primary school enrolment rates, accompanied by high drop-out rates and very low performance, particularly of girls, because of the inability of parents and guardians to pay school expenses, combined with their need for children's labour at home (Bendera, 1999; Kuleana, 1999). Access to medical care is also now reduced. Throughout the economic crisis in the 1980s, the Tanzanian public health service became conspicuously under-funded in absolute

terms, spending about US\$ 3.50 per capita per annum, well below what is normally acceptable (Koda, 1995:142). This has led to a deterioration in staffing, infrastructure and availability of drugs and equipment in basic health care, reflected in increased mortality rates for children under five, high maternal mortality rates and AIDS deaths (ibid; Bendera, 1999:118).

The current HIV/ AIDS epidemic is compounding many of the economic pressures facing Tanzania. There are an estimated one million AIDS cases and 940,000 people have already died (Appleton, 2000:20). According to the Tanzanian Demographic and Health Survey in 1996, 65 per cent of the total population was under 25 years of age, with 47 per cent under 15 years of age, which places an enormous burden on the economically active working population, now being gradually diminished by illness and death due to AIDS (UNICEF, 1999^a:50). The majority of the estimated three million orphans (due to all causes) (Grainger et al., 2001) are being cared for by extended family members, however, many guardians are either too old or too young to meet the orphaned children's material and emotional needs. Many older children leave their adoptive homes and make their way in the informal sector on the streets (Karlenza, 1998:5).

The 'African Contexts of Children's Rights Seminar' held in Harare in 1998, involving African scholars from Zimbabwe, Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania, Zambia, Congo, Cameroon, Ethiopia, South Africa and Nigeria, as well as representatives from international development agencies such as UNICEF concerned with children, explicitly acknowledged the lack of recognition of children's economic contributions to both national and household economies:

A discussion of the economic contexts of childhood in Africa cannot ignore the contributions made by children to both national and household economies through the work they perform. Like the domestic work of women, the considerable economic contribution of children remains unvalorised and, unlike the case of women, is seldom even acknowledged. There is so little information available that the national economic value of children remains invisible, to the extent that children are often accounted as a net cost to national education, health and welfare budgets. This contributes to the low status of children in societies in general, and thus acts as a barrier to the achievement of their rights (Tine and Ennew, 1998).

The comparisons drawn between the situation of children and that of women reveal that whilst national governments and international development agencies are now at least acknowledging women's economic contribution, children's economic role in development is still ignored, leading to their low social status and marginalisation.

In her article, *Democratisation of social relations at the household level: The participation of children and youth in Tanzania*, Koda links the marginalisation of children and youth in development policies and decision-making processes to undemocratic social relations at the household level, arguing that undemocratically designed development policies open up a space for violence and breach of peace and security both at household and community levels (Koda, 2000:262). The social impacts of the imposition of the 1980s Structural Adjustment Policies in Tanzania illustrates this tendency:

Studies of the impact of the 1980s SAPs, for instance, report that top-down policies have led to poor policy implementation and to increased violence at household level

in the form of wife-beating, incest, child abuse and other forms of domestic violence and social insecurity (ibid).

Koda suggests that children and youth are responding to increasingly undemocratic household relations by refusing to succumb to patriarchal rule, expressed in different forms, including passive resistance, running away from home (as seen in the increase in the number of street children), engaging in income generation activities of their own choosing, alcoholism, drug abuse and even suicide (ibid).

This discussion of the socio-cultural construction of 'childhood' in Tanzania and the socio-economic conditions within which Tanzanian children's lives are situated has highlighted the fact that the resources available to children and young people in Tanzania today, both materially, and in terms of human care and support, are severely constrained. Children and young people are highly marginalised in decision-making processes at the household level, despite their reproductive and productive roles in the household economy, all of which contribute to the phenomenon of street children in Tanzania. The next section examines the concept of 'street children' within the discourse of national social policy, academia, and non-governmental organisations working with children.

Street children in Tanzania

The first national workshop focusing on street children in Tanzania took place in Dar es Salaam in 1989, due to growing concern about the number of unaccompanied children visible on the streets of Dar es Salaam (Rwegarulira, 1989). In 1991, the Social Welfare Department estimated that there were between 250-350 street children in Tanzania, but by

1995, the figure had risen to 2000 (Mulders, 1995), and a six-fold increase was expected within four years (German Agency for Technical Co-operation, 1996). Tanzanian Government reports identify several causes for the rapid increase in numbers of street youth throughout the 1980s, including the sudden rise in the cost of living as a result of the imposition of IMF conditions, leading to a tremendous wave of rural-urban migration, particularly among the youth (Government of Tanzania, 1990^a); unchecked poverty in both rural and urban areas, forcing young people to work to supplement the family income; the wearing down of traditional family values, leading to broken homes and single parenthood; industrialisation and the rural to urban influx resulting in a growth of urban centres without a corresponding growth of services; inappropriate education which is not orientated towards meeting people's basic needs; and child abuse (ibid). The national child development policy (1996) identifies a number of problems facing children in urban areas:

In urban areas where there is overcrowding and a diversity of traditions and customs, children are faced by problems of early employment, lack of moral direction, and lack of communal responsibility for their upbringing, living on the streets, temptations to participate in illegal businesses, abuse and involvement in drug abuse, poor living conditions, as well as problems of travelling to and from school (Government of Tanzania, 1996:4).

The emergence of the phenomenon of street children is linked here to the breakdown of traditional cultural values and communal responsibility for children's upbringing, as well as poverty.

The literature on street children in Tanzania can be divided into two types of studies – those that concentrate on the characteristics of children and those that focus on the NGOs. The general findings of the various studies of children in the early 1990s are difficult to reconcile because of the different definitions used (UNICEF, 1999^a: 270). More recent studies such as Rajani and Kudrati's research, *Street Children of Mwanza: a situation analysis*, (1994) and Save the Children Fund's participatory research study, *Poor Urban Children at Risk in Dar es Salaam* (1997^a) help to deconstruct some of the common assumptions and stereotypes of street children based on notions of the child as a 'helpless victim' or 'deviant youth', as discussed in Chapter 1. Most of the literature on street children in Tanzania focuses to a great extent on the institutions established to provide for their needs. Early studies called for projects which aimed at the 'resettlement' and 'rehabilitation' of street children, backed by financial and other support from non-governmental organisations, with the Social Welfare Department acting in an advisory and regulatory role, developing criteria for evaluating projects, and a policy with regard to the prevention, reintegration and support activities to street children (Mulders, 1995). Of the early studies, Mwangosi's paper presented to the 1992 ILO National Seminar on Child Labour in Tanzania provides the most comprehensive overview of recommendations for social policy, identifying short and long term approaches and strategies for the rehabilitation and resettlement of street children (Mwangosi, 1992).

Mulders' situational analysis of street children and street children's projects in Dar es Salaam notes that by 1995, there were two projects for street children in Morogoro, two in Dodoma, three in Arusha, one in Mwanza, one in Moshi, one in Kagera, one in Singida, one in Mbeya, and twelve projects for street children in Dar es Salaam (Mulders, 1995). Most projects fulfil the children's basic needs (food, clothing, shelter) and some provide

vocational skills training (ibid). The report suggests that these projects face several problems: the NGOs involved are vulnerable and tend to lack sustainability; solving the daily and financial problems of the projects is very time consuming, with the result that long term strategies receive too little attention and are not developed; there is little or no sharing of experiences or institutional learning, despite the establishment of a network of NGOs working with street children in 1993 (ibid). Indeed the field tends to be characterised by extremes of competition (UNICEF, 1999^a:271). The result is that children can gain little from activities established for their benefit, which is clearly expressed by the children ‘shopping’ between projects in search of the best services or the services they want at a particular moment in time (ibid; Mulders, 1995). UNICEF notes that ‘in addition to the lack of co-ordination, not to say competition, between NGOs themselves, as well as between NGOs and both local and national government, some NGOs are reported to be “highly secretive” about their activities’ (UNICEF, 1999^a:271). A UNICEF study conducted in 2000 identified 36 street children NGOs and projects working in ten regions of Tanzania (Lugalla and Barongo, 2000). The study drew many of the same conclusions as earlier reports – that is, the NGOs provided a range of remedial services, rather than long term solutions, were characterised by a lack of sustainability, and a lack of co-ordination and collaboration between NGOs, leading to duplication of activities, despite the scarcity of resources (ibid).

Save the Children Fund (SCF)’s study, *Poor Urban Children at Risk in Dar es Salaam* documents the daily challenges faced by children in Dar es Salaam, from poor access to public services, constant police harassment, violence on the streets and at home, lack of education and awareness about their rights (SCF, 1997:44). The study also reveals, however, that children are not helpless victims, but rather run their own lives with little or

no adult support, and some even support their families (ibid). The study concludes that setting up centres and working with visible street children is only part of the solution, and more effort should be concentrated on prevention work with children who are vulnerable within poor urban communities (ibid). It also highlights the fact that the failure of development interventions is largely due to the fact that they do not listen to children or take account of their experiences, concluding, 'We have to strive to work with children as partners in development, not victims of circumstance or as the helpless poor' (ibid, 45). Participatory research conducted with street children in Mwanza also helps to deconstruct the stereotypes and assumptions made about them, highlighting aspects of their situation which are a cause for major concern, enabling the children's voices to be heard: shelter; health; sexual life; education; work; discrimination; and emotional needs (Rajani and Kudrati, 1994).

Many studies and reports express concern about the situation of street girls, who represent an estimated 20-30 per cent of the total numbers of 'street youth', but who are considered to be at more risk than boys, mainly because prostitution seems to be the only means of income for street girls (Yamamoto, 1996). They face sexual exploitation, harassment and sexual violence, and the consequent high risk of infection from sexually transmitted diseases and HIV in particular (Africa Education Fund International, 1998; Salvation Army Tanzania, 1997; Omari and Mwakaheya, 1997; Odhiombo, 2000). Other problems identified by street girls include stealing, unwanted pregnancies and drug addiction (Yamamoto, 1996:6). Factors leading girls and women to engage in prostitution are identified as lack of other employment opportunities when women migrate to urban areas and exploitation and/ or sexual abuse of 'house-girls' [child domestic workers] (Africa Education Fund International, 1998:6). Reasons cited for the smaller proportion of street

girls include the fact that traditional cultural values in Tanzania restrict girls' freedom of movement compared to boys, thus girls are discouraged from migrating to urban areas; girls who are found on the streets are likely to be recruited into wealthier households as domestic servants; and female children represent a source of revenue for the family in the form of the bride price when they get married, leading to forced early marriages (Mwakyanjala, 1996:36). This relates to the idea discussed in Chapter 1 that girls' presence on the street subverts cultural norms and gender relations more than boys' (see p.20). Traditional gender roles and the division of labour in Tanzania associate girls with reproductive duties within the home, while boys have more freedom to explore public space. Furthermore, UNICEF researchers noted that other than the one centre dealing specifically with child commercial sex workers in Dar es Salaam, street children projects are working almost exclusively with boys (UNICEF, 1999^a:258). Project directors explained their concerns about the difficulties involved in accommodating girls, associated with the general attitude that girls on the street are involved in prostitution and are likely to become pregnant (ibid; Lugalla and Barongo, 2000).

UNICEF's wide ranging study on Children in Need of Special Protection Measures in Tanzania (1999^a) includes chapters on children in institutions, orphans, abused and neglected children, early marriage and pregnancy, child domestic workers, child commercial sex workers, children with disabilities, as well as children living on the street, although many of these categories overlap and street children may be included in several of the other categories. The chapter on children living on the street concentrates on the institutional care provided for children living in the streets, with particular reference to the use of corporal punishment and to children's views of the projects and programmes designed to help them (ibid). UNICEF suggests that running away from home to become a

street child can be a strategy for obtaining educational opportunities, quite apart from access to other basic needs, such as food and shelter (ibid, 272). Children may see that their families cannot afford to pay for schooling, but that street children's projects offer educational opportunities (ibid). This is reflected in children's wide expectations from institutions:

They expect to be protected and get education; learn from their caretakers about good behaviour and attitudes; have a normal life after they leave the institution through education and training that will give them a good job. They often expressed to the researchers their frustration that these expectations are slow to be realised. Above all they complained that there was little preparation for life once they became too old for the institutions. (ibid, 273)

Whilst children's needs are generally fulfilled in these institutions, children said that shortages of food, clothing, sleeping facilities, or school materials for those attending school (due to a lack of funds), and punishment in projects are the major factors leading them to return to the street whether temporarily or permanently (ibid). One of the overriding messages arising from the UNICEF study concerned the participation of children in decision-making processes: 'Children want to be listened to and to give their opinions on issues relating to them' (ibid). This suggests that street children's projects in Tanzania are still far from achieving the goal of Hart's top rung in the ladder of child participation: child initiated shared decisions with adults (Hart, cited in Ennew, 1994). Having examined the phenomenon of street children in the discourse of national social policy, academia, and NGO reports, the final section provides an overview of the geographical and organisational setting for this study.

Background to the study

This study is based on fieldwork conducted mainly with children and project workers at Urafiki Centre for Street Children¹ (UCSC), in Arusha, northern Tanzania. According to the Arusha Municipal Council, it is estimated that the Arusha municipality has a total population of 270,466 people, of whom 39 per cent are children up to the age of 14, and 47 per cent of the population is female (Kadonya et al., 2002:13). Arusha has a high annual population growth rate, accelerated by rural-urban migration: 6 per cent, compared to the national rate of 2.8 per cent (ibid). There is a high population influx to Arusha from neighbouring regions, mainly Kilimanjaro, Tanga, and Singida, due to the development of Arusha in recent years as a centre for tourism, as an industrial town, and as the main market for the 'Tanzanite' mineral from Mererani (ibid). Other pull factors include the increased commercial and political activities taking place in Arusha as a result of the recent revival of the East African Community (Rwegoshora, 2002).

The main ethnic groups are Waarusha, which constitute about 45 per cent of the population, followed by Chagga, comprising about 30 per cent of the population (Kadonya et al., 2002). Other minority groups include Asians, Pare, and small tribes from neighbouring regions, such as Singida, Tanga, Mara, Morogoro, Kilimanjaro and Dodoma (ibid). According to Rwegoshora, children's presence on the streets of Arusha has been noted by the Municipal Council since the early 1990s, and at present the population of street children in the municipality is estimated to range from 400 to 500, although it is very difficult to give an

¹ Urafiki Centre for Street Children (UCSC), the street children project I worked with for twelve months (1999-2000) in Arusha, northern Tanzania, upon which my fieldwork is based. See chapters 3-8 for more information about the project. In the interests of confidentiality, the name of the organisation, project workers, and all the children I met, have been changed.

accurate figure due to children's mobility (Rwegoshora, 2002:4). Rwegoshora also suggests that the number of street children is expected to rise at a much faster rate, due to increasing levels of poverty in Arusha and neighbouring regions (ibid).

Like many of the other street children projects in Tanzania, UCSC is a small, local non-profit making, non-governmental organisation. The organisation's annual report (2000) identifies the project goal as: 'to offer intensive behaviour rehabilitation programmes to the willing street children until they become ordinary normal children' (UCSC, 2000). The language used in this statement shows the influence and acceptance within social work, social welfare and development discourse of the stereotype of street children either as 'victims' who need to be saved from the moral decay of the 'street', or as 'deviants' whose behaviour must be corrected in the interests of society (as discussed on pp.11-14, Chapter 1). The project objectives illustrate the emphasis on remedial services to individual children to 'rehabilitate' them into society:

1. To find an alternative to lives on the street for children either by re-integrating them with their family or by accommodating them in a temporary residential centre when this is an appropriate option.
2. To provide for the children's basic needs (medical care, education, food, clothing, counselling, especially with the spread of HIV/AIDS)
3. To rehabilitate street children into community life as responsible individuals.
4. To make the children self-reliant and self-supporting through education and skills training. (UCSC, 2000)

The first two objectives thus seem to be based on notions of street children as ‘victims’ who are engaged in a ‘deviant’ lifestyle on the street, and rely on the dependency concept of childhood, in which the child’s needs should be met within the family environment or failing that, a temporary residential centre. This concept of street children as ‘victims’ effectively deprives them of agency. The third and fourth objectives, however, seem to view the street children as young people, who need to learn moral values to correct ‘deviant’ behaviour, and who need to be equipped with education and skills training, in order for them to lead independent lives within the community. This notion of street children therefore seems to contradict the first to some extent, since it recognises the agency of children in leading independent lives. Many questions are raised as to whether UCSC staff view street children as ‘victims’ or ‘deviants’, or recognise their resiliency and agency, whether the street lifestyle is seen as ‘deviant’ or whether individuals themselves are seen as ‘morally corrupt’. These questions will be examined in detail in chapters 4-8.

The objectives correspond to the programme offered to children at the UCSC project, in which the first point of contact is the shelter in town. Members of staff engage in street outreach work, and gradually recruit an in-take of up to 30 street children (mainly boys) to stay at the shelter, where their basic needs are met (food, shelter, clothing, washing facilities, health care) and they engage in informal educational activities, such as health education lessons, maths, reading and writing classes, gardening, dance, sports and drawing. After a period of four to six months at the shelter, during which time the child has shown that s/he wishes to continue his/her education and has abandoned ‘deviant’ street behaviour such as smoking marijuana, stealing etc., and possibly after a home visit to the child’s family (usually if the child’s home is not far away), the child is moved to the residential centre outside of town (which accommodates up to 60 children), where s/he is

enrolled in the local primary school (UCSC, 2000). Home visits may be carried out once the child is settled at the centre, and parents, relatives and the children are encouraged to maintain their familial ties whilst the child lives at the centre. While at the residential centre, children gain vocational skills such as cultivating vegetables, rearing goats and cows, and carpentry, as well as engaging in other extra-curricular activities, such as football, music, art, attending church etc., and sharing in the day-to-day routine of the centre.

Earlier project reports identify two further objectives which are not included in the 2000 annual report: to advocate for children's rights (girls and boys) in the community in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and to create opportunities for the voice of street children to be heard in local communities and nationally. It appears that the project recognises that the daily administration of project activities leaves little time or funds for national advocacy work on the scale that Kuleana Centre for Children's Rights in Mwanza has achieved, successfully campaigning and lobbying the government on corporal punishment in schools and raising public awareness about children's rights through posters and other publicity. The UCSC 2000 annual report does however claim to have raised awareness about the organisation among key stakeholders – private and government hospitals, social welfare department, private practitioners and law enforcers within the local community, as well as raising awareness about the harm caused by child beating within families through home visits (UCSC, 2000).

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the Tanzanian concept of 'childhood', and outlined the many tensions with the dominant Western concept of childhood, which underlies the discourse of children's rights, international development, and national social policy. While the negative features of Western concepts of 'childhood' have been demonstrated, traditional concepts of childhood in Tanzania subordinate children within the family and marginalise them from decision-making processes, creating a paradox between concepts of 'childhood'. As well as finding themselves caught between differing world views – that of traditional cultural values and 'modern' Western individualism (both of which effectively disempower and marginalise children and young people), children in Tanzania today are also severely constrained by the socio-economic context and levels of national poverty, which impacts negatively on family life. The discussion suggested that running away to the street represents one of several survival strategies adopted by children and young people in response to their marginalised socio-economic position and low status within society.

The discourse of national social policy, academia and NGOs working with street children shows an overwhelming emphasis on the host of remedial services provided by street children projects, mainly in Dar es Salaam, aimed at the 'rehabilitation and resettlement' of street children (the vast majority of which cater almost exclusively for boys). Projects (although there are some exceptions) thus seem to be motivated more by adults' concerns that street children are 'victims' engaged in a 'deviant' lifestyle, or 'deviants', 'outside childhood', whose behaviour must be corrected for the security of society, rather than designed according to the interests, needs and opinions expressed by the children themselves. Participatory research conducted by Rajani and Kudrati (1994), Save the

Children Fund (1997), and UNICEF (1999) has helped to deconstruct some of the stereotypes and assumptions about street children and calls for adults to listen to children's voices and to encourage children's participation in planning and evaluating projects and programmes affecting them. The project I worked for in Arusha, northern Tanzania is typical of many of the remedial street children projects in Tanzania, aiming to rehabilitate the children through provision of basic services, education, counselling, skills training and family reintegration. The next chapter focuses on the research methodology employed for the fieldwork I conducted with street children in Tanzania (2000-2002), exploring feminist approaches to ethnography, issues related to research with children, and my reflexive analysis of the research process.

Chapter 3



Photograph 1: Shows myself visiting one of the former street boys, aged 14, at his home as part of the research (Arusha, 2002).

Power, Reflexivity and Participation: the Research Process

Chapter 3

Power, reflexivity and participation: the research process

Introduction

Having discussed the issues surrounding concepts of childhood, street children and children in Tanzania in the first two chapters, this chapter turns to the research methodology employed in this study. Feminist research and the tools of gender analysis have drawn attention to the way women's voices have been silenced in traditional approaches to social research, by positioning women as objects rather than subjects of research. The shift towards recognising the agency of marginalised groups has been mirrored in the emerging paradigm of the social construction of childhood (James et al., 1998). This approach involves repositioning children as subjects, rather than objects of research (Christensen and James, 2000). Indeed, many of the ethical concerns raised by feminist research, surrounding issues of power, are equally, if not more salient in research conducted with children. In this chapter, I explore key ethical issues raised in feminist research methodologies, cross-cultural research, and ethnographic research with children. Recognising the importance of reflexivity and personal experience in the research process, I then discuss the starting point for the research and analyse my own position as an active participant and the field relations I entered into while working with UCSC¹ street children project in Tanzania (1999-2000), supplemented by an additional period of fieldwork in 2002. Finally, I offer a reflexive account of implementing the child-centred participatory research methodology adopted in this study.

¹ Urafiki Centre for Street Children (UCSC), the street children NGO I worked with for twelve months in Arusha, northern Tanzania, upon which most of my fieldwork is based. In the interests of confidentiality, the name of the organisation, project workers, and all the young people I met, have been changed.

Feminist Research Methodologies

Feminist social researchers since the 1970s have been largely credited with debunking 'the myth of value-free scientific inquiry', calling instead for researchers to 'acknowledge their interests and sympathies' (Ellis et al., 1997:123). Feminists developed feminist methodologies largely in response to the androcentric methods traditionally employed in social research (Stanley, 1990; Reinharz, 1992). The central tenets of feminist research have been identified as the high level of personal involvement of the researcher in the research process; the involvement of the people being studied; striving to recognise diversity; and a commitment to social change (ibid).

Feminist researchers generally consider personal experiences to be a valuable asset for feminist research, and many describe how their projects stem from, and are part of, their own lives (ibid: 258). Similarly, Reinharz suggests that a feminist approach demands the establishment of rapport with the people involved in the study, recognising the researcher's participants as human beings, and therefore treating them in a non-exploitative way (ibid: 265). The possibility of this has, however, been questioned in recent years by ethnographers, sociologists and development practitioners, who have suggested that the researcher's relationships with his/her participants necessarily involve some degree of cultivation, exploitation and manipulation (Fielding, 1993:158; Cooke and Kothari, 2001). Reinharz comments that the feminist commitment to social change makes much feminist research practical as well as scholarly, often offering specific policy recommendations (Reinharz, 1992:252). The feminist approach to research outlined above guides the research process carried out in this study. I will now draw parallels with the ethical issues raised in cross-cultural research, and the role of participatory research in addressing some of these ethical concerns.

Ethical issues in cross-cultural research

Feminist debates over power relations between researcher and the researched, which traditionally positioned women as 'other' and denied them agency, have been paralleled in cross-cultural research. Sheyvens and Leslie note that in recent years a crisis of legitimacy has affected both male and female Western researchers who have been forced to reconsider their role in the research process in Third World contexts (Sheyvens et al., 2000:121). Unease over the dominance of Westerners as researchers of 'other' people's cultures, have emerged, leading researchers to question whether we can 'incorporate the voices of "others"' without colonizing them in a manner that reinforces patterns of domination' (England, cited in Scheyvens et al., 2000:120). One response to this crisis of legitimacy has been for Western researchers to completely abandon development research. Another response, taken by some researchers, has been to romanticise or privilege Third World knowledge. However, this response does not solve the ethical problems of cross-cultural research because it allows the Western researcher to ignore their own responsibilities (ibid: 121). Furthermore, both of these responses to the crisis of legitimacy facing Western researchers fail to consider the potential value of cross-cultural and cross-gendered research (ibid:122). Kobayashi argues that:

...the question of 'who speaks for whom?' cannot be answered upon the slippery slope of what personal attributes – what color, what gender, what sexuality – legitimise our existence, but on the basis of our history of involvement, and on the basis of understanding how difference is constructed and used as a political tool (Kobayashi, cited in Scheyvens et al., 2000:126).

Thus, as Sheyvens and Leslie comment, issues such as how well informed, how politically aware and how sensitive the researcher is to the topic in question and to the local context, would seem 'a more pertinent means of judging suitability to conduct research with women of the Third World than an essentialising characteristic, such as sex or nationality' (ibid). Reinharz suggests that a lack of cross-cultural research impedes our understanding of complex development issues, and advocates feminist scholars engage in research which avoids ethnocentrism and cultural relativism and builds cross-cultural solidarity (or attempts to do so) (Reinharz, 1992).

Participatory methodologies are seen to offer a way of addressing some of the ethical concerns over unequal power relations raised in both feminist and cross-cultural research. Some researchers suggest that participation in the research process can actually be an empowering experience for research participants, especially those who face significant social disadvantage (Scheyvens et al., 2000:127). Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) and participatory poverty assessment (PPA) approaches used within the development field are considered to offer 'new ways in which those who are poor and marginalised can present their realities to those in power and be believed, influence policy, and make a difference' (Chambers, 1998: xvii). Similarly, Opie suggests that feminist research can empower through seeking the opinions of the socially marginalised, because this assumes they can contribute to the description and analysis of a social issue (Opie, cited in Scheyvens et al., 2000:127). As Pratt and Loizos comment,

Sensitive research can help give the voiceless a voice. Participatory research can sometimes lead to actions which break with tradition, and in doing so it may

be empowering for groups involved (Pratt and Loizos, cited in Leslie et al., 2000:127).

The 'empowering' nature of participatory research has however been debated and critiqued in recent years in terms of masking continuing inequalities and power relations between researcher and participants (Cooke and Kothari, 2001). Kothari argues that:

PRA and the like are often carried out to give the appearance of participatory development but that the 'local knowledge' shared in the process invariably justifies or legitimizes the pre-determined project agenda rather than reshaping or influencing the project objectives or priorities (Kothari, 2001:149).

Using Goffman's (1959) metaphor of social interaction as a 'performance', however, Kothari suggests that there is also a possibility of resistance or subversion through people's performances in participatory exercises (ibid):

In the rituals of participatory research, participants are not always necessarily recipients/ victims of methodology but can also have power to carve out spaces of control with respect to the (re)presentation of their day-to-day lives. [...]

There is a general failing among development practitioners to recognise or acknowledge the capacity of individuals and groups to resist inclusion, resist projections about their lives, retain information, knowledge and values, and act out a performance and in so doing present themselves in a variety of ways.

Subversive participants can also choose to opt out of the participatory process completely, although they are often characterised as un-co-operative or even social deviants. [...] In this sense, exclusion can be empowering and even

necessary in order to challenge existing structures of domination and control (ibid: 151).

This highlights the need to recognise people's agency and be reflexive about the power dynamics of the participants-researcher relationship. It also calls for researchers to be sensitive to the different narratives and stories different people choose to tell the researcher, recognising that all are equally valid. Following this initial discussion of ethical concerns surrounding power in feminist, cross-cultural and participatory research, I will now relate these debates to ethnographic research with children, and explore how feminist approaches to ethnography can encourage children to participate in the research process.

Ethnographic research with children

The empirical study of children in Europe and North America over the last 150 years has largely been regarded as the domain of psychology, which positioned children as passive objects of study to be 'scrutinized, tested and measured' (Alldred, 1998:150). As Quortrup comments, this constructs children as more like 'human becomings' than human beings (Quortrup, 1987 cited in Alldred, 1998:150). In contrast, ethnography has established a place in the social sciences and humanities as an approach which attempts to place subjects' own perspectives centrally (ibid). According to Willis:

The role of ethnography is to show the cultural viewpoint of the oppressed, their 'hidden' knowledges and resistances as well as the basis on which their entrapping 'decisions' are taken in some sense of liberty, but which nevertheless help to produce 'structure'. (Willis, cited in Skeggs, 1994:74)

Ethnography, then, represents what bell hooks calls a ‘view from below’ (bell hooks, cited in Skeggs, 1994:74). Many social constructionist theorists of childhood have thus acknowledged that ethnography is the most effective methodology to be employed in the study of childhood (Jenks, 2000; James and Prout, 1997), since:

it allows children to have a direct voice and participate in the production of sociological data and for them to be seen as active in the construction and determination of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and of the societies in which they live (James, 1993:85).

Indeed, Alldred notes that as the children’s rights movement has been developing in the UK, ethnographic research has ‘given voice’ to children, ‘enabling them to begin to play a more direct part in the production of sociological knowledge than the adult/researcher-determined categories of survey or experimental methods’ (Alldred, 1998:150). The most recent approach to research with children embraces ethnography and participatory research methodologies, suggesting that an adult/child distinction should not be taken for granted (Christensen and James, 2000:2). However, as in all research, it is important that the particular methods chosen for a piece of research are appropriate for the people involved in the study, its social and cultural context and the kinds of research questions posed (ibid).

The importance of reflexivity on the part of the researcher has long been recognised within ethnographic research, since the main ‘research instrument’ in ethnographic research is the researcher, through whom all interactions with members of the group, observations, interpretations and analysis of data are filtered (Francis, 1997:359).

Ethnographic research thus calls for researchers to clearly situate their identity and the roles adopted in field relations, and the influence of this on interactions with participants. As Alldred sums up, reflexivity involves being explicit about the operation of power within actual processes of researching and representing people (Alldred, 1998:162). According to feminist methodologies, the researcher is seen as a, ‘“situated actor”’ (that is, an active participant in the process of meaning creation)’ (Hertz, 1997:viii). Since researchers are acknowledged as active participants in the research process, Hertz comments that, ‘it is essential to understand the researcher’s location of self (for example, within power hierarchies and within a constellation of gender, race, class and citizenship)’ (ibid):

Through personal accounting, researchers must become more aware of how their own positions and interests are imposed at all stages of the research process – from the questions they ask to those they ignore, from who they study to who they ignore, from problem formation to analysis, representation and writing, in order to produce less distorted accounts of the social world (ibid).

Furthermore, feminists recognise that personal, social and emotional factors affect each stage of the fieldwork process and these should be acknowledged in ethnographic works (Holmes, 1998:4). Feminists have disputed the claim that ethnographers should, and indeed can, remain detached from their subjects in the field (ibid: 80). Holmes notes that fieldworkers who conduct research with children (whether privileged or disadvantaged) may find it difficult to take a detached stance during (and sometimes after) the fieldwork period, although this admission rarely finds its way into the final ethnographic text (ibid). She outlines several levels on which fieldworkers can assist the children they study, echoing the feminist commitment to social change:

Firstly, the personal level that includes how the fieldworker might offer reciprocity to the children he or she studies. Such acts may include bringing food, clothing or other necessities to them. The next level includes enlisting the help of the community and other various institutions. Lastly there is policy writing – a political level of involvement that is concerned with the children’s welfare. (ibid: 81)

Christensen and James note that reflexivity is not only common to the discourse and practice of researchers, it is also the stance adopted by children who participate in research (Christensen and James, 2000:5). A dual process of reflexivity takes place, as children who participate in the research process also adopt a reflexive stance, in the ways they accept the researcher as a particular kind of presence in their everyday lives (ibid). Forming relationships in which children feel they want to participate throughout the research process is particularly important, ‘in order to keep up a continuing dialogue over which children, as well as researchers, feel they have control’ (ibid). It is recognised that children occupy a subordinate and marginal position in relation to adults, in terms of discourses of childhood, power relations, organisational structures and social inequalities, and therefore researchers, both ethically and practically, have a responsibility to take this into account during the research process (ibid: 6). Alderson proposes that a key question in research about children is: ‘how can adults can get beyond the power constraints and expose the intricacies of power in relations between adults and children?’ (Alderson, 2000:254). Christensen and James conclude:

Only through listening and hearing what children say and paying attention to the ways in which they communicate with us will progress be made towards

conducting research with, rather than simply on, children (Christensen and James, 2000:7).

The ethical and methodological issues raised in this discussion, concerning power relations between the researcher and researched, inform the research methodology employed in this study. As part of the feminist approach adopted in this study, I begin by analysing how my own personal experience working at the street children project in Arusha, northern Tanzania led to the initial idea to conduct fieldwork research with the young people.

Personal experience as starting point for the research

In feminist research, Reinharz notes, the connection between the research project and the researcher's self frequently takes the form of 'starting with one's own experience', particularly when the study concerns a disturbing experience (Reinharz, 1992:159). She suggests that personal experience can form the very starting point of a study, the material from which the researcher develops questions, as well as providing contact with potential participants (ibid: 160). Following this feminist approach, I would like to briefly discuss a gender specific incident that took place after I had been at the centre for a few months, since it was traumatic for me, changed my working relations with members of staff, and became the focal starting point for my research.

I began my volunteer placement with UCSC¹ in August 1999 as a project worker at the shelter for street children in the town centre. Initially, I concentrated on assisting with writing reports, newspaper articles, designing a brochure about the organisation in English and spending time with the children. Over the first few months, I found it

difficult working in an environment in which some project workers did not respect the children and occasionally resorted to corporal punishment. I helped the director to draw up a staff code of conduct, according to the main principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. As my knowledge of Swahili increased, I was able to participate more in staff meetings and in the day-to-day social work with the children.

After a few months at the centre, it was decided in a staff meeting that I should take over counselling the only girl, Regina² (11 years old) at the centre, who staff suspected was involved in a sexually exploitative relationship with one of the older youths, Bramani¹ (a former street boy – 19 years old) who worked as a cook at the centre. It was also thought that she was sexually abusing the younger boys at the centre. Other members of staff had tried talking to her, but had not got very far. I asked to work with another colleague, the only other female member of staff, believing that Regina might feel more comfortable talking to two women who were sympathetic to her. I worked with my colleague, translating what I wanted to say into Swahili, trying to put Regina at ease, and show her we were ready to listen when she felt she wanted to share her experiences with us. She told us that her father and older brother had died when she was young and her mother had no time to look after her, scraping a living by selling maize in town. We asked her to draw a picture of life on the streets, and she wrote on the paper ‘being beaten, being raped’ and hesitated before drawing herself and another figure. She told us that she had been raped by three of the boys outside the centre on separate occasions (several months before the centre became a shelter with overnight accommodation). I was shocked, especially as I knew the boys. The boys had been made to apologise to her and been beaten by a member of staff as punishment.

² In the interests of confidentiality, the name of the organisation and all the names of the children and young people involved in this study have been changed.

The situation between Regina and Bramani at the centre seemed to be escalating and male members of staff did not seem to be taking Regina's case very seriously, blaming her for leading Bramani on since she was a 'prostitute', despite her claims that he was beating her. I was distressed by male project workers' lack of concern and inadvertently found myself in the role of 'whistleblower' by seeking help from a health professional, which brought me under heavy criticism from my superiors who wanted the case hushed up. In an internal memo, I was accused of breaking confidentiality, complaining and spreading negative information about the organisation, undermining local people, not being able to control my feelings or emotions caused by a certain situation and not understanding cultural differences. As a volunteer at the centre, I realised I was in a very weak position and was a particularly easy target for blame. Bramani and the other former street youth who cooked at the centre (who both terrorised the younger boys) lost their jobs following discussions and advice from the health professionals, and it was decided that the centre's policy on girls should recognise that separate accommodation was needed to avoid similar circumstances arising in the future, and thus the centre was unable to accommodate girls at present.

It was an emotionally draining experience for me and I considered leaving the organisation. Working relations with some members of staff were inevitably strained following the incident, and I distanced myself from the work of the shelter, not wanting to get involved with individual children's cases, and working more as an art teacher at the residential centre outside of the town. I apologised to the director, recognising that I was way out of my depth and inexperienced in dealing with such cases. However, I feel that had the appropriate mechanisms and support been in place within the organisation, the case should not have escalated in the unfortunate way that it did. I felt sad seeing

Regina on the streets begging for money, and told her that I was very sorry she was not able to stay at the centre anymore, that I didn't know it was going to work out like that. I often saw her over the year, on the streets and after some time, at the centre during the day, to wash her clothes etc. She became more distant and on one occasion, stole some money from me at the centre. Towards the end of my year in Tanzania, I conducted an interview with her, but she was, perhaps understandably, not prepared to share much of her personal experiences or feelings with me, hardened after many months on the streets and perhaps feeling that I had let her down. I would like to think though that, at the time of the incident, she valued the fact that my female colleague and I had at least listened to her and believed her when no one else did. Unfortunately, my colleague lost her job soon after this incident, which I felt was partly due to her involvement in this incident, despite the management's line that it was because of repeated complaints from the children. I am convinced that had I not been a Western volunteer, with whom the organisation was keen to maintain good relations for the purposes of future funding opportunities etc., my job would also have been on the line. A few months later, a new manager created a much more positive working environment at the shelter, which the children clearly appreciated and found more beneficial, and which made my work there much more fulfilling.

The incident highlighted for me the potential dangers of mixed accommodation for street children in a shelter environment, in view of the sexually exploitative relationships that are sadly part of children's experiences of life on the streets. It brought my attention to the gender blind nature of most street children's projects and the lack of awareness of the issues street girls face, as well as lack of training and support for staff in dealing with issues of sexuality and abuse. Shortly after this incident, an NGO consultant friend suggested that I used the experience as a starting

point to conduct research with street children from a gender perspective, in recognition of the fact that most street children projects cater almost exclusively for boys. The idea that something positive might come out of such a difficult experience gave me the strength to continue working at the project. My hope that the research might make some tentative steps forward in the longer term process of gender planning for street boys and girls thus forms the pivotal starting point for the research, in support of the feminist commitment to social change.

This incident also highlights the fact that the researcher's presence and behaviour in the field often has tangible implications for people's lives, and indeed can have potentially negative consequences. The incident is still associated with feelings of guilt, for me, due to the negative impact of my presence and involvement in Regina's case. This raises several ethical questions about the participation of researchers in the field, and reveals the need for researchers to adopt a candid, reflexive stance in the final report of the research process and the field relations entered into. Adopting the reflexive stance advocated by feminists, ethnographers, and researchers of childhood, I will now analyse my own position as a 'situated actor' in the research process, the field relations I entered into, and the influence of this on the research design, data collection and analysis stages.

Field relations and my position as a 'situated actor'

In her article, 'Who am I? The need for a variety of selves in the field', Reinharz recognises that in ethnographic research, the self serves as the key fieldwork tool, and suggests that we both *bring* the self to the field and *create* the self in the field (Reinharz, 1997:3):

The self we create *in the field* is a product of the norms of the social setting and the ways in which the ‘research subjects’ interact with the selves the researcher brings to the field (ibid).

Reinharz suggests that the different selves employed in the field can be broadly categorised according to the notions of ‘research-based selves’, ‘brought selves’ and ‘situationally-created selves’, which is useful in analysing my position as a ‘situated actor’ in the research process (ibid: 5). My ‘research-based self’, as I have just outlined, emerged after I had already been working at the street children project in northern Tanzania for eight months, and thus was very much an extension of my ‘situationally-created self’, that is my role as a full-time project worker with the organisation. I continued working full-time at the centre while conducting the research and it is doubtful whether my research-based self was viewed by the children or members of staff as distinct from my role at the centre. However, my interactions, conversations and discussions with the children, members of staff, Tanzanian friends and other people in the community over the year could all be seen as part of my ‘research-based self’, since I was living and working within the ethnographic context, trying to gain an understanding of Tanzanian culture as a participant observer.

My personal experience and role as a *mwalimu* [teacher] at the UCSC project thus became the basis of my ability to do ethnographic research, informing the choice of topic and addressing some of the ethical concerns associated with cross-cultural research, outlined above. While I acknowledge that the population of children living on the streets of urban centres is relatively small in relation to the majority of poor children in especially difficult circumstances in Tanzania, my focus on street children is justified by my experience working for the UCSC project, the trusting relationships I had

developed with the children, and the unique opportunity my volunteer placement with UCSC offered to conduct unobtrusive ethnographic research and present a 'view from below'. The 'brought selves' which I brought to the field included being a British, white, middle-class, young woman, with university education, and my personality and personal characteristics, such as enjoying working with children, my quiet demeanour and aptitude for languages etc. These 'brought selves' determined to a great extent the role and field relations I was able to enter into within the ethnographic setting.

My status as a foreigner – *mzungu* [European – used to describe white people] seemed the most salient characteristic which determined my interactions with people. The legacy of colonialism and the emerging order of globalised capitalism means that white people who travel or live in Tanzania are much more wealthy than the average Tanzanian. That I was working as a volunteer on an allowance similar to my colleagues' monthly pay did not prevent the frequent requests for money from the children and members of staff alike.

With the children on the streets, the fact that I stood out as a *mzungu* provided an immediate point of contact with the children, as they would often approach me with pained faces, pointing to their stomach, the other hand outstretched for money, and saying '*njaa*' [I'm hungry], thinking I was one of the many tourists. Their expression would soon change to a faintly embarrassed smile when they saw it was me. They then always greeted me with the respectful greeting for anyone older than oneself ('*Shikamoo*') and shook my hand and we chatted. Nevertheless, the requests for money were never far from their lips and I always felt torn, aware of the gross differentials between my standard of living and theirs, not wanting to be mean when I obviously could afford to give them something, while on the other hand, knowing that they might

spend the money on glue or marijuana, rather than food. Furthermore, the work of the centre was undermined by the money they could earn by begging on the streets.

Sometimes I bought them tea in a café, sometimes a mango, or a soda drink – I felt happier buying them food than giving money. With the children at the residential centre, requests focused around buying them a radio, a watch, shoes, exercise books for school etc. since most of their basic needs were met by the centre. I always explained to them that I couldn't afford to buy, for example, a mini-radio for everyone at the centre, so it wouldn't be fair to favour one child above another. Although they protested that they wouldn't tell the others that I had given them something, I think they valued the fact that I treated all of the children equally, in view of their complaints about some project workers having 'favourites'.

Many authors comment that most male and female fieldworkers who engage in participant observation with children adopt the 'friend role' (Holmes, 1998; Fine and Sandstrom, 1988). Mandell defines the 'least adult role' in studying children as one in which 'the fieldworker exerts no authority over the children and establishes a trusting relationship that is modelled after the friendship bond' (Mandell, cited in Holmes, 1998:17). Holmes notes that the key traits necessary to achieve the friend role are expressing positive feelings and a desire to be with children, the failure to deliver discipline, and treating the children with respect (ibid). She comments, 'Such a role allows researchers to gain children's trust and to attenuate the researcher's authority that is implied inherently in the social status of a grown-up' (ibid). Although I was considered a full member of staff at the project, my status as a *mzungu* [white person] combined with my quiet, non-threatening personality, gender and age, plus my own disinclination to deliver discipline and my role in doing art activities and going on excursions with the children meant that the children at the centre saw me more as a

friend than a figure of authority. The authoritarian style of some of my colleagues was sometimes difficult for me to reconcile, but I recognise my own inability to keep control of large groups of children on occasion, without the help of my colleagues.

I was however, also painfully aware that in playing the 'least adult/ friend role', I was perpetuating the stereotype that all *wazungu* [white people] love children and treat them better than Tanzanian adults, a view which, sadly, the children at the residential centre often expressed. Their positive experiences of white people who visited the project were based on me and other volunteers who came to do fun activities with them and bring them gifts. These experiences contrasted with their negative experiences of abuse at home, and the discipline and punishment experienced with their Tanzanian teachers and some project workers. This stereotype can be seen as a product of the different cultural constructs of childhood in the North and South. The boys constantly asked me about life in Europe, whether there were any street children, any thieves, and whether parents beat their children. I affirmed that although more people might have televisions and running water than in Tanzania, there were also unhappy children, homelessness, poverty and crime in Europe, and showed them a book with pictures of homeless people sleeping rough in the UK to try to combat assumptions about the wealthy lifestyle all *wazungus* lead. I was particularly disturbed by the boys' internalisation of culturally dominant ideas about the superiority of fair skin, revealed in their frequently expressed desire for a *mzungu* [white] girlfriend, and on one occasion, one of the boys pointed to the skin on his hand saying it was bad and rough (due to manual work), whereas my fair, soft skin was seen as good.

My relationships with the children at the UCSC centres were much deeper than those who I knew on the streets, many of who had stayed at the shelter for only short periods.

I acknowledge that I became quite attached to many of the children I knew over the year, which made withdrawing from 'the field' difficult both for me and the children. I could not help feeling that by leaving I became just another adult, who they had trusted, but who let them down. I think my later visits, and my second period of fieldwork from October to December 2002, helped them feel that I had not forgotten them. Many of the boys I originally knew at the shelter in town had progressed in school, while living at the residential centre, and proudly showed me their school books and uniforms. My role as *mwalimu* [teacher] at the project limited my relationships with the children living on the streets, as they perceived me as a social worker/ teacher trying to convince them to stay at the centre. On one occasion, I was in the centre of town when some of the boys, who were arguing and had been fighting, approached me, wanting me to settle a dispute. I remember feeling surprised that they should look to me as a figure of authority or even listen to me, when I felt powerless to exert any authority over them, least of all in the street environment, and it reminded me that despite their resilience, street children are also vulnerable children who seek adult approval.

My lack of fluency in Swahili in some ways restricted my 'research-based self', since it meant that I had to translate questions for the focus group discussions and interviews in advance. A Tanzanian friend, who sometimes volunteered at the centre but who was not directly associated with the project, provided invaluable assistance with my Swahili, helping me translate questions, accompanying me while I conducted focus group discussions with the children and the first few interviews with the children, and transcribing interviews in Swahili. After the first few interviews, I became more confident and conducted the rest on my own, able to respond to participants with further lines of enquiry, but not always grammatically correctly. I feel that had I been fluent in Swahili I could have involved some of the children at the residential centre more in the

research design and they could have participated more as researchers. In other ways however, I think my grammatical incompetence possibly helped to reduce the adult/researcher-child power imbalance, since the children taught me Swahili and corrected my mistakes. In presenting myself as the 'pupil', and the children adopting the role of '*mwalimu*' [teacher], the usual role-hierarchy was reversed, giving the children greater agency. This also reinforced the research relationship between child participants and adult fieldworker, in which the fieldworker becomes the learner and children become the teachers in the fieldworker's attempt to experience the children's ways of knowing about the world (Holmes, 1998:19). Since the language I used was consistent with the language and expressions the children used to talk about their experiences, I think the usual linguistic gap between university-educated adults and children was reduced, thus aiding the research relationship.

Adults seemed much more comfortable speaking Swahili with me, even when they had good knowledge of English. Speaking English with Tanzanians also reminded me of Britain's colonial past and the power imbalance between coloniser/colonised. Speaking Swahili, an African language, however, seemed to be a way of showing that I valued and wanted to learn about Tanzanian culture. People were keen to tell me about different ethnic groups, customs and cultural traditions, and were delighted that I could speak Swahili and understand them on their terms. As my knowledge of Swahili increased, so my understanding of Tanzanian culture grew and I felt much more accepted by my colleagues and within the community. As mentioned above, a Tanzanian friend helped me transcribe the interviews conducted as part of my first period of fieldwork in Swahili, which I translated on my return to the UK. During my second period of fieldwork, I tried to translate most of the interviews and focus groups

directly into English from the Swahili tape-recordings, and asked Tanzanians, and on my return to the UK, a Swahili native speaker, to help me translate difficult phrases.

The final section of this chapter draws on the earlier discussion about power relations raised in feminist methodologies, participatory research and ethnographic research with children, which is used to inform the research methodology adopted in this study, and offers a reflexive account of the data collection process.

The research process

The importance of involving children in all stages of the research process has been recognised (Christensen and James, 2000:6), and ‘ “task-centred activities” which exploit children’s particular talents and interests might provide a better way of allowing children to express their ideas and opinions than more “talk-centred” methods’ (James et al., 1998:190). There have been some efforts to adapt activities used in participatory rural appraisal techniques, used in community projects in the developing world, in research with children. The approach is considered particularly advantageous for communities in which there are low levels of literacy, as the methods of information collection do not rely heavily on reading or writing skills, laying greater emphasis instead on visual representation of ideas (Christensen and James, 2000:138).

Participatory research methods are now increasingly being recognised as ‘innovative, fun and suitable for the study of children, for through their participation children would be enabled to take an active role and talk about their needs’ (ibid: 139). A child-centred participatory methodology, which enabled children to participate in the research process, and paid attention to differentials of age, gender and ethnicity, was therefore

considered most appropriate for the ethnographic research I conducted with street children in Arusha, Tanzania.

Participatory visual techniques such as drawing and photographic representation of the children's lives on the streets (using disposable cameras) were backed up with focus group discussions, and individual, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, with both girls, boys and adults, to explore their differing perspectives. The participatory nature of the research aimed to give the children more control over the representation of their lived realities, thereby addressing some of the ethical issues raised both in cross-cultural research and research with children. As Pink points out:

If ethnography is seen as a process of negotiation and collaboration with informants, through which they too stand to achieve their own objectives, rather than as an act of taking information away from them, the ethical agenda also shifts. By focusing on collaboration and the idea of 'creating something together', agency becomes shared between the researcher and informant (Pink, 2001:44).

The use of photography has increasingly been recognised as particularly suitable ethnographic media to develop successful collaborative or participatory projects (ibid). Indeed, sociologist Cavin used children's photography to research 'children's perspectives' by giving children Polaroid cameras with which to produce images (Cavin, 1994, in Pink, 2001:64). I got the initial idea for using disposable cameras with the street children, however, from a feature by Lana Wong which appeared in *The Observer Magazine*, based on photographs taken by children in Nairobi slums (Wong, 1999). While I was in the UK, and not sure when I would be able to return for further

fieldwork, a Tanzanian friend facilitated a couple of street boys to take photographs over a 24 hour period to represent their lives on the street, and met up with them the following day to go and develop the photographs. During my second period of fieldwork in 2002, I tried to involve some street girls in taking photographs to represent their lives. One of the girls disappeared with the camera, and sold it. However, another street girl, who I knew better, appeared happy to participate, and returned the camera the following day for me to develop the photographs. I gave a set of the photographs to the boys and girl who had taken them, and talked about what the pictures showed with them, which informed the captions used to describe them³.

For the first stage in the research, I gained some idea of previous studies conducted with street children in Tanzania by reviewing academic literature at the University of Dar es Salaam and the Institute of Social Work, and Tanzanian government and NGO reports at the UNICEF headquarters, the International Labour Organisation and Save the Children Fund libraries in Dar es Salaam. Using my personal experience of working with street children over the past seven months, and ideas from studies conducted with street children, I formulated four key research questions which guided the study:

1. What makes boys and girls leave home for the streets? To what extent do children exercise a choice over their situation?
2. What are street girls' and boys' needs, priorities and aspirations?
3. What services are available to boys and girls living on the streets in the town? Do these services correspond to the girls' and boys' needs, as identified by the children themselves? How can these services be improved?

³ See pp. 276-302.

4. What measures can be taken at the level of the family, household and community to prevent children running away from home to the streets?

I then formulated some questions for discussion with the children to gain an insight into their perceptions of home, school and life on the streets, and to explore concepts of childhood in general. I conducted focus group discussions with separate groups of four to seven girls and boys at the two UCSC centres⁴, with a group of boys on the streets, and with some girls at Theresa House⁵, a centre providing accommodation and vocational training for seven young women facing disadvantage aged 11-20, run by a religious organisation. After the discussions, I encouraged the children to draw pictures of their perceptions of life at home, on the streets and in the future, explaining to me the meanings they attached to their pictures, which they wrote down on their paper if they were able to, or I noted down for them, with their agreement. Drawings are considered to give children the freedom to express views, imagination and interpretation of the surrounding world in their own terms, and are thought to help reduce the adult-child power imbalance by giving full control to the child (Sapkota and Sharma, cited in O’Kane, 2000:140). I considered the technique of using drawings particularly suitable for working with children of different ages with varied literacy skills.

I found that both boys and girls seemed to enjoy participating in groups; the presence of their peers helped to reduce the power relations inherent in adult (researcher) –child relationships, as they felt more in control of the situation. I found that children in group conversations are generally positive (rather than negative), they listen to each other and often support and enable each other to speak (Mayall, 2000:134). Mayall notes that

⁴ See Table 1, p. ? for summary of research methods employed with participants.

⁵ Theresa House, a Roman Catholic project providing accommodation, education and training for up to seven young women facing disadvantage, aged 11-20. The name of the project has been changed to protect the identities of the young women and in the interests of confidentiality.

children in group conversations can be seen as presenting a collective front, in some cases in overt opposition to the power of adults, while in other cases, they share their understanding, as children, of their social worlds (ibid). I found both boys and girls were eager to describe their situations and express their views, prompting each other, and recounting stories they had heard from other street children. In one discussion with boys at the UCSC centre in town, a lively discussion ensued between the boys on their views about corporal punishment in school. Holmes comments that 'Fieldworkers in general [...] cannot escape the influence of their macro-system on what they observe and how they interpret data from children's cultures' (Holmes, 1998:92), which is emphasised by Alldred's comment that 'children's voices are heard through cultural constructions of childhood' (Alldred, 1998:155). I acknowledge the influence of Western concepts of childhood on my own standpoint. For example, I saw 'home' and 'school' as the key institutions in children's lives, with parents taking primary responsibility for their children, rather than being more sensitive to the role of the extended family and wider community, a bias reflected in the questions used in focus group discussions. Analysing the data in the final stages of the research process, I realise that this assumption was not necessarily incorrect, but I acknowledge that I automatically went in with assumptions based on the Western cultural construct of childhood. Following further study, I became more sensitive to the role of the extended family, and the community, and the influence of cultural values and traditional practices such as initiation rites, and discussed these issues in more depth with participants during my second period of fieldwork. I had initially felt uneasy about engaging with these issues, due to my position as a Westerner researching 'other' people's cultures, which, as discussed earlier, emerged as one of the key ethical issues in cross-cultural research⁶.

⁶ See p.61.

Since my contact time with the street girls was much more limited than with the boys, due to the fact that girls did not stay at either of the two UCSC centres, it was more difficult to set up the group discussion with the girls. I expressed my interest in learning about girls' experiences of life as a street girl, to Halima, a former street girl, attending a vocational training school (supported by UCSC), who occasionally dropped in at the shelter, and encouraged her and her friends to drop in at the shelter. After school one day, she brought her sister with her baby and two other street girls currently staying with her in her mother's rented room, to the centre in time for lunch. While some of the girls used the showering and washing facilities, the others were keen to type a letter to a former British volunteer on the computer, which I helped them with and later translated and put in the post. When they were ready, I conducted a group discussion with the girls in a room at the shelter. Due to the antagonism and hostility I had witnessed between street boys and girls in my work at the centre, it seemed logical to conduct the discussions in separate gender groups, and the girls seemed to value having their own space to express themselves. When a couple of the boys tried to come into the room to see what we were doing, the girls immediately hid their drawings and reacted angrily, and were pleased when I asked the boys to wait until we had finished. The girls often used the shelter as a drop-in centre, using the washing facilities etc. on subsequent visits.

Gender and development literature has revealed the need to fit in with women's routines and pay participants in community development projects a subsistence wage as compensation for time lost in earnings, in respect of women's 'time constraints' (Ostergaard, 1992; Brydon and Chant, 1989). This notion also applies to children living on the streets, since they too are economic actors, struggling to subsist by doing casual work. Recognising the need to fit into their time and place, then, I decided to talk to the

boys on Sunday afternoons, since Sundays were much quieter in town than weekdays, with fewer income-earning opportunities and so it seemed that the discussion and interviews would infringe less on their time. I noted in my fieldwork diary that the first group of street boys we approached did not want to take part in a discussion, busy playing draughts with bottle tops, and said they would come to the shelter the next day. A second group of boys I knew were more enthusiastic about participating:

We saw Abu, Pendaeli and about four other kids who have been in and out of the UCSC shelter. They were pleased to see us, and it was convenient to chat to them there, on the pavement where they sleep. They introduced us to their mwalimu [teacher] – a night watchman who teaches them maths, Kiswahili and English in the evenings. They explained that many children come in the evenings and the watchman's Indian boss provides exercise books and pencils, and blankets for them at night. We started asking some of the questions, and the kids kept coming and going when they needed to – Abu left for a couple of minutes when an Indian woman asked for some help to carry something up to the top floor. He came back looking pleased with himself – obviously rewarded for his help. They concentrated hard on their drawings to explain their experiences on the streets. (fieldwork journal, 08/05/00)

As can be seen here, I found the group discussion worked particularly well with the boys on the street, as the informal, flexible approach meant that the discussion could continue while a couple of them disappeared for a few minutes when they were offered a job carrying something, but they were keen to contribute again when they had finished. I was accompanied by a Tanzanian friend, who helped rephrase questions when the boys did not seem to understand completely, and could pick up on their 'street' slang. Being accompanied by another adult also helped to prevent members of

the public approaching me while talking to the street children, concerned that the children were 'troubling me'. I also felt safer being accompanied by a male friend in the street environment, particularly as it became dark, since as a white woman, I had often experienced mild sexual harassment while walking around the town on my own, and older youths had tried to pickpocket me on previous occasions. After the discussion with about five of the boys, we went to a small café nearby and had a soda together, joined by some of the others, as a thank you for their contributions and time.

I also conducted a focus group discussion with two members of staff at the UCSC centre, and with a community development group of 17 women, as part of a series of health education sessions, to gain an insight into adults' perceptions of street children⁷. The discussion, 'Street children – whose responsibility?' at a local community centre followed on from a talk the previous week on family planning, and the nurse leading the sessions drew connections between the phenomenon of street children and a lack of family planning, leading to unwanted children. Following a video telling the story of a street child in Zimbabwe, the women came up with different definitions of who they thought 'street children' were, the reasons they were on the street, the responsibilities and duties of children and their families, and ways to prevent children leaving home for the streets. At the end of the discussion, many of the women thanked me for helping them see that street children should not simply be perceived as 'thieves', but that street children were children just like their own, and any child could become a street child for a whole range of reasons (fieldwork journal, 4/5/00).

I used the findings of the group discussions and drawings to formulate questions for individual interviews with the children, in order to gain an insight into their perceptions

⁷ See Table 1, p.2 for summary of research methods employed with participants.

of their personal lives, aspirations and experiences of street children projects. Individual interviews also provided space for the children to narrate personal experiences which they might not have wished to reveal amongst their peers. Tape-recorded semi-structured interviews were conducted with four boys and four girls at the UCSC centre in town, with three boys at the UCSC residential centre, with two boys on the streets who knew me in my role at the centre, and with three former street girls at Theresa House, in total, seven girls and nine boys (aged 11-20, the majority of whom were aged 14-17) who were either on the streets or former street children. The proportion of girls included in the discussions and interviews was higher than that actually found in the general population of street children, but this was intentional since I wanted to gain a comparative sense of experience by gender.

Most of the interviews with boys at the two UCSC projects were conducted in one of the rooms at the UCSC shelter or in a small, staff room at the residential centre, while the other boys were doing other activities with members of staff. There was however considerable background noise, and some interruptions, when the tape-recorder had to be stopped and started again. Similarly, the interviews with the girls were conducted at the UCSC shelter during one of their drop-in visits. The interviews with the former street girls at the Theresa House project were conducted in a small, quiet reception room. For the interviews with boys on the streets, we returned to the shop front which the boys had claimed was their sleeping place, where we had conducted the discussion a month earlier, again on a Sunday afternoon, and found about eight boys hanging out there, as I noted in my fieldwork diary:

Some of the boys were fast asleep in the sun on the pavement. Simon agreed to talk to us, surrounded by his peers, listened and thought carefully about his answers. The

other boys sitting around us and listening to the interview did not want to participate themselves when Simon had finished. Luka arrived and wanted to talk to us, but was high on glue, which meant that his attention lapsed and he often forgot what I had just asked him. There was considerable background noise from traffic and people interrupting, which made it difficult to tape-record. The boys asked me the time and all left soon after 4.30pm to receive their regular donation of clothes from some Indian shopkeepers nearby. (fieldwork journal, 11/06/00).

The children I knew better were understandably more at ease during the interview, although it also depended on their personality. I explained that when I returned to the UK, I would write an extensive report about street children, and asked the children if they would like to participate by telling me about their lives. At the beginning of the interview, I made it clear that if they did not feel comfortable answering a certain question, or proceeding with the interview, they were free to refuse to answer or to withdraw at any point. Most of the young people however, thought carefully about the questions and their responses, and seemed to enjoy talking about their experiences and listening to themselves again on tape when the interview had been recorded. This supports the idea that participating in research can be an empowering experience for marginalised groups:

For people who do not usually have the opportunity to voice their concerns, research can be very positive and enabling in itself because it can encourage such people to articulate their needs (Pratt and Loizos, cited in Scheyvens et al., 2000:120).

Ann Oakley's feminist ethic of 'believing the interviewee' (Reinharz, 1992: 28) and the ethical importance of listening to children and young people's views and believing their narrations, guided my approach. Goffman's ideas about the presentation of the self in every day life are useful here to understand people's narratives of their behaviour and social interactions in public. Goffman (1959) uses metaphors of performance to describe social interaction, and distinguishes between what he terms the 'front-stage' and the 'back-stage'. The 'front-stage' is where performances are enacted for people to create impressions of themselves in public life, and the 'back-stage' is where unrehearsed performances take place, which are not intended for public observation. Thus, narratives and perceptions of 'truth' or 'reality' depend on who is speaking about whom, and what people choose to tell the researcher, but all are equally valid.

While accepting the children's words at face value, the children (particularly those at the UCSC centres) were likely to have adopted a reflexive stance in the way they accepted me as a *mzungu* [European, white person] young woman and were influenced by my 'situationally-created self', that is my role as *mwalimu* [teacher] at the centre, seeking my approval for their ideas and perceptions of their situations. I was aware that it was not realistic to expect the children or members of staff to distinguish my 'research-based self' from my role as a *mwalimu* at the centre, since the two roles were merged from the outset. Ethically, however, I felt the need to try to distinguish between the two roles at the beginning of the focus group discussions and interviews, to assure the participants that whatever they said as part of the research was completely confidential and would in no way influence the services they received from the UCSC project. On one occasion, however, one of the boys specifically requested me to share the concerns that he had raised with me in the interview, about a lack of clothing and

favouritism of certain project workers towards some children at the UCSC residential centre, to the centre manager, perceiving me as having some influence with him.

My informal conversations with the young people and members of staff and my own observations, noted in my fieldwork diary, complemented data gathered in the focus group discussions and interviews. I also had the opportunity to accompany staff as a participant observer on 12 home visits with some of the children to their homes in the region, to discuss their situation with their parents, relatives and community leaders. This gave me an insight into the home environment of the children and parental attitudes and difficulties in caring for their children. I also conducted interviews with the managers at Theresa House, a project providing services to young women facing disadvantage, and with the project co-ordinator and social workers at Rolling Stones Multipurpose Foundation⁸, a project which provided education, training and informal education activities for street children and other children in difficult circumstances during the day. A further visit in January 2001 enabled me to conduct interviews with five project workers at the UCSC project to explore their perceptions of the needs of street children and the services they offer. This month-long visit also enabled me to thank the children who had participated in focus group discussions and interviews with a small gift of some clothes, and to update my data on individual children after a period of six months away from the field. Similarly, a brief visit to Arusha in February 2002 also enabled me to update my data about the children who had participated in the research, and maintain relationships with colleagues at the UCSC project.

⁸ Rolling Stone Multipurpose Foundation, an initiative set up in 2000, which provided education, training and informal educational activities for street children and other children in difficult circumstances during the day. During fieldwork in 2002, a former member of staff from the project informed me that the project had closed down in 2001 due to a lack of sustainability.

On analysing and writing up the original data I had collected in 2000, I identified particular topics for further research, and spent a further two months in the field from October to December 2002. My role at the UCSC project during this period was predominantly that of researcher. However, I spent some time organising informal activities and outings with the children at the centres, as well as developing a funding proposal for the organisation in consultation with staff at the UCSC project, since the funding situation had become very insecure. During the two months, I conducted six focus group discussions and drawings with school pupils in three primary schools in Arusha town, in a small town roughly 20 kilometres from Arusha, and in a rural mountain village in the Kilimanjaro region. Access to these schools was gained through personal contacts with teachers at the schools. Focus groups were conducted in separate gender groups of five to seven boys or girls between the ages of 10 and 15, in the absence of teachers, in classrooms at school. The focus groups lasted 30-45 minutes, and were tape-recorded. At each school, I explained to the head-teacher my purpose to talk to a diverse group of pupils from Standard 4 to 6 [pupils who had spent four to six years in primary school] about their views about home, school, cultural values and street children, but I had little control over which pupils were selected. The groups of school pupils I talked to were likely to be those deemed most well-behaved, intelligent and articulate by the teacher, and more likely to come from wealthier backgrounds. Thus, while the groups of school pupils may not be completely representative of their class in general, their views provided an interesting comparison with those of the street children.

At one school, the teacher was reluctant for me to conduct the focus groups in her absence and warned the pupils aggressively with a cane in her hand at the beginning of the discussion that they had to be well-behaved, answer all my questions and not say anything bad about the school. When she had left, I tried to make it explicitly clear, as I

did in all the focus groups, that the pupils were free to refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the discussion at any point, assured them of complete confidentiality, and that I would not disclose any information about the discussion to the teacher. At one school, two boys who had been selected by the teacher decided that they did not want to participate, when I explained the purpose of the discussion, and others came forward who did wish to participate. Overall, the groups of boys were much more confident about expressing their views to me than the girls, reflecting conventional gender norms which socialise girls not to express their views and be less confident.

Following my analysis of the street children's narratives of their home situations, I identified that some street children, who had been orphaned by AIDS, had been ostracised by their families and communities. In view of the growing numbers of children being orphaned by AIDS, it thus seemed pertinent to explore the experiences of children from HIV/ AIDS-affected households in the community, who were at risk of becoming 'street children'. Through a former colleague I had worked with at a women's development organisation, I met Elli⁹, a woman who was open about her HIV status and involved in community education programmes about HIV/ AIDS. Due to the heavy fear, stigma and ostracism surrounding HIV/ AIDS, I was very fortunate to be introduced to someone who was willing to talk to me openly about their experiences. Elli knew many other adults and families affected by HIV/ AIDS in the community, and I arranged with her to visit her home and talk to some of her friends who were also HIV positive and were willing to participate in the research. I conducted tape-recorded semi-structured interviews with three adults and interviews and drawings with three children from AIDS-affected households in Arusha, focused on their coping strategies and experiences.

⁹ In the interests of confidentiality, the names of all participants have been changed.

Elli represented a key gatekeeper in introducing me to the participants, taking me to their homes, and participants agreed to talk to me largely because of their friendship and respect for Elli. Participants seemed comfortable with Elli remaining present during the interviews and she sometimes added to the conversation. Confidentiality was considered paramount, due to the AIDS stigma, although this was difficult to safeguard when I interviewed a grandmother and a girl whose parents had recently died from AIDS. The interview was conducted sitting on wooden stools in the compound outside the house, as I had observed was often the traditional way for people from the Waarusha ethnic group to receive visitors. However, as a white foreigner visiting a poor area of town and using a tape-recorder to record the conversation, I aroused a lot of curiosity from neighbours, and children playing nearby, who stared and whispered while we were trying to conduct the interview. Since the nature of the interview was very personal, and sensitive, I was concerned about proceeding, and Elli tried to make the people gathered around leave us alone. I would have preferred to conduct the interviews inside the house, out of earshot of the neighbours. This did not seem to be an option, however, which may have been partly due to the grandmother's embarrassment at showing me inside her traditional mud and wooden house, which she told me was in need of repair.

After conducting the interviews, I gave each family a financial contribution of expenses to thank them for their time and participation in the research, in line with common practice in social policy research conducted in the UK. Indeed, in view of the chronic poverty facing most of the individuals interviewed and my relative wealth, I think it would have been unethical not to have given some contribution to thank them for agreeing to participate in an interview, which talked about highly personal and often painful experiences. I found it quite emotionally draining conducting the interviews.

but knew that I had to just 'get on with it' at the time. When transcribing the interviews and writing about the children and families' experiences back in the comfort of my home in the UK, I found it even more depressing, and also felt anger that if only people's basic human right to appropriate medical treatment, that is anti-retroviral drugs, was met, much of the suffering and stigma surrounding HIV/ AIDS would be alleviated, and parents would be able to stay healthy and support their families for much longer.

During my second fieldwork period, I managed to gain access to visit the small-scale mines near Mererani, in Simanjiro district, where some of the street boys I knew had worked. Through personal contacts, I was introduced to a key gatekeeper, the co-ordinator of a small non-governmental project which had recently been set up to provide educational opportunities for children working in the mines. We arranged a car to take us from the nearby town out into the bush where the mining camps had been set up. The co-ordinator warned me that the miners were hostile and aggressive towards white people generally, as a result of long-standing clashes with foreign mining companies, which were buying out many small-scale miners. The co-ordinator negotiated our way into one of the camps by paying small bribes to various men to let us in. It was then safe to get out of the vehicle and talk to the miners inside the camp. The co-ordinator later told me that foreigners usually had to apply for special permission to visit the mining sites, which could take several weeks to obtain clearance, and was often refused, because the authorities suspected that foreigners were visiting to procure Tanzanite gemstones without paying official prices. I was thus very fortunate to be able to gain access to visit the mining site through a key gatekeeper. I talked to some of the boys working at the site, and saw Joshua, one of the street boys that I had known at the UCSC shelter and in town, who accompanied us back to the town. After I had

explained about the purpose of my research, Joshua agreed to talk to me about his experiences informally while we were sitting in a café, which I noted in my fieldwork diary. I also talked to some of the boys at the NGO project about their experiences. When I agreed to pay Joshua's bus fare, he, and another boy who had been working in the mines, came back to Arusha with me, as he wanted to see his mates in town again.

During the two months of fieldwork in 2002, I tried to trace all the children and young people I had initially interviewed in 2000. I was able to conduct in-depth, unstructured interviews with some of the children still living at, or in touch with the UCSC project. I feel that because they had known me for a long time, and trusted me, some of the young people were very open and talked in depth about their experiences. Sometimes this happened quite spontaneously, as with Peter, whose home I had visited in 2000. One evening, when we sat outside at the UCSC residential centre as it grew dark, he started telling me his story of how he came to live on the street, so I told him about my research, and he was pleased that I wanted to note his story down in my fieldwork journal. I heard from some of the children in town and from UCSC project workers that some of the street children whose homes I had visited in 2000 had chosen to go back home. I negotiated use of the UCSC project vehicle for a day, and accompanied by the UCSC shelter manager, visited these families and talked to the boys' fathers about how they were adapting to the rural lifestyle at home again. Unfortunately, gender norms and customs of receiving visitors meant that the UCSC manager and I sat in discussion with the father and other male relatives, and there was little opportunity to talk to the boys' mothers on their own. When men were not present, such as when I visited the homes of children from female-headed households, however, I was able to talk to the children's mothers and gain some insight into their perspectives.

In 2002, I also conducted interviews with the co-ordinators/ chair of new NGO projects and initiatives, working with street children and other children in difficult circumstances, which had developed in Arusha and nationally. These included the Arusha Referral Service¹⁰, Forum for Child Concerned NGOs in Arusha¹¹ (FOCNA), National Network of Organisations working with Children¹² (NNOC), Tanzanian Movement for and with Children¹³ (TMC). Following further study of initiation rites, including female 'circumcision' or Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), I also interviewed the co-ordinator of the Network Against Female Genital Mutilation in Tanzania¹⁴ (NAFGEM), based in Moshi, to gain further insight into this issue. Through my contacts with the UCSC project, I managed to interview a Community Development Officer for the Arusha Municipality, to gain an insight into the perspective of the local statutory authority towards street children.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed salient ethical issues arising from feminist research methodologies, cross-cultural research and ethnographic research with children. The tools of feminist research and participatory research techniques have been applied to the ethnographic research I conducted with street children while working at the UCSC

¹⁰ Arusha Referral Service, a partnership project between three NGOs in Arusha established in 2001, in collaboration with statutory authorities, which provides a street-based programme for street children in Arusha of meals, informal education, family reunification, referral of children and families onto other services and NGO projects by social workers, supporting older street youth etc.

¹¹ Forum for Child Concerned NGOs in Arusha (FOCNA), an umbrella group of 27 NGOs working with children in Arusha.

¹² National Network for Organisations working with Children (NNOC), an umbrella NGO established in 2001, based in Dar es Salaam, which by the end of 2002 had 29 members from different regions across Tanzania.

¹³ Tanzania Movement for and with Children (TMC) was launched in 2001 as part of the Global Movement for and with Children. By the end of 2002, it had 70 partners (mostly from NGO sector) in 20 regions of Tanzania.

¹⁴ Network Against Female Genital Mutilation in Tanzania (NAFGEM), an NGO established in 1999 which campaigns against FGM through community-based education programmes, mainly in Kilimanjaro region.

project in northern Tanzania (1999-2000). I adopted the feminist approach of 'starting with one's own experience' and reflexivity in an analysis of the field relations I entered into. I have analysed my own position as a 'situated actor', or active participant in the research process, and given a reflexive account of the process of implementing the participatory child-centred research methodology, which was considered most appropriate for this study.

The range of research methods employed with different groups of participants are summarised in Table 1, p.99. In total, I conducted individual semi-structured interviews with 16 street children (9 boys and 7 girls, aged 11-20, most of whom were aged 13-17) in 2000, 6 of whom I followed up with unstructured interviews in 2002 (5 boys, 1 girl). I conducted focus groups with a total of 63 children aged 11-20, the majority of whom were aged 13-17. These consisted of two groups of street girls, three groups of street boys, three groups of school-girls and school-boys at three primary schools in the region. I also conducted focus groups with a group of 17 women at a community centre, and 2 project workers at the UCSC project. I visited the family homes of 12 of the street children in 2000 (11 boys, 1 girl), three of which I revisited in 2002 and conducted interviews with 3 parents/ guardians. I conducted interviews and drawings with three children (aged 12-17) from AIDS-affected households, and interviewed three adults affected by AIDS in the community. Individual interviews were conducted with 13 key professionals working with street children and other children in difficult circumstances in the NGO and statutory sectors in Arusha and Dar es Salaam. This was combined with participant observation on the streets, at the UCSC street children project and on a visit to the mining site near Arusha. The next six chapters analyse in detail the data collected during the fieldwork period, contributing further to our

understanding of the lived realities of children living on the streets of urban areas in Tanzania.

Table 1:**Table of Research Methods Employed and Number of Participants**

Participant	Semi-structured	Unstructured	Focus group	Video and Group	Home Drawings	Photographic	Game	Participant	
	Interview	Interview		Discussion	Visit	Diary		Observation	
Street boys on the street	2		6			6	2	Y	
Street girls on the street	4	1	4		1	4	1	Y	
Street boys staying at NGO projects	7	6	11	15	11	11		6	Y
Street girls staying at NGO projects	3		12			6			Y
School boys			18			18			
School girls			18			18			
Street children's parents/ carers	3								Y
Community members (women)				17					
Children from AIDS affected households	3					3			
Parents/ carers from AIDS-affected households	4								
Children working at mining site		2							Y
NGO and other professionals in Arusha region	11		2						Y
NGO project workers in Dar es Salaam	2								
Total:	39	9	71	32	12	66	3	6	

Chapter 4



Figure 4: Drawing by James, a former street boy, aged 12, at the street children project (Arusha, 2000).

Tanzanian Childhoods: Perceptions and Experiences

Chapter 4

Tanzanian childhoods: perceptions and experiences

Introduction

This chapter explores adults' and children's perceptions of the socio-cultural construct of childhood in Tanzania. Building on the discussion about Tanzanian concepts of childhood in Chapter 2, I discuss the confusion surrounding definitions of a child according to chronological age. I explore children and adults' perceptions of the gendered roles and responsibilities of children, and their expectations of their parents. Recognising that school represents one of the major institutions in children's social worlds, adults and children's attitudes towards school are explored. Key issues of concern within the school learning environment are highlighted, including corporal punishment, poverty and school drop-out, gender discrimination and girls' education. I explore the interface between formal education and religion, on the one hand, and the informal teaching and traditions of the family and community, on the other, through focus group discussions with school pupils and interviews with parents. Finally, within this context of the socio-economic and cultural construct of childhood, local understandings of the concept of street children are discussed.

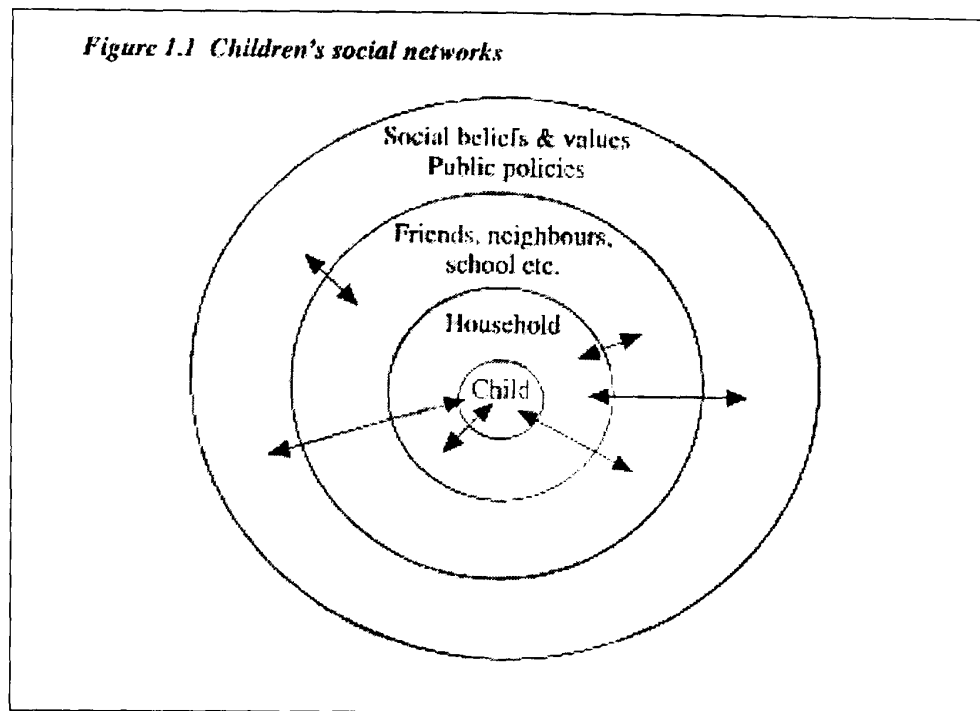
It is useful at this point to reiterate the theoretical approach to childhood adopted in this study¹. Childhood is seen as a 'social institution': 'an actively negotiated set of social relationships within which the early years of human life are constituted' (James and Prout, 1997: 7). Thus, the immaturity of children is a biological fact of life but the ways in which this immaturity is understood and made meaningful is a fact of culture (ibid). The emerging paradigm of the sociology of childhood has recognised that children are

¹ See p. 31 for more details

not simply passive recipients of adults' models, knowledge and values, but contribute actively to the creation of the social worlds in which they live, both individually and collectively (ibid; Hill and Tisdall, 1997: 1). As Hill and Tisdall note, a child's personality, interests and activities are neither attributes of an isolated individual nor imposed by the environment, but are firmly located in the interactions between a child and the network or system of social relationships to which each child belongs, as Figure 5 (below) illustrates.

Thus, we need to analyse both the *structures* of the social institution of childhood and the *agency* of children in constructing their social worlds:

There must be theoretical space for both the construction of childhood as an institution and the activity of children within and upon the constraints and possibilities that the institutional level creates. [...] By exploring the relationship between these two levels we can, then, begin to elucidate the links between given (and largely adult defined social institutions) and the cultures which children construct for and between themselves (James and Prout, 1997:27).



I will use the data gathered in this study to explore this relationship between the social processes which shape and constrain children's lives in Tanzania, and children's own activity in constructing their social worlds.

Children's and adults' perceptions of childhood in Tanzania

Having explored the cultural concept of childhood in Tanzania in the available literature in Chapter 2, it seemed important to gain an insight into people's own definitions and perceptions of childhood in Tanzania at the grass roots level. Tanzanian concepts view childhood as a process which cannot be fixed arbitrarily at a certain age specificity (Omari and Mbilinyi, 1997:2). Tensions are thus produced by the adoption of the UN definition of a 'child' according to the chronological age of eighteen. The confusion surrounding definitions of childhood in the legal and social policy discourse in Tanzania was reflected in people's responses in focus group discussions. While most adults and street children accepted the UN definition of any person under eighteen years of age, a

significant proportion considered a child to be any person under fifteen years of age.

One young woman commented that it depends on the ethnic group, which is supported in the literature on childhood in Tanzania. Omari and Mbilinyi note that conceptions of childhood in Tanzania are determined to a greater or lesser extent according to the cultural values of different ethnic groups:

In some societies like that of the Wamaasai, the process is so well elaborated that a man has to pass through about seven stages in his lifetime whereby in each stage certain activities and roles are prescribed for him and expected to be fulfilled. Among the Wapare and Wachagga, one is considered a child, if one is not yet circumcised, which constitutes one of the initiation rites [...] Further, among the Wapare before a person is married he is considered to be a child and cannot share with the adults in many of the social gatherings. Such a person could not share in any decision making process related the marital issues. For the women, if a woman has not given birth to a child she is considered a child, hence she is normally separated from any discussion and activities related to motherhood and adulthood among the women (Omari and Mbilinyi, 1997:2).

Such cultural values contribute to the marginalisation of women and young people from decision-making processes.

In focus groups with school pupils, three of the six separate gender groups thought that a person ceased to be a child at 18 years old, while two groups thought that a person (male or female) ceased to be a child at 10 years old. In the discussion with one group of boys, there was a perceived gender disparity, with girls seen as maturing and becoming adults earlier than boys:

RE: When do you think a person ceases to be a child?

Boys: At 18 years old.

RE: Is this the same for girls and boys?

Boys: No, it's not the same. Girls stop being a child when they are 14.

RE: How old do you think you are when you become an adult?

Boys: From when you're 16 and over – for girls.

RE: And for boys, it's 18?

Boys: Yes, 18 years old.

RE: why do you think it's different for girls and boys?

Boys: Because girls reach puberty early, from when they are 11 years old. (boys, primary school, Arusha, 14/11/02)

The confusion apparent here reinforces the ambiguity surrounding definitions of childhood in legal and social policy discourse nationally. UCSC members of staff suggested that in some rural areas, many people consider that a girl ceases to be a child when she reaches puberty at about fourteen years of age, while a boy ceases to be a child at the age of twenty. This reflects a gender disparity also found in the Tanzanian marriage legislation, which fixes the legal age of marriage for girls at the age of fifteen, while that of boys at eighteen years of age (Koda, 2000: 254). The UCSC director, on the other hand, relied on the Tanzanian definition of legal employment:

‘When we say a child in Tanzanian experience, we mean a person who is under fifteen years of age, that is, one who cannot be employed. Over fifteen years is not considered a “child” because he can work for his living’. (UCSC shelter, 18/1/01)

This definition was cited in part to justify the focus of the UCSC project on younger children (under fifteen years of age), who were considered easier to ‘rehabilitate’. The confusion surrounding concepts of ‘childhood’ defined according to chronological age, combined with the fact that many people, especially in rural areas, do not know their exact age, puts children and young people in a vulnerable position regarding their legal rights and at risk of marginalisation and exploitation.

Children’s gendered roles and responsibilities

As outlined in Chapter 2, African concepts of the reciprocal duties and responsibilities of children and communities constitute an integral part of the socialisation process for children in Tanzania. In group discussions exploring children and adult’s reciprocal duties and responsibilities, in response to the question, ‘What do parents and relatives expect from their children?’, all five groups of street children detailed the various reproductive and productive activities which were expected of them². The group of boys at the UCSC centre in town commented that parents want their children to stay at home to help them, but by the time they are fifteen years old, they expect their children to find paid work or engage in income-generation activities. In contrast, the school children’s responses to the same question had a greater emphasis on parental expectations of good behaviour and that children would work hard at school, help with the household chores, be cared for by their parents and that the children would in turn care for their parents in future. One group of school boys said that their parents and relatives expected their children: ‘to study, to help them with work, to listen to them, to study so that we can help them, they expect us to pass, they want to see us progress in

² See p.82 for composition of focus groups.

the future, they like good behaviour, and to participate in games' (Primary school, Arusha, 14/11/02).

According to the three groups of street boys, the duties expected of them included reproductive activities such as fetching water and firewood, sweeping the floor and other cleaning, washing dishes, cooking food, looking after younger brothers and sisters, looking after parents or relatives when they are ill (for example taking them to hospital, or washing and cooking) or face problems, such as alcoholism, or when they are elderly, running errands and calling the neighbours for help when their relatives are ill. Productive activities expected of boys included farming work such as cutting bananas, cultivating, grazing goats and cows, looking after chickens and helping with the household's small business activities, such as selling tomatoes, fish etc. (UCSC shelter, 17/4/00; UCSC residential centre, 28/4/00; street, 7/4/00).

The street girls' responses did not differ greatly from the boys, but perhaps showed a slightly greater emphasis on reproductive tasks: washing dishes, cooking, washing clothes, cleaning the floor, fetching water and firewood, looking after younger brothers and sisters (UCSC shelter, 31/3/00). One of the two groups of girls additionally mentioned that children were expected to help with farming, give advice and play (Theresa House, 20/5/00). Thus, the gender roles expected of Tanzania children do not seem as differentiated as in many other countries, such as India or the UK. However, the boys were much more specific about the tasks they performed, seeking recognition for the work they did, whereas girls did not think it important to detail their duties, suggesting that they internalised their roles and the duties expected of them more than boys.

When children at the three schools were asked about the work they helped with at home, their responses reflected the duties that street children detailed. Three of the six groups felt that there was no difference in the kind of work that boys and girls were expected to do, while the other three felt that there was a gender division of labour, with boys doing productive agricultural work, such as grazing cattle, growing crops and rearing livestock, while girls' were involved in reproductive work, such as cleaning, cooking, fetching water etc. One group of school girls thought that girls helped out with work more than boys, saying that boys just played games, and had more time to play than they did (girls, primary school, Aru-Meru district, 12/12/02). This suggests that girls may have a heavier workload than boys, and less time for recreation or study, which has implications for their educational performance.

All the groups of boys and girls, both street children and school pupils, agreed that these expectations and duties were fair. The boys living on the streets added that it was not difficult to help at home, while one of the groups of school boys said, 'It's right to help your parents, but it's not fair to be given hard work which is beyond our ability' (Primary school, Arusha 14/11/02). This shows an awareness that some children could suffer from a heavy workload and be exploited. One of the groups of street boys said that they used to carry out these duties after school (UCSC shelter, 17/4/00), while the girls living on the streets said that they worked every day, before and after school, and if there was a lot of work, they did not have time for school or it made them late. This reiterates the point made earlier, which is often raised in the literature on girls education in Tanzania, that girls have a heavier work load at home than boys, restricting the amount of time available for recreation and study, which has a proven adverse effect on girls' educational performance (Bendera, 1999; Kuleana, 1999).

Focus group discussions conducted with adults supported the children's accounts of their duties at the household level, noting that children were expected to help in the household's productive activities, for example, herding, cultivation, fishing, hunting, business etc. as well as reproductive activities. Both UCSC members of staff and the group of women at the community centre noted, however, that girls helped with work in the kitchen, particularly cooking, more often than boys, and saw the work that children perform at home as an important part of the informal teaching that children receive in preparation for adult life (UCSC shelter, 28/6/00; Vocational Training Centre, 4/5/00). Adults' perceptions of children's overall responsibilities towards their parents and relatives, however, were seen more in terms of financial support in the longer term, once young people had become self-reliant. It is interesting to note that recreation or 'play', a key defining factor in the global notion of childhood and specified as rights in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989: Article 31), was rarely mentioned (only in three of the 13 focus groups), a finding also noted in the UNICEF study (1999^a)³. However, conflicts between children's recreational needs and parents' demands on their time for labour emerged on several occasions in the street children's interviews⁴.

With regards the responsibilities and duties of parents and relatives towards their children, in response to the question, 'What do children expect from their parents?', all of the young people's discussion groups focused around expecting their family to care for them and provide for their basic needs – food, clothing, shelter – and education, in accordance with the UN Convention (1989: Articles 18, 27 and 28). The boys living on the streets at the time of the discussion provided the most comprehensive list of what they expected from their family: to look after them so that they have good prospects for

³ Also discussed on p.36

⁴ Discussed in Chapter 5.

the future, provide clothing, health care, school fees, education, a good upbringing, and to teach them good behaviour (street, 7/5/00). The boys at the UCSC shelter also mentioned that they expect their parents and relatives to teach them to cultivate (UCSC shelter, 17/4/00). The young women at Theresa House said that they also expected advice from their parents and relatives, and added that every child has the right to education (Theresa House, 20/5/00). Some of the school children felt that parents should not only provide for their education, but should also teach them how to study well, and give them an education which would enable them to flourish (boys, primary school, Aru-Meru district, 12/12/02). All the groups of school children agreed that their expectations of their parents and relatives were fulfilled, while one group of boys added that parents' ability to provide for their children could be constrained by poverty: 'It depends on the situation of the parents – some don't have any money' (Primary school, Arusha, 14/11/02).

The adults' discussion groups reiterated these messages about children's expectations from their parents and relatives, commenting that children expect a full upbringing, which meets their basic needs and includes education and love. While the children themselves did not specifically mention that they expected 'love' from their parents and relatives in the discussions, their ideas about their parents meeting their basic needs, providing 'good care' and a good upbringing, guidance and advice, can all be seen as stemming from the concept of 'being loved' by their parents and relatives. Indeed, in the individual interviews and home visits, many children expressed a lack of love at home as a key factor in their move to the streets⁵. The next section examines children and adults' perceptions of education and the school environment, as part of the social construction of childhood in Tanzania.

⁵ See pp.177-185.

Children's and adults' perceptions of education

Despite achieving impressive gains in primary school enrolment in the 1970s and early 1980s, Tanzania has since experienced a significant decline (UNICEF, 2001; Kuleana, 1999). UNICEF notes: 'School infrastructure in much of the country is dilapidated, teachers are ill trained and under-motivated, books are scarce, and teaching pedagogy fails to promote real learning' (UNICEF, 2001:42). The crisis in education in the country is widely acknowledged as a critical development priority in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, and in 2001, the Tanzanian government launched a five-year Primary Education Development Plan, which aims to achieve full enrolment, quality improvements and strengthened institutional governance by 2006 (ibid). Recognising that school represents one of the major institutions in children's social worlds and forms part of the construction of childhood, adults' perceptions and children's experiences of school at the grassroots level were explored in the focus group discussions.

Discussions with adults emphasised the importance of education for children's future, with the women at the community centre suggesting that alternative ways should be found to assist parents and relatives who cannot afford to send their children to school, to meet the cost of school fees, uniforms, books etc. (Vocational Training Centre, 4/5/00). The UCSC members of staff identified several problems with schools, including:

- a) Low level of education of teachers - many have only just finished completed primary school, and then go on to a four year teacher training course, without

any secondary education. They should have at least four years of secondary education.

- b) Low salaries mean that teachers are not motivated to teach children, and they conduct a lot of private tuition to supplement incomes.
- c) School equipment is poor/lacking and classrooms are overcrowded (there were over 100 pupils in one class at the primary school attended by boys at the UCSC residential centre).
- d) Corporal punishment is frequently used on children's hands and legs, for trivial mistakes or, for example, if they do not have a pen, an exercise book or school fees, if they are late, for example, they had to find some breakfast before school, or if they do not understand properly (UCSC shelter, 28/06/00).

Despite these problems, all five groups of street children said that they liked studying and thought it was important to enable them to find employment when they were older. All of the groups of girls and boys who participated in focus groups in three schools in the region liked going to school, and mentioned a range of subjects and aspects of school life that they particularly enjoyed. These included games, religious studies, reading, maths, science, social studies, English, Kiswahili, respecting the teachers and obeying them. Girls and boys at one school said that they like doing cleaning work at school, such as watering the garden, sweeping etc. and said that all the pupils had to help with these chores before class in the morning (8am) and before they went home at 2pm. This meant a long morning of study and work for children, having to go without food until they reached home, particularly for those who had to walk half an hour or more to school in the morning, often without breakfast.

Corporal punishment

Many studies on education in Tanzania draw attention to the widespread use of corporal punishment as a means of disciplining children in school (UNICEF, 2001; Kuleana, 1999). As Kuleana Centre for Children's Rights notes, it is difficult to know the extent to which physical punishment was used as a form of discipline for children in pre-colonial times, but corporal punishment was used in schools during the colonial era, and the practice has continued since independence (ibid: 40). While national regulations stipulate that corporal punishment should only be used in limited circumstances in schools (for grave offences, as a 'last resort', and only when specific procedures are followed), regulations are often not followed and children are beaten for minor mistakes (ibid).

When the school pupils were asked what they disliked about school, half of the groups mentioned corporal punishment, one group of girls mentioned favouritism by teachers, while the other groups said there was nothing they disliked about school. One group of boys detailed several aspects of school life that they disliked: 'Truancy, teachers who don't teach attentively, being beaten all the time for no reason, being treated badly by other pupils for no reason, arguing pointlessly' (Primary school, Arusha, 14/11/02). All of the groups of school pupils in all three schools confirmed that teachers' use of corporal punishment was widespread and expressed how much it hurt them when they were struck, often making them cry. Reasons cited for its use included: bad behaviour and disturbing others in class, mistakes, lateness, not having the full school uniform, uncleanliness, swearing, noisiness, not obeying and respecting the school rules, absconding from school, fighting. One group of boys from a rural school said that refusing to bring water to school every day for school building work was also punished

by strokes of the cane. Two groups of boys said that pupils were sometimes caned when they had not done anything wrong.

In addition to violating the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the widespread use of corporal punishment in Tanzanian schools violates Tanzania's own National Education (Corporal Punishment) Regulations of 1979, which clearly outlines specific extenuating circumstances in which corporal punishment may be used, of which many teachers and pupils are unaware, as my research shows (Kuleana, 1999:42). The physical, psychological and emotional consequences, as well as the consequences for learning, and for building a democratic society have been documented as overwhelmingly negative and damaging (Kuleana, 1999; Omari and Mbilinyi, 1997).

The street boys held differing attitudes towards corporal punishment in schools. Some thought it was right for teachers to beat pupils with a cane to teach them a lesson, indeed, the boys living on the streets quoted the Swahili saying, '*Akupigaye/ kuchapa ndiye akupendaye*' ['The one who beats you, loves you'] (street, 7/5/00). However, others disagreed strongly, saying that 'teachers beat children like cows if you make a mistake' (UCSC shelter, 17/4/00). Half of the groups of school pupils said that they thought it was acceptable for teachers to use corporal punishment to discipline pupils who had done something wrong, while the other groups were more divided on the issue. A group of girls and a group of boys confirmed that they would be happy if teachers stopped using corporal punishment in school. Two groups of boys thought that the use of the cane should be restricted to two to five strokes, but said that teachers sometimes struck pupils up to 20 times on the hands, legs, back or buttocks:

RE: Do you think it's alright to be caned if you've done something wrong, or do you think it's bad?

Boys: It's alright if you did something wrong. But even then, it shouldn't be more than five strokes of the cane. Some teachers strike you up to 20 times.

RE: How many times do they usually strike you?

Boys: 5, or 3, that's all.

RE: So why do they sometimes strike you 20 times?

Boys: You find some pupils make the teacher very angry. They lose their temper.

RE: What do your parents think about being caned at school?

Boys: They just think that's the way it is. They beat us too. (Primary school, Arusha, 14/11/02)

In another group, four boys felt that it was acceptable for pupils to be disciplined with the cane, seeing it as their own fault, while the remaining two were completely opposed to corporal punishment. It is interesting to note that the two who were opposed to corporal punishment also said that they were not beaten at home. This suggests that widespread acceptance of corporal punishment in school forms part of the cultural construction of childhood, which is often reinforced at the household level. Attempts to abolish corporal punishment in schools must therefore seek to change people's attitudes towards disciplining children at the household and community levels, in addition to reform of the national legislation, which permits corporal punishment in schools, albeit in extenuating circumstances.

Poverty and school drop-out

Despite recording impressive gains in primary school enrolment in the 1970s, less than one half of all children completed primary education at the end of the 1990s, and more than 2 million children were out of school (UNICEF, 2001:69). The introduction of school fees can be seen as direct consequence of the economic climate and policy of cost-sharing in Tanzania throughout the 1990s, which, as studies have shown, is linked to declining primary school enrolment rates, high drop-out rates and very low performance, particularly of girls (Bendera, 1999)⁶. Enrolment in Tanzania is very low in comparison with neighbouring countries, with only 77 per cent gross enrolment in 1999 (UNICEF, 2001:44). According to government data 1980-1996, over one third of those who begin primary schooling never complete the final year, Standard 7 (ibid: 50). Children from poor backgrounds tend to leave school earlier than those from better-off families (ibid). According to a World Bank study in 1999, by age 15-19, about two thirds of children from the poorest income quintile had dropped out (ibid). Qualitative studies show that attendance generally is very low, and at times up to half of those enrolled are not in class (ibid). The government's abolition of all primary school fees and compulsory levies in July 2001 is a welcome step towards increasing access to basic education. However, parents and guardians still struggle to meet the costs of school uniforms, exercise books, and contributions to school buildings etc. The greater numbers of children now being enrolled in primary school, has resulted in overcrowding, as teachers and school infrastructure struggle to cope with the new influx.

Four of the six groups of school pupils mentioned parents' and relatives' inability to afford the school fees and uniform, exercise books etc. for their children as a key factor which would prevent them from attending school. At one school, pupils knew four

⁶ See p.41-2.

pupils who had dropped out of their year because their parents were not able to pay for their school uniform and equipment (Primary school, Aru-Meru district, 12/12/02).

This issue was also raised by the group of girls living on the streets (UCSC shelter, 31/03/00). The school pupils pointed out that if a child came to school without the full uniform, they would be caned by their teacher, and so many children stayed away from school:

‘Sometimes you find they can’t afford it, for example, a child is told to come to school wearing shoes, and the child says to their parents, “I don’t have any shoes, I can’t go to school”. And also if they come to school wearing flip-flops, they are caned. So pupils are scared of going to school with flip-flops, because they’ll be caned, so they stay at home’ (Boys, primary school, Arusha, 14/11/02).

The only social safety net mentioned was a Christian non-governmental organisation, ‘Compassion’, which assisted poor families by providing school uniforms, although these were usually only available to younger children.

Other factors which school pupils mentioned would prevent them from studying at school were: illness or disability, their own self-discipline, absconding to watch TV, having to help teachers with work during class time, such as cultivating, carrying wood, stones or firewood for the teachers’ own use. This highlights an issue raised in the literature on education in Tanzania, that pupils are regularly forced to work on school farms, perform chores or run private errands for teachers, which according to UNICEF are, ‘illegal, humiliating and interfere with learning’ (UNICEF, 2001:60).

Gender discrimination and girls' education

In focus groups with school pupils, two groups of girls and one group of boys noted that pregnancy represented a gender specific problem, which affected girls' continued attendance at school. They confirmed that girls who became pregnant were expelled from school. A study conducted amongst school girls in Mwanza found that the most commonly cited problems experienced by school girls were pregnancy (50 per cent), followed by sexual harassment by boys (37 per cent) (Kuleana, 1999:57). The official practice is to expel all school girls who are found to be pregnant, and Kuleana estimated that the number of expulsions due to school pregnancies may be as much as 39,000 per year, that is, thirteen times the official record (*ibid* :58). While the former street girls did not mention pregnancy as a problem preventing their continued attendance at school, Sophia, a seventeen year old former street girl participating in the discussion group with her baby, had dropped out of the vocational training school she had been attending (sponsored by UCSC) due to her pregnancy. In my later visit six months later, I found her fourteen year old sister, Halima, who participated in the discussion and in an interview, had also dropped out of the same vocational training school due to pregnancy.

Both groups of street girls commented that they do not like being insulted, teased, beaten or discriminated against at school. These focus groups thus reinforce the issues raised in the literature on girls' education in Tanzania, that schools provide a 'girl-unfriendly learning environment' (*ibid*: 53):

The overall educational environment – parental and societal expectations, gender stereotyping in school, sexual harassment, and inadequate physical infrastructure – all promote lower female attendance and achievement in school (ibid).

Examination performance in Tanzania is extremely low overall, due to the poor quality of teaching, overcrowding, insufficient teachers and lack of facilities in school. While slightly more girls than boys complete primary education in Tanzania, the unequal opportunities for learning are evidenced in gender disparities in examination results. In 2000, almost 30 per cent of the boys passed the primary school leaving exam as compared to about half as many girls, and many more girls than boys received the total fail ‘E’ grade (UNICEF 2001:62). Within subject areas, girls do particularly poorly in mathematics, achieving grades that are three or more times lower than boys (ibid). In addition, performance results vary greatly between urban and rural areas, with a child in urban areas about twice as likely to pass the primary leaving exam as a child in rural areas (ibid). The discrimination and harassment girls experience at school is clearly a violation of girls’ right to education, which, though not recognised in the gender-blind language of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, is explicitly addressed in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ANPPACAN, 1999: Article 11:6).

Conflict between formal education and informal teaching of the family and community

A further aspect of the cultural construction of childhood in Tanzania is the interface between formal education and the informal teaching of the family and community. As was discussed in Chapter 2, UNICEF researchers note that a contradiction is produced

between the informal teaching of family and community (including knowledge passed on in the course of initiation) and the formal knowledge imparted in schools, which results in a gap between generations (UNICEF, 1999^a). Recent studies of Tanzanian schooling suggest that this ‘clash of world views persists and affects not only school enrolment but also the community’, which produces a situation in which children are vulnerable (ibid: 53). They suggest that parents’ capacity to protect children is significantly diminished, and ‘children [...] are forced to turn towards school, rather than the family, in order to become social adults’ (Bekombo, cited in UNICEF, 1999:53).

I tried to explore this apparent conflict between formal education and the informal teaching of the family and community in focus groups with school pupils. According to African concepts of childhood, initiation rites represent a child’s progression to adulthood and initiation into the next cycle of life⁷, and represent a key component of the traditional teaching of the family and community. The association of initiation rites with puberty and sexuality, my status as a European (*mzungu* – white person), and the widespread cultural desire to appear ‘modern’ through adopting Western values, is likely to have inhibited discussion of this issue to some extent. Despite their embarrassment, however, some pupils did speak up and talk about their perceptions of this sensitive issue.

The groups of boys and girls saw the informal teaching of the family, relatives and the community as concerned with teaching children good manners, respect for their elders, parents, relatives, younger siblings, and other children, discipline, and obedience. One group of boys however qualified this by saying that some parents could give children bad advice and set a bad example: ‘It depends on the advice, some parents are grown up

⁷ Discussed on p.38.

but they teach children bad habits, like smoking cigarettes, going to the disco etc.’

(Primary school, Arusha, 14/11/02). One of the groups of boys mentioned that as well as discipline, they learned to ‘participate with their peers, love and peace’ (Primary school, Aru-Meru district, 12/12/02). This suggests that the informal teaching of the family and community was important to their sense of well-being and identity within the community.

One group of boys also said that they learned how to study, how to cultivate, rear livestock, they learn different games, and learned ‘to make girls pregnant’ (Primary school, Rombo district, Kilimanjaro, 11/11/02). Indeed, when the pupils were asked more specifically about the teaching that accompanied initiation rites, two groups of boys mentioned learning about marital life: ‘The way to live with your wife’, and ‘If we’re not circumcised, we won’t be able to have children’. Within the focus groups, there was considerable ethnic diversity, and the boys and girls confirmed that circumcision customs varied according to the ethnic group. Both boys and girls said that they were taught by elders in separate gender groups in a period of confinement, and were not supposed to associate with members of the opposite sex during the period of instruction: ‘At home, you stay with the elders, you’re not allowed to stay with girls or women, you just stay with the older men’ (boys, primary school, Arusha, 14/11/02).

It has been estimated that about 18 per cent of Tanzanian women undergo Female Genital Mutilation⁸ (FGM), as part of the initiation of girls into adulthood, but the actual extent of the problem is not fully known because of the reluctance of communities to talk about the subject (Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC), 2002).

Female Genital Mutilation involves the removal or modification of the female sex

organs, causing immediate and permanent physical, psychological and sexual damage to girls and women (ibid). Short term health risks include: excessive bleeding and severe pain, which can lead to shock and death, infection, tetanus which can lead to death, injury or trauma to surrounding tissue and organs, urine retention, leading to bladder infections, high risk of HIV infection and hepatitis B though the use of non-sterile instruments. The long-term consequences include scarring, difficult childbirth, acute or chronic pelvic infections, infertility, painful sexual intercourse, chronic urinary infections, abdominal pains, and psychological effects, such as depression, anxiety, neuroses, shock, frigidity, amongst others (ibid). According to the Demographic Health Survey (1996), 81 per cent of women in the Arusha region undergo FGM, while nationally it is estimated that 13.9 per cent of 15-19 year olds have been mutilated (ibid: 35). The co-ordinator of a Network Against Female Genital Mutilation (NAFGEM) in Tanzania, a non-governmental organisation involved in community-based education programmes campaigning against FGM in the Kilimanjaro region, however, suggested these figures should be treated with caution, as there was much variation even within the same district. Figures for the Arusha region are likely to be heavily influenced by the fact that the main ethnic groups, Maasai and Waarusha practice FGM on virtually 100 per cent of girls and women in their communities (Interview, Co-ordinator, NAFGEM, Moshi, 12/11/02).

The Tanzanian government has shown its commitment to human rights principles by ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990). It has also passed the Sexual Offences Special

⁸ Female Genital Mutilation is defined by the World Health Organisation as comprising 'all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons' (WHO, 2000).

Provisions Act (1998), which makes the practice of FGM on anyone under the age of 18 illegal and makes the persons mutilating children subject to prosecution (LHRC, 2002:5). According to the research findings of the Legal and Human Rights Centre study, however, most of the respondents in the Kilimanjaro and Arusha regions were not aware of the legal provisions of the Sexual Offences Special Act, and in Arusha, there was no attempt to deny or hide the practice (ibid). In many communities which practice FGM, the study revealed that the practice was strongly supported by the elders of the community and by the young people, who fear non-acceptance by their family and peers (ibid: 19). Indeed, in Arusha district, there was anecdotal evidence of young girls going against their parents' wishes and being mutilated to receive the presents and be accepted by their peers (ibid). In these communities, FGM was closely tied to the initiation of the girl into adulthood in preparation for marriage, and the consequences of non-conformity were grave – un-mutilated women were called and treated as children, were not allowed to cook for their in-laws, were not allowed to participate in traditional ceremonies, and were ridiculed by their peers (ibid: 30).

All three groups of school girls were aware that it was against the law for female genital mutilation to be performed in Tanzania, and said that their parents were against the practice for their daughters. One group said that their parents and teachers had taught them about the dangers and health risks involved for girls, while another group said they had learned about it on the radio. The girls confirmed that the illegality of the practice meant that there was widespread secrecy about the practice among tribes who still performed FGM, such as the Waarusha: 'It's impossible for us know [of girls who have been mutilated] because they are afraid to say, if someone says, she'll be accused of it' (Girls, primary school, Arusha, 14/11/02).

Bendera and Mboya note that societies which practice initiation rites are grappling with the problem of how to comply with the state laws regarding education for their children and at the same time, to fulfil the cultural tradition and customs of initiation rites (Bendera and Mboya, 1998: 21). They suggest that communities are currently tackling this problem by carrying out the initiation rites during the holidays, especially for boys, and by reducing the age of initiation, so that initiation, especially for girls, takes place before girls start school (ibid). While the official age of school entry is seven years, in 2000, only 20 per cent of all Standard 1 entrants in government schools were of this age, while 14 per cent were 11 years or older, with the average age of entry into Standard 1 as just over 9 years (UNICEF, 2001:49). The co-ordinator of the Network Against Female Genital Mutilation in Tanzania (NAFGEM), an NGO campaigning against FGM, confirmed that the age at which FGM is performed on girls is getting lower and lower, as parents try to avoid the law: 'Some mutilate these very young children as a way of countering the law – they know there is a campaign on, and they think that if a child is done before she is old enough to know what is happening, they won't refuse, it will have already been done' (Co-ordinator, NAFGEM, Moshi, 12/11/02). She also suggested that whereas FGM used to be part of an initiation rite preparing girls for womanhood and marriage, which consisted of teaching girls about their roles as women, about their relationship with their future husbands, responsibilities to their in-laws etc, increasingly very little training is given:

'In most areas, there is very little training being given, especially when you consider the age of mutilation has gone down considerably, that now, some girls are being mutilated for non-traditional reasons. When you have babies and very young children being mutilated, you cannot say they are being mutilated in

preparation for marriage per se, that may be the end objective, but the immediate one is just the mutilation' (Co-ordinator of NAFGEM, Moshi, 12/11/02).

She highlighted a new form of mutilation being practised on baby girls called 'lawalawa' (Swahili for 'sweets'), as a way of curing vaginal fungal infections which babies often become infected with due to poor sanitary conditions and scarcity of water. The fungal infection disappears because mothers are told to keep the area clean, rather than due to the mutilation (Co-ordinator of NAFGEM, Moshi, 12/11/02). She suggested that parents' level of education, and religious affiliation were important factors which influenced the extent to which FGM was practised on girls. The taboo of talking about FGM in most communities means that girls and women who have suffered long-term health consequences, such as inability to retain urine, are reluctant to come forward or are unaware that medical treatment is available (ibid). She cited the case of thirteen-year-old girl who became very withdrawn, did not associate with any of the other girls, and did not want to go to school anymore. No one realised what the problem was, until a member of NAFGEM discovered that the girl had been mutilated when she was seven years old, and was suffering from long-term health complications from FGM:

'The scar tissue developed in to growth [...] So this girl had this thing growing and it kept growing until it made her so uncomfortable, she thought she was becoming a boy, because this tissue had grown so long. So she thought, if she is going to be a boy, she could no longer play with the other girls, but at the same time, she could not join the boys either. So she was caught in between and she withdrew into herself' (interview with co-ordinator, NAFGEM, Moshi, 12/11/02).

A gynaecologist decided that she needed to be operated on and the NGO were able to raise funds to pay for her medical costs. The NGO had recently heard that the girl was fully recovered and about to get married, while her mother had vowed not to mutilate her sisters, as a result of her daughter's experience.

While the national education policy aims to improve girls' opportunities for formal education, this may conflict with more immediate pressures exerted by the family and community on girls, regarding marriage and sexual activity, particularly among communities that practice female genital mutilation. Bendera and Mboya suggest that this contributes to girls' lower educational performance and high drop-out rates (Bendera and Mboya, 1998: 21). As noted earlier in the chapter, early sexual encounters lead to early pregnancies and ultimately girls' expulsion from school⁹. Furthermore, forced early marriage affects girls' continued attendance at school, as one of the groups of boys highlighted in the focus groups conducted in schools: 'Some parents threaten their children, especially girls, they threaten them when they are young before they've finished school. They threaten to marry them off, to make them get married, when they haven't even finished school' (boys, primary school, Aru-Meru district, 12/12/02). These cultural pressures thus appear to have a particularly detrimental impact on girls' educational performance and school drop-out rates.

When pupils were asked how they thought that the informal traditional teaching of the family and community differed from what they learnt at school, one group of boys articulated the perceived conflict between the informal traditional teaching and customs, and formal education and 'modern' values:

⁹ See p. 118

RE: Do the elders teach you about marriage [as part of the initiation rites]?

Boys: Yes.

RE: Do you think it helps?

Boy: Yes, it helps, but only to a certain extent.

RE: How does this differ from what you learn at school?

Boy: It is different. Because if you look at the current system of education, they call it science and technology, it is so different from the traditional way of life.

RE: Do you think the traditional teaching is out of date now?

Boy: I think it was better for our parents. I think the traditional teaching was better than what we learn today, because nowadays people say that they are moving with the times, when in actual fact they are losing their sense of direction. Some wear mini-skirts, but that's not strange when you consider that our forefathers did not have clothes or only had little pieces of cloth to cover themselves – some used leaves, but in modern day Africa, whether it is ignorance or what, when they see you in a skirt or if you are scantily-clad they feel bad and say you are badly dressed. (boys, primary school, Arusha, 14/11/02)

This suggests that in the face of formal education, and the increasing globalisation of Western values, parents are losing their authority with regard to traditional cultural values and the informal teaching of the family and community, which reduces their ability to protect and guide their children. Indeed, the national child development policy suggests that in recent years there has been a breakdown of the traditional system of communal responsibility for childcare, resulting in a more individualistic (Western) approach to parenting:

Parents and guardians have been left to promote the moral development of their children on their own, mainly because of the breakdown of the system of communal responsibility for child care. As a result, there is no common direction, but rather each parent or guardian brings up children in the way s/he sees fit (Government of Tanzania, 1996: 24)

I also sought the views of a father and a guardian of former street boys, who were now living at home, about this interface between formal education and Western values on the one hand, and the traditional teaching of the family and community, on the other. In both the interviews, religion emerged as a key factor, which caused tensions with traditional cultural values, rather than formal education *per se*. The guardian who had adopted two young former street boys was a Pentecostal pastor, and the father, head of a polygamous household, was a traditional subsistence farmer. Both were from the Waarusha tribe (of Maasai origin), the predominant ethnic group living in the surrounding rural areas of the Arusha region. The pastor was quick to differentiate between ‘believers’ and ‘non-believers’, pointing out that many of the traditional customs were incompatible with their beliefs:

F: [...] Non-believers have many different traditions and customs, but we church people are different to a certain extent. Many traditions and customs we have stopped because many of them don’t have any advantages for children, or for the community. Most customary practices adversely impact on our society because some treat women badly, some treat children badly, they don’t give children their rights, or women’s rights. So the majority of them we’ve stopped. Like respect, part of the traditions and customs are about respect between children

and parents, we still go along with that. But other aspects, where there's no benefit for the community, we now consider them unacceptable.

RE: Like what, for example?

F: There are many, like for example, female circumcision, which we don't go along with, and the traditional education which is part of female circumcision, traditional dances, various dances which are sexually provocative and take place at night, which there's no benefit for the children, which teach them bad things, these things we don't go along with at all.

RE: How do these traditions and customs differ from the education children receive at school?

F: They are very different because these traditions don't build, don't have anything to do with their development. Many of them harm the progress of the child, and it doesn't help them in the way that we believe in, that is, spiritually, it's not beneficial, it doesn't develop the child at all. As I've said, often it doesn't respect children's rights and the rights of the children's mothers, so if you compare it to education of human rights, it's completely different. Because in the traditions of the Maasai or the Waarusha, you find that children and women don't have any rights. Often, they are discriminated against and their welfare is not considered a big issue. And so you find that children may not have their needs met by their parents, they are only there to provide cheap labour and no one is concerned about their welfare. So on many occasions we exploit them.

(Home visit, Frank and Samuel, 6/12/02)

This illustrates the conflict between Christianity, a Western religion inculcated in the Arusha/ Kilimanjaro region via missionaries, and traditional African values.

Christianity here is seen to reject traditional African cultural values, perceiving these as

'primitive' and incompatible with human rights principles. This suggests that religious affiliation is instrumental in whether parents or guardians follow the traditional teaching and cultural practices of the community. The adopted former street boys, Frank and Samuel, had however quickly learnt the Waarusha language and integrated well into school, despite being from a different ethnic group originally:

'To a great extent, they have already become part of our tribe [Waarusha], they already know the language completely [...] Even when they were at school, often when they started there, the children teased them about being from a different tribe, but they didn't like those kind of jokes, later they tried to learn the language, they were happy with the environment here, they were happy with our tribe, they don't have any problems at all. They have learnt the culture of the people of this region' (Home visit, Frank and Samuel, 6/12/02).

This shows the importance of conformity to the dominant ethnic identity in rural areas, and suggests that this overrides religious differences.

Justin was a former street boy, who had lived at the UCSC residential centre, but came home for his initiation rites and decided to stay at home. His father, who maintained a traditional polygamous household, practised some traditional customs, which were combined with certain religious traditions. On Justin's return home, having left the UCSC residential centre, he had been circumcised in the traditional way (aged 15) and had become a *moran* ['warrior' – term used to describe stage of life when Maasai young men have been circumcised and are seen as respected adults]. As part of the traditional teaching of the family and community, he had learned about his duties and responsibilities to his family, respect for others, etc. Despite adherence to this cultural

practice, his father did not expect Justin to follow further stages of traditional Maasai instruction because his son considered himself a Christian. Indeed the Christian confirmation ceremony was seen as replacing the next stages of Maasai initiation rites:

RE: Are there any other traditions and customs when he's a bit older?

F: Now there aren't any more, because he's Christian, so now he goes to confirmation classes here, so next year, he'll be confirmed. There's nothing else. Once he's been confirmed, then he'll marry. He'll ask someone, someone he likes, a person like us. [...] I'm not yet [Christian] but later I'll become Christian. I say first, wait, first and see the children participate first, when they're done, I'll go.

Justin's father again illustrated the point made earlier that religion caused more tensions with the cultural values and teaching of the family and community than formal education:

RE: So how does the traditional teaching differ from the education children receive at school?

F: The traditional teaching and customs are about things to do with us at home here, and school goes it's own way. But school doesn't reject traditions or customs. But things that might do include religion, for example, baptism. Some people go to traditional healers for medical treatment, but for others like us, we're Christians and we reject those practices. But as for me, I still retain certain traditional values and customs, for example, male circumcision and many others. I don't have any great concerns with Christian practices – the Christians

do their own things, I don't interfere. They just go about doing their work, building his own house, rearing cows etc. (Home visit, Justin, 6/12/02)

Religion thus provides the backdrop against which parents or guardians, decide which cultural practices they wish to follow or reject for their children. Children themselves rarely have a say in the decision, as one of the groups of school pupils suggested:

'[Circumcision practices] depend on what the parents decide [...]. Your parents plan it all' (boys, primary school, Arusha, 14/11/02).

The previous sections have explored local understandings of the concept of childhood in Tanzania. The discussion about the reciprocal rights and responsibilities of children and their parents and relatives showed that boys and girls were socialised according to traditional gender roles and the division of labour. Children's and adults' attitudes towards education highlighted key issues of concern, including corporal punishment, poverty and school drop-out, and gender discrimination. The conflicting values of the traditional, informal teaching of the family and community on the one hand, and formal education and religion on the other, were shown to have negative consequences for children, particularly girls, and restricted the family's ability to guide and protect their children. The final section explores adults' and children's understandings of the concept of 'street children', within this socio-economic and cultural context.

Local understandings of the concept of 'street children'

Following on from the discussion in Chapter 1 about the confusion surrounding the term 'street children'¹⁰, it seemed pertinent to gain an insight into local perceptions of who

¹⁰ See p.17.

'street children' are within the Tanzanian context. The Swahili term '*watoto wa mitaani*', literally means 'children of the street', and thus seems to fit comfortably with the UN definition of 'children *of* the street' who live and work on the street, as opposed to 'children *in* the street' - children who work in the street but return home after work. Indeed, the UCSC director adopted the 'children *of* the street' definition of street children as the target group of the UCSC project (UCSC shelter, 18/1/01). Two NGO project co-ordinators also gave their personal definitions of 'street children' in terms of children's presence and activities within the street environment:

'A street child is any child who is either working, loitering, living or resting in the street surroundings, even those children who work at the market place, they don't have proper work, but just go there and get whatever comes. To me they are street children, whether they are there 24 hours a day, only for one hour a day, going there and going back home, whatever so long as he's there'. (Chair, National Network of Organisations working with Children¹¹ (NNOC), 27/11/02)

'A street child is a person who is under 18 who spends his/ her time on the street, relying on getting her/ her food, clothing, accommodation on the street. Another category is those who just spend the day on the street performing different activities such as scavenging, begging, petty business – selling plastic bags, but not for a big profit. At their age, they are not supposed to be involved in business, they are supposed to be in school, so it is an abuse of their time, that qualifies them to be street children. Street children are also those children who are with their families, begging on the street, just working with their families'. (Chair, Forum for Child Concerned NGOs in Arusha (FOCNA), 5/12/02)

¹¹ National Network of Organisations working with Children (NNOC), an umbrella NGO established in 2001 in Dar es Salaam, which by the end of 2002 had 29 members from different regions in Tanzania.

Similarly, a study, conducted by the Forum for Child Concerned NGOs in Arusha¹² (FOCNA), on the nature and extent of street children in Arusha municipality identified different categories of street children: those who lived and worked on the streets permanently, those who worked on the streets and returned home at night, and those who worked on the streets on a part time basis (Rwegoshora, 2002).

These definitions relating to child's presence and activities within the street environment reflect the national social policy and international development discourse on street children. However, local perceptions of 'street children' were more consistent with the children's own definitions, incorporating problems children experience at home into the concept of street children. In response to the question, '*Who are "street children"?*', women at the community centre wrote down their definitions on small pieces of paper distributed at the start of the discussion:

1. 'Those who missed out on advice and guidance from their parents because they didn't make bringing up their children a priority and they decided to devote most of their time to other activities such as drinking.'
2. 'Those who don't get a good up-bringing, nor education, nor good nutrition or clothing.'
3. 'Those whose parents died, who were born outside of marriage, or whose parents are unable to provide for them, they decide to move to the streets, where

¹² Forum for Child Concerned NGOs in Arusha (FOCNA), an umbrella group of 27 NGOs working with children in Arusha.

they don't know where they'll get food, clothes, education. In the end, they become thieves, smoke marijuana, drugs as a result of their situation.'

4. 'Those who failed at home and wander around aimlessly, eventually end up stealing things and being called street kids, as they lack guidance from their parents.'
5. 'Those who wander around town aimlessly, looking to follow any kind of lifestyle, whether good or bad. They are also those who don't have any parents to depend on, who take their life into their own hands and leave home because of various problems which they cannot tolerate.'
6. 'Those who didn't have the chance to go to school, so most of the time, you find them on the street, they become involved in robbery, since they imitate what their peers are doing to cope with life.'
7. 'Those who were not planned by their parents and later the parents failed to provide for their needs such as : food, clothing, shelter, education. Later they ran away from home and wander around town aimlessly.' (Vocational Training Centre, 4/5/00)

These definitions reveal the perception that some parents are unable to provide for their children's material and emotional needs, due to a combination of factors such as unstable marriages, poverty, parental deaths, a lack of family planning, irresponsible parenting and alcoholism. The language used in some of the definitions also implies that children's response to run away can be seen as a conscious decision to escape such

problems, for example, 'they decide to move to the streets' (3.), 'those [...] who take their life into their own hands and leave home because of various problems which they cannot tolerate' (5.).

The definitions of UCSC members of staff also linked the identity of street children to the problems they experience at home: '[Street children] are children who live on the streets because of various problems within the family', and a street child is 'a child who ran away from home because of problems both within and beyond the control of the family' (UCSC shelter, 28/06/00). This latter definition is particularly useful, for it gives a sense of children's agency within and upon the constraints and possibilities of the social institution of childhood (James and Prout, 1997:7).

Staff at Theresa House, on the other hand, thought that peer company was also a factor leading girls and boys to the street:

The difficult situation forces them [to the street] but there are external incentives from those who have gone ahead. They tell others, 'Why do you put up with problems like this, come here', so their peer company contributes to it a lot too.
(Theresa House, 12/6/00)

The adults' discussions and staff interviews thus suggest that adults have some understanding of the difficult situations facing poor households, and so do not blame children for running away, but rather perceive them as 'victims' of their situation. Once on the street however, children are seen as leading a 'deviant', anti-social lifestyle, characterised by drug use, crime and vagrancy.

School pupils gave a variety of responses to the question ‘Who do you think street children are?’ Four of the six focus groups with girls and boys at primary schools in the region thought street children were orphans, or children whose family were unable to meet their basic needs, such as food, clothing, education, shelter, medical treatment. Two groups of boys highlighted the problem of children being beaten and treated badly by step-mothers or other members of the family, which as will be shown in the next chapter, reflects many of the street children’s own perceptions:

RE: Who do you think are ‘street children’?

Boys: They’re called *wachokoraa* [street kid – insulting]. Those who don’t have any parents, or they live with their step-mother who treats them badly, they don’t have enough to eat. Some people give birth to children outside of marriage, and they’re taken in by people and looked after, but some people hate them, scold them and chase them away and they become *wachokoraa*.

A lot of parents don’t plan for the future. You find other children are chased away, they decide for themselves to leave. Parents don’t follow family planning, you find they have ten children, and the parents can’t afford to bring them up.

RE: So why do you think children leave home and go to the streets?

Boys: You find their friends come and trick them and persuade them. They trick them and go and smoke marijuana, drink alcohol, take drugs. You find their parents beat them a lot and neglect them, so they decide to go. (boys, primary school, Arusha, 14/11/02)

The group of boys who attended the primary school where former street boys from the UCSC residential centre were integrated did not draw any distinction between themselves and street children:

RE: Who do you think street children are?

Boys: They are children like us.

RE: They're just normal children?

Boys: Yes, they're normal children because they used to live with their parents. (boys, primary school, Aru-Meru district, 12/12/02)

The boys' level of awareness about street children here is likely to have been positively influenced by their friendship with their classmates from the UCSC residential centre, who were former street boys.

Half of the focus groups with school pupils gave a more mixed response, however, for while they acknowledged that parents might not be able to provide for their children's needs, they also saw street children as recalcitrant children who engaged in 'deviant' behaviour, rebelling against their parents, or school, became involved in petty theft, or got into bad company:

RE: Who do you think are 'street children'?

Girls: Children who don't have any parents, some have parents but don't want to listen to them, some parents don't have the money to educate their children, some parents have enough money, but they don't want to listen.

RE: Why do you think children leave home and go to the streets?

Girls: Parents don't provide them with a good upbringing, and temptations from their friends, getting into bad company, like those who smoke marijuana. Because of poverty. (girls, primary school, Arusha, 14/11/02)

Similarly, one group of boys perceived street children in terms of 'deviant' behaviour:

RE: So who do you think 'street children' are?

Boys: Those who don't want to go to school, thieves, those who run away from school.

RE: Why do you think children leave home and go to the streets?

Boys: They did something wrong at home, they stole something at home and are afraid to go back home, they swore at their parents, they are drawn to places with nice things, they refuse to work, they don't get any medical treatment from their mother and father. (boys, primary school, Rombo district, Kilimanjaro, 12/12/02)

Thus, while school pupils mostly saw children's move to the street as related to poverty and difficult home circumstances, some pupils also reflected public perceptions about street children being 'deviant' and recalcitrant, rejecting parental and school authority in favour of peer company and the street lifestyle.

The group of girls at Theresa House gave a definition of street children which emphasised children's difficult home environments and their agency in leaving for the streets: 'Those who miss out on help from parents, relatives and community, or who are orphans, which makes them leave for the streets' (Theresa House, 20/5/00). The emphasis on problems at home as the motivating force leading children to the streets, was reflected in the definition of street children offered by boys at the UCSC shelter:

RE: Who are street children?

Boys: Children who live in the streets in difficult circumstances, who have run away from home because of problems.

- RE: Does that mean they are boys and girls?
- Boys: Yes, but there are fewer girls because they listen to their mothers more, boys are insolent and rude! [laughter] Girls are also taken by mamas [married women] to be housegirls [domestic servants].
- RE: At what age do you stop being a street child?
- Boys: You can still be considered a street child up to the age of 20, or 30 – some people still live on the streets as adults. Others go back home.
- RE: Do you see yourself as street children?
- Boys: Yes.
- RE: What would prevent you from running away from home?
- Boys: Fathers shouldn't be alcoholic, and shouldn't beat their children, step-mothers shouldn't harass you, make you work at home, deny you food and treat you badly.
- RE: Do you think that running away is a way of coping with problems at home?
- Some boys: Yes, the problems at home are worse than the problems on the street.
- Others: No, there are many problems in town – verbal abuse, if you are ill, there's no one to help you...It's worse in town (UCSC shelter, 2/2/01).

The boys' perception that adults aged 20 or 30 could still be considered a 'street child' suggests that the concept is defined more by an individual's presence 'out of place' in the street (Stephens, 1995:12), and engaging in a 'deviant' street lifestyle, rather than by their biological age. However, the boys also defined the concept of street children in terms of the difficulties that forced them to leave home, showing their agency in dealing with problems and constructing their social lives. I conducted this discussion after watching a video, *Neema* in Swahili with the boys, which told the story of a brother and

sister who were forced on to the streets following harassment by their step-mother and their drunken father, produced by Youth Cultural Information Centre, a youth project in Dar es Salaam. The boys watched the drama intently, identifying strongly with the street boys in the film, and happy that the film gave some understanding of their situation from a child-centred perspective. Some of the boys had seen it before, as it had been shown the previous year as part of the film festival on national television.

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the socio-cultural context in which children construct their social lives, through perceptions of childhood, in relation to the reciprocal responsibilities and duties of children and adults within the community, and the school environment. The duties children perform within the household as part of the socialisation process are based on traditional gender roles which restrict girls' opportunities for recreation and study, while boys have more freedom to explore the outside environment and more time for homework. Although children did not specifically mention that they expected 'love' from their parents and relatives, their expectations about their parents meeting their basic needs, providing good care and guidance and advice can all be seen as stemming from the concept of 'being loved' by their parents and relatives. This theme will be taken up further in the following chapter focusing on factors causing children to leave home for the street.

The discussion about the school-learning environment in Tanzania highlighted key issues of concern which reinforce inequalities and negatively impact on children's education. Corporal punishment in schools was shown to be widespread, levels of poverty meant that some parents could not afford school fees and other expenses,

leading to high drop-out rates, and school provided a 'girl-unfriendly learning environment', with girls experiencing discrimination, sexual harassment and expulsion due to pregnancy. There was also an apparent contradiction between the Western values of formal education and religion, and African cultural values, expressed through the traditional teaching and customs of the family and community, including initiation rites. This interface of conflicting world views creates tensions and has negative impacts on parents' ability to guide and protect their children. Girls' initiation into womanhood in preparation for marriage includes Female Genital Mutilation amongst some ethnic groups, which has particularly negative consequences for girls and young women. Quite apart from the immediate and long term physical, psychological and sexual damage it causes, FGM and the informal teaching that accompanies it pressurises young women into becoming sexually active at an early age, and contributes to girls' lower educational performance, to teenage pregnancies, forced early marriage, and school drop-out rates. Thus, while boys and young men suffer from oppressive adult-child relations, girls and young women also face gender discrimination, gender-based violence and inequalities with the home, community and school environment.

Adults' and children's perceptions of street children suggest that there is recognition that the economic and social pressures placed on families play a major factor in children's decision to leave home for the streets. Thus, while children were in some ways seen as 'victims' of difficult home environments, children's agency in escaping their situations was also acknowledged. The 'street' lifestyle was however seen as 'deviant' and morally corrupt, leading children to engage in anti-social behaviour. Most school pupils perceived children's move to the street as related to orphanhood or the inability of families to meet the basic needs of their children, and some suggested that mistreatment by step-mothers or other members of the family could also influence

children's move to the street. Some school pupils, however, saw children who ran away from home as 'deviant' individuals, who rejected the norms of society. This reflects the more general attitudes of the community towards street children, which will be discussed in Chapter 7. Street children themselves emphasised problems at home as the motivating factor which led them to the street, revealing their agency in making the transition to the street. The next chapter takes up many of the themes discussed here in relation to the constraints and possibilities of the social institution of childhood, and explores street children's experiences of their home environments.

Chapter 5



Figure 6: Drawing by Ramadhani, an 11 year old boy living on the street (Arusha, 2000).

Street Children's Experiences of 'Home'

Chapter 5

Street children's experiences of home

Introduction

Having explored children and adults' perceptions of the social institution of childhood in Tanzania, with particular reference to education in Tanzania, I will now explore street children's experiences of their home environment. The young people's experiences will be analysed in relation to the household and local community (the three central circles of Hill and Tisdall's diagram of children's social worlds¹), based on individual interviews with street girls and boys, and on their drawings, carried out as part of the group discussions. I will also use my reports of home visits to children's homes in the region, when I usually accompanied the UCSC manager and other members of staff, and notes from my fieldwork journal (2000-2002).

The theoretical concepts of 'childhood' discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 will be used to analyse the ethnographic material, adopting a child-centred approach, which recognises the ethical importance of listening to children and believing their accounts². As Baker and Panter-Brick note, however, one must exercise caution when analysing children's (and adults') accounts of 'the past', since 'in recounting a personal history, particularly one which may have been traumatic, feelings and ideas from the present may be projected on to past events in order to "explain" them' (Baker and Panter-Brick, 2000:170). Thus, while the children's accounts have been taken at face value in this study, they can also be seen as part of the child's retrospective attempt to rationalise why they came to live and work on the streets, rather than to live within the family home. Normalising concepts of children's place at home with their family, and what

¹ See Figure 5, p.103.

² As discussed on p.88

children perceive as justifiable grounds (to a *mzungu* [European] woman) for running away from home, therefore influence their narratives. Using Goffman's metaphor of social interaction as a performance³, the children and adults can be seen as managing the impression of themselves and their behaviour for the 'front-stage' of public life, presenting what they thought I wanted to hear, according to my status as a white young woman (Goffman, 1959). Parents' perspectives sometimes differ greatly from children's, and thus I also attempt to give some sense of parental concerns about their children and parents' responses to difficult home environments, through my conversations with parents and observations of visits to the children's families and contact with parents at the UCSC centres.

Poverty and household instability

As Lockwood notes, poverty analyses often focus on income and assets in the short run, to the neglect of familial relationships (Lockwood, 1997:96). However, more recent studies have recognised the need to analyse poverty from a multidimensional perspective, linking poverty to social exclusion and social capital (ibid; Hulme and Shepherd, 2003:407). A distinction has been drawn between 'chronic poverty', when people remain poor for much of their life course and may 'pass on' their poverty to subsequent generations – termed 'intergenerational transmission of poverty'- and 'transient poverty' when people experience poverty for certain periods, but are able to move out of poverty (Hulme and Shepherd, 2003:405). This concept of chronic poverty, and the intergenerational transmission of poverty from the older generation to children is useful in the context of this study. Lockwood suggests that impoverishment can be conceptualised as a long-run spiral, which involves not only economic failure,

³ Discussed on p.89

but also social marginalisation (Lockwood, 1997:96). Within a context of scarcity of resources, social marginalisation is an outcome of poverty, but also helps to reinforce poverty (ibid). In addition, Sen's concept of 'co-operative conflict' is useful in understanding the different conflicts of interest, 'entitlements' and bargaining power of individuals within the household, which results in intra-household inequalities (Sen, 1999:192). Due to economic pressures and greater conflicts of interest, accompanied by social marginalisation, the marriages and the households of the poor are likely to be more unstable than those of the rich (Lockwood, 1997). This approach, which takes account of familial relationships and conflict within the household, will be used to analyse children's experiences of poverty and social marginalisation throughout this chapter.

It is clear, following the discussion in Chapter 2 on the socio-economic position of children in contemporary Tanzania⁴, that poverty severely constrains the family's ability to provide for their children and places great pressure on adult-child relationships within the family. As will become apparent throughout this chapter on the children's experiences of 'home', abject poverty affected the majority of the participants' households. Indeed, three quarters of the young people interviewed cited the family's inability to meet their basic needs as a major factor making them leave home. In over half of the homes I visited, poverty was a major constraint on the household's ability to care for the children.

In contrast to the harmonious and seemingly happy pictures drawn by school pupils of their family and home environment, the street children's drawings illustrated their experiences of poverty. Sophia was a former street girl, aged 17, who had a young

⁴ See pp.41-5

baby. She lived with her mother and sisters, one of whom also had a baby. Her drawing, Figure 7, shows herself at home cooking food outside on a charcoal stove, with the words, *'Here I'm cooking food. We don't have enough beds, we sleep on the floor, sometimes we overcome our hunger, other times we go to sleep hungry, we rely on selling fish so that we can eat. When we don't sell any, we go to sleep hungry'* (UCSC shelter, 31/3/00). Her sister Halima's explanation of her picture reiterated Sophia's message, before adding, *'We play at home without any happiness'* (UCSC shelter, 31/3/00).

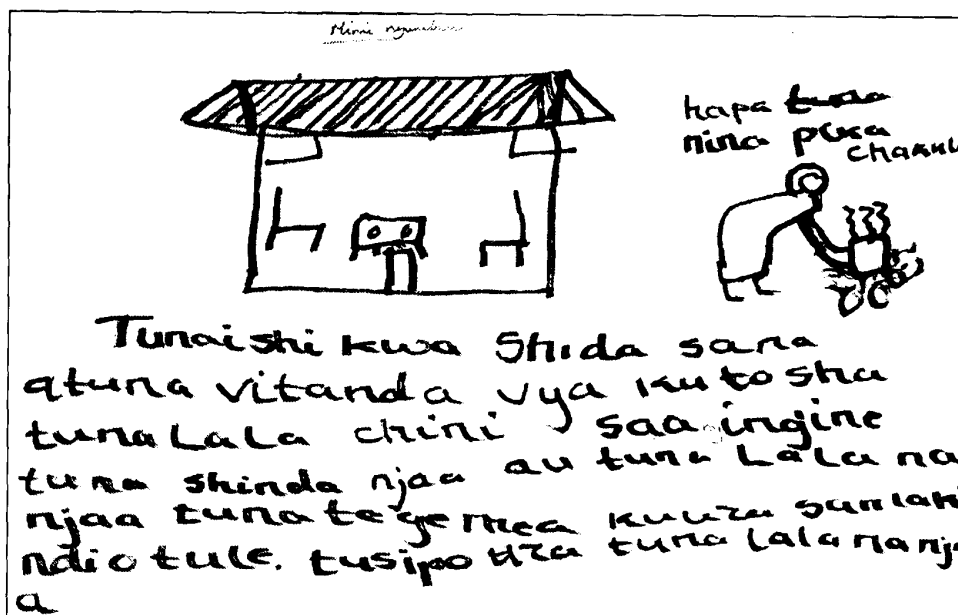


Figure 7: Sophia's (a 17 year old single mother) drawing of herself at home: *'Here I'm cooking food. We live with many problems. We don't have enough beds, we sleep on the floor, sometimes we overcome our hunger, other times we go to sleep hungry, we rely on selling fish so that we can eat. When we don't sell any we go to sleep hungry'* (UCSC shelter, 31/3/00).

Juma's (aged 14) drawing of himself at home (Figure 8) depicts himself with his mother and two younger siblings, all looking unhappy, with the words, *'The whole family is hungry'* (UCSC shelter, 17/4/00). Amina wrote on her drawing, Figure 9, *'We survive with difficulty. We sleep on the floor, we don't get any good food, other days we go to*

sleep hungry, we have problems surviving. Her drawing shows a girl bending over a washing tub with the words *'I was washing clothes'*, on the other side of the house, a woman beats another, shown by long extended arms on the other woman's body, and underneath Amina wrote *'she was beating me'*.

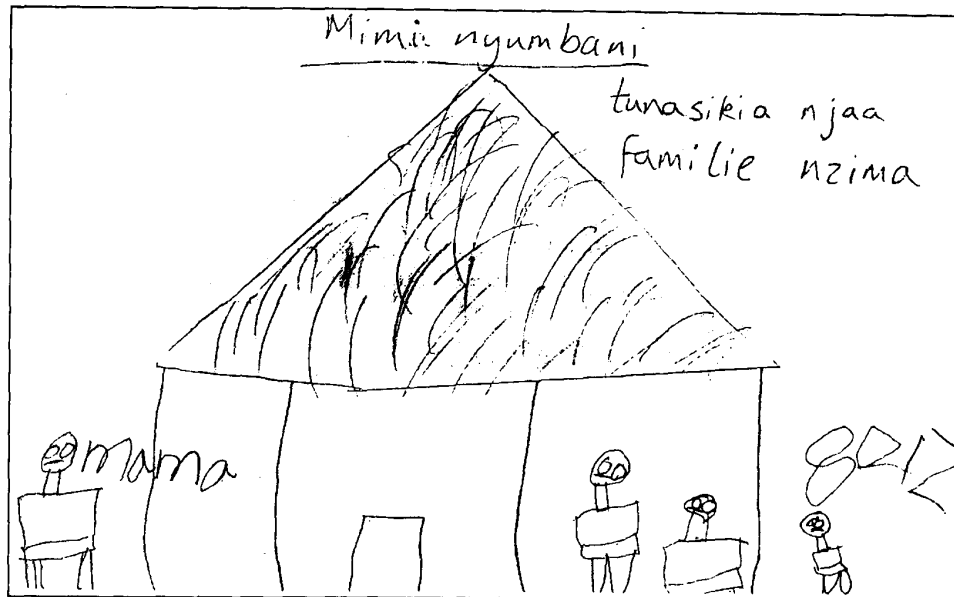


Figure 8: Juma's (aged 14) picture of himself at home: *'The whole family is hungry'*
(UCSC shelter, 17/4/00).

Several of the child participants, particularly girls, had never been to school when living at home. Blandina was a fourteen year old girl, staying at Theresa House at the time of the interview. Her mother and father had separated, so she and her three younger siblings were brought up by their mother. Blandina was sent out to the streets to beg during the day from an early age, to bring in some extra income for her mother. She never had the opportunity to attend school (Theresa House, 20/5/00).



Figure 9: Amina's (aged 14 years) drawing of herself at home: *'I was washing clothes. She was beating me. We survive with difficulty. We sleep on the floor, we don't get any good food, other days we go to sleep hungry, we have problems surviving.'* (UCSC shelter, 31/3/00)

Upendo, a seventeen year old girl living at Theresa House at the time of the interview, left home for town in order to help her relatives:

U: At home, we used to live with my father and he wasn't harsh, but we lived a life of poverty. [...] Life was tough, I saw my relatives were suffering and thought, I'll go and find a living in town, then I can help my relatives.

RE: How old were you when you left home?

U: Fourteen years old.

RE: Had you been to school?

U: No. (Upendo, Theresa House, 20/5/00)

This suggests that, for Upendo, leaving home for the street represented an altruistic motive, in response to chronic poverty, to try to help her relatives. This illustrates children's agency in constructing their social lives.

On a home visit with a fifteen year old boy, Peter, whose father had died a long time ago, the chronic poverty faced by female-headed households was clearly evident, as this extract from my report of the home visit shows:

A neighbour who remembered Peter took us to Peter's mother's house [in a poorer district of town] as Peter appeared confused about the way there. He had spent at least a year away from home. A large group of neighbours gathered, who remembered Peter, amongst them Peter's older brother. Peter's mother was not around and the neighbours did not know when she might return. They told us that she had a severe drinking problem and came and went at all hours. She did casual work, sweeping and cleaning anywhere she could for a minimal payment. The house consisted of a two-room traditional house (built out of mud and wood) with no furniture or a bed inside.

Peter explained to us that the two younger children (aged 9 and 6, who, like Peter, were very small for their age due to sustained under-nourishment) stayed at home all day, and didn't have anything to eat in the morning or midday, just a little ugali [the staple diet, like stiff porridge, made from maize flour and water] or porridge in the evening if their mother earned some money and bought some flour. Peter's older brother (aged 19 and unemployed) helped to care for them and cooked for them, although Peter said he also treated them strictly, shouting and beating them. Peter and his younger brothers had never been to school. [...] It was an emotional experience for Peter, he cried a little and mentioned someone he called 'grandma', who lived nearby and used

to offer them food, who he went to greet. It was clear that Peter's family was not in a position to support him, and that the UCSC residential centre would offer him the best support and a chance to attend primary school. (Peter, home visit, 10/05/00)

During my later period of fieldwork, Peter, who lived at the residential centre and attended primary school, told me how he had gradually drifted to the street over a long period of time. I noted his account down in my fieldwork journal as he told me:

Peter and his friend used to go to town in the evenings to beg for food, and once were arrested and detained in a Remand Home for juvenile offenders for a month. When Peter returned home, he found out that his father had died many years ago, but his mother had kept this from him when he was younger. Peter was taken to live with his grandfather for a few years, where he grazed the cattle every day. He became seriously ill with TB, due to walking barefoot in the rain when grazing the cattle. His mother collected him and took him to hospital in Arusha, where his (maternal) aunt and uncle brought him milk and visited him regularly. His grandfather sold all his chickens to pay for his medical treatment. When nurses asked his mother, 'Is this your child?', she replied, 'He's not my child'.

When Peter had recovered, he went to live with his aunt, but she couldn't afford to send him to school because his uncle had recently died, and his aunt had six other children to support. He used to collect aluminium from the rubbish dump and sell it in town. He forgot where his mother and younger brothers lived, until one day he saw a cow, which he recognised as belonging to the family. He followed the cow across town, and when he arrived, his brother asked him his name, as they did not recognise each other at first. Then he lived with his mother and brothers for a few months. Often his mother came

home drunk late at night, or sometimes did not return at all. On one occasion, she was about to stab Peter with a knife, thinking he was an intruder, as she did not recognise him, until his brother called out to stop her. Peter's older brother helped cook and care for the younger boys. Peter used to go into town every day to beg for money, if he got 400 Tsh. [equivalent to 35 pence] he would go and buy fish to eat with the ugali [stiff porridge, made of maize flour, eaten as staple diet with beans, vegetables or meat] with his younger brothers. Gradually, Peter and his friend went into town more and more in the evenings, and would stay there overnight (fieldwork journal, 27/10/02).

Peter's account illustrates the process of transition from home to the street and how the chronic poverty experienced by his mother was passed on to her children, leading to increasing social marginalisation, in spite of assistance provided by the extended family. While the extended family can play an important role in fostering children of poorer relatives, who are unable or unwilling to care for them, during particular times of need in the child's life, Peter's account suggests that such support may only be available for temporary periods. 'Home', for Peter, was characterised by a lack of food, clothing, opportunities for education, love or care, and indeed, familial ties with his alcoholic mother had already become tenuous long before Peter stayed on the street. Thus, spending longer and longer periods of the day on the street with a friend in search of food, appeared increasingly attractive and preferable to staying at home. Indeed, UCSC project workers tried to mobilise the *balozi*⁵ [village leader] to support the younger children in the household to attend school, as they were considered to be at high risk of becoming street children themselves.

⁵ *Balozi* is a village leader of ten households at the local political level, within the structure of the ruling CCM party [Revolutionary Party].

Members of staff at all three street children projects involved in this study cited extreme poverty as a major factor causing children to leave home. However, many of the children's stories tell of other problems within the household which compounded their experiences of poverty, and triggered their decision to move to town. These factors will be explored in this section, against the background of the socio-economic context in Tanzania.

Corporal punishment

A key issue emerging from the children's interviews and home visits, which had a major influence on children's decision to run away from home, was adults' use of corporal punishment as a means of disciplining children. The majority of the boys and girls who participated in individual interviews and most of the children whose homes I visited cited 'being beaten' by adults as the immediate reason they left home. As noted in Chapter 4, corporal punishment is widely used as a method of disciplining pupils in Tanzanian schools, and Omari and Mbilinyi suggest that corporal punishment is enshrined in African culture and traditions:

Child rearing is always accompanied with spanking and stroke beating. It is an old and upheld cultural custom and belief that a child needs whipping in order to follow the instructions of the elders (Omari and Mbilinyi, 1997:48).

Lachman comments on the problem of defining child abuse within the African context, since some of the activities carried out by children or directed to them are interwoven with African cultural traditions and customs, to the extent that when labelling them as child abuse one might be accused of interfering with people's culture and freedom

(Lachman, cited in Omari and Mbilinyi, 1997:45). However, as Omari and Mbilinyi point out, 'some people in the society, especially those who consider themselves as custodians of societal cultures, are blind towards the negative impact of what has been upheld by the previous generation and perceived as good' (Omari and Mbilinyi, 1997:45). Corporal punishment thus forms part of the cultural construction of childhood in Tanzania, and severely inhibits a continued dialogue between adults and young people, leading to young people's marginalisation from decision-making processes (ibid). Corporal punishment can be seen as a fundamental abuse of the adult-child power imbalance. UCSC members of staff cited harsh punishments from parents as the first reason children leave home for the streets, in line with the children's own responses (UCSC shelter, 28/6/00). Staff at the Rolling Stones⁶ project cited harsh treatment by parents as the second reason children left home, after abject poverty:

Parents are harsh with their children. There are some parents who are very, very strict with their children. As a result of African customs, if a child makes a mistake, s/he gets a harsh punishment. Then the punishments become regular, so they run away from home. (Rolling Stones, 3/6/00)

It is interesting to note that throughout the discussion with women at the community centre, the issue of corporal punishment was not mentioned, illustrating parents' lack of awareness about the negative impact on children of corporal punishment and their perception that beating is an accepted form of disciplining children (Vocational Training Centre, 4/5/00).

⁶ Rolling Stones Project, a small NGO set up in 2000, which provided education, training and informal educational activities for street children and other children in difficult circumstances during the day. During my second period of fieldwork in 2002, a former member of staff from the project informed me that the project had closed down in 2001 due to a lack of sustainability.

The children participating in the study clearly demonstrate the overwhelmingly negative impact of physical abuse on young people. Alex, a seventeen year old who had lived at the UCSC residential centre for three years, who came from a poor household, told how corporal punishment at home was the final trigger which made him decide to run away to the streets:

A: I ran away because when I went to school, my mum didn't have any money to pay for school. Many times, she decided to beat me, even when I'd only made a little mistake.

RE: What was it like at home? Did you go to school?

A: I went to school, but had a lot of problems. Up until Standard 3 [studying in third year of primary school]. Then mum couldn't afford the fees.

RE: What did you like about home?

A: I liked living at home.

RE: What didn't you like about home?

A: Being beaten.

RE: Was it just your mother who beat you, or your father too?

A: Just my mum.

RE: What made you come to the streets?

A: Because that day, my mum beat me hard. (Alex, UCSC residential centre, 16/7/00)

Farida, an 18 year old, who had a two year old baby born outside of marriage and worked as a commercial sex worker on the street, cited being beaten by her aunt and cousin as the motivating factor which made her leave home for the street:

RE: What was it like at home?

F: I left home a long time ago. And I came back the year before last, when I was pregnant. I gave birth and brought up the child, and then left again.

RE: Why did you stop going to school and go to town the first time?

F: I was beaten by my (paternal) aunt, because I went to see my grandmother in Kijenge, and when I came back in the evening, I was beaten, yes, that's why I left.[...]

RE: When you used to go to school, did you like living at home?

F: No. Because at that time, they beat me and I would run away.

RE: But you didn't have any problems with your mum or dad? Did they beat you?

F: No. My (maternal) uncle's child used to live at our place and he used to beat me with my (paternal) aunt, but he's not around now at home. [...]

RE: Would you like to go back home?

F: I don't get on with my aunt. (Farida, UCSC shelter, 20/6/00).

Most of the children said that they received corporal punishment from members of the immediate household – mothers, fathers, step-parents, grandmothers, older brothers, aunts, uncles and cousins. In Emanuel's case, however, since his father had left home, his mother called upon an elder living in the village to discipline her son. This illustrates the notion that many people in the community can play the role of parents to a child⁷ and reveals that corporal punishment is widely accepted as part of the cultural concept of 'childhood':

⁷ Discussed on p.33

E: I was there at home, the time I was at home, there was a *mzee* [an old man, an elder], mama used to call him, she went to call him, he comes and beats me, when he finished beating me, then I ran away and came here to town [...].

RE: You said at home there was an elder...

E: Yes, there is an elder, if I do wrong to my mum, she beats me and goes to call the elder who lives nearby, and he beats me.

RE: When he beats you, is it very painful?

E: Very, yes, he beats me severely.[...]

RE: What didn't you like about home?

E: That *mzee* used to beat me, and I ran away from home. If I do anything wrong for mama, she beats me, and he comes and beats me.

RE: What kind of mistakes did you make?

E: Perhaps, I was supposed to cut leaves or work on the field (Emanuel, UCSC shelter, 5/7/00).

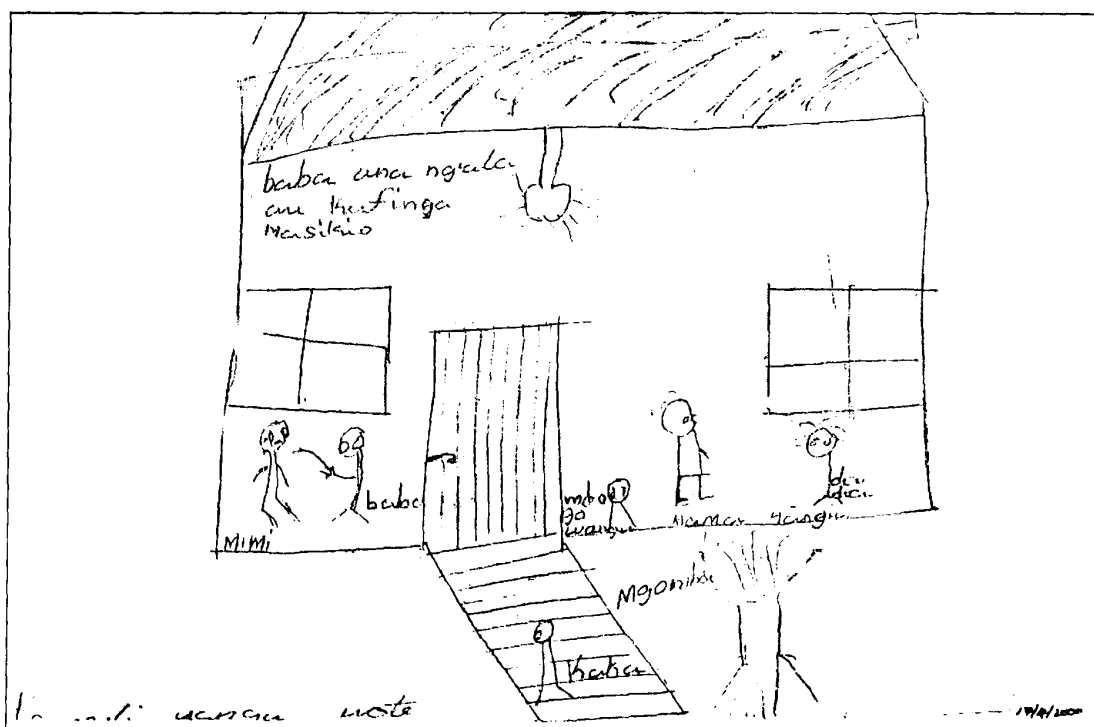


Figure 10: Daniel's drawing (aged 14 years) of himself (bottom left) at home: 'My family. My father canes me or twists my ear' (Daniel, UCSC shelter, 17 4 00)

Over a third of the children's drawings of 'home' showed an adult beating a child, confirmed in the words they used to describe the picture. Figure 10 shows Daniel (aged 14) being beaten by his father (bottom left), with other members of the family (his mother, sister, younger sibling and brother) and the banana tree outside the house labelled in Swahili.

The street children suggested that the practice of corporal punishment as a means of disciplining children can, in some instances, lead to severe physical abuse and even torture. In the discussion with boys at the UCSC shelter, one boy told how he'd heard stories of other street children who were tortured by their parents, although this may be exaggerated: 'Some parents tie their children in a sack [used to store maize], hang the sack from the ceiling and light a fire below, burning maize cobs, [producing a lot of smoke] choking the child above' (UCSC shelter, 17/4/00). On one occasion I noted in my fieldwork journal that John, one of the boys staying at the UCSC shelter had disappeared from the shelter one Sunday:

A neighbour from his home saw John outside the shelter, and dragged him home to his parents, where they tied him up with a rope and beat him severely. He managed to run away and come back to the shelter late that night, with bruises and marks on his skin from his beating. A few days later, we wanted to visit his family to discuss why they had reacted in this way. My colleague talked to John about it beforehand, assuring him that we would not leave him there, and that there was no danger that he would be beaten again while we were there, explaining that the visit was primarily to get the parents' agreement for UCSC to place him at the residential centre. However, John ran away to town from the shelter on the morning of the proposed home visit. We found him in town and persuaded him to come back to the shelter. However, John ran away again, in fear

of his family finding him there again. I have since seen John in town on several occasions (fieldwork journal, 2/7/00).

Many of the children who cited physical abuse as the reason for leaving home came from very poor households. This suggests that there may be a link between poverty and corporal punishment. Poor households may be more likely to resort to physical violence to discipline children, due to the greater strains and anxieties, and conflicts of interest within these households. This reflects Sen's concept of the household as characterised by 'co-operative conflict' (Sen, 1999).

In a few cases, poverty led boys to engage in theft from neighbours' homes, as Devi's story illustrates:

D: I ran away because my dad beat me. Then, I didn't sleep at home, I went to sleep at the top of the trees. When I'd stayed there for two days, on the third day, I left and went to town. [...] I went to the street children's centre there, I just stayed for a week, and was brought back home. I ran away again, I stole a big radio from some people's home, I blamed my father, and he was locked up, for two years, I accused him by saying that he had sent me to do it. When I'd accused him, he wanted to beat me, so I ran away fast, and came first to Arusha and I left. [...] I went home again, I found there was no-one there. When I didn't find anyone, I understood that my father must have gone away.

RE: And your mum?

D: My mum had been thrown out a long time ago, in 1995. So, I just stayed with my neighbour, for two, three days, then I came back to town.

RE: Before you left, what was it like at home? Did you go to school?

- D: Yes, I went up to Standard 2, I stopped in Standard 3.
- RE: What did you like about home?
- D: Nothing.
- RE: What kind of problems did you have?
- D: There was no food.
- RE: What didn't you like about home?
- D: Nothing. Going without food. If I was ill, I wasn't taken to hospital, you just use a certain type of leaves.
- RE: What made you come to the streets?
- D: It was because my father was given a punishment, and he beat me, yes, because of the radio taken from people. I just wanted to sell the radio to get some money for food. (Devi, UCSC residential centre, 16/7/00)

This example raises issues about how parents can and should best respond to such misbehaviour. It also suggests that some children may run away from home to escape from trouble in the community, as well as within the family, that their own misdeeds have caused.

The conflict between 'work' and 'play'

As was shown in the previous chapter, concepts of the reciprocal duties and responsibilities of children and their communities mean that children are seen as an important resource for the family and are expected to assist in a variety of productive and reproductive activities at the household level⁸. However, as Koda notes, tensions around time use between parents and children begin to surface as soon as children

⁸ See pp.106-111.

express a preference for recreation (playing) rather than performing jobs assigned to them by adult family members (Koda, 2000:249). The experience of several of the boys reflected this conflict between children and adults, as this interview with Michael, a small 17 year old boy staying at the UCSC shelter, shows:

RE: What was it like at home?

M: I used to be beaten by my father. When I came home from school, if I went to play football, I was beaten.

RE: Why?

M: I was warned not to play football, dad refused to let me play football, and I ran away.

RE: Was there lots of work to do at home?

M: Yes, like fetching water, cultivating, chopping firewood.

RE: So dad said there wasn't time to play football?

M: Yes. [...]

RE: Had you run away before that day?

M: No, I never ran away before.[...]

RE: What did you like about home?

M: At home, I liked going to school, I like playing, and growing crops.

RE: What didn't you like about home?

M: I didn't like being beaten, I didn't like having to carry heavy loads, like a bucket full of water from a river a little way away, I didn't like that.

RE: Did you have to do that every day?

M: Yes.

RE: What made you come to the streets?

M: Being beaten. I used to be beaten which is why I ran off, and came here to the streets.(Michael, UCSC shelter, 22/6/00)

Michael depicted this tension in his drawing of 'home', (Figure 11) in which he portrays himself with a blank expression, carrying a large bucket of water, outside a house with three younger children playing nearby. In my later period of fieldwork, a UCSC member of staff told me that Michael had stayed at the UCSC residential centre, where he studied in Standard 5 at primary school for a year. Michael had been missing his parents, and asking to go home, but the UCSC project could not afford the bus fare for him to go home during the school holidays, since he came from a rural area far from Arusha. His father came looking for him, enquiring first at the UCSC shelter in town, and from there, was directed to the residential centre, having made the long journey from their home. Michael was very pleased to see his father, and after agreeing with staff members, Michael expressed his wish to live at home again, and they left together (fieldwork journal, 22/10/02). This shows that in spite of difficulties at home, some former street children actively choose to go back to their home communities once they have left and spent a considerable amount of time away from their families.

Two of the boys at the residential centre showed that they resented their parents' restrictions on their freedom. Devi wrote on his picture 'There's no happiness, dad beats me, if, for example, I go for a walk and don't go back home, so I sleep in the trees' and Samuel wrote 'I don't get any education, I'm not allowed to go for a walk in the village' (Devi and Samuel, UCSC residential centre, 28/4/00). Justin⁹ also experienced conflict between his father's demands on his labour time to graze the cattle and his recreational desire to explore the outside environment.

⁹ See pp.188-192.

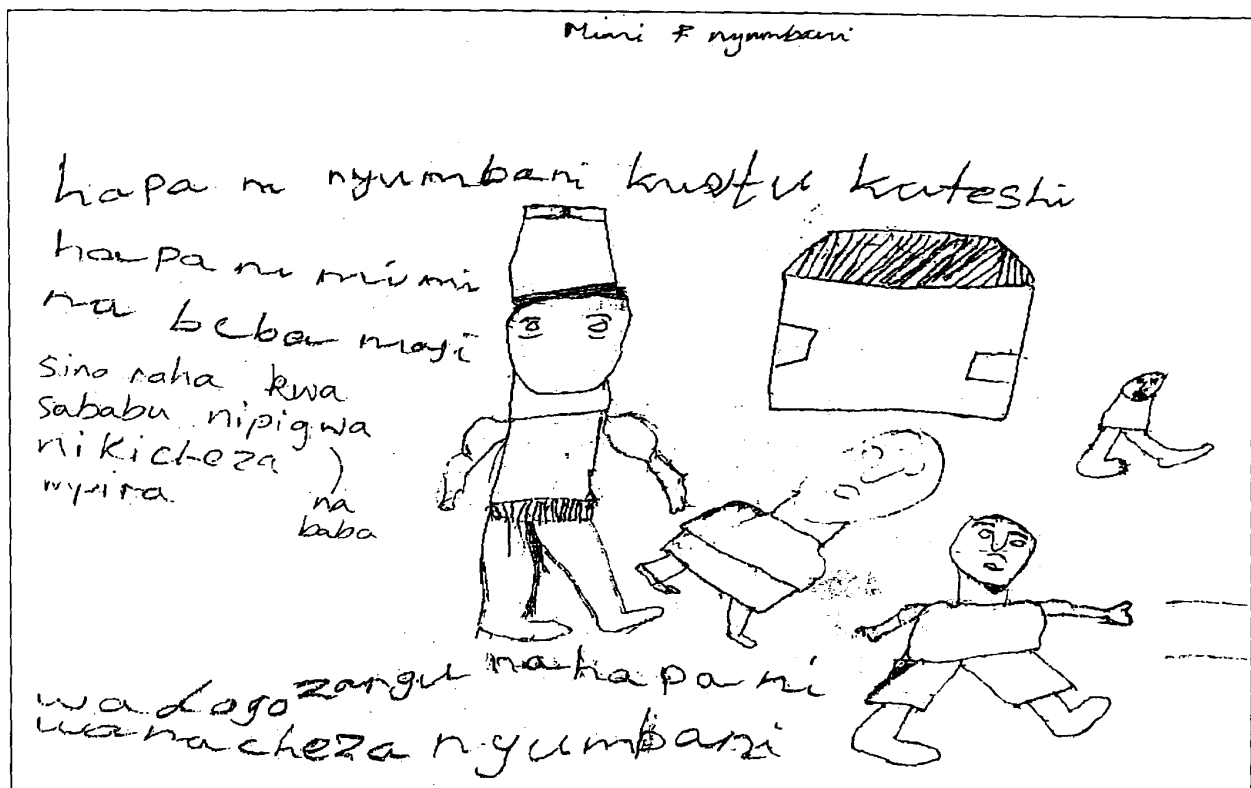


Figure 11: Michael's (aged 17) drawing of himself at home: 'This is our home. This is me carrying water. I'm not happy because I'm beaten by my father if I play football. These are my younger brothers and sisters playing at home.' (Michael, UCSC shelter, 17/4/00).

The experience of Charles, an eleven year old boy staying at the UCSC shelter, also illustrates the intergenerational tensions over time use and boys' recreational activities:

Charles' mother and brother came looking for Charles at the shelter, explaining that the father could not walk far, due to a physical impairment, otherwise he would have come himself. They told us that Charles had been severely punished by his father for going to watch videos in bars after school and returning late in the evening, over a period of several months. Charles had started absconding from school, disappearing for days at a time, and then returning home, where he would be beaten as punishment and taken to school to apologise to his teachers. He had finally run away to the street for a month, when he came to the UCSC shelter (fieldwork journal, March 2000).

After Charles' mother's visit to the shelter, we arranged to visit the family at home with Charles. The mother provided the main source of income for the family by selling bananas at the market, grown by the older children, since the father was unable to work on the farm. They rented out the other buildings in their compound (traditional houses, built from mud and wood) to provide an extra source of income. After our discussion with the father about the harm caused by corporal punishment as a means of disciplining Charles, the family expressed their desire for Charles to live at home with them again, and Charles agreed, requesting that we helped with the initial costs of new exercise books and shoes. We met the headmaster at his school and asked that the teachers refrain from using corporal punishment for his absence from school and accepted him back into his class (Standard 3) (Charles, home visit, 3/4/00).

During the months following his 'reintegration', Charles often spent a few days in town, or came to the UCSC shelter, complaining that his father or older brother had beaten him again, or simply coming to visit his friends and the teachers at the shelter, sometimes bringing a gift of fruit from the family farm. On one occasion, he said that his father had made him work in the field all day without any food, so he had taken 500 Tsh. (roughly equivalent to 50 pence) from the house to buy some chips to eat, and then was too scared to return home, knowing that he would be beaten by his father. While the father's response to his son's behaviour was inappropriate and merely succeeded in pushing his son further away, the father did seem to genuinely care about his son, as did the rest of the family – his mother, brothers and sisters, and his elderly grandfather, who kept asking the father where Charles was whenever he disappeared. Charles' habit of returning home late and neglecting his agricultural tasks was irresponsible, in view of the economic pressures facing the household. This example clearly illustrates the strain on adult-child relationships within the family caused by the economic situation and

national levels of poverty in Tanzania. In this case, these pressures were likely to be further aggravated by the father's physical impairment and his frustration and sense of inadequacy in not being able to provide for the household.

On a later visit to Arusha, I visited Charles's home in one of the poorer districts of town, and was pleased to find that he seemed happy living at home. He proudly showed me all of his school books and his father confirmed that he was progressing well at school. Charles represents one of the ten children considered to have been 'reintegrated' into his family home by UCSC members of staff in 2000 (UCSC, 2000). One boy at the shelter mentioned that it was Charles who had befriended him on the streets and brought him to the UCSC shelter, where he had stayed for the past three months, while Charles had returned home (fieldwork journal, 2/2/01). Thus, it appeared that Charles maintained fluid ties with his friends both on the streets and at the UCSC shelter. The street represented a place where he could escape from corporal punishment, should he need to, when tensions with his father surfaced around the need for his labour on the farm and his own recreational pursuits. During my later period of fieldwork, I found Charles at home with his family, then studying in Standard 5 at primary school. He told me that he didn't wander round town anymore, just went to the shelter occasionally to greet staff there, but otherwise concentrated on his studies, which his father also confirmed (fieldwork journal, 3/11/02).

Having discussed key impacts of the cultural construction of childhood on children's experiences of 'home', the next sections explore how diverse household structures affect children's socio-economic position within the household and wider community.

Household structures

As was noted in Chapter 2, African concepts of childhood mean that rights over children are vested in men by customary, religious and statutory law so that in the event of divorce, separation or husband's death, the custody of children remains with the father or his clan members (UNICEF, 1999:47), and that the rights of the child can only be understood fully in the context of the status of the child's mother (Omari and Mbilinyi, 1997:19)¹⁰. Children are seen as 'belonging' to their fathers, thus the structure of the household and the legal status of the parents' marriage has a considerable impact on the socio-economic position of children. As noted in Chapter 2, Tanzanian society is characterised by considerable diversity of household structures, kinship responsibilities and a tradition of child fosterage within the extended family¹¹. Thus, it seems important to analyse children's experiences of 'home' in terms of the diverse household structures which form the core of their social networks, and the implications of their position within such structures for the children concerned.

Female-headed households

Omari notes that the 1988 Census estimated that 30 per cent of households in Tanzania consist of a single (mainly female) parent, and that female-headed households are more common in urban than in rural areas, because women in towns work mainly in the informal sector and are thus economically independent (Omari, 1995:215). Positive aspects of female-headed households may include: women are less constrained by patriarchal authority at the domestic level, have greater freedom to take on paid work,

¹⁰ See pp.36-37

¹¹ See p.34

enhanced control over finances and a reduction or absence of physical and/ or emotional abuse (BRIDGE, 2001:3). In addition, studies have shown that the expenditure patterns of female-headed households are more biased towards nutrition and education than those of male households (ibid). However, female-headed households may face greater difficulties than men in gaining access to labour markets, credit, housing and basic services, and there may be additional layers of discrimination against female heads (ibid). Furthermore, single parent households, most of which are female-headed, also face the difficulties of one adult having to combine income-earning with household management and child care, with the result that the parent can only take on part-time, informal jobs with low earnings (ibid).

In Tanzania, female-dominated activities in the informal sector include beer brewing, *mama ntilie* - small eating places selling cooked food (most of which are mobile to follow customers), selling doughnuts, peanuts, ice lollies, gardening, poultry keeping, pig keeping and selling charcoal and firewood (Koda, 1995:147). Female micro-entrepreneurs have very little access to credit due to the small nature of their ventures, lack of property rights and inability to generate savings (ibid). As Koda comments, the customs of most ethnic groups in Tanzania oppose women having either inheritance or ownership rights over land and other immovable property, the very items which are usually demanded as collateral for bank loans (ibid).

In the light of these gender inequalities, and the idea that the rights of the child are largely dependent on the status of the child's mother, female-headed households in Tanzania would thus appear to be particularly vulnerable to poverty and insecurity, with adverse consequences for children within the household. Although a link between female headship and poverty cannot be assumed (BRIDGE, 2001), the young people

involved in this study, whose mothers were separated from their fathers, whose fathers had died, or who had never known their fathers, who lived in female-headed households, all commented that their home life was characterised by impoverishment. The story of Halima, a fourteen year old former street girl illustrates the insecurity faced by single mothers:

H: I came to the streets on 22nd of August 1998. We used to live in Nairobi with my sister and my mother and father. When my father died, I was left with my mother and sister, we lived there in Nairobi, and then we came here. We just lived any old how, we didn't have anything, mama did some small business activities, bought a brick moulding machine, and sold bricks, and once she had started, she got some money to feed us, clothe us and she registered me for school. I studied from Standard 1 to 5. When I was in Standard 5, she realised she didn't have the means to send me to school, because she didn't have the money for school fees and the teachers expelled me. I met an older street boy called James and he told me about a place called UCSC, he took me there [...] and I studied there [...].

RE: Was your mother at home at that time ?

H: No, mama used to do domestic work for people.

RE: So there was no place where you could sleep?

H: There was nowhere.

RE: You couldn't stay at their place with your mama?

H: They didn't want me to. [...]

RE: Your mother wasn't able to rent a room?

H: Yes, she just worked like that, she was paid monthly, she put money aside, then she eventually rented a room, bought a bed, and a mattress, that's all. [...] I live

at home now with my mother and sisters, and my sister has a baby. At home we only have one bed and there are six of us to sleep there. [...] My mama had sixteen children, some died, so there's nine left.

RE: Not all of them live at home?

H: No, they're not at home, they stay with their fathers, one is in Tabora, one in Moshi, one in Nairobi, another in Bukoba, another is in Arusha. Different fathers, but me and Sophia and another sister of mine all have the same father (Halima, UCSC shelter, 16/6/00).

I visited Halima and Sophia's home in an area considered 'rough' (near the bus stand) in the centre of town to meet and talk to their mother, having been told by UCSC members of staff, that it was a *Wahaya's* place [a brothel] where people drank beer and *piwa*, the illicit homebrew, and sold marijuana. Halima's mother was frying fish for sale in a courtyard off their rented room, and it seemed likely that she might supplement her income for the family with commercial sex work, although, understandably, she never mentioned this. Her perception of how Halima and Sophia had come to stay on the streets centred around her unavoidable absence from home: one of her children began to have mental health problems when he completed primary school, so she went to Tabora to look after him for a year, leaving Halima and Sophia on their own. They were in Standard 5 and 6 of primary school [aged 12 and 15], but started playing truant, because their mother was not at home, and were expelled from school.

In response to my question about how she felt about her current situation, Halima's mother said that she was happy that her children were all well again, and if she could save enough money (she needed about 60, 000 Tsh., roughly equivalent to £60), she would start up her own business, which she saw as the answer to her problems. She was

waiting to be able to pay for Sophia to return to her tailoring course, now that Sophia's baby was six months old, and her other daughter living with them had a baby too, which made it difficult for her to go back to school. I asked whether the fathers of the babies supported the girls, but they laughed, slightly embarrassed, saying they were useless. UCSC members of staff reported seeing Sophia and Halima sometimes soliciting around town in the evenings and in bars known as pick-ups for prostitutes. It thus seemed likely that the girls were also occasionally involved in commercial sex work, having grown up in an environment in which prostitution provided the main source of income for women. Understandably, however, they did not wish to share this information with me (home visit, 16/6/00). This illustrates Goffman's metaphor of social interaction as a performance, in which the 'front-stage' is where performances are enacted for people to create impressions of themselves in public life, and the 'back-stage' is where unrehearsed performances take place, which are not intended for public observation (Goffman, 1959)¹². Thus, Sophia and Halima and their mother all sought to present themselves in a favourable light to me, and hide their involvement in commercial sex work, which could be seen as the 'back-stage' performance. Their narratives and perceptions of 'reality' are however, all equally valid.

Two other home visits revealed the problem of irresponsible paternity, where single mothers were left to bear the costs of bringing up children born outside of marriage on their own. Samuel was a fourteen year old, who had lived at the UCSC residential centre for about two years when we visited his home in Namanga, on the border with Kenya:

¹² See p.91

A neighbour told us that Samuel's mother had gone to see relatives, while her partner, who owned the house, was travelling. She did domestic work over the border in Kenya and lived there with her daughter, Samuel's older sister. Samuel said that he knew who his father was, but he had never helped him, saying 'he never even gave me Tsh.100' (roughly equivalent to 10 pence). The mother had four children, but two of them had died (one last year, when Samuel had asked for the bus fare from UCSC to come to see his mother) (Samuel, home visit, 20/03/00). During my later visit, Samuel explained to me at the UCSC residential centre that he went to visit his mother in Namanga in the school holidays at Christmas time and she was happy to see him and hear that he was progressing well at school. She gave him food, shoes, a coat and other clothes, but went to visit her mother and her daughter (who now lives with her grandmother, after finishing Standard 7 at primary school), and other relatives in Singida, so Samuel stayed with his aunt for the rest of the holiday. Samuel said that although his mother gave him some clothes, she could not afford to send him to school (Samuel, UCSC residential centre, 05/02/01).

This illustrates the Cornwall's comment that in African societies, as elsewhere, 'refusing to acknowledge paternity is a well-used tactic to avert having to cater for a child or maintain any kind of link with its mother' (Cornwall, cited in Lockwood, 1997:94).

In my later period of fieldwork, I found that Samuel (and two other former street boys) were studying at an English medium boarding school near the UCSC Residential centre, after a sponsor had offered to meet their schooling costs. Despite some initial tensions with some of the other boys at the school, the former street boys had settled in well, and returned to the UCSC centre during school holidays (fieldwork journal, 4/12/02). The

fact that they were being educated at an English medium private school, where they were forbidden to talk Swahili or any other local languages, even in their leisure time. meant that their standard of English had improved significantly, which would give them a head-start if they had the opportunity to go to secondary school. This demonstrates that UCSC provided important educational opportunities for children in difficult circumstances, who would otherwise never have been able to access formal education.

Step-fathers

In view of female-headed households' vulnerability to poverty and instability, due to their lack of independent access to land and property, many women find another partner to live with, as Samuel's mother did. However, due to the notion that children 'belong' to their fathers, step-fathers are not expected to care for older children from previous marriages. This was revealed in three home visits, and in two of the children's interviews. Devi, a seventeen year old (small for his age) who had been living at the UCSC residential centre for about two years, and had previously lived on the streets for about four years, went to visit 'home' in the school holidays:

RE: Who lives at home now?

D: There's no one. My dad went to Ngorongoro, to the animal reserve.[...]

RE: And your mother?

D: My mum lives in Moshi, near the road which goes to Dar es Salaam.

RE: During the school holidays did you go to see your mum?

D: Yes, I went, but I found she had got married to another husband.

RE: How long did you stay for?

D: At my mum's? I just stayed one day, and came back.

RE: Did you want to stay for longer?

D: No.

RE: Your mum didn't want to have you staying at home?

D: No.

RE: Because of her new husband?

D: Yes. [...]

RE: Did you go to see your father?

D: No, when I was at home, I just sat there the first day, the second day, I sat there, and he left with the money from the centre that we were given, he just left with it. It was for the bus fare to Moshi, 700 Tsh. and the 2,000 Tsh. left over, he put it together with his money, mixed it with my money, and took it, I just stayed there, at home. He took it and went round to my mum's place, when he came back, I said to him, 'dad, where's that money?' He said, 'I don't know, maybe it got lost.' I said to him, 'That's it, if that's the way it is', I hated it and thought, that's it, and left, I just left. When I got to a small place like here, I heard that my grandfather had died. (Devi, UCSC residential centre, 16/7/00)

Devi's experience shows that maintaining familial ties through returning home in the school holidays can sometimes merely reinforce street children's feelings of worthlessness and rejection from their family. When I talked to Devi at the residential centre over two years later, he told me that he had not been home since then. After dropping out of school, and spending several months on the street again, Devi had returned to the UCSC residential centre, where he was studying carpentry and construction work. UCSC project workers had discussed with Devi, now aged 20, the possibility of raising funds to buy a set of carpentry tools for him, to enable him to

support himself in his home community. However, living with his father or mother was not an option for Devi:

RE: Do you think you could live at home and work?

D: Yes, I would like that.

RE: Would you like to carry on with construction or carpentry?

D: I like carpentry. If it was possible to buy me tools, I could live at home either with the *balози*⁵ [village leader] or the village chairman.

RE: Do you think they would agree?

D: Yes, it was the UCSC manager who said that to me.

RE: You can't stay with your father?

D: No, I can't stay with him.

RE: He lives with another woman now?

D: Yes, there's no room. [...]

RE: Does your mother live in Moshi too?

D: Yes, she lives with my three younger siblings.

RE: Does she work?

D: She sells tomatoes.

RE: So there's no room at her place?

D: There's no room there.

RE: Do you have other relatives at home?

D: Yes, my older brother, my paternal uncle, my grandfather – on my father's side.

RE: Do they live nearby?

D: No, they live a little way away, in the mountains. (Devi, UCSC residential centre, 8/12/02)

This shows the important role that community leaders could play in supporting former street children to reintegrate into their home communities, when their parents are unable or unwilling to support them.

Step-mothers

Whereas step-fathers are not expected to look after step-children, men who remarry often expect their new wives to care for children from their first marriage, since the children are considered to 'belong' to their father. One of the clearest messages emerging from the children's interviews, discussions, and drawings, is that boys are particularly at risk of abuse, neglect and harassment from step-mothers who resent the inheritance rights they have over their own children.

In the focus group discussion with the boys at the UCSC shelter, the problem of step-mothers was cited as the main reason boys run away from home (UCSC shelter, 17/4/00). They claimed that they are beaten severely if, for example, they are carrying the baby and it falls, they are made to go without food, not allowed to go to school and made to do hard labour at home. Step-mothers' neglect and exploitation of their step-sons was also reflected in Samson's drawing of 'home' (conducted at the end of the discussion), in which he depicted himself, his father, step-mother and younger brother, and wrote, 'my step-mother treats me badly, I feel hungry' (Samson, UCSC shelter, 17/4/00). Luka, an eleven year old living on the streets at the time of the interview, simply said, 'I used to live with my step-mother and she used to treat me badly, so I decided to run away'. In response to the question, 'what didn't you like about home?', he replied, 'They didn't have to harass me and beat me again and again', confirming that it was his step-mother who beat him (Luka, street, 11/6/00). While step-mothers'

ill-treatment of boys seems to be a gender-specific abuse of children's rights, due to the threat step-sons represent to the inheritance of the husband's property, it can also be seen as a product of structural gender inequalities, which deny women independent access to land and property, and overburden them with productive and reproductive work.

An issue resulting from the breakdown of a first marriage and men remarrying, is that as well as step-mothers' ill-treatment, children from previous marriages may also experience resentment and rejection from their father. As noted earlier, the rights of the child can only be understood fully in the context of the status of the child's mother (Omari and Mbilinyi, 1997). As Bledsoe argues, for formally or informally polygynous men, there is a tendency to rank wives, and therefore children by wives' status (Bledsoe, cited in Lockwood, 1997:94). Consequently, children of high-status wives, and especially educated wives, may receive special attention, while those of uneducated, low status wives may be marginalized (ibid). As Lockwood notes, this relates to a long-observed approach to paternity in African societies in which it is social, not biological paternity which is important, and that people may choose courses of action to emphasise or de-emphasise particular relationships at particular times (ibid). Thus, when husbands reject and banish their first wife, the children from that marriage are often rejected, as the experiences of two of the street boys interviewed shows.

Emanuel, a seventeen year old boy staying at the UCSC shelter at the time of the first interview, explained that he used to live with his mother, but he ran away due to physical abuse. Staff told me that Emanuel's father had thrown his first wife, who was disabled, and Emanuel, out of the house, leaving them without any property, and had married another woman with whom he had fathered other children (fieldwork journal,

5/7/02). His father found Emanuel on the streets and took him to his house where he beat him. After staying for a week, Emanuel came back to the UCSC shelter:

E: I stayed and then that step-mother came and took me away with her child, they came to take me. I found that she gave me work, but she didn't give the others any work, but me, she gave me work to do. I refused and ran away to town. Yes, then I came here for the second time, I stayed and my father came, he knew I was here. He left me alone. And then the priest from our church came here. He came to see me. And now I'm here. My father used to hate me and he threw my clothes, he threw my clothes down the toilet, he dropped them into the pit.

RE: Why do you think he did that?

E: I don't know, he just loves the children from that other woman. She has six children.

At the end of the interview, I asked if there was anything Emanuel wanted to add, and he stressed the ill treatment he had experienced from his step-mother. His labour was exploited while her children received preferential treatment:

RE: Is there anything else you want to add?

E: When I came here, that step-mother was with them. It was me who had to do all the work, while her children went to school, when they came back they ate their meal, then other food was prepared which I ate, they would go to watch TV, and tell me to finish the other work first.

RE: You didn't go to school while you lived with your step-mother?

E: No, she used to tell me, just to graze the goats, once when I was grazing the goats, one was eaten by a dog, and she got angry at me, she came and beat me with a big stick. Yes, she beat me.

RE: How long did you stay with your step-mother?

E: I stayed with them for three months. This year (Emanuel, UCSC shelter, 5/7/00).

Staff at UCSC told me that Emanuel's father worked at the mortuary and once had locked Emanuel in the mortuary on his own with the corpses for several hours, which had understandably been a very traumatic experience for him (fieldwork journal, 25/10/02). When I talked to Emanuel again during my fieldwork over two years later, Emanuel was upset that his father still refused to have any contact with him, or his mother:

RE: [...] Have you seen your father since the last time we talked?

E: No.

RE: It's difficult?

E: Yes, because it's him, since I've been at the residential centre, I've never seen him, since he left me on my own, he's doesn't want to see me again.

RE: Since you left home for the streets?

E: Even when I was younger, before I was in town, when I was 9 or 10, he bought me some clothes, but since then, nothing.

This illustrates the idea raised in the previous chapter, that being bought clothes and other basic necessities by their parents is perceived by children as an expression of

parental love for their children¹³. Consequently, when parents withdraw such support, or neglect children's basic needs, it is experienced by children as a feeling of rejection and of 'being unloved'. At the end of the interview, Emanuel expressed his wish that UCSC staff would facilitate a reconciliation with his father, since on his own, he felt powerless and afraid to approach him:

RE: Is there anything else you want to add?

E: Perhaps if they [UCSC staff] could talk to my father, and bring him here to see me.

RE: Does he know you live here?

E: Yes, he might have heard that I'm here, but it needs staff from here to go, I can't go alone.

RE: You can't go to see him at home?

E: No, I can't, he might not understand me.

RE: So you would like him to come and see you here at the residential centre?

E: Yes. He might say he's coming, but then not come. It's two years ago since I last saw him and he didn't want to see me again. (Emanuel, aged 19, residential centre, 8/12/02)

Emanuel's story reveals the particularly vulnerable situation of women and children who are rejected by an autocratic father/husband, due to preferential treatment for a second wife and her children, leaving them with no rights to property or inheritance. Emanuel experienced such rejection and hatred by his father as a source of unresolved sadness and pain. As discussed earlier:

¹³ See p.110

Refusing to acknowledge paternity is a well-used tactic to avert having to cater for a child, or maintain any kind of link with its mother... Becoming a father is an expected part of men's life courses, yet despite being 'owners' of children, fathers can devolve responsibility over their children onto other women, either their mothers or their kin; sometimes to the extent whereby they become practically irrelevant in the day-to-day process of bringing up the child.

(Cornwall, cited in Lockwood, 1997: 94)

The experiences of Juma, a fourteen year old living at the UCSC shelter, whose younger brother also lived on the streets, also illustrate the strategy adopted by men to de-emphasise a relationship with a lower ranking wife, and marginalise the wife and her children. Juma expressed his problems at home in terms of a lack of love on the part of his father, step-mother and their children, while his real mother was unable to provide for him:

RE: When do you feel happiest?

J: Soon I'll be grown up, so I won't be happy because of my parents, my father doesn't love me and my mother lives in a place where there are a lot of problems, so I can't feel happy. [...] UCSC took me home and I went to school at my step-mother's place, but I couldn't cope because my step-mother doesn't like me and my father doesn't love me and their children too don't like me, and they say I'm waiting for my father to die, so that I get the inheritance. I saw that there was no love there, and left. [...] I would like to go to school anywhere they [UCSC] decide, but not at my step-mother's. And I can't stay with my real mother because she only has one rented room and is a petty trader at the market (Juma, UCSC shelter, 20/4/00).

According to UCSC members of staff who visited Juma's home, Juma's 'father' had four wives, two of whom had left him (including Juma's mother) and about twenty three children. The neighbours and relatives claimed that Juma's mother went through a period of heavy drinking when she did not come home at night, and became pregnant with Juma at this time. One of the neighbours claimed that he was actually Juma's biological father, and UCSC staff perceived a noticeable resemblance. This man had not been a father-figure to Juma, however, illustrating the notion that it is social, not biological paternity which is important in African societies (Lockwood, 1997).

When I talked to Juma again over two years later, he took me to meet his mother who rented a room in a traditional house (built out of mud and wood) in town, where she lived with his younger brother. She relied on going around town selling spinach, which she bought at the market, for her livelihood. Juma and his mother described how Juma's father had rejected her, and she had been pushed over by one of her husband's other wives, who had broken her arm and hurt her leg, and driven her away. An older sister had got together enough money for the bus fare for her mother to go to Arusha with her youngest son, George, where she stayed with her eldest son, who helped her pay the rent. Juma stayed behind with his brother Samson, as they were both studying in Standard 4 at primary school, while Juma continued working as a day labourer on a coffee plantation as soon as he got home from school every day:

J's Mum: Before I arrived here, I was pushed over by one of their father's other wives, she broke my arm, he [Juma] slept outside with me through the whole night, there was no hospital. I stayed there until my hand almost rotted. [...] I left the children there to go to school at their father's place.

J: My mum came here when she was ill.

M: When I came, I had a broken arm. If it wasn't for him [Juma], I would have died.

J: There was no work back home, mum just used to work as a casual labourer. At least to get some food, school fees, we used to work as a day labourers and then bring the money, so we used that money for school fees and food. My dad didn't look out for us at all, even clothes he didn't help us with.

M: Not a single thing.

J: When mum was injured, she had to come to Arusha. She met her son here, her first born, and so she stayed with him. And we carried on going to school.

RE: You used to live with your father then?

J: No, we lived with the *balози*⁵ [village leader].

RE: So your father rejected you then?

J: Yes.

M: Then the school fees were due.

J: I stayed with the *balози*⁵, he decided to take legal action against my father, and I saw that the law would make me imprison my father. So I thought I'll have to just leave it, as in our culture, it's not acceptable for me to take legal action against my dad. So then I came to Arusha, with my older sister here. Because she wanted to come. When we came to Arusha, Samson had already come here.

(Home visit, Juma, 17/11/02)

Juma's mother explained that she was not officially married to Juma's (social) father, which meant that she was not ranked as highly as his other wives and children:

RE: Why do you think your father rejected you and chased you from home?

J: You know my father had four wives.

Mother: And also, he drinks a lot.

RE: So he has lots of other children?

J: Yes, lots and lots.

M: Lots, but they have a different mother.

RE: So you were his first wife?

M: No, I was not quite straightforward. It was just like lovers because I wasn't even married.

J: The third wife. (home visit, 17/11/02)

As a woman involved in an informal union with a man who had fathered her children, therefore, Juma's mother was in a vulnerable position. When Juma's (social) father chose to de-emphasise the relationship, due to demands on scarce resources, tensions, and conflicts of interests with his other more favoured wives and children, Juma's mother and her children were marginalised. As Lockwood notes:

The unequal economic and ideological ability of men and women to manage relationships makes women potentially more vulnerable to marginalisation than men. (Lockwood, 1997:98)

Although staying with the village *balози*⁵ leader seemed at first to offer an alternative means of support to enable Juma to attend school, he was again marginalized within this household, while the other children received preferential treatment:

'I suffered there, my father rejected me, so I stayed with the *balози*⁵ [village leader], I studied there. Then after a while, his children went to school, but I was told to stay at home and graze the cattle. I stayed and suffered, my step-mother doesn't love me, I was lonely, the others went to school but I couldn't. So then I decided to come to Arusha, I ran away to Arusha'. (Juma, UCSC shelter, 4/12/02)

Juma's story illustrates how a child's situation is clearly linked to the status of the child's mother, and a husband's rejection of a wife often leads to insecurity and impoverishment, with particularly detrimental impacts on children.

Polygamous households

As noted in Chapter 2, a significant proportion of marriages in Tanzania are polygamous (28 per cent of married women have co-wives: Omari, 1995), which has important implications for the welfare and status of children within polygamous household structures. Koda suggests that the father's role in socialising children is greatly curtailed in polygamous households: 'With limited time, and love and responsibilities shared among several children, most polygamous fathers fail to have a dialogue with their children' (Koda, 2000:245). She suggests that this corresponds to the 'autocratic' (the father dictates to the others) mode of decision-making (ibid). However, each wife in a polygamous household also has a degree of autonomy in relation to decision-making about food production and other matters concerning resources and welfare for herself and her children (Omari, 1995; Koda, 2000). Omari asserts that decision-making in polygamous households involves negotiations and the balancing of interests of several wives and their offspring, with elements of tension and jealousy sometimes arising between wives and children, as was illustrated in the example of Juma (see above) (Omari, 1995:211).

Polygamy was cited by UCSC members of staff, and staff at the Rolling Stones project as a factor making children run away from home, since the current economic situation places greater pressure on large families and husbands are no longer able to provide for several wives and their many children (UCSC shelter, 28/6/00; Rolling Stones, 3/6/00). Three of the young people participating in the study came from polygamous families: Juma whose mother was rejected by her husband and was unable to provide for her

sons¹⁴; Lucy, a twenty year old former street girl, who described her home living with her mother (who had separated from her husband) as ‘a life of poverty’ (Lucy, Theresa House, 20/5/00); and Justin, a fourteen year old at the UCSC shelter, whose home we visited and whom I interviewed.

Lucy saw her father’s polygamous household structure as a form of security and wealth when her mother could no longer provide for her:

‘At home, because my father had several wives, when I finished Standard 7 [primary school], I decided to go and find him, he used to live in Shinyanga. We arranged it with my mother, and she got the bus fare for me. I went to Shinyanga in 1991, I stayed for eight months, then my father started to be sick. After four days, he died and we brought him to Moshi to be buried, and when the mourning period was over, everyone went their own way, the other wives just went to their fathers, that’s all, there were many children. Then I saw that my mother didn’t have any help and I thought I’ll come to Arusha and look for work’ (Lucy, Theresa House, 20/5/00).

On the death of Lucy’s father, however, the wives were forced to return to their parental homes with their children, causing the break-up of the polygamous household. The wives and their children were therefore left in a vulnerable position, with few, if any, inheritance rights. Lucy’s move to the streets, as in the example of Upendo¹⁵, was thus motivated by an altruistic desire to earn money to help her mother, in response to poverty.

¹⁴ See p.181-185.

¹⁵ See p.150.

Justin's father's polygamous household also seemed to be relatively wealthy in terms of assets and food security. In response to the question, 'What was it like at home?', Justin replied, 'My father used to beat me, that's why I came here. It was when I went to graze the cows and if they ate people's maize, he came and beat me' (Justin, UCSC shelter, 3/5/00). Two of Justin's older brothers had come to the UCSC shelter looking for Justin a month before I conducted the interview, saying that he had run away from home several times before, but they usually managed to bring him back. According to his brothers, Justin used to abscond from school, saying he would rather graze the cattle than go to school, but he would wander off, leaving the cattle to ruin people's crops, and then he would be beaten severely by his father. Justin refused to go back with his brothers, fearing his father's reaction.

When we visited his home a few months later, we found a large compound with traditional Maasai *bomas* (round huts) for each wife and her children and a square hut for the father:

Unfortunately, Justin's mother had gone to visit relatives, but his father and two other wives, Justin's maternal uncle and about twelve children were there. His father said 'Praise God' when he saw his son again, offered us tea and then we asked him about Justin, sitting outside in the compound surrounded by the rest of the family. He said that Justin had studied up to Standard 4 in primary school with the usual problems, sometimes lacking a pen, exercise book etc. Then Justin simply refused to go to school and sometimes took things from people, which the father punished by beating him, and then he ran away. The father went to the school to see if Justin had done anything wrong there, or to see if he was bullied and afraid of going to school, but the teachers confirmed that there was no problem, and advised him to leave Justin be, saying he

would return in his own time. Justin had since run away several times, leaving the cattle to ruin the neighbours' crops, which the father paid back with the gift of a cow. They had gone looking for him many times, and the police had brought him back home once.

When we asked about Justin's behaviour, his father said that he worked well, but he had just got in the habit of running away. He said Justin did not argue with anyone, and did not mess around, but if he decided to go, he would – he had his own ideas and did what he wanted. He said they were ready to take him to school and able to provide for him, since they cultivated a large plot of land, had a large herd of cows and goats, and the father also worked as a night watchman in town. Perhaps as was to be expected, the father denied beating Justin severely, saying he only beat him as was considered normal. UCSC staff discussed with his father taking Justin to school either at a boarding school or at the UCSC residential centre. Despite their relative wealth in terms of self-sufficiency and property, their cash income for school fees was thought to be limited, thus, UCSC staff recommended that Justin stay at the residential centre, where he could go to the local primary school. It seemed unlikely that Justin's father was able to send all of his twenty children to school, particularly as they became older and school fees rose accordingly (Justin, home visit, 6/7/00).

Despite responding inappropriately to Justin's misbehaviour, the father appeared genuinely concerned about his son, and in view of the financial pressures on such a large household and the need for all the children to contribute to the family labour, the father's frustration at his son's irresponsible behaviour is understandable. Apart from the occasional harsh punishments, Justin seemed happy at home, enjoying the company and support of his large family:

- RE: Do you feel happy at home?
- J: Yes.
- RE: At home, who/where would you go to play?
- J: With friends, my younger brothers and sisters, there are lots of us, same father but different mothers.
- RE: Who/ where would you go to share a secret?
- J: My father or mother or friends.
- RE: Who/where would you go if you get bad news?
- J: I can tell my father or my mother.
- RE: Who/where would you go if you are beaten by your mates?
- J: I tell my father or my mother or my step-mother.
- RE: Who/ where would you go if you are beaten by an adult?
- J: For example, if it's my father, I would go to my maternal uncle (Justin, UCSC shelter, 3/5/00).

Many of the other children interviewed did not respond nearly as positively to these questions, implying that fewer adult figures were available to turn to for support in non-polygamous household structures. Thus, in Justin's experience, although his father expressed his 'autocrat' role through the threat and fear of violence as a means of exerting control over the household, the polygamous family structure could also represent a source of support.

During my later period of fieldwork over two years later, I heard that after staying at the UCSC residential centre for a year, where he was studying in Standard 3, Justin had returned home for his circumcision and initiation rites, and had decided to stay at home.

His father gave him a field where he cultivated his own maize, he slept in his own hut, now he was a *moran* [warrior – term used for circumcised Maasai young men], and was building his own more permanent hut just outside his father's compound, which he proudly showed me. His father was pleased that Justin was living at home again, but was clearly finding it a strain on the household's resources to meet all the needs of his twenty or more children:

RE: How is Justin getting on now?

Father: Not bad, he doesn't have any problems now. I stay with him, we cultivate, he grazes the cattle, he works as usual. The thing which I am concerned about is that he doesn't have any education, I think it's serious, education opens up life. But the money isn't there to help him to get an education. It makes me sick at heart to think that I can't send him to school, to develop his intelligence, but I can't afford it.

RE: How long has he been living at home now? A year?

F: Yes, I think a year has passed since he came back home. A year.

RE: He doesn't think about going back to the street?

F: No, he doesn't have any problem with the street, we live together here completely. The places he goes to now are to [confirmation] classes, choir, to learn the hymns of the church, and he has the field over there, it's his maize. I gave it to him, it's his, so that he works on it, it all depends on your means, whatever little you have, so you give it to someone to work on.

RE: What do you think about his future?

F: Life isn't bad, life continues well, [...] the thing which affects things is money, so you can progress, you could buy a modern cow, to get milk, you buy

something else and give it to him, so that he could build his house properly. you cultivate, so that you get money to cultivate the land with him, that's all.

RE: And the children help you at home...

F: They help, but I have a heavy burden to bear. I'm not very strong now, but you carry on, I'm tired, that's all, others carry on, to look after their uncle, and other relatives, I don't have any work, just dwelling on things. [...] If there's problems here, I am the only one everyone runs to for help. I don't have any work, it's just me and the children. If I had lots of cattle, I would be better off. I could afford to give my children a good education. But now that we have so many different needs, our meagre resources have continued to get less and less. If I had studied a bit, I would have some work in an office, but if you don't have education, that's the way it is. We do our best. Whatever little we get, we make do with it, if we get nothing, grandfather will be left at home on his own. Nobody hates their children, honestly, it's just not having the money to help.
(Homevisit, Justin, 6/12/02)

Following our visit, Justin expressed an interest in attending a vocational training course not far from his home to learn construction work, which UCSC was able to facilitate.

Justin's case suggests that polygamous households could offer young people, particularly young men, a source of support and sense of belonging, as well as valuable assets such as land and property. However, sharing the household's resources between so many wives and children clearly had detrimental impacts on children, particularly on their ability to access education.

Family breakdown

Using Sen's concept of the different conflicts of interests amongst individuals within households, and men, women and children's different entitlements and bargaining power, the likelihood of tension and conflict within poor households seems greater (Sen, 1999). Thus, as Lockwood points out, the marriages and the households of the poor are likely to be more unstable than those of the rich (Lockwood, 1997). In some cases, this leads to the breakdown of the family and the dispersal of the household.

Several of the former street children came from households which had dispersed on the death of one or both of the parents. The situation of children orphaned by AIDS, whose family was unable or unwilling to support them will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6. Several other street children came from families where the parents' marriage had broken up and the members of the household had dispersed, to stay either with relatives or friends in temporary or more permanent arrangements, or on the street. When Devi, a seventeen year old, staying at the UCSC residential centre, took UCSC project workers on a home visit, they found his father's house locked up and in a state of disrepair:

RE: Did you go home with the members of staff here?

D: Yes, we went in 1999. We sat there at home for a while and then came back.

There was no one to stay with at home.

Re: So your dad wasn't there?

D: No, there was no one, the house was just there by itself, as if it had been wrecked.

RE: So he had moved?

D: Yes, he built another house near there. [...] But when I found there was no one there, I understood that my dad must have gone away. (Devi, UCSC residential centre, 16/7/00)

As illustrated earlier in the chapter, living at home with either his mother, or with his father, was not an option for Devi, due to their new partners and a lack of room¹⁶.

The story of Nixon, a seventeen year old living at the UCSC residential centre who was head boy at primary school, reveals how relations between family members in poor households can become strained, eventually leading to the disintegration of the household. A combination of poverty, corporal punishment at school (due to lack of school fees), his father's alcoholism and domestic violence made Nixon drop out of school and engage in petty theft, eventually leaving for the streets:

N: I ran away from home because when I was studying in Standard 2 at home when I was in Standard 1, my father didn't pay the school fees for me because he was an alcoholic and he didn't have any work. If he did casual work, when he was paid, he got drunk, when he came back home, he beat all of us and my mum and he threw us out, we went to sleep at the neighbours' place. If we came back in the morning, we would sit outside until he decided to get up, yes, then I changed my clothes and went to school. You would also find that he had eaten all the food. At school, I used to be beaten and suspended because of the school fees, but I put up with it. When I reached Standard 2 I couldn't bear it anymore, and I went back home, and I didn't go to school. He used to give me work to do, when I didn't do it, he beat me and told me to go to school. If I asked him for school fees, he said, 'Just go as you are, how the hell did you

¹⁶ See pp. 173-6.

used to go to school without school fees before?’ I saw that things weren’t cool there and went to my grandmother’s, and helped her so that she would give me school fees.

‘Then there was a friend of mine, my cousin, and he didn’t used to go to school because he was retarded and he used to smoke a lot of marijuana. Once he convinced me to break into a kiosk and I agreed. He broke in and stole things and came out with them and money. We went to town with the things and we sold them, with the money we bought radios. We returned to my grandmother again. When evening came, we found that my (maternal) uncle had already reported it to the police, he thought we were the thieves. We just sat there scared and he came and found us with the radios. He asked us and we didn’t answer, so he knew it must have been us that broke into the kiosk, and he took us to the village council office, we were just counselled and we came back home, but my uncle held a grudge. Another time, that friend of mine stole grandma’s coffee plants, and at night we were both caught, and we were beaten from 10pm to 12am. We were beaten by my older brother and that uncle. We were beaten, and allowed to rest, then beaten again and allowed to rest, but I wasn’t guilty. When I came away from there, I saw that I didn’t have anywhere to live. If I stayed with grandma I was beaten, if I went home, I was beaten, so I decided to go to town. Because my older brother had gone ahead, when I decided to go to town, I really believed in myself that my age-mates wouldn’t beat me. And at that time, there weren’t many street children, so we were able to live well. That was in 1993. I lived on the streets and my parents didn’t look for me, so I just got used to it.[...]

RE: Do you go home sometimes?

N: Yes, in June and December, in the holidays.

RE: Did you find everyone at home?

N: There wasn't a single one of my brothers at home and at that time, my mum used to come home occasionally, the rest of the time she slept in town. [...] When I went home in the school holidays, I found my father, I asked him, 'where's mum?' and he told me she went to town with my younger siblings, and never came back again. So, I didn't sleep at home, I slept at my grandmother's until the holidays were over and I came back to UCSC.

RE: Does your mum work in town?

N: No, she doesn't work, she just begs. She's never worked.

RE: Why?

N: I think, because she's someone who doesn't have any education.

RE: Have your mother and father separated?

N: When she left, I don't know if they split up. Perhaps because of the problems there at home. Firstly, my father is an alcoholic, when he comes home at night, he wants food when he didn't leave any money for it. If he is told there's no food, he beats all of us and throws us out. I think my mum couldn't tolerate it anymore and decided to go to town. [...]

RE: How old is your older brother now?

N: 20.

RE: Does he live with your father?

N: They are all in town. Now my father is on his own at home.

RE: Does your brother work?

N: No, he doesn't work, he's just in town, wandering round.

RE: Does he beg for money?

N: No, he used to sell marijuana at the *Wahaya's* place [tribe renowned for prostitution, meaning brothel] but when it was dangerous, he stopped. I don't know what he's doing now. He didn't even go to school, so he can't get work.

RE: Did you see him during the holidays?

N: I saw him and asked him what kind of work he's doing, he told me he just sits around, he pickpockets people, if someone passes, he puts his hand into their pocket, if he finds any money, he takes it, if he doesn't get any, too bad. And my other older brother has been at Mbuguni [Tanzanite mines] for a long time (Nixon, UCSC residential centre, 16/07/00).

Thus, the combination of poverty, the father's alcoholism and domestic violence sadly drove Nixon's mother and all their children to the streets, causing the household to disintegrate. When I talked to Nixon during my fieldwork over two years later, he told me that he was one of 20 pupils chosen from 120 in his year to go to the government secondary school, and UCSC had found a sponsor to meet the costs of his secondary education. His younger sister, who was on the streets at the time of the initial interview, was being sponsored and was studying in Standard 6 at boarding school. He had visited 'home' or rather, his relatives in the school holidays:

RE: How are your parents?

N: My parents? I don't know really, because my dad is on his own, and my mum is on her own, it's different from when I was younger.

RE: I remember you told me that there's no one at home anymore...

N: No, there's no one at home anymore.

RE: Really?

N: Really, there's no one there now. My mother is at my grandma's place.

RE: So your dad lives on his own in a different house?

N: Yes, at his friend's house. So our house is locked up, it just stands on its own, there's no one living there.

RE: And your mum?

N: My mum lives with grandmother, her mother.

RE: So you stayed there with your grandmother?

N: Yes, I stayed with her, grandmother. But not in the same house. I used to go in the day, we used to sit there, and then at night, I went to another house.

RE: Another house...?

N: Yes, because there wasn't enough room.

RE: How is your father?

N: I don't know what to say to you, because he doesn't do any work at all, perhaps just if he gets some day labour to do some farm work for people, he gets some food to live on.

RE: Does he still drink?

N: Yes, a lot. Even my mum drinks a lot too.

RE: And does your mum work?

N: She doesn't have any work at all.

RE: Where does she get money from?

N: I don't think, I don't know where she gets money from.

RE: Are you going to go again for these holidays?

N: I'm not going again.

RE: You don't want to?

N: It's not that I don't want to, I just don't have anywhere to stay if I go.

RE: Have your parents been here before?

N: To visit me? My parents come to UCSC? They have never ever come here since I've lived here.

RE: It's several years now that you've lived here....

N: 7 years, almost 8 years. (Nixon, UCSC residential centre, 8/12/02)

Nixon's account illustrates the vulnerable position of children following the break up of their parents' marriage and disintegration of the household, and shows that residential centres such as UCSC may offer the most appropriate form of care for some children, for whom 'home' is simply not an option. Following extensive periods on the street, both Nixon and his younger sister Maua, had taken up the opportunities for education that UCSC could offer them. Residential care at the UCSC centre had enabled Nixon to flourish academically, both at primary school, where he was head prefect, and at secondary school.

Initiation rites

A further aspect of the cultural construction of childhood which impacts on children's experiences of 'home' is the tradition of initiation rites for boys and girls among several ethnic groups in Tanzania, as discussed in the previous chapter. Koda sees initiation ceremonies as an example of adults' gendered control over youth sexuality (Koda, 2000:247). She comments that some youth (both males and females) have vehemently expressed their condemnation of the practice despite the limited avenues to air their grievances (ibid). Koda suggests that girls and boys are increasingly refusing to be 'initiated' by running away from homes to hiding places (teachers' and religious leaders' homes, urban areas and other hideouts) to seek protection (ibid: 248).

In the discussion of factors influencing young people's decision to leave home, UCSC members of staff suggested that the fear of traditional circumcision practices makes some children run away from home. They commented that although most ethnic groups

nowadays take boys to hospital to be circumcised, the Maasai, Waarusha (of Maasai origin), and the Wameru (the dominant ethnic groups in the surrounding region) still use traditional methods in rural areas (staff discussion, UCSC shelter, 28/6/00). Within the scale of the study, none of the young participants mentioned fear of circumcision as a factor in their move to the streets. As noted earlier in the chapter, the association of initiation rites with sexuality and puberty, and my status as a Westerner (*mzungu* –white person) and the widespread cultural desire to appear ‘modern’ through adopting Western values, may have inhibited discussion of this sensitive issue. Furthermore, the taboo and illegality attached to FGM inhibited discussion of girls’ and young women’s personal experiences of FGM.

As noted in Chapter 4, female ‘circumcision’ is very different to male circumcision. In male circumcision, the male sex organs are left intact and there are no permanent health risks (if sterilised implements are used) and arguably some health benefits (LHRC, 2002:2). Female ‘circumcision’, on the other hand, is a much more dangerous procedure which removes or modifies the female sex organs, and causes permanent damage to a girl’s physical and mental health (*ibid*). In view of this fact, girls might be considered more likely to wish to resist initiation rites than boys. However, the co-ordinator of an NGO campaigning against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in the region had not come across any evidence linking a fear of FGM to girls running away from home to the street (interview, NAFGEM co-ordinator, Moshi, 12/11/02). Indeed, as noted in the previous chapter, in Arusha district, there was anecdotal evidence of young girls going against their parents’ wishes, and being mutilated to receive the presents and be accepted by their peers (LHRC, 2002)¹⁷. This suggests that an un-mutilated woman is heavily stigmatised amongst some ethnic groups which practice

¹⁷ See p. 123.

FGM, thus girls seek social acceptance amongst their peers and in the community by conforming with the practice of FGM as part of their initiation into womanhood.

The experiences of several of the boys and young men who were former street boys also provided evidence contrary to the argument that fear of circumcision may force young people to run away from home. For them, initiation rites and circumcision represented a motivating factor for them to return to their home communities, either temporarily or permanently¹⁸. Gasper, a nineteen year old, had lived at the UCSC residential centre for several years, where he had completed his primary education and had qualified to go to the government secondary school, where he was studying well. Despite appearing quite settled in secondary school, staff told me that he left the centre without any explanation and spent two months staying with his grandfather and uncle in his home community so that he could be circumcised, which was followed by a period of seclusion and informal teaching (fieldwork journal and interview with Gasper, UCSC Residential Centre, 8/12/02). Another former street boy living at the UCSC shelter, Juma¹⁹, aged 16, told me that peer pressure, the ‘modern’ values attached to living in town and the medical costs, had made him decide to go to hospital himself to have the operation performed before the age of 18, which was customary for his ethnic group – Meru:

RE: [...] So why did you decide it was time now?

J: I’m here in Arusha, if I was in the village, there’s no problem. But here in Arusha, people think that at 18, you’re already grown up.

RE: People think you’re grown up by then?

¹⁸ See Justin’s story, pp.188-192 and Onessmo’s story, pp.205-9.

¹⁹ See Juma’s story, pp.181-185.

J: Yes. And here in Arusha, for a grown up it costs 15,000 Tsh., if you're still fairly young, 10,000 Tsh., if you're very small, 5,000 Tsh. [roughly equivalent to £14, £9, or £4.50].

RE: Why didn't you tell UCSC you were going?

J: I just knew they would totally refuse, they would tell me to wait until I'd finished my course. If I'd waited until I'd finished my course, I'd already be grown up. So I thought I'll already be grown up if I wait til next December and it will be 15,000 Tsh.

RE: And you didn't miss any school?

J: No, because we'd already finished our exams.

RE: Did you feel a lot of peer pressure?

J: I was very disappointed about it. Because many boys are circumcised when they are very young, so they're ready, but I was already grown up but hadn't had it done yet.

RE: So they laugh at you?

J: Yes, me, grown up like that, but now, everything is cool. I apologised to the teachers, explained my problem, and they're fine about it now (Juma, UCSC shelter, 4/12/02).

Juma left the UCSC centre without letting staff know where he was going, and spent two weeks following his operation recovering and receiving some informal teaching about respect and other values from his older male friends in seclusion in a small goat shed at his mother's place. Gasper and Juma both left the UCSC centre without informing staff, because they feared that they would be prevented from leaving and told to wait until the school holidays. However, they both returned, apologised to members of staff, and were accepted back into the centre once their period of seclusion was over.

These examples illustrate the independence and agency of former street boys, who on the one hand, could be seen as missing out on the traditional cultural practices of their communities because they live within institutional settings, but on the other hand, their particular situation means that they are able to take more responsibility for deciding when their circumcision should be performed.

Rural-urban migration

While most of the young participants' experiences have been explored under the themes already discussed, some of the children's experiences of home defy attempts at categorisation, revealing the diversity of children who become street children and their own agency in constructing their social lives.

The story of Amani, a fourteen year old boy, suggests that some street children come from more comfortable home environments, as this extract from his home visit shows:

Amani told UCSC members of staff in his first interview that his father never came home and did not provide food for the family. After about four days at the shelter, his father came looking for him and found him at the shelter under the name of 'Juma'. His father arrived with a group of young men, ready to take him home by force, however, staff persuaded him to discuss the matter first. The father said that Amani had gone to watch a magic show at school, but had stayed until dark, and then was scared he would be beaten if he went home, so he stayed with a neighbour that night, and then ran away into town. The father said that all his needs were met at home, and he was doing well in Standard 7 at primary school, with only two months until the National Examination to

finish primary school. The father was persuaded to return a week later, to accompany staff to visit their home with Amani without forcing him.

When we arrived at Amani's house, the parents greeted us and offered us lunch inside a well-furnished large concrete house, with a pretty garden. Amani said that he wanted to be a driver when he was older, so we tried to emphasise the importance of finishing Standard 7, since he only had two more months left. He was in a much more fortunate position than most of the other children at the shelter, and his family could obviously afford to provide for him and genuinely cared about him. When members of staff asked what problems he had at home, Amani said that he was lonely, since he was alone there with his older sister. He added that he was afraid of being beaten by his father, and completely refused to stay at home. He complained that his father had hit him once, while the father claimed it had only happened on one occasion as punishment for running away the first time. When the other members of staff were talking to the parents outside, Amani told me that he had run away the first time because his mother had said that his sister was her only child.

The father explained that Amani had run away several times before and had even reached Dar es Salaam, where the police had arrested him and wanted to take him to a Remand Home, but the father argued on his behalf against such a heavy punishment for merely loitering on the streets. The mother had tears in her eyes, and they were very keen for Amani to live at home again, offering to send him to vocational training school to learn mechanics, if that was what he was interested in. They even offered to buy him a bicycle so that he could fetch water and go round selling it to people, so that he could earn his own income. The parents also suggested that, if he preferred, he could live with his relatives, his aunt or his grandmother nearby, but he rejected their suggestion.

Eventually, after talking to the parents and Amani separately, we came to a compromise: Amani could stay at the UCSC shelter, since he liked being with his friends there, but would go to school and attend tuition at the local primary school until the National Examination, which he would do in his home school where he was registered' (Amani, home visit, 1/6/00).

Amani attended school while living at the shelter for two weeks, but when the shelter manager gave him 3,000 Tsh. (equivalent to £3) for his tuition fees, he disappeared. A few days later, the UCSC co-ordinator called in on his family to tell them he had run away from the shelter, but found Amani at home, attending school there. He'd just decided himself that he should go home, remembered what it was like going to school, missed his old school and living with his parents, so he used the 3,000 Tsh. tuition fees for the bus fare home! (fieldwork journal, 14/6/00) On a return visit, a colleague told me that they had seen him in town again, but he had finished primary school at home (fieldwork journal, 15/1/01). This story illustrates young people's agency in constructing their social lives, and perhaps suggests that the attractions of 'modern' urban lifestyles may exert a significant force in young people's decision to migrate to urban areas.

Another home visit also revealed that some street children came from households which were able to provide for the children and the parents genuinely cared about them, where the children themselves found it difficult to rationalise why they had run away:

Onessmo was a fifteen year old who had been on the street for about two years, who had been staying at the UCSC centre for a few months. When we reached his home in the foothills of Mount Meru, his father said that they had missed Onessmo a lot and

tried to find him several times, had looked for him at the mines nearby, in different parts of town and had even filed a report at the police station. On one occasion, his father had found Onessmo in town, bought him some grilled maize and some meat and he had agreed to come home. He washed his clothes there, but ran away the next day, taking the meat with him. The father was a respected *balazi*² [village leader] and village coordinator for the Oxfam water project in the area. He could not understand why Onessmo had run away at all, everything was provided for him at home, he had a good relationship with his step-mother, did not have any problems at school, he was free to play football after school and did not have to work hard on the farm. He spoke proudly of his son, saying that he could speak his mother's language, Mbulu fluently, as well as Maasai and Swahili, because he had lived in Mbulu with his mother and grandmother until he was seven, when his mother died. Onessmo had three older sisters, one of whom had just completed A-levels in Form 6, secondary school and married, the others were presently studying at secondary school. The father's second wife had three small children. The father explained that since Onessmo was his first son, he would soon become a Moran [warrior – term used to describe Maasai young man who has been circumcised] and would inherit a large farm.

In response to project workers' question about why he left home, Onessmo said there was no reason, he had just run away into town one day. In the father's view, the only problem Onessmo had experienced at home was when he had taken some money from a neighbour and bought a radio. The neighbour had made him return the money and had informed his father, so Onessmo had apologised and the problem had not occurred again. Onessmo appeared willing to live at home again, so we left him with his father.

When we returned with the rest of his clothes, as promised, a week later, we found that Onessmo had left home for town the day before. The father and uncles suggested a possible rationalisation for his behaviour in terms of his ethnic origin - Maasai (his father's side) and Mbulu (his mother's side) tribes, both of which were traditionally pastoralist hunters, and so in the past, it was customary to sleep outside at night, since people believed that this made them braver and fearless towards wild animals. They commented that since he had been a small child, Onessmo had always preferred to sleep outside under a tree, rather than inside his grandmother's hut. When Onessmo came to live with his father after his mother's death, he always chose to sleep outside at night, amongst the coffee bushes on the farm, rather than inside the boma (traditional round hut) (homevisit, 19/04/00).

UCSC members of staff would always welcome Onessmo at the shelter if he chose to stay, but were frustrated that he did not seem to want to engage with the long term aims of the project – to be reintegrated into the family, or to stay at the residential centre and receive primary education. I saw him with the other street children around town on several occasions during my later visits. It is likely that after a period of two years or more of surviving independently on the streets, earning his own money, combined with the solidarity and friendships he enjoyed with his peers, and the entertainments and other attractions of 'modern' town life, Onessmo felt bored on the farm at home.

During my later period of fieldwork over two years later, I heard from the other street boys in town that Onessmo had returned home with his father. When we visited his home, we found Onessmo in seclusion for a month, having recently been circumcised in a traditional ceremony. The group of boys were taken out to the bush overnight to test their endurance, and the circumcision was performed at dawn:

Onessmo told us that he was confined to the small hut, which his father had recently built in his compound for the purpose of his seclusion, for a month following his circumcision. There would be a big celebration when he came out of seclusion and because he was Christian, he would be baptised. People would bring goats as gifts, which would all be slaughtered for the celebration, although Onessmo told us he intended to keep his so that he could breed them. He told us that he was visited every day by older morans [warriors – term used for circumcised Maasai young men] in black robes with intricate white patterns painted on their faces. They were responsible for the informal teaching and advice that accompanied the circumcision, which included regular beatings for failing to remember exactly what he had been taught, which Onessmo said happened to him frequently, not least because he was finding it hard to remember the local language, Maasai, which he had not used on the streets. Onessmo was pleased to see us again, but was wary of stepping outside his hut, for fear of leaving any signs of the thread of his blanket on his door, which would solicit a beating from the morans. Thus, he sat in the doorway, while we talked. He told us how he often used to see his uncles near where he used to sleep with the other street boys in town, and they told him that his father wanted him to come home to become a moran. One morning, at 6am, his father came, and Onessmo just got up and left his friends sleeping, without a word. He had been living at home for about a month, and only once had felt like returning to town, but on the way, he had met someone from the village on his bicycle, and had returned with him. Since then, he had not felt tempted to go back to town. (fieldwork journal, 6/12/02).

Onessmo seemed convinced that now he was a *moran*, and everyone expected him to behave respectfully as a ‘man’, with the same status as his father, there was no way he

would return to the streets. This is linked to the sense of transition from childhood to adulthood which the initiation rite symbolised. His behaviour in drifting from home to the street was associated with being an irresponsible child, but as an adult, he was expected to behave responsibly. In addition, Onessmo knew that the older *moran* would be watching him closely, in view of his previous tendencies to run away, and would punish him severely if he defied them.

This example shows how boys in some ethnic groups are socialised to adopt aggressive behaviour and prove their bravery and 'manhood' by enduring pain in initiation rites, as has been noted amongst other tribal communities in Kenya and Ethiopia (Thomson, 2002). In this case, male circumcision, and the subsequent sanction of the threat of violence which accompanied the male initiation rite, was shown to be more of a motivating force for young men to return to their home communities, whether temporarily or more permanently, rather than a cultural practice which would drive boys and young men away from home

The experiences of Onessmo and Amani suggest that the opportunities for earning a cash income and urban lifestyles, which traditionally attracted young men to migrate to African towns and cities, represent significant influences in street children's decision to continue living on the streets. Their exposure to the urban street environment made it difficult for them to adjust to life back at home. One of the groups of school boys also articulated this sense that town life was easier and, thus, more appealing than village life, which involved hard agricultural labour:

RE: So what don't you like doing?

Boys: I don't like working, any kind of work! I just like relaxing, an easy life!

Boys: I like life in town.

RE: When you say town, do you mean here [small town roughly 20 kms from Arusha], or Arusha?

Boys: Arusha, town.

RE: Why do you like Arusha more than here?

Boys: On the farm, you just grow crops again and again, it's hard labour .

RE: You think it's a hard life in the village?

Boys: Yes.

RE: And what about in town?

Boys: In town, it's an easy life, there's no cultivating to be done.

RE: But don't you think perhaps you wouldn't be able to get a job in town, and then where would you get food from?

Boys: You buy it.

RE: You buy it? And if you don't have a job?

Boys: I can't live in town if I don't have a job.

Boys: You could become a thief.

RE: So you couldn't stay in town?

Boys: If you don't have work, you can't live in town. (boys, primary school, Aru-Meru district, 12/12/02).

This suggests that the perception that large towns and cities offer wealth and employment opportunities is still pervasive among young people, particularly boys.

This is evidenced by the large rural-urban influx to Arusha town from neighbouring regions, which contributes to its high annual population growth rate of 6 per cent, compared to the national average of 2.8 per cent (Kadonya et al, 2002:13).

Conclusion

Street children's experiences of 'home' suggest that chronic poverty, and the accompanying social marginalisation, is a major influence in children's decision to leave home. Leaving home to earn some money to help support the family was an altruistic motive adopted by some children, in response to poverty. However, chronic poverty experienced at home was usually compounded by negative manifestations of the cultural construct of childhood, which triggered children's decision to leave. Socio-cultural expectations of children's responsibilities in contributing to the household's productive and reproductive activities caused tensions between the generations around time use. Several boys experienced conflict with their parents over their recreational needs and the duties they were expected to perform. Corporal punishment was shown to represent an integral part of the cultural construction of childhood in Tanzania, which was experienced as overwhelmingly negative by the boys and girls participating in the study. Adults, however, seemed unaware of the negative impacts of their actions and resistant to change. There was some evidence of a link between poverty and corporal punishment - poor households may be more likely to resort to physical violence to discipline children, due to the greater strains, anxieties and conflicts of interest within these households. The young people's accounts suggest that corporal punishment subordinates children and severely inhibits a continued dialogue between adults and young people, marginalising them from decision-making at the level of the household, school and community.

Some boys from poor households misbehaved, were irresponsible in their agricultural duties, or engaged in theft from neighbours in the community, which parents and other

relatives responded to with corporal punishment, which triggered the boys' move to the street. This suggests that some children may run away from home to escape from the trouble, in the community as well as in the family, that their own misdeeds have caused. This also raises issues about how parents can, and should, respond to such misbehaviour. This is linked to the idea discussed in Chapter 4 that parents have been losing authority with regard to traditional cultural values, which reduces their ability to guide and 'control' recalcitrant or rebellious children²⁰. Indeed, the national Child Development Policy suggests that the breakdown in traditional values of the community, such as communal child care, combined with gender-biased attitudes towards girls' and boys' behaviour, has resulted in vagrancy, petty crime, drug abuse and other recalcitrant behaviour amongst boys and young men (Government of Tanzania, 1996). This is linked to notions of gender 'norms' which mean that boys' presence unsupervised in the outside environment is more acceptable than for girls, who are confined to reproductive duties within the home. This in turn contributes to the greater numbers of boys living on the street than girls (discussed further in Chapter 7).

Female-headed households appear particularly vulnerable to impoverishment and insecurity, with negative consequences for the children within the household. Children whose mothers remarried experienced rejection from their mother and step-father, since according to custom, step-fathers are not expected to provide for older children from their wife's first marriage. Step-mothers, in the boys' experience, often subjected boys to harassment, neglect, physical and verbal abuse and exploited their labour, due to resentment and jealousy of boys' inheritance rights to their father's property over their own children. The experiences of some former street boys illustrated the notion that it is 'social' rather than 'biological' paternity which is important within African societies.

²⁰ See p.127

In particular, some men, particularly those involved in polygynous relationships, were shown to emphasise or de-emphasise particular relationships at particular times, resulting in the rejection, impoverishment and marginalisation of women and their children. Children's experiences of polygamous household structures revealed the economic pressures facing 'autocratic' father figures, but also suggested that the large polygamous family could be seen as a source of support and company. In some cases, the economic pressures, domestic violence and conflict of interest within poor households caused the breakdown of the family, and the household dispersed, with children leaving home for the street.

Traditional initiation rites and male circumcision represent a characteristic of the cultural construct of childhood, which can have potentially positive impacts on boys and young men. Positive benefits for boys include a sense of acceptance amongst their peers, a sense of belonging to their family and ethnic group, and becoming a more responsible member of the community. In some cases of street boys who returned home for their initiation rites, the cultural values instilled in them as part of the informal teaching which accompanied the circumcision ceremony helped to curb their formerly rebellious behaviour in running away from home to the street. However, as discussed in Chapter 4, girls' initiation into womanhood in preparation for marriage includes Female Genital Mutilation amongst some ethnic groups, which has particularly negative consequences for girls and young women. In view of the pain, excessive bleeding and longer-term health risks involved with FGM, fear of circumcision has been suggested as a motivation for girls to run away from home, although this study was not able to explore this issue in depth.

This chapter has therefore shown that the constraints of the social institution of childhood, manifested in young people's subordination within diverse household structures, oppressive, gender-discriminatory adult-child relationships within the family, school and community, combined with the severe socio-economic pressure on families, therefore represent the key motivating forces influencing Tanzanian children's decision to leave home for the streets of urban areas. In response to difficult home situations, children leave their immediate household, and seek their own independent life on the streets, where they construct their own social networks amongst their peers and other members of the community. However, some street children's experiences of home defy attempts at categorisation, revealing the diversity of children who become street children, and their own agency in constructing their social lives. For some young people, the attraction of an 'easy life' in town and urban employment opportunities exert a significant force in their lives, leading to their rejection of rural livelihoods at home on the farm. The attractions and employment opportunities for children in urban areas will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 7 and 8, which analyses how children develop their own social networks and survival strategies within the street environment.

First, however, the next chapter looks at the particular situation of children from AIDS-affected households, who are at risk of becoming street children if their families and communities are unable or unwilling to support them. Within the context of the socio-economic pressures facing families in Tanzania, the HIV/ AIDS epidemic is compounding many of the concerns raised in this chapter. As children negotiate their way through the constraints and possibilities of the social institution of childhood, children from AIDS-affected households must also cope with the AIDS stigma, the prolonged terminal illness of one or both parents, siblings and other relatives,

bereavement and meeting their own survival needs as orphans. Their vulnerable situation in turn makes them more susceptible to HIV infection themselves.

Chapter 6

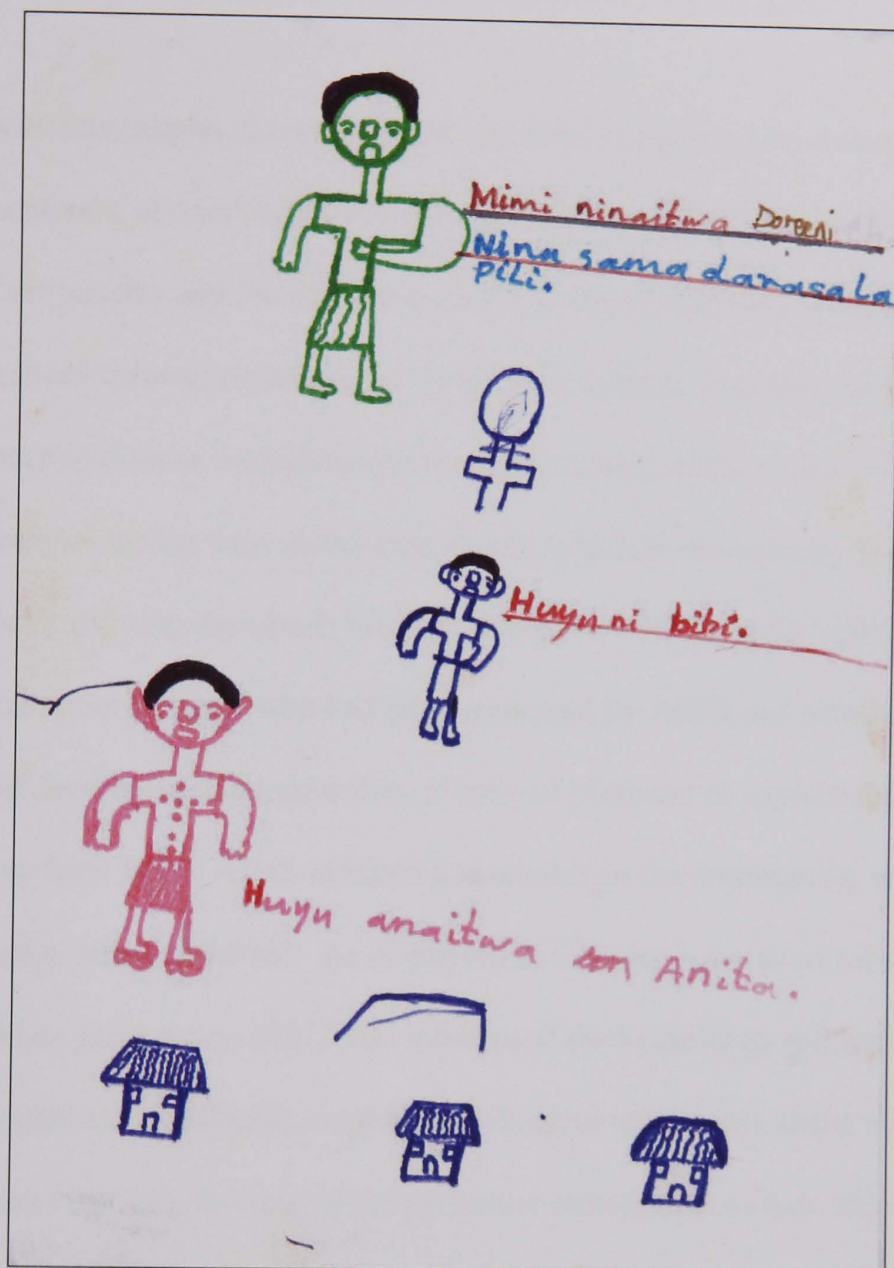


Figure 12: Drawing by Doreen, a 12 year old girl recently orphaned by AIDS, of herself at home. She wrote: 'I am called Doreen, I study in the 2nd year of primary school. This is grandma. This is Anita.' (Arusha, 2002)

Young People's

Experiences of HIV / AIDS

Chapter 6

Young people's experiences of HIV / AIDS

Introduction

The previous chapter discussed street children's experiences of their home environments, and identified key factors in children's decision to leave home for the street as: poverty and the accompanying social marginalisation, negative manifestations of the socio-cultural construct of 'childhood', such as corporal punishment, the influence of diverse household structures, and rural-urban migration. This chapter focuses on a further key, motivating factor, which is increasingly likely to influence children's move to the street: being orphaned by AIDS. In the light of the experiences of some street children who had been orphaned by AIDS and who had been ostracised by their families and communities, it seemed pertinent to explore the experiences of children from HIV / AIDS-affected households in the community, who were at risk of becoming 'street children'. As discussed in Chapter 3, I was fortunate to be able to meet a key gatekeeper, Elli¹, who introduced me to children and adults from HIV / AIDS-affected households, who were willing to talk openly about their experiences². This was very rare, in view of the pervasive atmosphere of fear, stigma, and ostracism attached to the disease in Tanzania (as in many other societies). Based on the findings of semi-structured individual interviews with children and families affected by AIDS in Arusha, this chapter thus explores young people's experiences of HIV / AIDS, the impacts on children and families, and their coping strategies. It also highlights young people's age-related and gendered vulnerabilities to HIV infection.

¹ Elli accompanied me to participants' homes, and participants seemed comfortable with Elli remaining present during the interviews, to which she sometimes contributed. In the interests of confidentiality, the names of all the children and adults interviewed have been changed to protect their identities.

² See p.94.

The HIV/ AIDS epidemic is compounding many of the economic pressures facing many sub-Saharan African countries and constitutes a major threat to sustainable development, poverty reduction and gender equality (as noted in Chapter 2). According to UNAIDS, there were 29.4 million adults and children living with HIV / AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa in 2002, which represents 70 per cent of the global number of people living with HIV / AIDS (UNAIDS, 2002). Only a fraction of the millions of Africans in need of anti-retroviral treatment are receiving it, and many millions are not receiving medicines to treat opportunistic infections (UNAIDS, 2002). In Africa, more women than men are infected: 58 per cent of adults who are HIV positive in sub-Saharan Africa are women (ibid). This trend, as yet unseen on other continents, is linked to a number of complex factors including poverty, patterns of sexual networking and underlying gender inequalities among others. Despite significant reductions in HIV prevalence rates in Uganda and Kenya since 2000, the number of people living with HIV aged 15 and over in Tanzania is estimated to have increased by 3 per cent 2000-2001 (Ministry of Health 2001:vi). Since 1989, HIV / AIDS has been the leading cause of death among the productive adult population in Tanzania and if current trends continue, average life expectancy is estimated to be reduced by ten years by 2010 (2nd National Multisectoral AIDS conference, 2002).

There have been many studies conducted on the care and support of children living with HIV / AIDS, mostly focusing on children in developed countries (Grainger et al, 2001). However, as Grainger points out:

The needs of children who are affected through the sickness and death of parents, guardians, siblings and others in the community have not been seen as a

priority – even though the number of such children dwarfs the number actually infected and will continue to do so. (Grainger et al., 2001:10)

This has resulted in a lack of child-focused studies on the impacts of the epidemic on children who are caring for dying parents and relatives, and who must survive independently on their parents' death. According to the Tanzanian Demographic and Health Survey in 1996, 65 per cent of the total population was under 25 years of age, with 47 per cent under 15 years of age, a situation which places an enormous burden on the economically active working population, now being gradually diminished by illness and death due to AIDS (UNICEF, 1999^a, 50). Save the Children estimates that in Tanzania, over three million children (aged under 18) had lost their mother, father, or both parents due to all causes in 1999 (Grainger et al., 2001). The majority of the orphans are being cared for by extended family members, due to the tradition of child fosterage in Africa, which significantly mediates the impacts of the epidemic.

However, many guardians are either too old or too young to meet the orphaned children's material and emotional needs, and many older children leave their adoptive homes and make their way in the informal sector on the streets (Karlenza 1998).

As Godwin notes, women and girls often bear the greatest costs of adult ill-health and death, 'primarily because of the significant opportunity costs to them of their traditional roles as carers and nurturers of the ill or dying' (Godwin, 1998:3). However, whilst women and girls may suffer most from the 'opportunity costs' of their carer role, orphaned children and the elderly are identified by Barnett as the most vulnerable to the long term impacts, as the survivors of AIDS-afflicted and/or AIDS-affected households (Barnett, 1998: 168).

Interviews with children and families affected by AIDS in the Arusha region, conducted as part of my fieldwork in 2002, revealed some of the main impacts of the epidemic on children at the household level. A Save the Children report on children affected by HIV / AIDS (2001) identified the following principal factors which determine how HIV / AIDS affects children:

- Economic status
- Social and cultural context
- Attitudes to and knowledge of HIV / AIDS
- Access to basic services
- The legal and policy environment. (Grainger et al, 2001)

In the following sections, the impacts of HIV / AIDS on children and families will be analysed in relation to these broad themes. I will also explore young people's vulnerability to HIV infection and the linkages with education. I will show how poverty, HIV / AIDS, gender inequalities and barriers to education all intersect to severely limit the potential of vulnerable young people in Tanzania.

Policy environment and access to basic services

The first cases of HIV / AIDS were reported in Tanzania in 1983, which the Tanzanian government responded to by establishing a National Task Force on AIDS within the Ministry of Health in 1985. Throughout the 1990s, however, governmental allocations to prevent the spread of the epidemic were virtually non-existent. In 1999, President Benjamin Mkape declared the HIV / AIDS epidemic a national disaster, and called for joint action from all sectors in drawing up a national strategic policy on HIV / AIDS, which came into effect in 2001. By 2002, it was estimated that 3-400 million US

dollars were required annually to halt the spread of the epidemic, yet the 2002 budget allocation represented just 5 per cent of this figure (UNICEF, 2nd National Multisectoral AIDS conference, 2002).

HIV/ AIDS is having a major impact on already overstretched basic services, such as the health and education sectors. Nearly 2.2 million Tanzanians (6.7 per cent of the total population) and about 1.5 per cent of all children under five years old were living with HIV / AIDS in 2002 and of these about a third had full blown AIDS requiring intensive care and support (Mhalu and Lupogo, 2002). Only a very small minority of those living with HIV / AIDS and in need of care and support are able to access any care at all (ibid). Over half of all beds in many hospitals across the country are occupied by people with HIV-related illnesses (UNICEF, 2001:40). The consequences of losing thousands of skilled professionals within the basic services sector to HIV / AIDS, such as teachers, health workers and other care workers, has major ramifications for the future socio-economic development of the country. A World Bank study in Tanzania projected that 14,460 teachers would die from AIDS by 2010, costing US \$ 21 million in training for replacements (World Bank, 1996, cited in Grainger et al, 2001).

In 2001, the Arusha region represented one of the six regions which had a HIV prevalence rate of 10-19 per cent among blood donors aged 15-24 (broadly reflecting the rate of new infections) (Arusha region: 17.8 per cent), while Kagera and Iringa regions had an HIV prevalence of 20 per cent or more (Ministry of Health, 2001:18).

In interviews, parents living with HIV/AIDS in Arusha highlighted the government's lack of commitment to involving people living with HIV / AIDS (PLWHA) in

community-based education programmes, and the lack of appropriate care, support and access to basic services for people affected by HIV / AIDS:

RE: So what do you think about the government's policy on AIDS?

E: The government doesn't co-operate with people infected with the virus, because even in the mobilisation programmes, we haven't co-operated with the government, we co-operate with NGOs. The government should use people infected with HIV, as they are the best educators.

RE: They don't have the funds to help?

E: They have the means but they don't like to, they don't value us. Those in the government just want people to be tested and be open, but once you've been tested, they don't have any news for you.

RE: They think their job is just to educate people?

E: At the moment, they just educate people to get their blood tested.

RE: If you go to get tested, do they give you counselling?

E: Yes, they advise you, but in the government hospitals you have to pay to be tested, while the NGOs do it for free.

RE: How much is it to be tested?

E: 2,500 Tsh. [roughly equivalent to £1.80]. (Elli, Arusha, 12/12/02)

Parents living with HIV highlighted the need for governmental leadership towards changing attitudes towards people living with HIV / AIDS, to recognise their capacity to contribute to society and actively involve them in shaping responses to the HIV / AIDS epidemic. Theresa, a 28 year old mother living with HIV for the past seven years, commented:

RE: What do you think about the government's policy on AIDS?

T: The government should educate the citizens not to treat people with AIDS like us badly, so that they get enough education.

RE: What can government, community, religious organisations, various NGOs do to help people who are infected with AIDS?

T: They can help us as they help other people who don't have any money, because if you have AIDS, it's guaranteed that you'll be ill for a long time and you'll end up selling everything that you have at home. So the government could help us even with money. Because firstly the government needs to see us not as sick people, to give people work.

RE: It's very difficult to get work?

T: It's very difficult to get work, the government refuses. There's other people like us, who are healthy like us too, what is needed is for us to get work, or those who have got worse to put an amount aside to take to them. There are some who just sleep on their bed all the time, they can't look after themselves, it's us, people who are infected, who go and do day labour there, we take nurses there to their bed. What is needed is for the government to be close to us. (Theresa, Arusha, 12/12/02)

This shows the key role that government could play in supporting the active involvement of people living with HIV / AIDS (PLWHA) in community-based education programmes in order to raise awareness and help to combat the stigma and discrimination experienced by people affected by HIV / AIDS. It also highlights the need to protect the rights of people living with HIV / AIDS to employment and livelihood strategies, provide adequate support and care for those living with AIDS, and recognise and reward the important role that PLWHA can play in counselling and

caring for each other, within the context of insufficient medical and health care facilities.

All the parents living with HIV who were interviewed expressed great concern for the well-being of their children in the future, since there was at present very little financial, educational, emotional support or access to health care for orphans from the government or NGO sector:

RE: How do you feel about your situation now? How do you feel about it?

E: My situation now is not that good, because of financial difficulties, and I'm worried that my children will have problems, because the government doesn't do anything for orphans. (Elli, Arusha, 12/12/02)

Community responses towards orphans and other vulnerable children to date have consisted of several non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations and religious agencies spearheading initiatives for orphans and families most in need. Kateregga notes that, 'although many of these initiatives are urban-based and usually on a small-scale, their collective response so far provides the most reliable alternative safety nets for children, besides their extended families' (Kateregga, 1999:17). It is generally recognised that compared to institutionalisation, community-based care for orphans is cost-effective, builds on local communities' own coping strategies and, because it keeps children in a familiar social, cultural and ethnic environment, reduces their distress (UNICEF 1999^b). However, due to limited resources, government funding in Tanzania has been mainly targeted at orphanage institutions for orphaned children experiencing hardship, under the Social Welfare department (ibid). Kateregga notes that by 1997, some 2,500 children were being cared for in 45 such institutions, and

experience has shown that it has been difficult to find foster parents for them, although the policy is that children should be moved into a family setting by the age of three (ibid). Charles, a 17 year old orphan living in a child-headed household, perceived the needs of orphaned children and young people such as himself as: 'to look after us, provide for our education, financial support, food and shelter, advice / counselling, and for people to get to know us by being close to us' (Charles, 12/12/02).

Poverty and the household economy

It is clear from street children's narratives, discussed in the previous chapter, that poverty severely constrains families' abilities to provide for their children, and places great pressure on adult-child relationships within the family. As previously noted, chronic poverty affected the majority of the street children's households. Due to economic pressures, and greater conflicts of interest, accompanied by social marginalisation, the marriages and households of poor families were shown to be more unstable than those of the rich (Lockwood, 1997). Interviews with children and families affected by HIV / AIDS in Arusha illustrate these processes of extreme poverty and the social marginalisation which results from, and reinforces poverty, as structures of households change to adapt to the epidemic. These processes impact most on the survivors of AIDS-affected households, usually children and elderly grandparents (Barnett, 1998). Children and an elderly grandmother in families participating in the study, who had previously been supported by fairly well-educated parents, had seen a dramatic decline in the household economy as each parent in turn succumbed to ill-health and eventually death, leaving the survivors vulnerable to chronic poverty.

Research in Uganda found that children being cared for by grandparents were vulnerable to malnutrition and infectious diseases, because food production was low and medical care could not be afforded (Barnett and Blaikie, 1992). Children being cared for by single female grandparents, particularly in rural areas, were even more vulnerable, because women generally have lower incomes and depend more on friendship-based goodwill (ibid). A study in Tanzania and Zambia found that an estimated 80 per cent of foster parents are grandmothers (Caldwell, 1997, cited in Grainger et al, 2001). In addition, children are likely to experience further trauma when their elderly carers eventually die. The inversion of the tradition of grandparents being cared for by younger members of the family puts a severe strain on the household economy as well as family relationships (Grainger, 2001).

Extreme poverty, bereavement, ostracism, and the domestic burden of caring for four children following the death of both parents was painfully apparent in an interview with an elderly grandmother. Throughout the visit, she wept and was clearly finding it difficult to cope:

G: My story, I've got problems, because the deceased doesn't have any brothers, there's no brothers, so the children can't go to the brothers of the deceased, there's no brothers. The deceased died, that's all, and left me with the children.
[...]

RE: So you look after the children?

G: Yes, just me. I just stay here.

RE: Do you grow food?

G: Ah! No, food is a problem, even the house, I don't have one for the children, we just sleep. We don't even have a house.

RE: Really?

G: That one, if it rains, it rains on us. (Grandmother, 12/12/02)

The grandmother was about 80 years old, and relied on buying and then selling bananas at the roadside near the house. She made about 200 Tsh. a day [roughly equivalent to 14 pence] which was not enough to feed the family. They had some relatives who lived in another part of the town, who did not offer any support.

Doreen, one of the orphaned children, aged 12, had started school later than her brothers due to her domestic duties caring for her dying parents and the rest of the household, and was studying in the second year of primary school. Her responses to questions about who she turned to in times of need reveal the lack of access to health care and limited emotional support available to orphaned children:

RE: At home, who would you go to/ where would you go if you're ill?

D: There's nothing. Nowhere.

G: Just God. [...] Even if I'm ill, that's how it is.

RE: Who would you go to/ where would you go if you want to share a secret?

D: There's no-one.

RE: Your friends at school, do you tell them?

D: Yes.

RE: And if you feel sad, who would you go to?

D: To grandma.

RE: And if you want some advice, where would you go to?

D: To my older brother.

RE: And if you get bad news, where do you go?

D: I tell grandma.

RE: When do you feel safest? Or you feel happy?

D: There's none. [...]

Re: When do you feel lonely?

D: If I get ill. (Doreen, aged 12, 12/12/02)

Doreen played a vital role in helping her grandmother with the household chores and caring for her younger brothers, within an environment of extreme poverty and loss. The prospects for continuing her education at school were severely limited and she had been sent home on previous occasions for wearing torn school uniform and not having any shoes. This emphasises the point made in the previous chapter that girl children are expected to take on a greater proportion of the household tasks than their brothers, often at the expense of their education.

As Grainger et al. note, studies of orphans show that, while younger children are more likely to be withdrawn and shy, older children sometimes experience behavioural problems, such as truancy (Grainger et al, 2001). The behaviour of Doreen and her older brother seemed to support this, since Doreen was very quiet and shy, while the grandmother told of how Doreen's older brother (aged 18) had dropped out of primary school, where he had been studying in Standard 5, and spent less and less time at home, probably seeking economic independence through employment.

Since the late 1980s, the emergence of child-headed households in some sub-Saharan African countries has been linked to the HIV / AIDS epidemic. As Foster et al. note, although the children themselves may prefer to live in a child-headed household, members of such households typically suffer from a lack of supervision and care, poor

nutrition, declining health status, educational failure, exploitation and abuse by adults, early or delayed marriage, discrimination, and disruption of childhood and adolescence (Foster et al, 1997, cited in Grainger, 2001). Charles, a 17 year old boy studying in the second year of Secondary school, lived with his 20 year old sister and 13 year old brother in the house left to them by their parents, who had recently died of AIDS. He told me that all his uncles on his mother's and father's sides of the family had died of AIDS, and his grandparents had also died, so their only surviving relative was an uncle who was disabled and unable to care for them. Coping strategies adopted by the children following the death of their parents included: doing casual agricultural labour after school to earn a little money to support the household, reducing the household's food consumption, seeking financial support from adults to enable Charles and his younger brother to continue at school:

RE: What do you think about your situation now?

C: As it is now, my situation is not good, family wise, because we're children who are affected by AIDS, we've been affected, because my parents have already died and we have to fend for ourselves. There's no help in town, we need people to help us with food and other things.

RE: Are there times when you go without food?

C: Not yet, at the moment, but we only get a little, it's not enough.

RE: And what about the house, noone can come and harass you?

C: Ours? No, there's noone. If they come, I'll cut their throats! [...]

RE: Do you have some land?

C: No, we have a small garden, you can plant five maize plants.

RE: How do you see your future?

- C: The future, if God helps, my life will be good in the future, like if He helps me to finish my education. [...]
- RE: Tell me the three most important things for your future.
- C: Education, a good house which will last a long time, to get some capital which would help to develop our livelihood, to do business. (Charles, aged 17, 12/12/02)

A study in Uganda suggested that the likely success of child-headed households depended on the age and gender of the eldest sibling, with teenage girls identified as more able to ensure the household's survival due to their early socialisation in domestic work (Barnett and Blaikie, 1992). Safeguarding orphans' rights to inherit their deceased parents' tenure of the farm was also found to be an important issue for the orphans in the study (ibid). Charles and his siblings thus seemed to stand a good chance of the household's survival since he and his older sister were in their older teenage years when they were orphaned, had a good level of education, and there appeared to be no danger of being disinherited from their parents' small house. The older sister's lack of employment or capital to start a small business and the two brothers' dependence on charity to enable them to continue at school, however, left them in a vulnerable situation, and the household was at risk of disintegrating if the older siblings left in search of employment or marriage.

Stigma and impacts on children's psycho-social well-being

As well as facing extreme poverty, the families interviewed all experienced discrimination and ostracism because of the AIDS stigma which further compounded their situation. Parents living with HIV told of the difficulty of coming to terms with

their HIV status, the dilemma of whether to test their children and tell them of their HIV status, and breaking the news to their close family. Theresa, a 28 year old HIV positive mother of two was involved in awareness-raising programmes in schools and churches, educating people about HIV/ AIDS. Despite being able to talk openly about her HIV status in community education programmes, the stigma prevented her from sharing her HIV status with her relatives:

T: I have already accepted the problem and if we go to schools, we educate people about it. Because even if I go first, I don't feel bad, because I live with hope.
[...] I have two children. My husband died in 1998. [...] The boy is nine and the girl is six, and I haven't tested them, sister. But Elli said that she would come and take them and test them.

RE: Will you tell them?

T: I won't tell them. Even me, I've accepted it now, but I haven't told my parents yet, or my relatives.

RE: You're afraid to tell them?

T: You know we Africans, once you've told them, they ostracise you. And things like a spoon, plate, cup, they have to put out your own for you. They stigmatise us.

RE: They're afraid, they don't understand properly...

T: Maybe they haven't had enough education. But the problem is that we're still battling with the government to give them education. (Theresa, 12/12/02).

Robert, a 30 year old father of two, had witnessed a girlfriend die from AIDS in 1998, and in 2001, another girlfriend's baby had died, then the girlfriend, followed by her husband. A few months before I interviewed him, he decided that he should go to be

tested, but found it difficult to believe the result. His story showed how local explanations for the cause of illness, such as witchcraft, leads to denial and the stigmatisation of those affected, which fuels the spread of the epidemic, as this extract shows (with additional comments from Elli):

RE: Did your girlfriends know it was AIDS?

R: The ones who died? They say that they were bewitched.

E: But now you know yourself, it's getting worse.

R: Yes, I know it's AIDS.

RE: It's hard for people to say that it's AIDS, to say the truth.

E: Yes, who says that? They say it's witchcraft. [...]

RE: So for how long do you think you have been infected with HIV? Do you think it's been quite a long time now?

R: Yes, it's quite a long time, because my first girlfriend died in 1998 and she showed all the symptoms of AIDS. So I must have been infected at that time. But I didn't want to acknowledge the suffering. But it's very important, after getting tested properly, then I believed it. (Robert and Elli, 12/12/02)

Robert told of his mother's reaction to the news of his HIV status, which led to his suicide attempt:

I didn't do anything for a little while, say three days, then I explained to my brother, I've found out that I'm infected, they didn't believe it. I went with my brother to the centre [NGO which provides free HIV tests] and to the hospital, they explained about the disease and that it was true that I was infected. Then I told my mother that I was infected, and she refused to accept it. [...] She didn't

want to hear that I had AIDS. She made me so angry. I decided to drink some medicine to kill myself because mother was causing such an uproar, saying I don't have AIDS, it's witchcraft, whatever. [...] Well, I didn't die, the medicine was for diarrhoea, so I explained to my mother. After accepting the problem, I felt I had to meet some people who were infected, so then I met Elli, she came and talked to my mother, and told her that I'm infected, and took someone else there too for her to see. Now, I'm friends again with my mother. (Robert, 12/12/02).

Robert's story shows the level of fear, denial and stigma attached to the disease, which has devastating consequences since it facilitates the fatal spread of the epidemic.

All of the people living with HIV that I spoke to emphasised the importance of society accepting and being open about the disease, not only to halt the spread of the epidemic, but also to improve the physical and mental well-being of people living with HIV.

Benefits that participants experienced since they became open about their HIV status included being able to access free healthcare (provided by some NGOs), increased awareness about the importance of nutritional foods to build up their resistance to the disease, supporting and counselling each other and becoming involved in self-help groups within community-based organisations and NGOs, which brought them together with others living positively with HIV, which gave them hope and helped to combat their sense of isolation and stigmatisation.

For children whose parents were living with HIV, being open about the disease could help them to understand and care for their parents. However, children from AIDS affected households were likely to be stigmatised by the wider community. Stephan, a

13 year old boy studying in the sixth year of primary school, lived with his HIV positive mother, Elli, (who was my key gatekeeper) in town, where she played an active role in AIDS awareness education in the community. His younger brother was infected with HIV and was living with their older brother, who were being cared for by their grandmother in their home village several hundreds of kilometres away. Stephan understood about his mother's and younger brother's illness, but tried to keep his mother's HIV status a secret from his friends at school:

RE: Do you talk to mama about AIDS, and you understand about her situation?

S: Yes.

RE: What does she say?

S: She says she's being worn down by AIDS and it kills.

RE: Do you understand about your little brother's situation?

S: I understand [..].

RE: What about your friends at school, do they know that mama is ill?

S: They don't know.

RE: They don't know, you don't tell anyone?

S: No.

Mum: He doesn't like, even me, I don't go to introduce myself at his school. Even at seminars, I don't want it shown on TV. He gives me conditions, he says talk on the radio, in the newspapers, but not on TV.

RE: What do you think your friends would say if they knew?

S: They make fun of you. (Stephan, aged 13, and his mother, Elli, 12/12/02)

Ostracism is not only experienced by friends and others in the community. In Stephan's case, discovery of their HIV status had caused the break up of his parents' marriage, and his father's rejection of him and his siblings:

S: I don't live with my dad because he told me that I was not his child.

RE: When did he say that?

S: He said that at the time when he was arguing with my mum.

RE: Do you go to see him sometimes?

S: We went the other day.

RE: What did he say?

S: We just said hello, and then left.

Mum: Didn't he just shut the door and stay inside?

S: Yes.

RE: He's still angry?

S: Yes, he's still angry. (Stephan, aged 13, 12/12/02)

This further illustrates the notion discussed in the previous chapter, that men choose to emphasise or de-emphasise particular relationships at particular times, which can result in the rejection and marginalisation of women and their children. Stephan's mother, Elli, gave me a photo of her three boys posed together, standing outside their grandmother's house. When she showed me her photo album, there was a picture of a little girl with a piece of paper with a cross and RIP written on in red, inserted next to the photo. Elli then told me that she had another child (older than her youngest) who had died from AIDS when she was seven in 1999, which she had not mentioned previously in the interview. Although her older boys (aged 15 and 13) were not showing signs of illness, she was too afraid to test Stephan and her older son for HIV.

because if the result was positive, 'it would mean the end of all of them' (Elli, 12/12/02). This shows the multiple losses that children, parents and other relatives from AIDS affected households may have to cope with over extended periods of time.

Thus, orphaned children experience loss, sorrow and suffering long before the eventual death of their parents (and sometimes siblings, as in Stephan's case), due to the psychological trauma of a long-term fatal illness that afflicts their parents, combined with the increasing domestic burden of nursing their dying parents, caring for their siblings or elderly grandparents, and increased work in the fields (UNICEF 1999^b). The distress and social isolation experienced by children, both before and after the death of their parent(s) is exacerbated by the shame, fear and rejection caused by the AIDS stigma.

Charles, aged 17, lived in a child-headed household with his older sister and younger brother. When asked about coping strategies, about where he would go to play, who he would turn to for guidance and emotional support etc., it was clear that orphaned children were forced to become self-reliant early on and meet their own survival and emotional needs themselves. Doing day labour on the fields to earn money for food had replaced time spent playing, and adults were not longer seen as an option for emotional support due to their own illness:

RE: If you feel sad, who do you go to?

C: If I'm sad, I like to work to get rid of my thoughts. [...]

RE: At home, who do you go to if you get bad news?

C: Bad news? What like?

RE: Say, that you heard a relative has died?

C: It's a good question. [..] You can't go to grown ups because their illness just gets worse. I would start with my sister. [...]

RE: When do you feel happiest?

C: The days when I don't think about things, I feel happy. (Charles, aged 17, 12/12/02)

As well as coping with the psychological distress of caring for their parents through the final stages of their illness, Charles' experience revealed how orphaned children are often subjected to verbal abuse and sometimes physical violence due to the AIDS stigma associated with their household:

RE: What don't you like about home?

C: I don't like it if someone harasses me.

RE: Has that been a problem?

C: Yes, problems like being insulted and being beaten up.

RE: By who?

C: People on the way home, people grazing their cattle.

RE: Why do they do that?

C: They say, 'Your mother died of AIDS'.

RE: What do you say to them?

C: I'm quiet and just look at them. I don't feel bad, I just have bad memories.
(Charles, aged 17, 12/12/02)

This illustrates the point made by Brown and Sittitrai, that children are stigmatised and discriminated against by association with their deceased parents: 'One can be 'contaminated' just by being near somebody with HIV or AIDS: the stigma is

transmitted by casual contact, even if the disease isn't. Thus, children whose parents have HIV or AIDS are 'contaminated' by association'. (Brown and Sittitrai, 1995, cited in Graigner, 2001:30) This was also illustrated when Theresa voiced her concerns about her children's future (with additional comments from Elli):

RE: What do you think about the future of your children?

T: If you find the children, in the future, I don't know how they will live.

RE: Do you think your relatives will be able to help in the future?

T: I don't know if they will be able to help in the future. Perhaps if I die, they will be able to help them.

E: If they can't, they can go to the Centre [NGO supporting people living with HIV / AIDS and their families].

T: But when I've been there, those at the Centre haven't helped me, if I die, how will they help the children? It will be difficult. If they go there, people will say, 'Your mother died of AIDS'. (Theresa, 12/12/02)

Theresa feared that the AIDS stigma would be transferred to her children, preventing them from being supported by her relatives and making it difficult for them to access support available for orphaned children.

Gender inequalities

It is clear from the families I met that children, parents and relatives from AIDS-afflicted households experience prolonged processes of loss, rejection, ostracism on multiple levels both within and outside the immediate family circle. These processes compounded the chronic poverty experienced by AIDS affected households, which is

linked to underlying gender and age inequalities. Female-headed and child-headed households face a particularly high level of insecurity and poverty, with women and girls also suffering from an increased domestic burden. As a result of the AIDS stigma and the level of impoverishment, children may be denied access to schooling and health care, and their rights to inheritance and property may be denied, particularly in the case of girls (UNICEF 1999^b; Barnett and Blaikie, 1992). The rights of children are closely linked to those of the surviving parent. Thus, in Tanzania, as in other African countries, the customary laws which deny widows the right to inherit their deceased husband's land, can have devastating consequences for children after their father's death (UNICEF 1999^b).

Women who live with male partners and have children who are born outside of marriage are particularly vulnerable to impoverishment after their partner's death, as the story of Theresa, a 28 year old mother who had been living with HIV for seven years, illustrates.

T: When my husband died, he didn't die of any disease, he was in a car accident. [...] When my husband died, his relatives came and took all the furniture and household goods. Here, for a Tanzanian woman with children, it's not until you get married that you're given any control, but we weren't married, they took all the furniture, I was left with my children.

RE: They took everything?

T: Everything in the house. I started a life of sleeping on the floor and helping out at my neighbour's houses.

RE: It was in 1998?

T: Yes, 1998. I started a life of problems and now, I've just got used to it. So for the children, it's just me who looks after them and provides for their education on my own, no one else helps me.

RE: Do you work?

T: I don't have any work. I hope to set up a small business but I don't have any capital. (Theresa, 12/12/02)

This illustrates the vulnerable situation of female-headed households, due to underlying gender inequalities, as was also evidenced in the previous chapter. A study conducted in Tanzania found that women headed nearly 40 per cent of orphan households, compared with 15 per cent of non-orphan households (Urassa et al, 1997, cited in Grainger, 2001). Thus, HIV / AIDS is contributing to a rise in female-headed households which are generally more impoverished than male-headed households, especially in rural areas (ibid).

The burden of care for female-headed households was again illustrated by the situation of Elli, who had been living with HIV for over seven years. She lived with her thirteen year old son in Arusha, while the grandmother cared for her oldest son (aged 15) and her youngest (aged 7) who was infected with HIV, in their rural home several hundreds of kilometres away from town:

RE: Have your sons lived there [with their grandmother] for a long time?

E: Two years now.

RE: You decided they...?

E: They should live there because I get ill every so often and it's hard for me to provide for them. The youngest one is infected and gets ill too.

- RE: Does he know?
- E: No, we haven't told him, but the older ones know. I'm afraid to tell him.
- RE: And your mother is still quite fit?
- E: She's still quite fit, but I have to help her, I send her money.
- RE: Does she do agricultural work?
- E: Yes.
- RE: And you go to see them?
- E: When I can, the last time I went was May last year, if I get the bus fare, I'll go.
It's a long way.
- RE: Are they there on their own with your mother, or are there other relatives there?
- E: No, they're just there with their grandmother. Their grandfather died. (Elli,
12/12/02)

This shows how female members of the extended family, particularly grandmothers, are seen as a source of support and a coping mechanism for women living with HIV / AIDS, whose ability to care for their children was being reduced due to their illness.

Street children's experiences of HIV / AIDS

According to Karlenza, Director of CREDO, a Tanzanian NGO working with AIDS survivors (orphans, the elderly and children in distress):

Many orphaned children are traumatised, poorly socialised, lack emotional support, receive little education, and are poorly equipped for adult life. Many older children leave their adoptive homes and seek a better life on the streets.
(Karlenza 1998, 5)

The orphaned children I talked to were clearly at risk of turning to the informal sector on the streets for survival, when faced with a lack of financial and emotional support from their communities and with no opportunity to continue with their education or earn a livelihood. One of the parents living with HIV identified the harassment and lack of support for orphans as being a key factor in orphaned children's move to the street:

RE: In what ways can government, community, religious organisations, various NGOs address the needs of AIDS orphans?

T: If they know the parents, many are infected and many have already died, what's needed is, because orphans are abused, so they don't have any support at all, that's why you see that they become street children. The government should be close to them. (Theresa, 12/12/02)

Indeed, the experiences of two of the street children participating in the study revealed that running away to the streets represents a survival strategy adopted by some children orphaned by AIDS when their families and communities fail to support them. The experiences of Simon, a fourteen year-old boy living on the streets at the time of the interview, illustrates the rejection and stigma children may face following the death of his parents from AIDS-related illnesses:

'I used to live in Babati with both my parents. My mama became ill with pneumonia and died in Babati. We moved to Arusha with my brother. Then my brother went away to Nairobi, and my sister got married and went back to Babati. Then my father too became ill, with TB, his lungs were rotten and he died. Then my (paternal) uncle treated us badly, I mean, we didn't have

anywhere to stay. We had to leave. We left, the two of us, we went to a woman's house. We worked for her in her house but she refused to pay us. We left and my brother went to Morogoro and I came here. [...] At home, there were problems, but not that we had to go without food or school fees. But when my parents died, then we went without food a lot and school fees' (Simon, aged 14, living on the street at time of interview, 11/6/00).

Simon's story shows how the rights of children from some AIDS-affected households are denied, with the extended family effectively disowning them. It also demonstrates the economic exploitation faced by child domestic workers seeking a living independently, once they have left home for the street.

For Amina, a 14 year-old girl living on the streets at the time of the interview, 'home' also offered no possibility of support after her mother's death:

RE: At home, who would you go to/where would you go if you are ill?

A: At home, in Singida? In Singida, there's only grandma, and she can't look after herself, even if she's ill, there's no one to help her. She doesn't work at all. The year before last, her *shamba* [plot of land for cultivating] was grabbed from her and they are building a school there. She just lives there by herself. My younger brother has already died. Grandma is there with another relative of mine, my brother – we have the same mother but different fathers. He lives with his father and goes to school. My mum died last year. (Amina, aged 14, UCSC shelter, 9/6/00.)

Amina's experiences testify to the rejection of orphans after the parent's death of AIDS:

- A: When my younger brother died, my mama left and went to Dar es Salaam, and my father left for Mwanza. And me, I stayed with my grandmother.
- RE: Why did mama go to Dar es Salaam?
- A: Because of the famine. She went to find food and work. She got work as a barmaid. I stayed with my grandmother; when grandma's land was taken away from her, then I left.
- RE: Why did they take her land?
- A: The land belonged to the government, grandma just got a place and cultivated there, she didn't know whose land it was, she just grew crops. We carried on living there, but grandma didn't have any food, not even a little, and we went hungry, we just picked fruit or vegetables, say, spinach, we picked it, boiled it, ate it and went to sleep. Then, grandma said to me, 'Go and live with your brother, the relative of your father'. And I went and lived there in Singida. My brother was a fisherman, he went off fishing. I stayed with my sister-in-law, she harassed me and beat me again and again.
- RE: If you did something wrong?
- A: I mean, she harassed me, she didn't want me to stay there. [...] So I went back to grandma's. At grandma's, I met someone who offered to send me to school, and I went to live at boarding school.
- RE: Someone paid your school fees?
- A: Yes, for three years. Then at school one day, we were told that they'd run out of food. All the children had to be sent back home. So I stayed with my grandmother until mama came back. When she came, she was ill and I helped with the work at home, fetching water, for example, cooking, boiling water for

mama, or relieving the pain with a cold press in the places she hurt. When she made it to the third month, yes, in the third month she died.

RE: I'm very sorry. What illness was it?

A: I don't know, she was just ill, with malaria, coughing, being sick, passing diarrhoea and blood [AIDS-related illnesses]. Once she was buried by my relatives, they hated me, because mama had died and there was no one to look after me. I had to go to my brother's and I lived there for about three months with my father's relatives. I was harassed as I had been before and I said to myself, 'I can't be harassed like this again', I'll have to start out on the streets.
(Amina, UCSC shelter, 09/06/00)

Amina's story not only illustrates the impact of AIDS on orphans and the elderly, but also highlights the linkages between poverty, gender inequalities and education. It reveals the increasing domestic burden Amina and her grandmother had to cope with in caring for and nursing her dying mother and the rejection and harassment Amina faced from her extended family as an 'AIDS orphan'. It also shows the impoverishment her elderly grandmother and her mother faced due to underlying gender inequalities, such as the lack of independent access to land and lack of employment opportunities, leaving urban migration as the only alternative for poor female-headed households in rural areas. Amina's experience also reveals that the tradition of child fosterage within the extended family³ leaves orphans vulnerable to exploitation as domestic servants, where they may be subjected to harassment and physical and emotional abuse.

In response to the fear, harassment and rejection they face due to the AIDS stigma, some orphaned children, like Amina and Simon, try to survive independently on the

³ See pp.34-5.

streets. However, orphaned children's emotional vulnerability and financial desperation living on the streets make them particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation, abuse and survival sex with adults and other street children in exchange for food, shelter or protection⁴. Thus, these young people are at a far greater risk of becoming infected with HIV themselves, thereby tragically perpetuating the cycle of poverty, HIV and AIDS which claimed one or both of their parents.

While only two of the street children participating in the study had clearly been orphaned by AIDS, seven others had lost one parent due to illness, and according to UCSC records of children at the Residential Centre, a quarter of the former street children staying at the centre had lost one or both parents (UCSC, February 2000). It is likely that some of these parental deaths were due to AIDS; however, as Karlenza notes, experience from other countries suggests that it is important not to label children orphaned by AIDS as 'AIDS orphans', or single them out for development assistance, due to the stigma associated with AIDS and the fact that other children in poor communities suffer many of the same disadvantages (Karlenza, 1998, 4).

Indeed, this study shows that children whom UNICEF defines as 'social' orphans (whose parents are not available to care for them) are just as vulnerable as 'biological' orphans (one or both parents have died). Parents in a discussion group conducted in Arusha as part of the UNICEF study 'Children in Need of Special Protection Measures: a Tanzanian Study' (1999^a) suggested an all-inclusive definition: 'An orphan is a person [child] who does not have people to take care of him or her, or one who has lost his/her father or mother, or whose father and mother are unknown' (ibid: 116). Most of the street children participating in the study are thus included in this definition of an orphan.

⁴ Discussed in more detail on pp.252-3 and in Chapter 7.

Having explored the policy context and the impacts of HIV/ AIDS on the household economy, children's psycho-social well-being, gender equalities and street children's experiences, the next sections explore young people's own vulnerability to HIV infection.

Education and gendered vulnerabilities to HIV

Although young people constitute over 20 per cent of the Tanzanian population, they comprise around 60 per cent of new HIV infections (UNICEF, 2001: 90). Sexually active boys, and girls especially, are more vulnerable biologically, since their bodies are often not yet fully developed and their skin tissue can get damaged more easily, which increases the risk of HIV transmission (Honigsbaum, 1991).

Within an environment of poverty, gender discrimination, and harassment at school⁵, teenage girls are particularly vulnerable to HIV infection. Indeed, UNICEF notes that girls often become infected at a younger age than boys because they are biologically, socially and economically more vulnerable both to infection and to unprotected or coercive sex (UNICEF 1999^b). Despite recent positive trends among young people, especially young women, in some African countries, overall about twice as many young women as men are infected in sub-Saharan Africa (UNAIDS, 2002). According to blood donors in 2001, the HIV prevalence rate in Tanzania was 12 per cent for young women aged 15-24, compared to 8 per cent of males in the same age group (Ministry of Health, 2001:12). Furthermore, there were three times as many cumulative AIDS cases reported for young women aged 15-19 as for young men in the same age group, and

⁵ Discussed on pp.118-9.

over twice as many cases of young women in the age group 20-24 as for young men, 1987-2001 (Ministry of Health, 2001:3). UNICEF notes that the average age of starting sexual activity is very young, usually immediately before or after the onset of puberty, often with partners who are older, and is usually coerced (UNICEF 2001: 90).

Many girls from poor households may never have the opportunity to attend school, as several of the girls interviewed as part of the study illustrated (UCSC shelter, 31/3/00). Furthermore, girls are often the first to be withdrawn from school (particularly secondary school) when the household encounters economic pressures (Kuleana, 1999). Thus, engaging in a sexual relationship with an older man, a 'sugar daddy', may represent the only way for a girl to continue her education. As Amina's story implied earlier in this chapter, it is common for teenage girls to find a 'sugar daddy' – an older man who is often married – who can afford to sponsor her through school, in return for her sexual favours (ActionAid et al., 1997). According to UNICEF, transactional (usually unprotected) sex is a common socio-economic coping strategy for many girls and women, especially, but not only, in urban areas in Tanzania. In a recent study, 71 per cent of girls reported granting sexual favours for basic daily needs, and 73 per cent of girls reported having sexual partners older than themselves (Kiwara, 2001, cited in UNICEF, 2001:90). Girls' economic dependence on older men is reinforced by men's preference for younger girls, believing they are less likely to be HIV positive. This leads to a cycle of HIV infection, since many school girls who engaged in sexual relationships with 'sugar daddies' are already infected by the time they marry; they then pass the virus on to their husbands, who in turn infect their younger mistresses (Guest, 2001). Furthermore, in West and Southern Africa, some men believe that sex with a virgin will cure AIDS (Garcia-Moreno 1991). A reported rise in child rape in South Africa has been attributed to this myth (Guest, 2001).

It has also been noted that within school settings in Tanzania, and in some other African countries, some male teachers sexually harass female students, and a girl's refusal to have sex can lead to public humiliation, unfairly low marks, exclusion from class or corporal punishment (Kuleana 1999: 56). UNICEF notes that rape is said to be a common occurrence, but is rarely reported through official channels, and perpetrators are virtually never taken to account: 'Despite the strong provisions of the *Sexual Offences Act* (1998), the few teachers who are 'caught' generally receive warnings, temporary suspensions, or transfers to other schools' (UNICEF, 2001:61).

In focus groups with street children, the girls confirmed the issues raised in the literature on girls' education in Tanzania that schools provide a 'girl-unfriendly learning environment'(Kuleana, 1999:56), commenting that they were sometimes insulted, teased, beaten and discriminated against at school. One group of girls in the focus groups in school showed an awareness of the particular gender dimensions of vulnerability to HIV for school girls:

RE:: Do you think that the problems that prevent a child from studying at school are the same for boys and girls?

Girls: Boys are often disrespectful. Girls have to deal with being harassed and their babies get sick.

RE: From what kind of illness?

Girls: Often, AIDS.

RE: So it's usually older girls?

Girls: Yes, older girls, older children, perhaps they started school late, because their parents don't have any money.

RE: Are they harassed by boys, or grown up men?

Girls: By grown up men.

RE: Here at school, or outside of school?

Girls: Outside school.

RE: Has this already happened here at school, or you've just heard about it?

Girls: Yes, we heard about it. (Girls, primary school, Arusha, 14/11/02)

This demonstrates the school-girls' awareness that young women were at risk of sexual harassment, HIV infection, pregnancy and mother-to-child transmission of HIV, particularly young women who engaged in sexual relationships with older men (or 'sugar daddies') to support themselves through school. During the fieldwork period, I noted that HIV/ AIDS awareness campaigns, showing school girls accepting chips and drinks from older men in bars, and encouraging school girls to say 'no' to sexual harassment, were shown regularly on prime time national TV. This may have contributed to the girls' awareness of the issue in the focus group.

Despite the fact that many children are affected in some way by HIV/ AIDS, UNICEF notes that very few schools have included HIV/ AIDS in the curriculum, or teach life skills to help children protect themselves, and also cope with the situation (UNICEF 2001:72). Half of the six groups of school pupils mentioned being afraid of AIDS, and only two groups said that they were taught about HIV/ AIDS at school. One group of boys who said that their teachers did not teach them about AIDS, had seen people who had developed AIDS, commenting, 'They're very thin', and they had read about AIDS in science books, and heard about it on TV (boys, primary school, Aru-Meru district, 9/12/02). At one school, the groups of girls and boys both mentioned not liking rapists, and the girls referred explicitly to child rape:

RE: What are you afraid of?

Girls: Being chased at night, being raped. [...]

RE: What kind of people don't you like?

Girls: People who have a bad character – those who rape people's children. (Girls, primary school, Aru-Meru district, 9/12/02)

Indeed, the national Child Development Policy notes that in recent years, there has been a large increase in cases of child rape in society, 'because of the decline in morality and neglect of our traditions and customs' (Government of Tanzania, 1996: 31).

Even if young people have the necessary knowledge about how HIV/ AIDS is transmitted and how to prevent it, their level of knowledge is often very superficial (UNICEF, 2001). In addition, economic and social pressures and gender inequalities severely constrain young women's ability to insist on condom use and protect themselves from HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. Social expectations pressurise young people into starting to have sex early and having multiple partners, and cases where girls are told to finance their own needs, even though they are still in school or very young, force them into sexual activity (UNICEF, 2001). As noted in Chapter 4, such cultural pressures on girls can lead to pregnancies and forced early marriages, often ending in early divorces, leaving young women to cope on their own, with few skills, leaving them few options but to engage in risky behaviour (ibid).

Young people's vulnerability to HIV on the street

My research with street children suggests that young people – both girls and boys – living on the streets are particularly vulnerable to HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases. They are often sexually exploited and abused, may engage in survival sex or prostitution, and have greater freedom to experiment with sex, a lack of adult protection and socialisation (Rajani and Kudrati, 1996). Some studies show high levels of HIV prevalence among street children globally: 7 per cent of street boys aged six to fourteen in Khartoum, 9 per cent of street children in Sao Paulo, and 5.3 per cent of runaway or street youth in New York have tested HIV-positive (Rajani and Kudrati, 1996:302).

Male clients of sex workers often prefer young women, girls and boys, due to the belief mentioned earlier that they are less likely to be infected with the HIV virus.

Paradoxically, however, young people are more biologically vulnerable to becoming infected and their low social and economic status places them in a weak bargaining position to insist on safer sex. The power imbalance governing relations between child commercial sex workers and their adult clients means that children have little power to negotiate the terms of sexual encounters, such as the fee, condom use, or the avoidance of rough sex practices (Ennew, 1995; Rajani and Kudrati, 1996).

However, Rajani and Kudrati point out from their experience with street children in Mwanza, Tanzania, that street children also engage in a range of sexual practices and behaviours with one another, which impact on their vulnerability to HIV infection and need to be understood when working with street children on HIV/ STDs prevention programmes. These include *kunyenga*, non-mutual anal penetration practised among

street boys in initiation rites, and at night; street girls and boys engaging in survival sex with older male acquaintances for warmth, protection and food; rape of girls and younger boys by older street boys; heterosexual sex between boys and girls on the street as well as stereotypical prostitution (Rajani and Kudrati 1996). My study also found that street girls and boys engage in sexual relations with each other, with older street boys and men as a strategy to obtain food, shelter or protection, street boys engaged in sexual relations with their peers, and boys and girls were vulnerable to rape from older street youth⁶. As UNICEF notes, penetrative anal sex is a more dangerous vector for sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, than penetrative vaginal sex (UNICEF 1999^a). Thus boys engaging in or exposed to sexual activity with other males on the street are also highly vulnerable to HIV and other STDs.

Street children's lack of access to health care⁷, combined with the fact that they have often missed out on sexual health education at school, and often suffer from other sexually transmitted diseases which facilitate HIV transmission, all further constrain their ability to protect themselves from HIV infection.

Traditional cultural practices and HIV

Some cultural practices, such as traditional circumcision ceremonies and initiation rites, represent a further aspect of the cultural construction of childhood, which can increase children and young people's vulnerability to HIV. Within the literature on Female Genital Mutilation, there is some allusion to the risk of traditional circumcisers using an un-sterilised razor or knife on several children being circumcised at the same time, putting children at risk of infection where a child is HIV positive. Furthermore, scar

⁶ See Chapter 7 for more discussion of this issue.

⁷ Discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

tissue developed as a result of FGM and childbirth are said to increase the risk of laceration and thus facilitate the transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (Heinonen, 2002). Research conducted in Tanzania revealed a change in the instruments used to perform FGM in some regions in recent years, due to concern about HIV/ AIDS (Legal and Human Rights Centre, 2002). Researchers note that traditionally the same instrument, usually a knife, was used on all the girls being mutilated, but increasingly, a razor blade is used and a new one being used for each girl (ibid)⁸.

Similarly, boys are at risk of HIV transmission in traditional circumcision ceremonies where instruments are not sterilised. The account given by Onessmo (aged 17), in the previous chapter, of a traditional Waarusha (Maasai) circumcision ceremony where a group of boys were taken to the bush and circumcised with an un-sterilised local knife, which was washed in milk before being used to cut each boy, puts boys at risk of HIV transmission⁹. Furthermore, having lived on the street for over four years, Onessmo was likely to have engaged in or been exposed to high-risk sexual behaviour, which further heightened the HIV risk for other boys.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the policy context of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Tanzania, the impacts on the household economy, children's psycho-social well-being, gender inequalities, and the experiences of street children who were orphaned by AIDS. It has revealed that children and families affected by AIDS experience prolonged processes of loss, discrimination, and ostracism on multiple levels within and outside the immediate

⁸ See pp.121-126 for further discussion about FGM.

⁹ See pp.205-9.

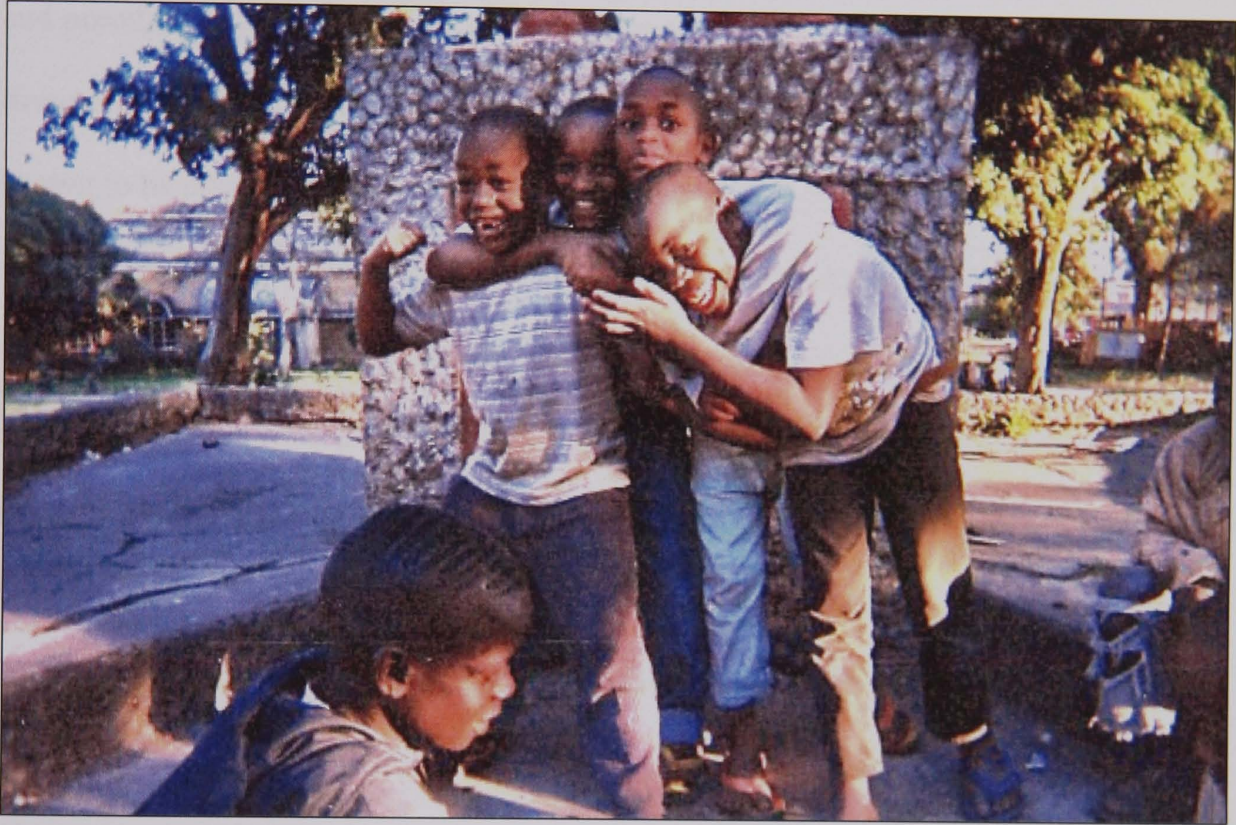
family circle. These processes compound the extreme poverty suffered by AIDS-affected households, which is linked to underlying gender and age-inequalities.

Female-headed and child-headed households are particularly vulnerable to extreme poverty and insecurity, resulting in a lack of access to health care, education, property, livelihood and food security. The HIV/ AIDS epidemic is also having a detrimental impact on children's psycho-social well-being at the level of the household and community. This places children and young people from AIDS affected households at risk of dropping out of school, and seeking a living independently in the street environment. Children whose parent(s) died from AIDS, are vulnerable to rejection and discrimination by relatives, friends, and the wider community, due to the AIDS stigma, and are susceptible to exploitation and harassment as domestic servants within the extended family or in wealthier households in urban areas.

The age-related and gendered vulnerabilities of young people to HIV/ AIDS were also discussed. Young people living on the street, and girls and young women generally, have been identified as particularly vulnerable to HIV infection themselves, due to their low socio-economic status, sexual harassment, gender discrimination at school, lack of access to health care and lack of awareness and education about sexually transmitted diseases. Furthermore, some cultural practices such as traditional circumcision ceremonies, peer pressure and societal expectations to start sexual activity early, and early marriage, further increase young people's vulnerability to HIV. My research suggests that poverty, HIV/AIDS and gender inequalities are all interlinked, and severely constrain the ability of young people from poor communities to mitigate the risks and impacts of HIV/ AIDS.

The next chapter focuses on street children's perspectives and experiences of their situation from a gender perspective, and explores the survival strategies and coping mechanisms they adopt, both materially and emotionally, which enable them to lead independent lives within the street environment.

Chapter 7



Photograph 2: Taken by street boys in a small park (Arusha, 2001).

Life on the Streets: Contradictions and Contrasts

Chapter 7

Life on the streets: contradictions and contrasts

Introduction

The previous chapters have discussed children's agency within and upon the constraints and possibilities of the socio-cultural concept of childhood in Tanzania. In the discussion about the different factors causing children to leave home, children were shown to be making a conscious decision to move to town, as a result of poverty, difficult home environments, negative aspects of the social institution of childhood, and conventional rural-urban migration patterns. The children can be seen as rejecting the immediate household, and interacting predominately with the wider community, where they construct their own social networks. This is represented as the outer two circles of Hill and Tisdall's (1997) diagram of children's social networks¹. Taking this as the starting point, this chapter adopts the child-centred approach taken in the previous chapters to learn about children's experiences of life on the streets.

The ethnographic material presented in this chapter builds on the growing body of empirically-based research conducted with street children, which starts from children's perspectives. It aims to provide a 'view from below' (bell hooks, cited in Skeggs, 1994: 74), based on children's voices and own representations of their lives on the streets, in contrast to 'top-down' approaches to research with children. Group discussions with the boys and girls, as well as drawings, participatory photography, individual interviews, and participant observation will be analysed to provide an insight into children's experiences², drawing on the discussions about 'street children' in Chapters 1 and 2. While children identify several negative aspects of street life, such as a lack of

¹ See Figure 5, p.103.

² All the names of the children participating in the study have been changed to protect their identities.

basic needs, feelings of powerlessness at being bullied by older youths, and police harassment and surveillance, they also reveal several positive aspects, such as freedom, autonomy, the thrill of danger, and deviating from the 'norms' of society. Street life is thus shown to be characterised by paradoxes and contrasts, and gender represents a key differential in children's experiences.

Children's perspectives

The discussion in Chapter 1 revealed that street children are often portrayed in the media and by development organisations either as abandoned 'innocent victims', or as 'deviant' youths (Boyden 1997; Ennew 1995; Stephens 1995). It thus seemed pertinent to gain an insight into street children's own experiences and perceptions of their situation. The group discussions offered an opportunity for the young people to talk in general terms about 'street life', giving an insight into their perspectives and their attitudes towards others, which will be analysed in this section.

In response to the question, *'How did people treat you when you were on the streets?'*, the three discussion groups of boys³ said that some people were kind to them, giving them food, money, clothes, shoes etc. The boys living on the street at the time of the discussion and those at the UCSC shelter also said that some people gave them good advice, such as advising them to go home, or go back to school so that they could learn how to write, do sums etc.(street, 7/5/00; UCSC shelter, 17/4/00) The boys at the UCSC shelter cited NGO projects as helping them, teaching them good behaviour and to read and write etc. (UCSC shelter, 17/4/00). However, the boys all commented that others were unkind to them, beat them, insulted and abused them. In the discussion at

³ See p.82 and p.99 for composition of groups

the UCSC shelter, the boys said that the older street kids beat them up, took their money by force, and even strangled the younger boys, for example, if they had asked someone to buy shoes for them, the older boys strangled them until they gave up their shoes, or sometimes used knives to extort money or goods. One of the boys said that he had seen a younger street kid strangled to death by the older boys (UCSC shelter, 17/4/00). The two groups of street girls did not reply so positively to the question, '*How did people treat you on the street?*' as the groups of boys. The former street girls at Theresa House replied that people were kind to them, but they did not receive much help (Theresa House, 20/5/00), while the girls living on the street at the time of the discussion mentioned only negative treatment – being insulted and verbally abused and beaten not only by older street youths, but others too (UCSC shelter, 31/3/00). This suggests that there is more stigma attached to being a girl on the street than a boy, illustrating the idea raised in the first two chapters, that girls' presence within the street environment subverts cultural norms and gender relations more than boys'.

When asked what people called them, all the groups of young people cited the common insulting, slang words for 'street kids' - *kapurwa*, a term widely used in Tanzania, *chokora*, the Kenyan equivalent, and the more neutral term used by development agencies *watoto wa mitaani*, literally 'children of the street'. The boys at the UCSC residential centre additionally mentioned the term, *nyoka*, (literally 'snake') which usually refers to skinny street boys, particularly those who work in the mines (UCSC residential centre, 28/04/00), while the girls living on the streets cited the common slang words for prostitutes – *malaya*, and *machangudoa*, as well as *vibaka*, meaning pickpockets (UCSC shelter, 21/3/00).

In response to the question, *'Would you like to go on living on the streets?'*, all five groups of young people said 'no' unequivocally, perceiving life on the streets as overwhelmingly negative, citing the lack of basic needs and the abuse that they suffered on the streets. The boys living on the street at the time of the discussion said that they lacked education, were susceptible to illness, and that a mentality of abusing the weaker ones existed, while admitting that there were also many attractions to town (Street, 7/5/00). The boys at the UCSC shelter and those at the residential centre commented that they wanted to continue staying at the centres, since they provided them with education. The boys at the residential centre saw life on the streets as characterised by a lack of education, and drug use: *'You become crazy because of smoking marijuana, sniffing glue, petrol, and drinking piwa'* [potent illicit local brew, which is used to make fertiliser] (UCSC residential centre, 28/4/00). The girls at Theresa House saw life on the streets as characterised by a lack of shelter, food and guidance (Theresa House, 20/5/00), while the girls living on the streets at the time of the discussion cited violence and verbal abuse: *'Life on the street is bad because boys throw stones at us and insult us with bad language'* (UCSC shelter, 31/3/00).

When asked what they did not like, what they were afraid of, the kind of people they liked and disliked, the street children's responses revealed a strong sense of moral values, which was sometimes at odds with their own survival strategies. The predominant message arising from all five groups of young people participating in the study seemed to be children's perception that 'street life' was 'bad' or 'deviant', both in terms of risks to their well-being, due to lack of food and shelter, drugs, exploitation of their labour, violence, sexual abuse, ill health, including HIV/ AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases - as well as in a moral sense, due to their exposure to crime, violence, drug use, sexual abuse and prostitution. The negative connotations

surrounding 'street life' found in the wider community thus seem to have been internalised in children's self-perceptions. This supports the findings of Swart's study of street children in Johannesburg (1989) which found that the children shared the values of the wider community, condemning stealing, prostitution, and violence, even though they sometimes took part in these activities to survive (Bourdillon, 1994).

While it was easier for boys and girls staying at NGO projects to condemn bad 'street' behaviour, such as drug taking and stealing, as morally wrong, the boys and girls living on the streets at the time of the discussion found themselves in a contradictory situation: while they considered such behaviour 'bad', they themselves followed the 'street' lifestyle that they condemned and faced considerable peer pressure to conform. The boys on the street explained the difficulty they experienced in resisting peer pressure to take drugs: *'if you refuse to smoke marijuana or sniff glue with your mates, they beat you up and you are considered an outcast'*. Four of the five boys on the street drew people smoking marijuana when asked to illustrate their perceptions of life on the street, with captions of people saying, *'The weed's strong today!'*. Jusuphu's drawing (Figure 13) shows a group of three people smoking marijuana with the words, *'Stop smoking marijuana'*, and himself, alone, with the words, *'I don't smoke marijuana or even cigarettes'*, but drew a bottle of glue next to himself instead (Jusuphu, street, 7/5/00). Thus, while he sought my approval for his condemnation of, and refusal to succumb to marijuana and cigarettes, he subtly admitted in his drawing that he needed glue to survive on the streets. Indeed, I had previously witnessed him hiding a bottle of glue up his sleeve on other occasions when I had seen him around town. These responses from the group discussions will now be compared to individual interviews with the children which related more to their personal experiences of life on the streets.

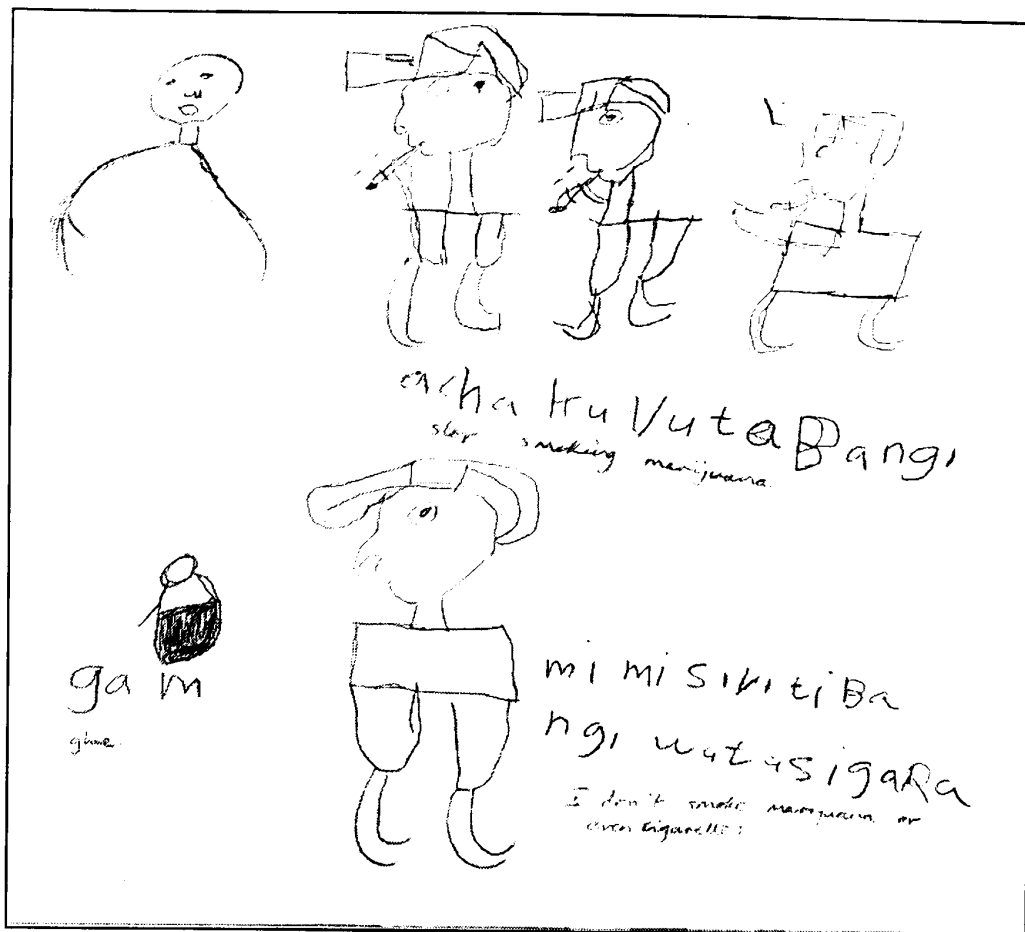


Figure 13: Jusuphu's (aged 15) drawing of himself on the streets: 'Stop smoking marijuana. I don't smoke marijuana or even cigarettes' next to a bottle labelled 'glue' (Jusuphu, street, 7/5/00).

Lack of basic needs

In individual interviews with the young people, most children reiterated the messages arising from the group discussions: that they perceived life on the street as negative, due to a lack of basic needs, violence, harassment and abuse. Halima (aged 14) saw the lack of shelter and access to health care as the main difficulties:

RE: What difficulties/ problems did you experience on the streets?

H: Only sleeping out in the cold at night, if you don't have a sweater, you're ill with a chest infection, sometimes you get malaria, you don't have anything to help

you, unless you beg for money, and get money for medicine. (Halima, UCSC shelter, 16/6/00).

Similarly, Emanuel perceived the difficulties of street life in terms of a lack of basic needs: *'You don't get clothes, you don't get food, and shoes, and clothes, yes, and a bed'* (Emanuel, UCSC shelter, 5/7/00).

Simon, however, who was orphaned by AIDS and living on the street at the time of the interview, had a more ambivalent attitude towards the street:

RE: What is it like on the streets?

S: Life on the streets isn't bad, but not good either. The good thing about life here on the streets is food. The bad thing is that you sleep on the pavement and a snake could bite you and you die here on the pavement, you could be beaten by your mate, and you don't have anywhere to go.

RE: How do you get enough money to live on the streets?

S: I get money just by begging, and the money is just enough for food. Yes, if for example, I get 500 Tsh. [equivalent to 50 pence], I buy clothes for 200 Tsh. and the rest I put aside for food and drink.

RE: What things do you like about living on the streets?

S: There's nothing I like about life on the streets, perhaps wearing new clothes, we get given clothes by some Indians.

RE: What difficulties/ problems do you experience on the streets?

S: There are different difficulties, like being beaten, being hit by a car, and going without food once in a while, and also you can't go to school if you are on the streets (Simon, street, 11/6/00).

While Simon mentioned the immediate risks of violence and physical dangers from snakes, cars, and perhaps an occasional lack of food, he also showed an awareness of a more longer term need which was not satisfied on the street: education (which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 8). The danger from cars and buses is linked to street children's pastime of catching a ride on the back bumpers of cars and buses for entertainment, which often resulted in accidents. On several occasions over the year I worked at the UCSC project, street children reported to UCSC staff that one of their friends was in hospital having been involved in a traffic accident. UCSC staff visited the local hospital if the child had been seriously hurt, ready to pay for medical treatment if necessary. Members of the public, particularly *wazungus* [white expatriates], who had been driving when the boys hurt themselves, sometimes paid for the street children to be admitted to hospital, but we often heard that the boy had run away soon after, if he was not seriously hurt.

A few months after one of my visits to Arusha, I heard from staff at the UCSC centre that one of the boys I had interviewed as part of this study, Luka, had been tragically run over and killed in a accident with a bus. During the fieldwork period when I returned, the boys who had been with Luka when he was run over told me how it had happened and expressed their sadness at losing their friend. Three boys had been washing their clothes in the river in the evening, and then went to the graveyard and were high on glue, when Luka wanted to leave, but the others were further behind. He stepped out into the road and was knocked down by a long distance bus. The bus did not stop and carried straight on to Nairobi, but was stopped by the police at the border with Kenya. The driver negotiated to pay Luka's funeral costs. The UCSC project took a group of street children to see Luka's body in the mortuary and Samson and the others

who had been with him attended his funeral, facilitated by UCSC and the street children centre in Moshi. The project in Moshi traced Luka's parents and they were present at the funeral (fieldwork journal, 23/11/02). Luka's story illustrates the danger posed by road accidents, particularly at night, combined with the fact that the drugs and alcohol, that form a daily survival strategy used by street children, reduce their ability to protect themselves.

Despite these disadvantages and risks, however, Simon, living on the street at the time of the interview, demonstrated resiliency, through his ability to negotiate for food, clothing and money. The fact that he mentioned food as a positive aspect of street life suggests that street children are not necessarily the most deprived and may in fact have a better diet in the street environment than they would at home. UCSC staff often commented on how much the street children at the centre ate, and had to almost double the Municipality's recommended measures of rice and ugali [staple food, a kind of stiff porridge made from maize flour] per child for school meals to satisfy the appetite of the children at the shelter and residential centre. A study conducted by the Forum for Child Concerned NGOs in Arusha found that 88 per cent of the street children interviewed in Arusha acknowledged that they got at least two meals a day, although sometimes the quantity was small (Rwegoshora, 2002:33). Indeed, Veale's research in Sudan and Ethiopia found that street children mentioned a greater variety of food to be gained from the street than from home, and in Nepal, Panter-Brick et al. have shown that height-for-age and weight-for-age of street boys were actually better than in slum-dwelling and rural children, and that growth status did not deteriorate with time spent on the street (Veale et al., 2000:136). Similarly, Hecht's research with street children in northeast Brazil suggests that street children eat better on the streets, although they do experience hunger at times (Hecht, 1998:54).

Violence and abuse

Many of the children interviewed perceived life on the streets as 'bad' because of the violence, harassment and sexual abuse they suffered. In response to the question, '*When do you feel safest?*', the majority said that they did not feel safe on the street, and in response to the question, '*When do you feel lonely?*' most said that they were lonely in town. Nixon mentioned positive and negative aspects of street life:

RE: When do you feel lonely?

N: [...] I felt lonely all the time [on the streets], because the night watchmen used to harass me, as well as the police.

RE: When do you feel happiest?

N: When I was in town, I used to feel happy when I was young. [...]

RE: What was it like on the streets?

N: Life on the streets is just being harassed by the policemen and watchmen, until you long to go back home, but if you think about life at home, you see that it's better to live in town.[...]

RE: What difficulties/ problems do you / did you experience on the streets?

N: There are difficulties there when you are harassed. Because there are the older boys there, if they find you with something, they grab it and beat you up. And the police, them too, if they find you they beat you, they used to practise on us (Nixon, UCSC residential centre, 16/7/00).

Nixon's words suggest that young street boys face considerable harassment, physical and sexual abuse from night watchmen, the police and older street youths.

Indeed, on one occasion while I was working at the UCSC shelter, an older street youth (aged about 19 or 20) came to the shelter, seeking medical treatment, after he had been stabbed in the back and in the leg. He was bleeding heavily, and needed to be admitted to hospital immediately. The nurse said that she was unable to treat him without first reporting it as an assault to the police, who would then bear responsibility for the cost of medical treatment. However, when hospital was mentioned, the youth immediately refused, and simply walked away from the shelter weakly, still bleeding. We felt quite helpless watching him walk away, but the nurse and other members of staff said there was nothing they could do, since he had categorically refused to go to hospital. I asked one of the boys why he had refused, and he told me that he was afraid he would be arrested, as he was well-known by many of the younger street boys as a child abuser who was always hanging around the bus stand, saying that '*he does bad things to us*' [phrase used to imply sexual abuse], and '*he persecutes us*'. Someone had attacked him for raping one of the younger boys, which explained the other boys' lack of sympathy for him and the distance they kept from him at the centre. A project worker later told me that the younger boys at the bus stand had cheered when he had been attacked (fieldwork journal, 28/6/00). This incident demonstrates the level of violence and abuse that street children are regularly exposed to in the street environment.

During my later fieldwork, I talked to Rashid, a 20 year old former street youth who had spent the past four months staying at the UCSC shelter, recovering from a knife wound in his chest. He was stabbed a year previously by another street youth, and spent eight months in hospital and had several operations to repair the damage. Rashid told me that his friend Michael had tried to take his money, and stabbed him when Rashid refused. However, Joshua, who I met at the mines, told me a different version: Rashid and

Michael had put their money together to buy some glue to share between them, but Michael wanted it all to himself, Rashid refused, so Michael stabbed him (fieldwork journal, 10/12/02). The two versions of this story reveal how Rashid modified his story to project a more socially acceptable image of himself as being the victim of violent crime, rather than admitting to me that he was fighting over glue. Goffman's ideas about the presentation of the self in everyday life are useful here to understand people's narratives of their behaviour and social interactions in public. Goffman (1959) uses metaphors of performance, and distinguishes between what he terms the 'front-stage' and the 'back-stage'. The 'front-stage' is where performances are enacted for people to create impressions of themselves in public life, and the 'backstage' is where unrehearsed performances take place, which are not intended for public observation. While Rashid created a more favourable impression of his behaviour when narrating the incident to me, Joshua, however, chose to tell me the backstage version of the incident, since he had nothing to lose by revealing his peers' addiction to glue. However, Joshua was keen to emphasise that he had stopped sniffing glue following this incident, presenting his own front, which may or may not represent how he performs unrehearsed 'backstage'. The 'backstage' insight into this incident therefore demonstrates how drug addiction significantly increases the risk of violence that young people living on the street are exposed to.

Amina, aged 14, who had recently decided to stay at the UCSC shelter, perceived street life as 'bad' because of the risks of violence and rape:

RE: When do you feel safest?

A: If I am on the streets, I don't feel good, but if I'm, for example, staying with someone and I go to school, I feel really good, but if for example, I sleep at the

bus stand, or I just stay on the streets, sometimes we go to sleep in the centre of town, it's dangerous at night, sometimes, someone plans to rape you [...].

RE: When do you feel lonely?

A: Yes, on the streets, because if you beg and you don't get any money, you go hungry, I just sit around, aimlessly, I just sit there, lonely, people insult you again and again, street children beat you up over and over again, yes, the boys, beat you.

RE: The older boys?

A: The older boys, even the younger ones. They beat you, they insult you again and again, sometimes, you want to throw things at them. But if I'm at home, I don't feel lonely, but if I'm on the streets, I feel bad.

RE: When do you feel happiest?

A: For example, like yesterday, when I came here, I was taken in, I was given clothes, I changed into nice clothes, and I just sat there and felt happy. (Amina, UCSC shelter, 9/6/00).

Many of the children's drawings of life on the streets depicted violence and other negative aspects of 'street life'. Abu drew a fierce looking figure and next to him, wrote '*this one [drug] is strong today*', while another figure smoked a large spliff (Figure 14). He also drew two figures, one of whom was sexually abusing another, who seemed powerless, without any arms, labelling the scene, '*sexual abuse*'. Abu also drew some positive aspects of street life, however, showing a woman offering him some tea with the words, '*tea services*', and a picture of car, speeding away, one of the most frequent images (along with houses) featured in many of the boys' drawings in my art classes at the UCSC centres (Abu, street, 7/5/00).

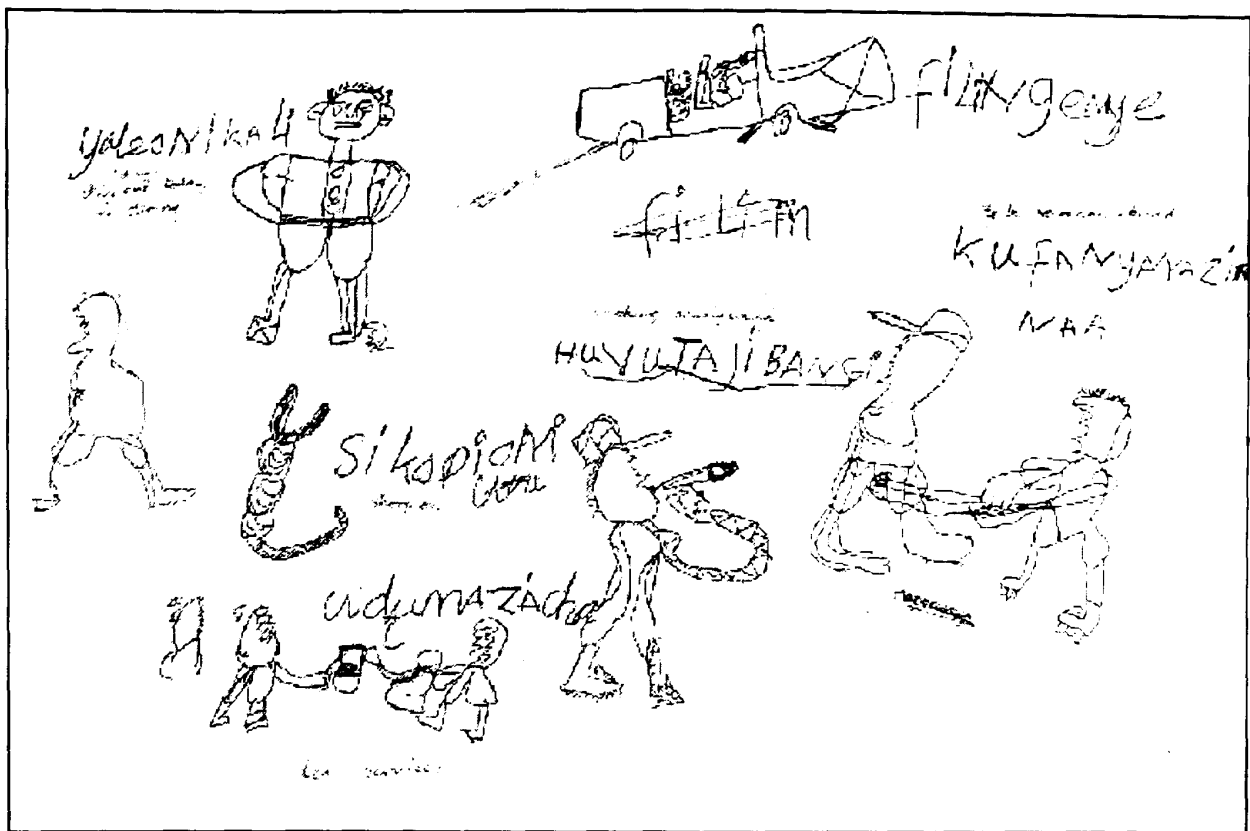


Figure 14: Abu's (aged 17) drawing of life on the streets. From top left corner clockwise: 'This one [spliff] today is strong', 'car', 'sexual abuse', 'smoking marijuana', 'tea services', 'scorpion' (Abu, street, 7/5/00).

The girls living on the street drew themselves employing survival strategies – begging for money, scavenging from the rubbish dump, selling mangoes and bananas – as well as suffering physical and verbal abuse. Angelina (aged 14) drew a female figure with an outstretched hand with the comical words, 'Please, 100 Tsh. [equivalent to 10 pence] Nyerere [former president of Tanzania, often referred to as 'Father of the Nation'] refused beggars, that's why it's shit to deny us'. She also drew a fat woman and a small girl, with the words, 'Shikamoo [respectful greeting for an adult], mama, please can I have some food to eat, I haven't eaten for two days', with the woman returning the greeting, saying, 'I don't even have 5 Tsh.'. Below she drew another girl with the words, 'Hey, you kapurwa [street kid - insulting], come here' (Angelina, UCSC shelter, 31/3/00).

Halima (aged 14) (Figure 15) drew a girl carrying a basket of bananas on her head with the words, *'She's selling bananas on the streets'*, below, a figure looking amongst rubbish, with the words *'she's scavenging from the rubbish dump'*. Another figure stood next to a car, with the words, *'She's begging for money from the car'*. Below, another scene showed a girl attacking another shaded, unstable figure with an sharp implement, while another girl approached, with the words, *'She is crying and has been beaten by her friend'*. Halima wrote at the bottom, *'This is us on the streets, begging for money'* (Halima, UCSC shelter, 31/3/00). Amina (aged 14) (Figure 16) depicted herself begging at the window of a bus with the words, *'I was begging from this bus'*, below she drew herself being hit by a boy, who had long extended arms on her head and skirt, with the words, *'A boy was beating me'*, and another picture of a male figure holding her and threatening her with a knife, with the words, *'You whore, give me the money you were given by that man'*.

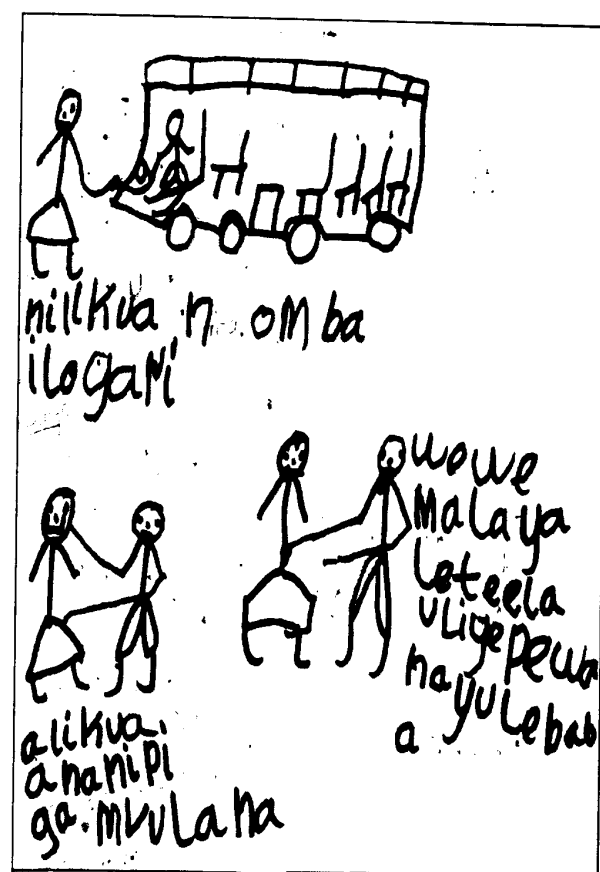
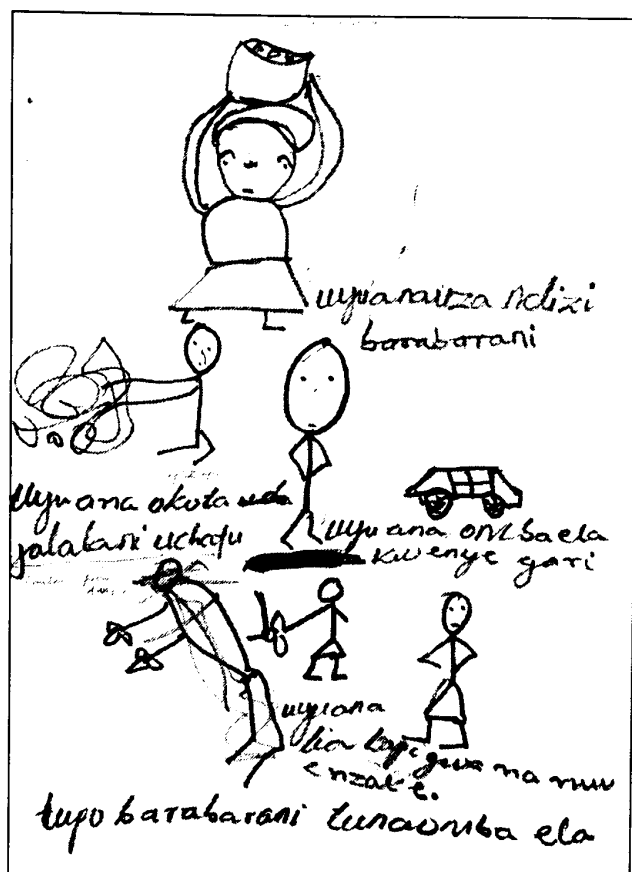


Figure 15 (left): Halima's (aged 14) drawing of life on the streets: 'She's selling bananas on the streets', below, 'she's scavenging rubbish from the dump' and 'she's begging for money from the car'. Below, 'she is crying and has been beaten by her friend'. 'This is us on the streets, begging for money' (Halima, UCSC shelter, 31/3/00)

Figure 16 (right): Amina's (aged 14) drawing of herself on the streets: 'I was begging from this bus', below, 'A boy was beating me' and, 'You whore, give me the money you were given by that man' (Amina, UCSC shelter, 31/3/00).

As well as these violent images, however, Amina (Figure 17) also depicted herself looking happy in another drawing, sitting inside a café where she was drinking tea with her friend, with the words, 'We were bought tea by a woman'. Sophia (aged 17) also depicted herself begging for money from a woman and from a car, as well as a scene showing three girls playing with a skipping rope, with the words, 'We were playing and people came and beat us'. Her drawing also reveals the insulting language used against

them – ‘You, whore, come here’, and ‘Hey you, prostitute, bring some mangoes over here’ (Sophia, UCSC shelter, 31/3/00).



Figure 17: Amina’s (aged 14) drawing of herself and a friend on the streets:

‘We were bought tea by a woman’ (Amina, UCSC shelter, 31/3/00)

The boys staying at the UCSC shelter and residential centre, as well as girls at Theresa House found it more difficult to draw themselves on the streets and were not so motivated as the girls and boys living on the streets at the time, which may reflect a desire, or need, to blank out traumatic experiences once they were living in a safer environment. Samuel, however, drew himself begging at the window of a bus, with the words, ‘Baba [father, used to address a man], *help me*’ (Samuel, UCSC residential centre, 28/4/00) while Samson, drew a man beating him, with the words, ‘He is beating me, I am not happy’ (Samson, UCSC shelter, 17/4/00). One boy at the residential centre drew a figure running away with money in his hand, being pursued by another with a

panga [machete] labelled ‘thief’, while Fredi drew an angry police man with his baton in hand (Figure 18).

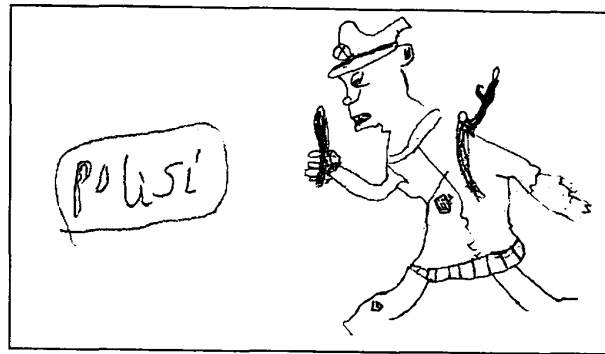


Figure 18: Fredi (aged 15)’s drawing of life on the streets, with the word ‘Police’ (Fredi, UCSC residential centre, 28/4/00).

It is clear from the children’s discussions, interviews and drawings, that street children regularly witness considerable street violence and are exposed to traumatic experiences of physical, verbal and sexual abuse within the street environment. However, the fact that the children wrote comical captions to accompany their scenes of street life, laughing at each other’s depictions, and that they also illustrated their survival strategies and some positive images of street life demonstrates their resiliency and agency as active participants in their social worlds, rather than being ‘helpless victims’. This reinforces the findings of Veale et al.’s research with street children in Ethiopia that, ‘In spite of the often severely traumatic conditions some of them had been exposed to, there was little evidence that they had become psychologically helpless; many demonstrated resiliency in their ability to negotiate for food or money’ (Veale et al., 2000:136).

Freedom, independence and opportunities

In contrast to the group discussions, individual interviews with the children revealed several positive aspects of street life which they enjoyed. While half of the young participants said that there was nothing to like about living on the street, the other half mentioned that they liked being able to earn their own money, having the freedom to spend it as they chose, to go and do whatever they wanted and living together with their mates, which compensated to some extent for the dangers and risks of street life. In response to the question '*What things did you like about living on the streets?*' Blandina (aged 14) commented on the sense of freedom she experienced: '*I used to like living on the streets because I saw that I was free. I could go wherever I wanted*' (Blandina, Theresa House, 20/5/00). I often observed the children in different areas of town at different times of the day according to the activities they were engaged in: begging at the post office and main tourist areas during the day, carrying loads and doing other casual work near the bus stand, accompanying friends to hospital, going to the UCSC shelter to wash their clothes, playing cards or draughts in groups on street corners during the afternoon or evening, catching a ride on the back of buses or cars etc. It is thus clear that street girls and boys enjoy considerable freedom of movement around town.

Some children also enjoy considerable freedom of movement between towns and cities. During my art classes at the UCSC project, the boys frequently drew pictures of the long distance buses bound for big towns and cities, from Dar es Salaam and Tanga to Singida and Mwanza, and told how they liked travelling

around the country. One of the boys at the residential centre even claimed to have travelled as far as Zambia on the commonly used long distance truck route, while Juma, aged 16 living at the UCSC shelter, told of how he and a friend hid on a goods train to Malawi. They spent a couple of weeks catching fish on an island on Lake Malawi, until the police caught them and they were returned to Tanzania (Juma, interview, UCSC shelter 4/12/02). Joshua, a fifteen year old boy, who I found when I visited the mining site near Arusha, told me that last year he went to Dar es Salaam and Dodoma on his own, and travelled over the border to Nairobi with three others for about a month. He said that they helped the bus conductors drum up custom and fill up the buses, for which he could earn up to 3,000 Tsh. [equivalent to £2.70], and the conductors and bus drivers would give him lifts wherever he wanted to go, because they knew him. He told me in Dar es Salaam, he and his friend would go to the main market at night, and eat bananas from the stalls while the watchmen were asleep and then hide and go to sleep, while the watchmen were blamed the next morning! (fieldwork journal, 10/12/02). This demonstrates street children's resiliency in negotiating to meet their needs and the thrill of subverting the rules of adult society.

Several of the boys on the street, who I knew from short stays at the UCSC shelter, often went over the border to Nairobi, and on one occasion when I was returning to Arusha, crossing the border from Kenya into Tanzania, I saw two of the boys begging for money for the bus fare to take them over the border, heading for Nairobi. Joshua told me that he and his friends usually got a night bus to Nairobi, got a free lift from their conductor friends, climb down just

before the immigration inspectors come on board the bus checking passports, hide outside and when the bus is let through the gate, they slip through and get on the bus again on the other side of the border. He explained that he and his friends were drawn to Nairobi because of the many wealthy white tourists passing through Nairobi on their way to Kenya's game parks and coastal resorts (fieldwork journal, 10/12/02). Rajabu's (aged 13) drawing of life on the street included a figure getting on to a bus, with the words '*Namanga border*' [to Kenya] (Rajabu, street, 7/5/00). However, several Tanzanian friends commented that street children in Nairobi were much more aggressive than the children in Arusha, threatening to throw stones or even faeces at members of the public, if they refused to give them money. Many NGO and academic studies report a much larger street children population in Nairobi than in Arusha, with high levels of drug use etc., although the proportion of street boys using glue in Arusha was visibly increasing over the period I was there. Luka confirmed that the street children in Nairobi were particularly aggressive in his interview:

RE: Have you travelled much, to Nairobi or Dar es Salaam?

L: Yes, the *machokoraa* [Kenyan slang word for street children - insulting] in Nairobi are bad. If they see you're an outsider, they surround you and beat you up (Luka, street, 11/6/00).

Joshua, aged 15 who I met at the mining site, confirmed that there are just as many people on the street at night in Nairobi as in the daytime, and lots of people sniff glue in the street, even girls and women, which makes people

aggressive and steal younger boys' money (fieldwork journal, 10/12/02).

Nairobi was therefore becoming a less favourable destination for the boys of Arusha.

Nevertheless, travelling between towns and cities can be seen as appealing to children's (especially boys') sense of freedom and the thrill of adventure. This freedom of movement between towns and cities can also be linked to the notion of children 'shopping' between street children projects, in search of the best services or the services they want at a particular moment in time⁵ (UNICEF, 1999^a). Many of the children I knew at the UCSC centres had stayed for short periods at, or at least were aware of, street children projects in nearby towns or further afield. Farida (aged 18) who had a two year old baby and worked as a commercial sex worker, told how she had been helped by a street children project in Mwanza while her baby was small:

RE: Has any other organisation helped you?

F: Yes, Kuleana, Mwanza have already helped me. I went with my child.

It was at the start of September 1998 until January 1999. They let me stay there because the baby was young, and when she was nine months old, they wrote a letter to the Social Welfare, and someone from Social Welfare brought me home. (Farida, UCSC shelter, 20/6/00).

⁵ Discussed on p.48.

On a return visit, while going for a walk around in the evening in the centre of Dar es Salaam, I was approached by two boys, carrying empty cardboard boxes on their heads, begging for food. When I looked closer, I recognised one of them as Jusuphu, a fourteen year old, who had stayed at the UCSC shelter for some time several months previously. He had been transferred to the residential centre, where he had been enrolled in school, but had left for Moshi about a month later, where I had come across him by chance. He had told me then that he was staying at the street children project there. On this occasion in Dar es Salaam, eight months later, after his initial surprise and slight sense of embarrassment for me to see him there, he told me that he was waiting for a place at the most well known of the many street children projects in the city, which he reported was at present oversubscribed. Meanwhile, he said that he sometimes attended another youth project during the day, where he was learning to play drums and do acrobatics. He and his friend went round the empty streets at night looking for discarded cardboard boxes to sell in the morning to the fish traders at the market (fieldwork journal, 3/2/01). This incident provides further evidence of street children 'shopping' between NGO projects, demonstrating their sense of independence and agency in constructing their lives.

Children also identified earning their own income, and the freedom to spend their money as they chose, as further positive aspects of 'street life'. An immediate cash income and a lack of responsibilities, combined with the attractions of 'modern' town life, which include the freedom to watch television and films in bars, thus form significant influences in young people's

(particularly boys') decision to remain on the streets (as was suggested in the case of Charles, pp.164-6 and Onessmo, pp.205-9). Children's participation in the informal sector in Tanzania is fuelled by the macro-economic and political context of urbanisation, Structural Adjustment, and globalisation. As Hecht comments:

The political economy, a term I use loosely to denote the macro-level political and economic systems under which power relations are played out and resources distributed, is a part of the backdrop against which street children assess the benefits of leaving the street and returning to the fold of working, nurturing childhood, and it is the political economy that makes it clear to street children, that, materially, home life has little to offer them (Hecht, 1998: 195).

When these attractions are weighed up against extremely poor, and often abusive, home environments which subordinate children and young people, it is perhaps surprising how many children do stay at home. As illustrated in Chapter 5, Nixon experienced a combination of extreme poverty, his father's alcoholism and domestic violence within the home environment⁶. Street life, on the other hand, offered the chance to earn a cash income, giving him a sense of self-esteem and liberation from oppressive adult-child relationships: *'I liked begging because I got money and when I got money I could do whatever I wanted with it, even if you want to smoke marijuana, there's no one to control*

⁶ See pp.194-9.

you' (Nixon, UCSC residential centre, 16/7/00). Luka (a small 11 year old), who was living on the street at the time of the interview and high on glue, saw life on the streets as good, perceiving it as an escape from corporal punishment at home, and the survival strategies adopted by himself and his friends ensured that food was usually sufficient and that they were protected at night:

RE: When do you feel safest?

L: When I'm full there's no problem. [...] I feel safe all the time.[...]

RE: What is it like on the streets?

L: It's good, isn't it, because there's no one to beat you hard, and food's no problem.[...]

RE: What things do you like about living on the streets?

L: I like living with my mates, we play together, there's no quarrels.

RE: What difficulties/ problems do you experience on the streets?

L: There's no difficulties at all. (Luka, street, 11/6/00).

Two of the boys at the UCSC shelter also mentioned the friendships they enjoyed with their peers: '[I like] *looking for money and living with my mates*' (Emanuel, UCSC shelter, 5/7/00). In response to the question, '*What is it like on the streets?*', Justin (a small 14 year old) replied in the same way as Luka, perceiving it as an escape from corporal punishment at home: '*It's good! Because there's no one to beat you again and again*', and cited living with his friends as the main aspect of street life that he liked (Justin, UCSC shelter, 3/5/00). These answers contrast with Juma's attitude (aged 14) who had lived on the streets for several years and was also staying at the UCSC shelter:

‘There’s nothing to like about it [living on the streets]. For example, if you beg for money, how long will you go on begging for? That’s why it’s better for me to stay in a place where I’m helped. For example, if someone volunteers to take me to a garage, I’ll learn how to be a driver and I’ll get more money than I would in town, where you can be called a thief and be cut up with a *panga* [machete]’ (Juma, UCSC shelter, 20/4/00).

While life on the streets itself was experienced as negative by Juma and he did not wish to continue on the streets, becoming a street child had, in the long run, been a positive step for him, since it had brought him into contact with an NGO which offered him valuable education and training opportunities. This illustrates an idea suggested in UNICEF’s study on *Children in Need of Special Protection Measures in Tanzania*, that running away from home to become a street child could be a strategy for obtaining educational opportunities, quite apart from access to other basic needs such as food and shelter (UNICEF, 1999^a: 272). As was mentioned in Chapter 2, children may see that their families cannot afford to pay for schooling, but that street children’s projects offer educational opportunities (ibid).

These contrasting responses reveal the diversity of possibilities and opportunities that urban life represents to different street children. Thus, street life is characterised by a series of paradoxes and contrasts. Negative aspects, such as violence, bullying, and police harassment, can be seen in terms of

powerlessness and constraint. This contrasts strongly with the freedom, thrill of adventure and danger, sense of autonomy and power children experience by transgressing the 'norms' of society and rebelling against adult control.

Furthermore, street children projects could offer a way for children to gain access to basic services and educational opportunities, on their terms, without having to return to the familial home, with its constraints, responsibilities and often oppressive forms of adult control. The next section analyses the extent to which gender differentiates children's experiences in the street environment.

Gendered experiences of 'street life'

As was discussed in Chapter 2, the literature on 'street girls' expresses concern that, although street girls only represent an estimated 20-30 per cent of the total numbers of street youth in Tanzania, they are considered to be at more risk than boys, due to sexual exploitation, harassment, sexual violence and the consequent high risk of infection from sexually transmitted diseases and HIV in particular⁷. It therefore seemed important to gain an insight into young people's views on the situation at the grassroots level. The majority of the young people interviewed thought that the experiences of girls and boys on the street differed. The differences focused around the girls' greater vulnerability to rape, sexual violence and pregnancy, as well as fewer opportunities for casual work than boys.

⁷ See pp.49-50.

Some of the boys, such as Devi (aged 17) perceived girls to be at greater risk of sexual violence:

RE: Do you think that life on the streets is different for girls and boys?

D: I think girls get a lot of problems because they are raped.

RE: By who?

D: Men and street youths. They can give them money, or they just do it to them without paying.

RE: What do girls do to get money?

D: They can work, like mopping floors, and they're given money.[...]

(Devi, UCSC residential centre, 16/7/00)

Emanuel and Luka thought that girls had fewer employment opportunities than boys. Many of the boys commented that there were only a few girls on the street. Nixon offered a possible explanation for the increasing numbers of girls:

RE: Do you think that life on the streets is different for girls and boys?

N: Yes, it's very difficult especially for girls. Because the older street boys can do bad things. Also, when the girls are convinced to do something, they agree because they are not used to the hard life.

RE: When you lived on the streets [1992-6], were there any girls then?

N: There weren't any, not even a single one. But now there are many.

RE: Why, do you think?

N: I think because they used to have problems like ours but they didn't have anywhere to go, but now they have heard that there are street

children and there are centres which help them, so they decided to come to town (Nixon, UCSC residential centre, 16/7/00).

Nixon's comment that street children projects may make it easier for girls to leave difficult home environments suggests that girls' problems at home have previously remained hidden. It also highlights a point raised in the literature on street children in Latin America, that projects may actually encourage children to go to the streets, which is not in itself a bad consequence of the project's presence, but it may produce a contradiction with the aims of the project to prevent children leaving home:

[...] by making life on the streets more palatable and failing to address the root issues in the home, projects may even make it easier for children to leave impoverished or abusive homes, thereby increasing the numbers of street children! (Green, 1998:83)

Four of the seven girls thought that life on the streets was more dangerous for girls because of sexual violence and abuse, as Lucy (aged 20) commented:

'A street girl is in a lot more danger than a boy. Many, many women at the bus stand are raped. You hear the older street boys say there are girls sleeping in a certain place, let's go and find them. But a boy, if he sleeps anywhere, he doesn't have any problem because he's a boy' (Lucy, Theresa House, 20/5/00).

However, as noted earlier in this chapter, younger boys are also vulnerable to rape and sexual abuse from older street youth and other men ⁸. Furthermore, Rajani and Kudrati, in their study on the sexual experiences of street children in Mwanza, Tanzania, have documented that boys are exposed to ‘rape’ in a traditional sense, as well as *kunyenga* - non-mutual anal penetration among street boys in initiation rites, when members of a group rape a new boy as a necessary and proper rite of belonging (Rajani and Kudrati, 1996: 308). The researchers note that although it clearly expressed the use of power, the boys conceptualised this initiation differently from other experiences of sexual violence, such as being raped at night, which were more strongly associated with being wronged or shamed (ibid). Thus, as UNICEF notes, ‘What little research evidence exists about the dangers to which children on the street are exposed in African societies seems not to bear out the hypothesis of exclusively female sexual vulnerability.’ (UNICEF 1999^a: 282)

The perceived greater threat to girls in terms of their sexuality illustrates the idea raised in Chapter 2, that girls’ presence on the ‘street’ subverts cultural norms and gender relations more than boys’ and thus is sanctioned by society. Judith Butler’s theory of ‘gender performativity’ provides a useful way of theorising this process: ‘gender’ is conceived not as a fact or an essence, but as a set of acts that are reiterated to produce the appearance of a stable category in the regulation of hegemonic norms:

⁸ See pp.267-8; also p.252-4.

Identifying with a gender under contemporary regimes of power involves identifying with a set of norms that are and are not realizable, and whose power and status precede the identifications by which they are insistently approximated. This ‘being a man’ and this ‘being a woman’ are internally unstable affairs. They are always beset by ambivalence precisely because there is a cost in every identification, the loss of some other set of identifications, the forcible approximation of a norm one never chooses, a norm that chooses us, but which we occupy, reverse, resignify to the extent that the norm fails to determine us completely (Butler, 1995: 127).

In Tanzania, as in many diverse countries, hegemonic norms dictate that girls’ are responsible for reproductive duties within the home, while boys have more freedom to explore public space and engage in income-generation activities in urban areas (Koda, 2000; Bendera, 1999; Omari and Mbilinyi, 1997). Indeed, as girls reach puberty, they are seen primarily as sexual beings, which, as shown in the previous chapter, makes them vulnerable to exploitative sexual relationships, transactional sex, and a consequent high risk of infection from HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases⁹. As Rajani and Kudrati point out, ‘Much of the rhetoric about what it means to be a woman, wife or girlfriend revolves around satisfying one’s male partner sexually and in other related roles (such as childbearing)’ (Rajani and Kudrati, 1996: 312). Girls who do not conform to the conventional gender role of performing reproductive duties

⁹ See pp. 247-251.

within the home, such as street girls, destabilise the identity category and subvert norms of 'gender' as well as norms of 'childhood'. The subversive nature of young women's presence in the street environment is demonstrated by the perceived concern, as evidenced in many studies, that street girls are more vulnerable and more at risk of exploitation and sexual violence than street boys (Africa Education Fund International, 1998; Salvation Army Tanzania, 1997; Omari and Mwakahesya, 1997; Odhiombo, 2000; Yamamoto, 1996; Green, 1998). Society however sanctions individuals who do not conform to hegemonic gender norms, as Butler notes:

[...] gender is not a performance that a prior subject elects to do, but gender is *performative* in the sense that it constitutes as an effect the very subject it appears to express. It is a *compulsory* performance in the sense that acting out of line with heterosexual norms brings with it ostracism, punishment and violence, not to mention the transgressive pleasures produced by those very prohibitions (Butler, 1993: 315).

Thus, the recruitment of girls found on the streets into wealthier households as domestic servants, forced early marriages for a bride price, violence, exploitation and prostitution, ostracism and punishment of street girls can all be seen as society's reassertion of hegemonic power regimes and gender norms (Mwakyanjala, 1996; Africa Education Fund International, 1998; Yamamoto, 1996). Since girls on the street cannot be situated in their conventional place as daughters, sisters or mothers performing reproductive duties in the home, they are overwhelmingly characterised as sexual beings who are available to any

man, and the stigma of prostitution is attached to them. This stigma is reflected in the lack of service provision for street girls: UNICEF researchers noted that other than the one centre dealing specifically with child commercial sex workers in Dar es Salaam, street children projects are working almost exclusively with boys (UNICEF, 1999^a: 258). Project directors explained their concerns about the difficulties involved in accommodating girls with the general attitude that girls on the street are involved in prostitution, despite evidence that street boys also engage in sexual relationships with each other and with girls, and a small proportion of boys sometimes use prostitution as a survival strategy (ibid; Rajani and Kudrati, 1996).

Rajani and Kudrati's study on the sexual experiences of street children in Mwanza, Tanzania, showed that sex plays a much more central role in the lives of street girls, especially after puberty, as compared to boys (ibid). They note that street girls in Mwanza have sex primarily with street boys and other men situated on the margins of society, such as unemployed men, and those working in low-paying, low status jobs such as restaurant cleaners and porters, while girls working in stereotypical prostitution at a bar constituted a minority (ibid). Furthermore, street girls have fewer livelihood strategies available to them than older women or street boys, as Rajani and Kudrati's study highlighted:

Whereas other girls and women may be able to assert a different role for themselves, street girls have comparably fewer resources, clout or protection. 'If I was a school girl I could say don't bother me, I want my education. If I had a business I could say I was a businesswoman.

If I had lived in a home then they wouldn't think of me [sexually]
because they would know I have parents.' (ibid: 311)

Street children's accounts suggest that they sleep in separate gender groups for protection, and indeed, associate in groups according to a strong gender division. According to my observations and the comments of boys and girls in discussion groups and interviews, relationships between girls and boys on the street seemed to be largely characterised by mutual antagonism, suspicion and exploitation. Naemi (aged 12) told of her experiences of being harassed by boys:

RE: Do you think that life on the streets is different for girls and boys?

N: Yes, it is different, because street girls are abused a lot. Because we can't fight men, yes, that's why they abuse us.

RE: Do you see many girls in town?

N: No, I haven't seen them, but Maua is now in town, she goes round with another girl called Theresa who has a baby.

RE: Does she beg for money?

N: Yes.

RE: Are there many other girls in town, or not many?

N: Not many apart from us, and there are others in town but they go home, go back to their homes in the evening.

RE: Where do you sleep at the moment?

N: I go and beg, and I sleep at the bus stand.

RE: Isn't it dangerous to sleep at the bus stand?

N: Yes, they want to rape us, but if you tell a policeman, they arrest them.

RE: So the police protect you?

N: Yes.

RE: Do you have to give them a little money?

N: No, I don't give them money (Naemi, UCSC shelter, 16/6/00).

Naemi seems to suggest here that the police offered some protection, however, earlier in the interview, she stated three times that she and her girl friends had gone to the police when they were beaten by some of the older youths, but the police had refused to let them in the police station. Amina (aged 14) suggested that the police harassed both boys and girls, but did not usually arrest girls:

'When night comes, you go to sleep, and you have a lot of problems just getting to sleep, noise, the boys make a lot of noise to disturb us, or they hit us, the police too say, "That lot, they're the kids who just wander around aimlessly". Sometimes they say they'll arrest us and take us to the police station, but they don't arrest girls, they just arrest boys. They take them to the police station' (Amina, UCSC shelter, 9/6/00).

Amina illustrated the hostile relations between boys and girls on the 'street':

RE: Do you think that life on the streets is different for girls and boys?

A: There is a difference, for example, a boy could meet a girl, he could do bad things to her, or a girl could meet a boy who's in trouble, and she would just watch him and leave him alone. She would say, 'he treated

me like this', so she would leave him on his own and go her own way.

(Amina, UCSC shelter, 9/6/00).

During my later period of fieldwork over two years later, Amina, then aged 16, revealed the oppressive and often abusive nature of relationships between street girls and older youths:

'I used to live with a youth called Aziz. I left him because he used to hit me. He told me if I go anywhere, even not very far away, when I came back he used to beat me. He said, why are you going there, you have to stay here, don't go anywhere, he just told me don't go anywhere'.

(Amina, UCSC shelter, 20/11/02)

Talking about her friends, Amina suggested that as street girls became older, they set up home with their male partners, particularly if they became pregnant, and their relationships could last for a few months or longer:

A: Blandina doesn't sell herself, because she lives with her 'husband', who is called Rajabu, but her 'husband' is not a good person. They go and drink together and later then he hits her. To tell the truth, I'd really like to help Blandina, but there's no point anymore, because if you tell her, she says I can't leave Rajabu again.

RE: Is he young, or is he older?

A: He's quite young, a youth.

RE: And she lives there with her mum too?

- A: Where she lives, her mum's place is in front, and then Blandina's place is behind.
- RE: And her partner gives her enough money to pay for food, everything?
- A: She told me that she's given money, if her boyfriend goes to his work, when he comes back, he sometimes gives her some so she can cook.
- RE: And what about Naemi, has she got a boyfriend, or does she just go round?
- A: Naemi used to have a boyfriend, but her boyfriend isn't there anymore, he's at the mines, he's Sophia's brother, but they split up. (Amina, UCSC shelter, 20/11/02)

This illustrates the point made by Rajani and Kudrati that despite their experiences of sex as power, intimidation and practical exchange, many girls continue to experience sexual feeling in terms of love, physical attraction and yearning for friendship (Rajani and Kudrati, 1996). As Amina's interview suggests, by living with a partner and creating a traditional domestic life together, 'relationships are viewed as one way to recreate families that the street girls have lost or never had' (ibid: 314). Amina referred to her friends' male partners as their 'husband', as the study with street girls in Mwanza also found (ibid). Indeed, one of the street girls who was pregnant and lived with her partner excitedly told members of staff at the UCSC centre that she and her partner intended to get married officially soon (fieldwork journal, 16/11/02).

Rajani and Kudrati highlight the confusing situation street girls find themselves in by engaging in often abusive sexual relationships for material benefits while experiencing them in terms of love and affection:

The combination of damaging sexist roles and the internalised desire to seek fulfilment through them can be profoundly confusing for street girls. Because the continuum between love and abuse is so blurred, and because they have very low self-esteem, street girls often accept violence and humiliation in the pursuit of love and connection. Alternatively, girls may pursue sex in a cynical and calculated attempt to gain resources while continuing to think that the sexual experiences needs to be 'something special'. This confusion often leaves them paralysed, their ability to seek and create health options seriously undermined. (Rajani and Kudrati, 1996: 314).

Farida (aged 18) who had a two year old baby and worked as a commercial sex worker, highlighted the issue of pregnancy and irresponsible paternity facing girls on the street:

RE: Who lives at home?

F: My mother, my child and my younger sibling. My child is two years old.

RE: Do you know the father of the child?

F: Yes, he lives nearby, but he rejected the child, says it's not his. He came to our home the day I gave birth and hasn't been back since. And

I know my father was given money [by the youth] which is why my dad didn't follow up on him [to support the child]. [...]

RE: What was it like at home?

F: I left home a long time ago. And I came back the year before last when I was pregnant. I gave birth and brought up the child and then I left again.

RE: Why did you leave again?

F: Because I had got used to living in town.

RE: What did you like about home?

F: I liked home when I was pregnant, they looked after me well until I gave birth.

RE: What didn't you like about home?

F: I don't like living at home because people talk about me, say that a young child has given birth to a baby. [...]

RE: Do you think that life on the streets is different for girls and boys?

F: It's easy for boys, they are more able to survive on the streets. Girls get more problems, for example, a youth could want you and force you and you don't want him, he beats you. Or you can get pregnant and the youth rejects you.

RE: What do you think about your situation now?

F: I don't want to carry on living on the streets. I want to stay somewhere where I can study, but not at home. I don't like living at home because people in the streets at our place provoke me a lot and I don't want to argue with them.

RE: Your mother will carry on looking after your child?

F: Yes. She told me if I want to leave, to leave the child with her because the child will face problems here in town. And she said to leave the child with her, she won't fail to bring him/her up (Farida, UCSC shelter, 20/6/00).

Farida's account reveals the shame attached to a young woman having a child born outside of marriage, and shows how she was excluded from participating in negotiating support for the baby from its father. It also shows how female members of the extended family, who, we saw in the previous chapter, are usually grandmothers¹⁰, become foster parents for children whose parents are unable to care for them. Having given birth to the child, Farida was left with few options but to return to commercial sex work to earn a living. Indeed, Farida's mother's willingness to care for the child, in view of the hazardous living environment Farida's baby would face if she kept her baby with her on the street, facilitated her return to prostitution. Indeed, in a recent ILO study on child prostitution in Tanzania, the factors which led Farida into prostitution, that is early pregnancy and rejection from her home community, were found to be typical of many young women involved in prostitution:

Children born out of wedlock to underage mothers are regarded as outcasts by most societies in Tanzania, as are their mothers. Society

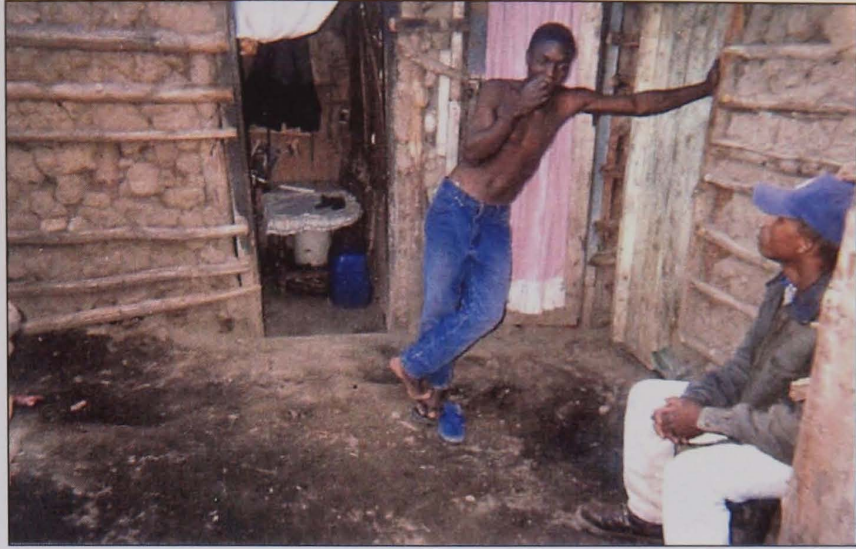
¹⁰ See p.226.

rejects them and they have to seek shelter elsewhere. The only possible option is prostitution (Kamala et al., 2001: 4).

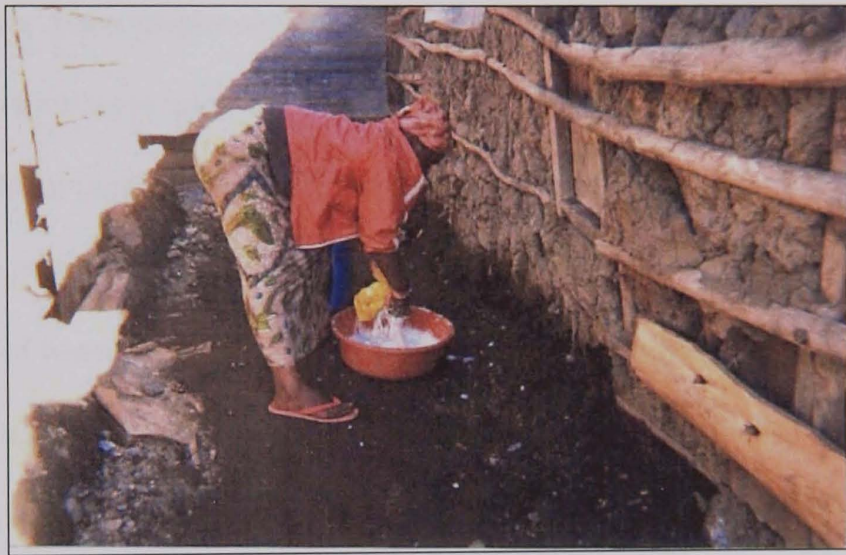
The photographs taken by some of the street girls to represent their lives, as part of the participatory research techniques used with the children, illustrate their different gendered experiences of life on the streets. One of the street girls was given a disposable camera to take pictures over a 24-hour period, thereby giving street children control over the visual images used to represent their lives on the streets. The images show the girls in a domestic setting, outside the two small rooms rented by Tausi's mother, where they had lived together for the past couple of months. The photographs also show the girls hanging out with older boys, who they told me were their boyfriends, and Tausi's small younger brothers, washing dishes, and applying makeup in the evening, with a paraffin lamp to see in the mirror. These images illustrate the fact that so-called 'street girls' are not so visibly homeless, and often seek out temporary accommodation with friends for periods of up to a few months, rather than sleeping rough on the streets. This is linked to the idea discussed earlier that girls' presence on the streets subverts gender 'norms' as well as 'norms' of childhood, and thus is sanctioned by society.



Photograph 3: hanging out in the evening



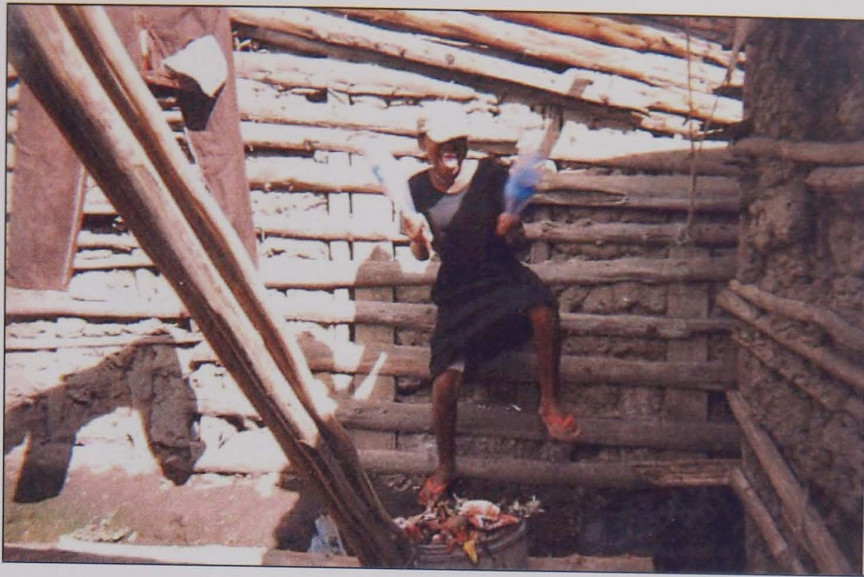
Photograph 4: a brother and a boyfriend of the girls



Photograph 5: washing dishes



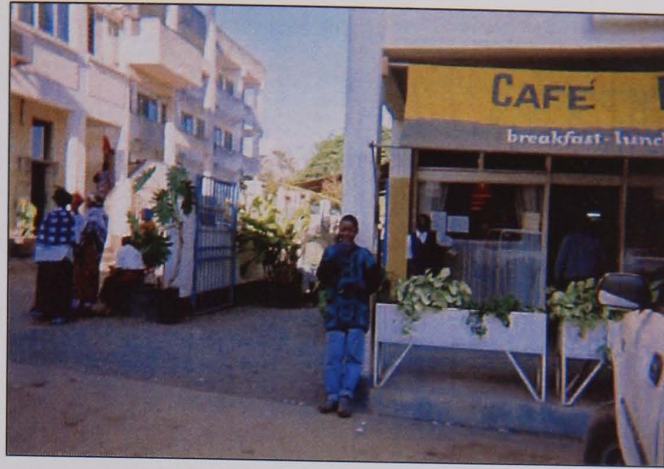
Photograph 6: in the evening



Photograph 7: Having fun

The girls' photographs differ markedly from the photographs taken by street boys, which were taken in public spaces with their (male) mates. Two boys, Ramadhani (aged 14) and Samson (aged 16) were also given disposable cameras to take pictures over a 24-hour period. The pictures show a group of boys in the centre of town, watching a pickup van for the owner and asking for payment, and hanging out in the main tourist shopping areas. The juxtaposition of the street children outside a smart café, which was popular with tourists, illustrates how their presence on the streets subverts 'norms' of the use of public space, as Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman comment of street children in Brazil:

Unlike other forms of refuse, these 'garbage' kids refuse to stay in the dump [...] and they stake out the most elegant spaces of the city in which to live, love and work, thus betraying the illusion of Brazilian 'modernity'. The social embarrassment caused by the visible presence of seemingly abandoned children contributes to the strong impulse to segregate, repress, exclude, confine and even 'eliminate' street children altogether. (Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman, 1998: 353)



Photograph 8: outside a tourist café

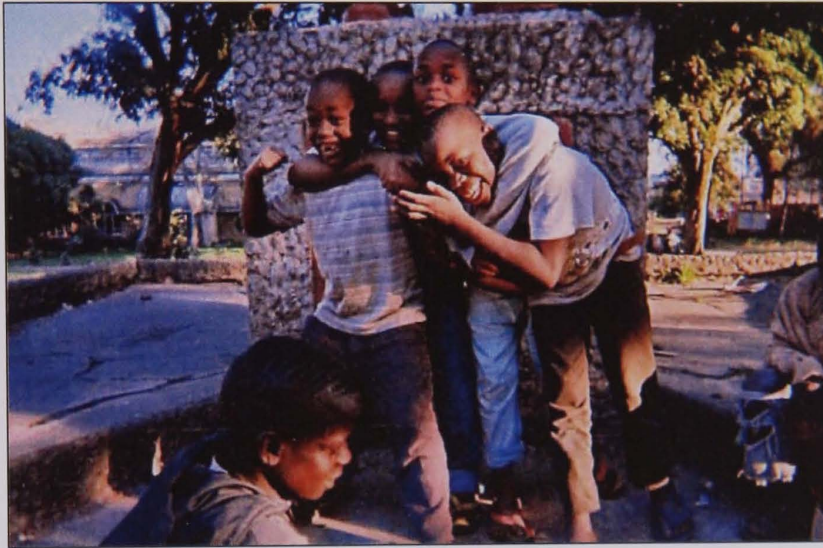
On several occasions when I saw the street children in the centre of town and stopped to chat to them, members of the public approached me, thinking that the children were troubling me, shouting at them to go away, and warning me that they would pickpocket me. When I replied that I knew them, that they were my friends, and the children said proudly that I was their 'teacher', the woman reluctantly walked away, still muttering that they were thieves. This reveals the public perception that 'vagrant', 'dirty' children are 'out of place' in the centre of town and considered a social embarrassment and nuisance to foreign visitors.



Photograph 9: buying a cigarette

The boys' other pictures show Ramadhani buying a cigarette (photograph 9), a group of boys hanging out in the evening (photograph 9), a boy, smiling, sitting on his own next to the independence monument (photograph 12) in the small park where they often

played football and relaxed in the afternoons, a group of boys with their arms round each other, laughing, next to the monument (photograph 10), two boys, one of whom is showing off a watch, the other making a rebellious gesture (photograph 15) and two photographs showing a group of boys watching a pickup van for an owner in return for payment (photograph 16 and 17).



Photograph 10: playing in the small park



Photograph 11: hanging out



Photograph 12: outside a tourist café



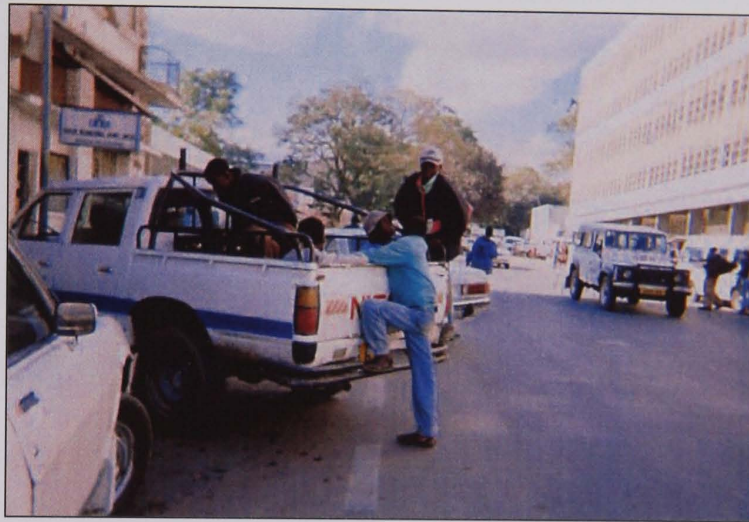
Photograph 13: in the centre of town



Photograph 14: in a small park with monument



Photograph 15: showing off a watch



Photograph 16: watching a pickup van for the owner



Photograph 17: in the van

Many of the photographs that the street children took to represent their lives show the camaraderie, friendship and solidarity they enjoyed amongst their peers. They refute any stereotypes about street children being passive, 'helpless victims', and exude a

sense of solidarity, defiance and resiliency, with street children proving that they are capable and intelligent photographers / visual ethnographers.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored children's perspectives of living, working and sleeping on the streets of Arusha, Tanzania. Children's overwhelming perception was that life on the streets was 'bad' in terms of their physical and emotional well being, due to a lack of basic needs, an unhygienic living environment which made them susceptible to illness, harassment, verbal and physical abuse, street violence, drug use, the risk of sexual coercion and sexual abuse, which consequently made them vulnerable to HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. Despite exposure to often severely traumatic conditions on the street, girls and boys demonstrated considerable resiliency in negotiating for their basic needs and recreational activities, actively constructing their social worlds and refuting images of them as 'helpless victims'. They did, however, seem to have internalised negative connotations of 'street life' dominant in the wider community, perceiving street life as morally 'bad', due to the 'deviant' behaviour (such as drug use, prostitution, stealing, extortion, violence and sexual abuse) they were forced to adopt as survival strategies.

However, the young people also mentioned several positive aspects of street life which compensated to some extent for the risks and difficulties they experienced. These included the freedom of movement, both within and beyond the town, thrill of danger and adventure, the attractions of 'modern' urban lifestyles, employment opportunities for a cash income, educational opportunities from street children projects, the sense of self-esteem they gained by earning their own money and leading independent lives

away from oppressive forms of adult control within the household (discussed in Chapter 5). Street life was thus shown to be characterised by a series of paradoxes and contrasts. For some children who had lived on the streets for extensive periods, the positive aspects seemed to outweigh the negative aspects. This suggests that children's negative experiences were mediated by the pleasures of transgressing the 'norms' of adult society, revealing their agency in non-conformity. In addition, it is likely that the longer children stayed on the street, the more respect, power and fear was accorded them among their peers. The photographs that children took to represent their lives illustrate the intense solidarity and friendship that develops between young people in the street environment, as well as their freedom, independence and resiliency.

The experiences of girls and boys on the street were shown to differ according to cultural expectations of gender roles. Both girls and boys thought that street girls were more at risk of sexual violence, exploitation as commercial sex workers and domestic servants, with fewer opportunities for casual work than boys, and were particularly vulnerable to HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. Girls' presence on the street not only subverts 'norms' of childhood, but also gender 'norms', which led to increased discrimination, verbal, physical and sexual abuse from members of the public, which girls' internalised in their self-perceptions. The photographs street children took illustrate the different gendered experiences of girls and boys. While the boys' photographs were taken in public spaces in the town with their (male) mates, the girls' photographs showed themselves in a domestic setting with male boyfriends and partners, and carrying out reproductive duties in the home.

Butler's theory of 'gender performativity' (1993; 1995) is useful to understand the way that society sanctions individuals who do not conform to hegemonic gender 'norms'.

Since girls' presence on the street is sanctioned by society, girls often seek temporary accommodation with friends, rather than sleeping out on the street. This partly accounts for the smaller population groups of girls than boys who are visibly homeless. My research reveals that since street girls are perceived primarily as sexual beings available to men, many street girls engage in sexual relationships with older men and youths in exchange for goods, money or protection. Some street girls, however, try to re-create a conventional domestic life in their relationships with male partners, for temporary or longer periods, which shows a desire to conform to hegemonic gender 'norms'.

Having discussed the positive and negative aspects of street life from a gender perspective, the next chapter examines in detail the employment opportunities and survival strategies adopted by young people to enable them to support themselves and lead independent lives on the street.

Chapter 8

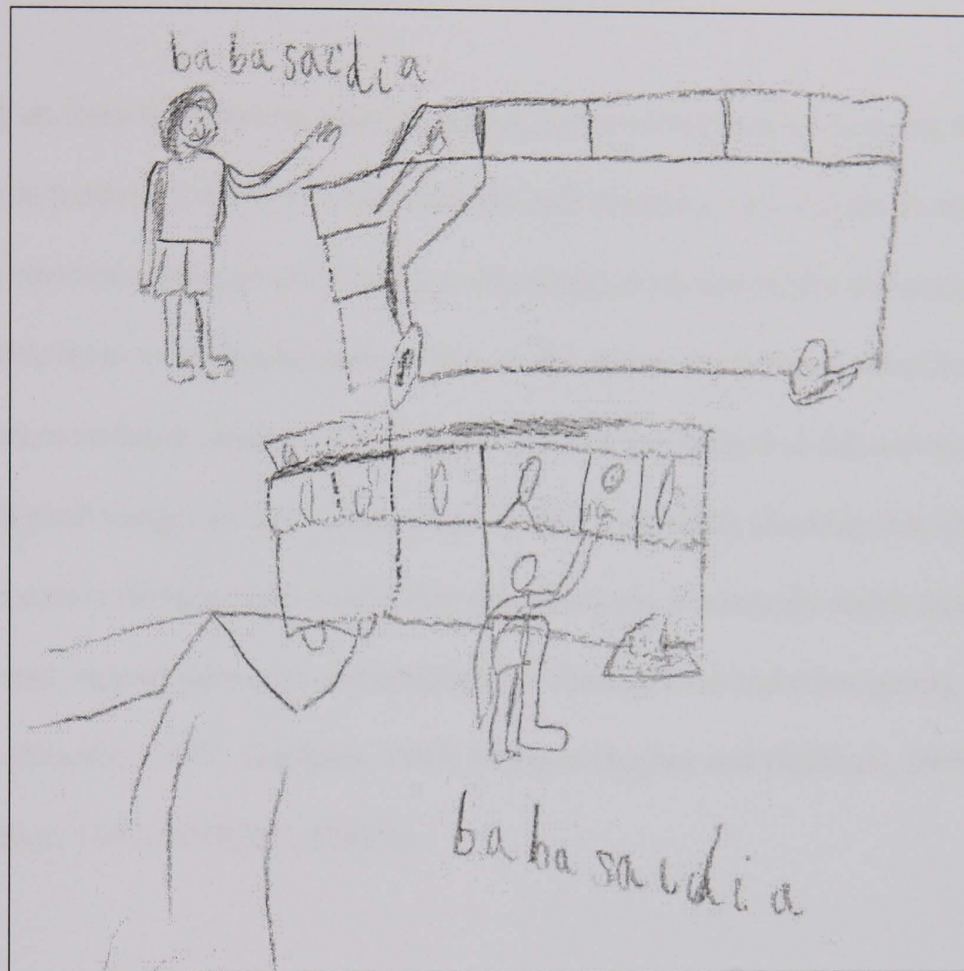


Figure 19: Samuel (aged 14)'s drawing of life on the streets. He wrote, 'Father [used to address a man], help me' (Arusha, 2000).

Life on the Streets: Survival Strategies

Chapter 8

Life on the streets: survival strategies

Introduction

Following on from the previous chapter, which explored children's experiences of life on the streets in terms of a series of contradictions and contrasts, this chapter examines children's survival strategies and coping mechanisms, both materially and emotionally, which enable them to lead independent lives on the street. As was noted in Chapters 1 and 2, more recent research conducted with street children has helped to deconstruct many of the stereotypical images of the 'untamed' or 'feral' street child, showing that children who live on the streets develop their own social organisations, a relatively stable attachment to territories and support networks and solidarity in sharing food and other goods, and for protection (Boyden, 1997; Stephens, 1995; Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman, 1998; Hecht, 1998; Glauser, 1997; UNICEF, 1999^a).

This chapter examines how street children construct their own social worlds in order to survive independently in the street environment. The employment opportunities, survival strategies and coping mechanisms they develop through their interactions with each other, with allies and other adults in the community will be explored by analysing data from discussion groups, individual interviews and participant observation. In particular, I will show that begging forms the most common strategy adopted by street children to earn money for their basic needs. I will explore the other main employment opportunities and survival strategies girls and boys adopt in Arusha, including stealing, casual work in the informal sector, domestic labour and commercial sex work (mainly girls), and working in the mines (older boys). I will then explore the coping mechanisms and support networks

that children develop in the street environment in order to meet their needs for shelter, health care, protection, emotional support, advice, recreation and entertainment.

Begging

The young people participating in this study in the discussion groups and individual interviews all cited begging as the first strategy they employed to earn money. The boys at the UCSC residential centre said that they begged from older men who were shopkeepers, and from tourists. They were sometimes able to earn as much as 5,000 Tsh. [equivalent to £5], which was enough for food and a whole set of clothes (UCSC residential centre, 28/4/00). Simon (aged 14), who was living on the streets at the time of the interview, earned enough from begging to pay for food and clothing:

RE: How do you get enough money to live on the streets?

S: I get money just by begging, and the money is just enough for food. Yes, if for example, I get 500 Tsh. [equivalent to 50 pence], I buy clothes for 200 Tsh. and the rest I put aside for food and drink (Simon, street, 11/6/00).

Similarly, Nixon used the notion of a street child as a 'cute, innocent, victim' to beg from wealthy Western tourists:

RE: How did you get enough money to live on the streets?

N: I used to look for things there at the main market, if I got onions, I would sell them or I went to beg from the tourists and because I was little, they used to give me food,

money and I was very happy. I used to be able to get 2,000 Tsh. or 5,000 Tsh.[
equivalent to £5] (Nixon, UCSC residential centre, 16/7/00).

Nixon's words illustrate Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman's finding, amongst street children in Brazil, that younger street children are more able to elicit compassion and a handout, due to Western concepts of childhood, whereas older street children may be forced to resort to stealing, due to the public perception that they are 'deviant' youths engaging in criminal acts, who do not deserve a handout (Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman, 1998: 365). As Hecht explains, age and success at begging are inversely related:

As children become physically larger, less 'cute' and more 'threatening', sympathy for them diminishes. On the other hand, as the kids get older they become physically stronger and more daring, which facilitates self-defence and enhances their skills at snatching wallets, watches and purses. (Hecht, 1998: 52)

Halima (aged 14) told how begging was regarded as an extra source of income for poor families, where children begged during the day, but returned to sleep at the family home at night:

RE: How did you get enough money to live on the streets?

H: We just used to beg for money there in the centre of town, we got money from morning. At the shelter, on Thursdays, the older boys used to come. So we went to Ngaramtoni [a small market town near Arusha], and the centre of town, if we got money we would go to put it aside, and take it to our parents.

RE: The money you got was enough for food etc.?

H: Yeah, you could get 500 Tsh. per day, or 1,200 Tsh. and you put your money safe, others take it home to their parents, they go home (Halima, UCSC shelter, 16/6/00).

Blandina (aged 14) told how she used to beg every morning and return home later in the day, gradually becoming more accustomed to 'street life', until she finally stopped returning home, staying with her girl friends on the street at night:

RE: Is it long since you left home?

B: Yes, I have lived on the streets for a long time. I was on the streets since I was little but in the evening I used to go back home [...]

RE: Where did you go to relax/ rest?

B: [I was] at home from 1 pm. I used to go into town in the morning until 1 pm, and then go back home. On the streets, I didn't used to get any time to relax.

(Blandina, Theresa House, 20/5/00).

I noted in my fieldwork diary that many small children often approached me in town, begging for money to help their family or selling handcrafted baskets (fieldwork journal, 20/4/00). On another occasion, a group of boys wearing fairly good, clean clothes, begged me for some money. They said they lived at home with their family and went to school, but as it was the Easter holidays, they had come into town to beg or do casual work, to help their parents with their school fees and exercise books (fieldwork journal, 29/3/00). This suggests that begging for money represents an important income-generation strategy employed by 'children *in* the street' as well as the homeless 'children *of* the street' that form the focus of this study. The noticeable presence of many wealthy *wazungu* [white] foreigners throughout the year in a vibrant tourist town perpetuates culturally dominant

ideas about the association between fair skin and wealth, and encourages children (and adults) to adopt this income-generation strategy. This supports the findings of the study carried out by the Forum for Child Concerned NGOs in Arusha, which suggested that the presence of foreigners in the town due to the tourist industry represents a pull factor attracting children to town (Rwegoshora, 2002: 37). Researchers noted that parents sent their children to beg for money to supplement the income of their families, and the children returned home with kilos of sugar, rice, maize flour and soap (ibid).

Stealing

In interviews with UCSC staff, becoming a 'deviant' street youth engaged in criminal activities, was considered one of the main risks associated with street life for young children. While only the group of girls at Theresa House mentioned 'stealing' as a survival strategy, street children's strong moral disregard for people who steal was clearly evident in the discussions. Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman highlight this contradiction between street children's sense of 'right and wrong', and the survival strategies they sometimes adopt:

Although a street child doesn't think it's right to steal, nor does he think it is fair not to have anything, just as he doesn't think it is right that governors, rich people and the police steal and aren't punished [...] Stealing and getting away with it momentarily inverts society's hierarchy putting street children on top and in control, transforming them for a moment into 'somebodies', people to take seriously (Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman, 1998: 367).

Lucy (aged 20), however, candidly told of how she became involved in a gang of thieves on the street:

L: I went round selling watches on the streets. I met a brother from our home place who was a thief. He stole bicycles, we got to know each other. He has a gang of street youths. One is called Little. There were three of us in it together, we swore that when we steal, if someone is caught, we would never tell. Because I was a woman, I used to go to suss it out first. For example, I get someone who has got a bicycle, I talk to them so that the others get the bike, and when he goes back, he finds his bike gone. I help him and sympathise but actually it's all part of our plot. We carried on stealing again and again. There was one bloke's motorbike we wanted to take, but we weren't able to get it, I thought I was going to be arrested and if I'm arrested, I'll just die, so I talked to the blokes and told them I don't want to steal again, but they didn't believe me. I stayed with some other girls. I went to a *mama ntilie's* [cooked food vendor's] place and helped her if she decided to give me somewhere to sleep, but I wasn't going to be her worker, until I came across the women here. When they saw me, they could just tell, 'this one is a street child'. They asked me about my life, and I explained, they decided to bring me here.[...]

RE: Where would you go to relax?

L: I used to get time to relax, because there were days you know there's no mission, so you relax. For example, you go to a place where the petty traders are selling and if he trusts me, he asks me to watch his stuff while he goes for something to eat, well, I simply take a watch, I was just relaxing, and I got a watch for myself. [...]

RE: You weren't afraid of the police?

L: No. Because if you give the police officer a small amount of money, he would defend you if you had done something wrong.[...]

RE: What is it like on the streets?

L: Life on the streets is very dangerous (Lucy, Theresa House, 20/5/00).

Lucy's account reveals that stealing represents a sometimes lucrative, but dangerous, survival strategy, and shows the kind of criminal activity in which older street youths might engage. The children's frequent stories of older street youths extorting money or goods from the younger boys and girls suggests that younger street children would find it difficult to safeguard their loot, unless they assisted older street youths. This relates to Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman's finding amongst street children in Brazil, that 'There is a gradual and perhaps inevitable evolution from begging to stealing and stealing is generally the second phase in the moral career of the street child' (Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman, 1998: 365). Cultural attitudes linked to the children's age, and public perceptions of older children as 'deviant' youths engaging in criminal acts, thus seem to partly determine the survival strategies street children are able to adopt.

Casual work in the informal sector

In a rapid assessment of child labour in the informal sector in Tanzania, an ILO report defined the informal sector as: 'a way of making a living which lacks a moderate degree of security of income and employment, whether productive or not, working for oneself, or others, legally or otherwise' (Foster-Carter, 1985, cited in Kadonya et al., 2002). It is a fast growing sector in Tanzania, particularly in urban areas, and its contribution to the national GDP is estimated to be 32 per cent (Kadonya et al., 2002:xi). 4.920 children under the age

of 15 are estimated to be engaged in the informal sector in Arusha (ibid). Children in Tanzania are used both on a part-time and a full-time basis as casual farm workers in tea, sisal and tobacco plantations, as hawkers of foodstuffs, clothing and miscellaneous items, house-girls, assistants in home beer brewing, and also in manufacturing and the mining industry, while the feminisation of child labour is mostly found in domestic labour and commercial sexual exploitation (Koda, 2000; Omari and Mbilinyi, 1997). I observed many children doing casual jobs around town during the day, such as selling fruit, peanuts and sweets etc.:

One boy (aged 15) told me that he had finished primary school, and sold bananas at the market every day, returning home in the evening, giving the money to his parents, who grew the crops. Another two boys (aged 15) selling plastics bags in the main market told me that they too had finished school, and now sold bags every day and returned home every evening. They said that some boys did stay at the market at night, sleeping in cardboard boxes, but the majority working at the market went home at night (fieldwork journal, 7/3/00).

According to the UN definition, these children working in the street are classified as ‘children *in* the street’ as opposed to the homeless ‘children *of* the street’ participating in this study.

The participants (‘children *of* the street’) mentioned several casual jobs in the informal sector open to them in urban areas, which as we have seen in chapter 5, is one of several factors motivating children and young people to migrate to towns and cities. In the discussion groups, both girls and boys mentioned helping the *mama ntilie* (small eating

places run by women selling cooked food, most of which are mobile to follow customers), by fetching water, washing dishes and sweeping the floor, in return for food, and sometimes a little money. The groups of boys and girls all cited going round selling small items, such as fruit which they found at the market, although the girls living on the street at the time talked about it more in terms of a small business activity: firstly, they had begged for some money, which they then used to buy the goods from the market - plastic bags, peanuts, coffee, cigarettes, bananas, fruit, fish etc., for resale around town (UCSC shelter, 31/3/00). Activities mentioned only by the groups of boys included carrying heavy loads or luggage for people, pushing cars to get them started, directing people while they park their car, watching cars while the owner was away, working in hotels and emptying rubbish bins for shops, offices and hotels (receiving a small payment of 100 Tsh. [10 pence], which paid for tea in the morning, or the left-over food from hotels) (street, 7/5/00; UCSC shelter, 17/4/00; UCSC residential centre, 28/4/00). When I asked the boys at the residential centre if the girls did the same work as them, they replied that girls beg, pickpocket younger boys and girls, and sleep with night watchmen for money (UCSC residential centre, 28/4/00). The girls at Theresa House mentioned stealing, and working as house-girls (domestic servants) (Theresa House, 20/5/00).

Interviews with the young people reiterated the messages arising from the group discussions. Devi (aged 17) mentioned doing several different casual jobs as well as begging:

RE: How did you get enough money to live on the streets?

D: I used to beg.

RE: Did you work as well?

D: Yes. I collected rubbish and went and watered flowers in gardens, or mopped the floor. You'd be given 200 Tsh. or 500 Tsh. [equivalent to 20 or 50 pence] (Devi, UCSC residential centre, 16/7/00).

Michael (aged 17) worked in a hotel, washing dishes for a minimal payment. His story of how he came to the UCSC shelter testifies to the solidarity, friendship and trust that develops between street children as a marginalised group:

M: I came to town on Friday, 17th March, this year. I arrived and I started working at a hotel, I washed dishes at night, stayed for about two weeks. Then I met Juma, and he said, let's come here, there's a place where you can watch TV, you live there, you sleep there for free, and we came with Juma, he lives here, and I have lived here since then.

RE: Did Juma live on the streets at that time?

M: No, Juma lived here, he saw me in town, and he brought us, me and my mate, and my mate ran away [...].

RE: How did you get enough money to live on the streets?

M: I didn't get enough money, I got money for food, in the evening, when I sold food there at the kiosk, I ate there, then I'd get given some money, then the next day I'd eat, I'd eat in the afternoon (Michael, UCSC shelter, 22/6/00).

There were thus a range of options for casual work in the informal sector in town that mainly boys engaged in, in order to earn enough to survive on the streets. As noted earlier, the feminisation of child labour was mostly found in domestic labour and commercial sexual exploitation, which will now be discussed.

Domestic labour

The experience of children exploited as domestic servants represents a hidden violation of children's rights, and according to some researchers in Tanzania, represents one of the most critical human rights issues in Tanzania (Rajani and Kudrati, 1996). The tradition of child fosterage leads to the recruitment of young children by relatives or non-related adults, particularly from rural areas, for domestic work in the homes of wealthier families, where they are often exploited and subject to physical, verbal and sexual abuse. Simon, Lucy and Upendo all sought domestic work as an employment opportunity in town, but were paid very little, if at all, as Lucy's story shows:

'I saw that my mother didn't have any support and thought I'll come to town and look for work. I lived with a woman in Majengo. I did domestic work there, and I realised the wage was very small – 4,000 Tsh. a month [equivalent to £4] – which didn't help me and my mother. I thought, wait, let me go to town and sell goods which the petty traders sell. I went round selling watches on the streets'. (Lucy, Theresa House, 20/5/00)

Following their parents' death, Simon and his brother worked as domestic servants but were cheated out of their wages:

'We left, the two of us, and went to Moshi, we went to a woman's house, she's called Mama Kaude. We worked for her in her house but she refused to pay us'. (Simon, street, 11/6/00)

Researchers report that in Tanzania, a typical domestic servant is a young girl of between nine and eighteen years of age who may have been brought to her employer by a relative or friend, or village-mate, or who has migrated to the urban area on her own (Koda, 2000: 251). The experiences of Amina and Upendo, who were recruited into households as domestic servants once they had moved to the street, provides evidence for one of the reasons for the smaller proportion of street girls, cited in the literature. Since girls' presence on the street subverts gender norms, members of the public approach girls with the offer of food and shelter in return for their labour in the home. In this way, street girls are made to conform to conventional gender roles¹.

To reiterate Amina's story, when her mother died, and the household was facing extreme poverty², Amina's grandmother suggested Amina went to live with her half-brother, where she was treated as a domestic servant and subjected to physical and emotional abuse.

Amina then told of how she started out on the street:

'I used to wander around the streets in Singida, and I got a bus to come to Arusha. I got on, it had come from Mwanza, and I got on at Singida, I didn't know where it was going, I didn't pay. We arrived here, I got on at 7 pm and we arrived at 7 am. I arrived, got off, and sat there at the bus stand, I didn't know where to go. That was last year. I stayed at the bus stand, and thought, I'll just wait and wander around. I wandered around, then night came and I went back to the bus stand, I sat with a certain woman who sold tea at the stand, and she gave me tea, I drank it, and went

¹ As discussed on p.287-290.

² Cited on p.243-5.

to her house, and went to live there. Then, sister wanted to go away, to take her child to Moshi. She told me, “I’m taking my child to Moshi, where are you going to live?” I decided to go back to town. I walked round and round, I met Naemi and her friends, I went round with Naemi, up to now. [...]

Then I left to work for a man, I didn’t want to live on the streets anymore. I went to this man’s place and stayed with his wife and child. His wife ran away, left with her child. She came to Arusha. I carried on living there, this man worked in the hunting business. I saw that there was no one left for me to stay behind with, and thought it was better for me to come back to town’. (Amina, UCSC shelter, 9/6/00).

Amina’s sense of vulnerability following the departure of her employer’s wife demonstrates research findings that young ‘house-girls’ are often vulnerable to patronisation, exploitation and sexual harassment from either the employer or his/her relatives, children and friends (ibid).

When I talked to Amina again, over two years later, her life during those two years had alternated between periods spent doing domestic labour in different households, and periods of commercial sex work:

A: When I left you, I went to work, to do housework, in Maasai land, Simanjiro [Tanzanianite mining area].

RE: Were you living with a woman there?

A: No, we were just there with a grandmother, the man used to come and work, go to the mines and then come back. I used to work there. Then I told them that I want to

go home to visit, and they said why, because they didn't give me any wages, they just gave me 500 Tsh. [equivalent to 35 pence] per month.

RE: Per month?

A: Yes, 500 Tsh. per month.

RE: How long did you stay there?

A: I only stayed for a month, then I came back here, and stayed with a brother at Blandina's place. (Amina, UCSC shelter, 20/11/02)

This again reveals the vulnerable position of young women, isolated in people's homes, and with little recourse to complain when they are exploited financially, or suffer physical or sexual abuse. The UNICEF study on Children in Need of Special Protection Measures in Tanzania found that the average salary reported by domestic workers was 8,000 Tsh. per month [roughly equivalent to £8 in 1999], which falls well below the minimum wage of 32,000 Tsh. per month (UNICEF 1999^a: 245). It is clear from Simon, Lucy, Upendo and Amina's accounts, however, that some domestic workers have to work for virtually no salary at all.

When I visited the mining town in Simanjiro, a small local NGO, set up to provide educational opportunities for children working in the mines, had helped two girls who had been exploited as domestic workers. They had been recruited at a young age from their parents with the promise of education, which had never materialised. One of the girls, Lawama, and the co-ordinator of the project told me her story. Lawama, aged 13, had been doing domestic labour since she was eight years old. She was taken from her parents several hundreds of kilometres away in Tanga, with the promise that she would be educated. She had to work from 5 am to midnight every day, having to continue working

long after the adults had gone to bed. She was never paid, she had to cook, sweep, wash dishes, wash clothes, fetch water and collect firewood, walking over five kilometres in the bush without even flip-flops to protect her feet from thorns. She was regularly beaten and neglected. According to the project co-ordinator, when she arrived at the centre, she had bruises and scars all over her body, a skin infection, was very thin and looked so old and worn out. Six neighbours had finally managed to bring Lawama to the centre, although the woman who she had been working for refused to admit any maltreatment or neglect. Lawama told me she liked going to school, and was now studying in the first class of primary school, and living with the project co-ordinator (fieldwork journal, 10/12/02).

While Lawama's case is extreme, it shows the hidden abuse and neglect that young girls often suffer as domestic workers, isolated within the homes of their employers. The UNICEF study found that adults in the community agreed that children are preferred for domestic labour because they are cheap, docile and powerless (UNICEF, 1999^a). Key factors identified as pushing girls into domestic work were poverty, overcrowded housing conditions, lack of access to education in rural areas, and a lack of alternative forms of employment for rural girls (ibid). Furthermore, the research found that not only are children exploited, but they are also stigmatised in their communities of origin by being associated with HIV infection, unmarried pregnancy and sex work when they return from towns and cities (ibid: 250). As the researchers note, in the face of physical, emotional and sexual abuse from employers, and working long hours for minimal financial reward, 'it is not surprising that [girls] run away from this exceptionally exploitative employment and prefer to be employed in more lucrative sex work, which is one of the few options available to them' (ibid). Commercial sex work will now be examined as a survival strategy for girls living on the street.

Commercial sex work

All of the project staff interviewed at UCSC, Theresa House and Rolling Stones Project thought that street girls were engaged in commercial sex work, although informal conversations with members of staff at other projects in Tanzania suggest that some boys are also involved in prostitution, particularly in big cities like Dar es Salaam. Upendo (aged 17), staying at Theresa House (a Roman Catholic project), seemed uncomfortable and ashamed talking about her former life on the streets, and had renewed her Christian faith since staying at the project. She thus seemed to have internalised the notion that her former life as a street girl was 'immoral'. In response to my question, *'When are you happiest?'*, she replied, *'I comfort myself with the scriptures'*, and in the group discussion, said that she liked *'knowing God'*. In response to my question, *'What was it like on the streets?'*, she said, *'Because I didn't know what was important, I saw it as good'*. She told of how she used to share accommodation in a guest house with other girls:

U: We used to live in a guest house. We used to stay two to a room, and other girls each had their own room. Every day we used to pay 3,000 Tsh. a day [equivalent to £3].

RE: Was it safe to leave your things in the guest house?

U: Yes, because once you've locked the door, you take the key to the guest house reception.

RE: Did you stay in one guest house for a long time, or did you change?

U: We stayed for a long time, then I went to the Tanzanite mines for three months.
When I came back, I didn't stay for long in the guest house, about one week, then I came here (Upendo, Theresa House, 20/5/00).

Farida, aged 18, was a young mother³, who I was introduced to by the other street girls in contact with the UCSC project. She was more open about her work:

RE: How did you get enough money to live on the streets?

F: I beg from people

RE: Is it enough to live on?

F: No, it's not enough.

RE: Did you work to get money?

F: I used to go round at night but I've stopped now.

RE: Did you used to get money?

F: Yes. But on other days you wouldn't get any. I used to walk around with other girls who come from their homes, we go round the bars and on the streets. The other girls go back to their homes.[...] The men used to take us and I would sleep with them, he gives me money for it and then I can live.[...]

RE: What difficulties/ problems do you experience on the streets?

F: There's nowhere to stay. You get real problems finding somewhere to sleep at night (Farida, UCSC shelter, 20/6/00).

³ Cited on pp.295-7.

Farida also seemed ashamed talking about her work as a prostitute and expressed a strong desire to find an alternative to working on the streets, suggesting that she had internalised the public perception that street girls were engaged in 'immoral' and 'deviant' behaviour. Upendo and Farida's accounts suggest that some young women are involved in sex work on a regular basis, soliciting around the centre of town and in bars, and the majority return home or to a guest house to sleep.

The younger girls involved in the study did not mention commercial sex work as a source of income in the discussion groups or interviews, although they stated that they were commonly called 'prostitutes' by people on the streets. It seems, however, that younger girls sleeping on the street engage in survival sex on a more casual, informal basis, in exchange for a minimal payment, clothing and other goods, or for protection (for example from night watchmen, or older street youths), combining it with other survival strategies, such as begging, stealing and periods of domestic work. This is supported by the findings of Rajani and Kudrati's study, which suggests that stereotypical prostitution probably accounts for less than five per cent of all potentially risky sexual encounters among street children in Mwanza (Rajani and Kudrati, 1996: 307). The researchers note that very few boys reported having engaged in this type of prostitution, and although it was reported more frequently among girls, it still constituted a relatively small percentage of their total sexual activity (less than 15 per cent) (ibid).

UNICEF points out that one of the problems in assessing the scope of child commercial sex work is the tendency to inflate the number of child sex workers by including women over the age of eighteen, who are also referred to as 'girls' (UNICEF, 1999^a: 280). The researchers note that young women over the age of eighteen who work as domestic workers

and as commercial sex workers are regarded by society as 'less than real adults', due to their low socio-economic status, which has implications for projects that work with commercial sex workers (ibid). The studies by UNICEF and Rajani and Kudrati both conclude that although child commercial sex work is a major issue of overt public concern, it is not a large-scale problem, and is not confined to urban areas. Rather, more casual commercial sexual transactions between adults and children were found to be more frequent, both in the street environment in large towns and cities, as well as in smaller towns and more rural areas (ibid; Rajani and Kudrati, 1996).

This also supports Ennew's perception of street children's involvement in sex work:

Sensational accounts of street children often state or imply that they are all involved in prostitution. The truth is less exciting and more sordid. Many children, both male and female, sell sex at some time during their lives on the streets, but they are not all prostitutes; many who are would rather not be and sell sex only as a last resort. Many others do not sell sex at all. However, street children are increasingly suffering from a further discrimination because of the spread of HIV infection amongst them. Sexually transmitted diseases are a common health hazard, not only because of prostitution, but also because of the sexual relationships many have with each other, which some experience as warm and caring. Far from being lucrative child sex is cheap. That is one of the most insufferable features of its essential tragedy. Children have no power to ask for a high fee from adult customers (Ennew, 1995: 206).

As noted in Chapter 6, male boyfriends and clients of sex workers often prefer younger women, girls and boys due to the belief that they are less likely to be infected with the HIV virus, but paradoxically young people are more biologically vulnerable to becoming infected and are more constrained in their ability to insist on safer sex due to their low social and economic status (Garcia-Moreno, 1991; UNICEF, 1999^a). The peer group culture of ‘risk-taking’ that exists in the street environment combined with the fact that street children have little awareness about their bodies and STDs due to a lack of education, have little access to health care, and often suffer from other sexually transmitted diseases which facilitate HIV infection, thus means that they are particularly vulnerable to HIV infection.

As Ennew points out, many street children may sell sex at some point during their lives on the streets, but not all are prostitutes (Ennew, 1995: 206). Thus, street girls are likely to engage in sexual relations with boyfriends, older street youths and men on the explicit understanding that they will receive money in return. After talking about her difficult friendship with Naemi, Amina (aged 14) suggested that Naemi was involved in such a relationship with an older youth. Amina talked about her girl friends forcing her to go round with them, and after the interview, talked more openly about how the girls recruit each other for sex work. She told me and another UCSC staff member that Naemi took Maua to men - older street youths – for sex and then took the money herself. She was quick to mention that she herself always ran away when she saw that Naemi wanted to take her to a man. She talked about them drinking *piwa* [illicit home brew] in the daytime, buying it from Halima’s mother at their place⁴ and stealing clothes from people’s houses.

⁴ See pp.169-171.

She complained that she and Maua were afraid of Naemi, and Naemi had tricked Maua into running away from the UCSC residential centre, because she wanted to go round the bars with her, to earn more money (fieldwork journal, 9/6/00).

When I talked to Amina again over two years later, she mentioned several fellow street girls and other young women who recruited her to engage in commercial sex work, as well as being recruited for domestic labour with her friends, while staying at the UCSC shelter:

A: I stayed with a brother at Blandina's place. Blandina said to me, go and collect money and take it to her. I stayed, then I said, living like this is bad, so I met up with Naemi.

RE: When you were at Blandina's, you used to work?

A: Yes, I used to work, fetch water, wash clothes, wash the dishes, and she told me to look for money. I used to go and collect money in the centre of town, when I came back, I gave her the money.

RE: Did you go round the bars?

A: I went to ask at people's places. Then I thought, living like this, and giving the money to that woman is bad, you just give her the money. So then I met Naemi, and we used to go and collect money, and gave it to a woman for safekeeping. She refused to pay me my money. When she let me down, I saw that I didn't even have anywhere to put my money, I didn't have anyone anymore who I could trust. Another woman came and took us to an elderly woman when we came to UCSC, this elderly woman appeared and said, 'let's go and live with me', she took me, Halima, Sophia, and Naemi, at first, but then she ran away, and Tausi, Blandina and Janet. So we went and stayed there, with Sophia's baby. Halima gave birth there.

RE: So the elderly woman spoke to UCSC about it, UCSC knew about it?

A: Yes, she said she wanted to take some children and will provide for their education. So we stayed there, but she didn't educate any of us. [...] We left the house, me, Halima and the others took their clothes, and went to their mothers. I came back to the *Wahaya's* place [tribe traditionally associated with prostitution] here in town. I stayed first with a sister called Fatima, she told me when you look for money, you collect it and bring it to me, and then we'll cook food and eat. I stayed there for a while, for about three months, then I saw it was very bad, it was like she was giving me a hard time, or sometimes she said her husband told her not to go round with me. I went to another girl's place. She wanted me to sleep with men and give her the money.

RE: She wanted to take the money?

A: Yes, she said to me, don't go to school, look for money and give it to me. You sleep right there, where they sell the local brew [strong, illicit cheap alcohol]. They sell everything there, even they sell their bodies there, and she wanted me to sell myself, so that I give her the money (Amina, UCSC shelter, 20/11/02).

Amina's account illustrates some of the key findings from an ILO Rapid Assessment of Children in Prostitution in Tanzania: there was child-to-child mobilisation and peer influence for those joining the prostitution business, and friends or young women act as pimps or middle persons to newly arrived younger girls (Kamala et al, 2001). Another key finding was the link between child domestic work and the risk of entering child prostitution, due to the exploitative and abusive working conditions of domestic workers, as detailed earlier in this chapter. The next section explores the situation of children working in the mines as a survival strategy.

Working in the mines

The ILO recently conducted a rapid assessment of child labour in mining, and found that children below the age of 18 were involved in different activities related to the sector, the majority aged 14-17 (Mwami et al., 2002). Boys represented 80 per cent of the study sample of children working in mining (ibid). Health related problems associated with mining included: air pollution, exposure to mercury in gold mining, unhealthy sanitary conditions, pulmonary problems and death which arises from major collapses of mine walls and roofs (Mwami et al, 2002:2). Indeed, the small-scale Tanzanite gemstone mines near Arusha were notoriously dangerous and remained uncontrolled for many years, resulting in smuggling and a lack of adherence to safety and security precautions. In July 2002, an underground suffocation accident at the Tanzanite mines near Arusha led to the death of 39 small-scale miners. The accident led to the temporary closure of 60 small-scale mines, pending an investigation and the implementation of new safety procedures, which unemployed miners responded to by looting the local town and demanding that the government reopen the mines (IRIN, July 2002; East African, July 2002).

While I was working at the UCSC project, I got to know several boys who worked at the Tanzanite mines near Arusha. When Joseph (aged 11), Abubakari (14 yrs) and Mahmed (aged 15) were relaxing at the UCSC shelter having returned from the mines, they explained the kind of work they did: collecting sand from the pit once the rock had been dynamited, carrying minerals out to ground level, carrying food and water, and messages down to the miners, and sifting gravel outside for small gems. They worked shifts through the night, or during the day, and slept outside on the ground, where they set up camp. They

were not paid, but they often found small gems, which they sold to people from the village who came to the site and bought the clear rough gems [which become the blue Tanzanite gem] and 'mfupa' stones, the colour of bone. They said that they could usually earn at least 1-2,000 Tsh. a day by selling small stones [equivalent to £1-2] (Joseph et al., UCSC shelter, 3/4/00). Halima and the other girls told me that Christian, Amon and James were still working in the mines, after leaving the UCSC shelter for the mines in August 1999. Christian came to the UCSC shelter every few months after working in the mines for a short period, for some food, to sleep, and for medical treatment if he was ill. I noted in my fieldwork diary, on one occasion, he told me that Amon had made 100,000 Tsh. (equivalent to £100) in the mines and had gone home to Singida (fieldwork diary, 19/3/00)

Older street boys working in the mines thus earned a higher cash income than any of the other employment opportunities or survival strategies pursued by the other boys in town, although the work was heavy, highly dangerous and associated with several health risks. ILO reports on child labour in Tanzania suggest that as well as being exposed to the environmental hazards in the mining sites, children are subjected to sexual abuse and hence are particularly vulnerable to HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases (ILO, 1998^a: 6). As Amina and Upendo's accounts show⁵, street girls are also attracted to the mining areas for commercial sex work and domestic work, and therefore represent another group at risk of HIV infection.

During my later period of fieldwork, I managed to gain access to visit the small-scale mines at Mererani, through a key gatekeeper, the co-ordinator of a small non-governmental

⁵ Cited on p.321 and p.325.

project which had recently been set up to provide educational opportunities for children working in the mines. We arranged a car to take us from the nearby town out into the bush where the mining camps had been set up. She warned me that it was too dangerous for me to get out of the vehicle until we had entered the gates of one of the camps, because the miners were aggressive and hostile towards white people generally as a result of long-standing clashes with foreign mining companies which were buying out many small-scale miners. After the woman negotiated our way into one of the camps, giving small bribes to various people to let us in, they explained the mining process, drilling and then laying explosives to break up the rock, and then digging for clear lumps of Tanzanite using manual tools. Some of the boys we saw sifting stones in the main market area came into the camp with us, and said that they had all climbed down the ladder to the pit, with a torch strapped to their head, without a helmet, carrying water etc. to the miners, although they were not really allowed into the pit by law. I recognised one of the boys, Joshua, as a street child who I had known at the UCSC shelter and in town. He had been working there for about four months. He explained to me that some days, the boys could earn 1,000 Tsh. by sifting small stones, if they were lucky [equivalent to £0.90], which wasn't enough to pay for food, and they had to rely on others to help them out. Joshua said that the 'nyoka' [literally 'snakes' – nickname for children who work in the mines] only suffer there, because even if you do find a large gemstone, the older youths pin you down, and beat you until they can grab it from you, or if you have money, they force you to hand it over to them (fieldwork journal, 10/12/02).

At the local project working with children who had been working in the mines, I met several more boys who were now studying at primary school. They told me that they used to sometimes make as much as 10 - 15,000 Tsh. [equivalent to £9-14] for the stones that

they sifted in town at the market. Project staff told me that many children are exploited as commercial sex workers at the market, because of the lifestyle of small-scale miners, who suddenly make a lot of money on the cash sale of a gemstone and throw their money around. The risk of becoming infected with HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases for children and adults in mining areas is therefore particularly high.

One boy at the centre told me that one day he had made 15,000 Tsh. from selling small gemstones. He took half of it home to his parents, and used the other half to buy himself food and clothes. Another boy said that he would take any amount from 3-10,000 Tsh. home to his parents in Mererani. He had dropped out of school in the second year of primary school, and when I asked if his parents could use the money to send him to school, he replied that the money he brought home was just used for food. One of the boys, Samuel, aged 13, who had come back with us to the town in the vehicle from the mining site, was studying in Standard 6 of primary school. He had run away from home to the mines as soon as school closed for the holidays, and for the past two years had spent all his school vacations working in the mines, to earn enough money to buy himself clothes. Another small boy, Rajabu, who also accompanied us to the NGO project from the mining site, told me that he wanted to go home and go to school, but both his parents had died last year, leaving him with his grandparents, who did not have any money to send him to school. After spending a year on the streets in Arusha, he had come to the mines to earn some money. He was visibly upset telling me his story, but project staff managed to persuade him to stay with the other boys at the project and attend school there (fieldwork journal, 10/12/02).

The stories of Samuel, Rajabu and the other boys at the NGO centre, illustrate some of the findings of the ILO rapid assessment of child labour in the mining sector in Tanzania: that the key factor leading children to involve themselves in child labour was the family's inability to provide basic needs for their children – children had to either drop out of school due to lack of funds to support their education or had to work part-time to meet their educational expenses (Mwami et al, 2002: x). Children also had to work to support their families, and parents were noted to highly value their contributions (ibid). Related to this, is the fact that researchers observed the highest number of children involved in the mining sector during the school vacations and the lowest during the school terms (ibid).

Ennew notes that since all street children work for survival, they are clearly at risk of economic exploitation, and comments that 'child labour laws are seldom implemented and may even work to the detriment of child workers by expelling them from the formal labour market and obliging them to seek an income in casual, poorly paid, exploitative and hazardous activities' (Ennew, 1995: 205). When I interviewed the Community Development Officer for the Arusha Municipality, she confirmed that a new country-wide ILO initiative on child labour had recently been launched in the district. The priorities for the Arusha programme were: prostitution, domestic workers, mining and commercial agricultural workers. The four year programme comprised a baseline survey, capacity and awareness raising, and activities concerned with legal and social policy, micro-economic employment and poverty, withdrawal of children and the provision of transitional school and other services, provision of marketable pre-vocational school development for older children, economic empowerment of families and relatives, community mobilisation (Community Development Officer, Arusha, 15/11/02). While the non-governmental organisation working with children who had worked in the mines in Mererani did provide

valuable educational opportunities for some young people previously involved in child labour, the project was very small-scale, severely under-funded, lacked sustainability, and relied on a few key staff volunteers to keep it going. When I visited, there were not enough blankets or beds for the ten boys to sleep on, and some had to sleep on the floor (fieldwork journal, 10/12/02). Furthermore, as Ennew notes education alone cannot eliminate child labour unless children are freed from the necessity of working to survive, and 'more children would attend schools if the education was relevant to their lives, experiences and aspirations' (Ennew, 1995: 205). This raises several issues about education and street children projects, which will be taken up in greater detail in the next chapter.

Children's survival strategies and employment opportunities in urban areas in relation to earning money and goods have been discussed and identified as begging, petty theft, casual work in the informal sector, domestic work (mainly girls), commercial sex work (mainly girls), working in the mines (boys). These strategies were shown to give young people a sense of self-esteem and independence in being able to support themselves (and often their families), although they received minimal payments, and had little or no protection from exploitation and physical, verbal and sexual abuse. The next section explores children's coping mechanisms and social networks within the street environment, in relation to meeting their needs for shelter, health, protection, emotional support, advice, recreation and entertainment.

Coping mechanisms and support networks

In order to gain an insight into the kind of support systems children employed to cope independently on the street, I asked a series of questions in individual interviews with the

children, such as who or where they would go if they were ill, to play, to relax, to share a secret, if they got bad news, if they felt sad, if they were beaten by their peers, if they were beaten by an adult, for advice and to look after their money and personal belongings.

In response to all but two of the ten questions, almost half of the children consistently replied there was no one/ nowhere to turn to for emotional support, or advice within the street environment, suggesting a high level of self-reliance. A significant proportion of the children did however mention friends, that is, fellow street children, as a source of emotional support, and their peers played a particularly important role, not surprisingly, in meeting their needs for recreation and relaxation. In response to the question about where they would go to relax, children mentioned a range of open spaces and places in town where they felt it was safe to relax and rest. Children also gave a variety of responses to the question about who/ where they would go to look after their money and things, with the majority leaving their money and personal belongings with a trusted adult, often a shopkeeper, in town, while several said that they hid their money themselves, often by digging a hole for it. Friendly adults within the street environment could sometimes offer advice and sympathy if street children were beaten up, while others said that they would report it to the police. In response to the question, '*Who would you go to/ where would you go if you got bad news?*', several street children said that they would go home, suggesting that some street children maintain some tenuous links with their families whilst living on the street. As discussed in Chapter 1, Glauser suggests that the severing of familial ties and separation from the family home is a gradual process which occurs over time: a series of extended periods away from home culminates in the child moving away from the

companionship and care of the family, and opting to live on the street along with other children (Glauser, 1997: 160)⁶.

The responses to the questions about street children's coping mechanisms, thus, seem to indicate, on the one hand, a sense of solidarity among their peers, but on the other hand, an overwhelming sense of solitude, isolation and loneliness on the street, where many children reminded me that it was '*each one for themselves*'. Thus, as Hecht found amongst the street children of Northeast Brazil, 'street life is marked by both wrenching solitude and intense solidarity', as can be seen in the children's interviews (Hecht, 1998: 46). Nixon's responses indicate a high level of self-reliance, solitude and distrust of others:

RE: Who would you go to/ where would you go if you get bad news?

N: I didn't used to have anyone to tell because there it's everyone for themselves.[...]

RE: Who would you go to if you were sad?

N: There's no one.

RE: Who would you go to if you were beaten by your mates?

N: I didn't used to have anyone to tell, instead I managed by myself.

RE: Who would you go to if you were beaten by an adult?

N: I would even go to report it to the police, but if I return, I won't find him again, so I would just cope myself.

RE: Who would you go to for advice?

N: I didn't have anyone to advise me (Nixon, UCSC residential centre, 16/7/00).

⁶ See p. 19-20.

Similarly, Amina felt there were few avenues for emotional support on the street:

RE: Who would you go to / where would you go if you get bad news?

A: There's no one, you leave it as it is. Because there's no one to tell.

RE: Who would you go to / where would you go if you are beaten by your mates?

A: There's no one. For example, if a child hits me, and there's an adult there, you can tell him, 'Mister, he's hitting me' and he would listen to me carefully, he could say, 'don't quarrel'.

RE: Who would you go to if you are beaten by an adult?

A: There's no one, if you are beaten by a grown-up, can you tell a child? No, I couldn't tell any of my age-mates, won't she be beaten just like me? [...] (Amina, UCSC shelter, 9/6/00).

Michael suggested that his peers or a nearby adult might offer some kind of emotional support:

RE: Who would you go to / where would you go if you are sad?

M: If you're sad in town, you'd tell your mates who you know, perhaps they'd help you. If they don't help you, you just stay like that.

RE: Who would you go to / where would you go if you are hit by your age-mates?

M: If you're beaten in town? You shut up because there's not even anyone to tell, there's no one you know, you just shut your mouth.

RE: Who would you go to / where would you go if you are beaten by an adult?

M: On the streets? They beat you, you shut up, they beat you up, then they leave you, I cry and cry and they leave and leave you like that.

RE: You can't tell anyone?

M: No, perhaps if you meet someone who's kind, like another adult, a father with a kind heart, he'd tell them, 'leave him alone', then maybe they'll leave you alone.

RE: Who would you go to for advice?

M: You and your mates advice each other. Perhaps you're told and it's not good advice, they tell you, 'Let's go and smoke marijuana', or sniff glue, that's the kind of advice you get, perhaps they trick you into going to smoke. There's a gang of smokers, they're ruining themselves, they become used to it.

RE: Do you like them, or are you afraid of them too?

M: No, I like them. If they tell me, let's smoke marijuana, I tell them I don't smoke, I trick them by saying my chest hurts, and they leave me alone (Michael, UCSC shelter, 22/6/00).

Michael reveals his own individual coping strategies here, managing to resist peer pressure to use drugs, without being rejected by his friends, since he still valued their company and support. Juma also reveals contradictory feelings towards his peers:

RE: Who would you go to if you get bad news?

J: In town if you get good or bad news it's all the same, because your mate who you sleep next to somewhere, you can wake up in the morning and say to him, 'let's go', and you find he's already dead. I have seen a mate of mine die and not just once, several times.[...]

RE: Who would you go to if you were sad?

J: In town, it's everyone for themselves, when it's time to go to sleep, then you gather round, you talk, maybe play cards, then you go to sleep inside sacks. [...]

RE: Who would you go to if you are beaten by your age-mates?

J: On the streets, if you are beaten up you shut up, but if you are able to, you beat him yourself. If you can't, you go and wait for someone else you can beat, and you beat him, you get revenge. For example, you demand your money which you lent to a mate, if he doesn't have any, you beat him up because you were beaten up.

RE: Who would you go to/ where would you go if you are beaten by an adult?

J: If it's on the streets, there's nowhere to go to report and if you go to the police to report, you'll be told, 'You're a *kapurwa*, [street kid – insulting] get lost!' [...]

RE: Who would you go to for advice?

J: If you're on the streets, it's not easy to get advice, but if you have a friend, he can tell you, let's go UCSC and stay because people help us there, but other advice you get is not real advice. And you can get bad advice, for example, he tells you, 'Let's go and smoke marijuana', and if you refuse, you quarrel (Juma, UCSC shelter, 20/4/00).

Juma's responses indicate that he enjoyed the friendship and camaraderie of his peers, but had suffered the loss of friends on the streets, and thus was aware that he had to look out for himself to survive.

Simon and Luka, who were living on the street at the time of the interview showed considerable self-reliance and had developed supportive relationships with others on the street:

RE: Where would you go to play?

- S: Here on the streets, I don't go anywhere to play. We often play football, but we don't have a proper football field to play on. Sometimes we play catch by throwing something around or we play football.
- RE: Where would you go to relax/ rest?
- S: We go to say the river, or to the small playing field, yes, it's better to relax.
- RE: Who would you go to, to share a secret?
- S: I don't tell anyone my secret. No, no one. I have a friend called Fredi, he's not around at the moment, I said to him, let's come here and he said, he's going to wear his shoes first. He's here in town, we were here together up 'til now, but he's not around here anymore.
- RE: Who would you go to if you get bad news?
- S: I would go to report it to the police, at the central police station, and they would put me on a bus and I'd go home.
- RE: Who would you go to if you are sad?
- S: I'd go to my mates.
- RE: Where would you go/ who would you go to if you are hit by your mates?
- S: I would just sit by myself, that's all.
- RE: Is there a grown up you could tell?
- S: Yes, there is, anyone who is older than me, you could tell him/her to help me.
- RE: Who would you go to/ where would you go if you are beaten by an adult?
- S: I would just go to report him/her. I would report him/her to the police. They would help me because they follow the law.
- RE: Who would you go to for advice?
- S: I would go to any night watchman to get advice. For example, if my brother is not far away, I would go to get advice.

RE: Does he live near here?

S: No, there, I'm at a loss (Simon, street, 11/6/00).

Simon's faith in the police as a source of support contrasted with many of the children's complaints of police harassment. Indeed, several children mentioned turning to the police as a coping mechanism if they received bad news, if they were beaten by their peers or by an adult, or even for advice. This suggests that although some street children suffered from police violence, many still viewed the police as a source of protection, having been strongly socialised to value the role of the police in upholding law and order in society. This supports the findings of Swart's study of street children in Johannesburg (1989) that the children shared the values of the wider society, as Bourdillon comments: 'The boys criticised violence (including violence by the police, particularly against street children) but still had nothing against the police as such, whom some represented as providing an admirable service to the community' (Bourdillon, 1994: 524).

Luka (aged 11) demonstrated resiliency and self-reliance in his responses:

RE: Who would you go to/ where would you go to play?

L: I play with my mates.

RE: Where would you go to relax/ rest?

L: I rest over there on that big building, there are big mattresses, if you are sleepy in the afternoon, you can sleep there.

RE: Who would you go to, to share a secret?

L: Our teacher who teaches us, over there, you can tell him.

RE: Where would you go if you get bad news?

- L: I would just go and get on a bus and go home.
- RE: And if you don't have the bus fare?
- L: I ask for a lift.
- RE: Who would you go to/ where would you go if you are sad?
- L: I sit like this until the feeling disappears.
- RE: Who would you go to if you are beaten by the other kids?
- L: If I can't beat him, I hit him with stones.
- RE: Even if he's very big?
- L: I might tell a policeman.
- RE: Who would you go to for advice?
- L: If there's somewhere I want to go, I go on my own. I don't have anyone to tell, and if there's something I want to do, I do it on my own, I don't tell anyone (Luka, street, 11/6/00).

Luka's words illustrate the freedom and independence some street children enjoy on the street. Children's coping mechanisms in relation to shelter and protection, in accessing health care and in meeting their recreational needs will now be examined in greater detail.

Shelter and protection

As has already been mentioned, children cited lack of shelter and sexual abuse as major difficulties of living on the street. Most of the young participants (girls and boys) said that they slept in separate gender groups on the pavement under overhanging shop fronts, or at the bus stand. However, as Hecht noted in Brazil, despite being found in groups, the street children in Arusha rarely formed organised, stable gangs, with the exception of Lucy and

her gang⁷ (Hecht, 1998: 45). As mentioned earlier, the children often commented that a Darwinian philosophy of ‘survival of the fittest’, or as they put it, ‘*each for themselves*’ ruled on the street. Some of the boys said that they slept in the gutters, or in the bushes, while one of the boys adopted his own individual strategy, asking to sleep inside people’s houses. Many of the boys mentioned a relatively stable attachment to territories, where they regularly slept, under the protection of a night watchman, as I found when I conducted the group discussion and interviews with the boys on the street:

We saw Abu, Pendaeli and about four other kids who have been in and out of the UCSC shelter. They were pleased to see us, and it was convenient to chat to them there, on the pavement where they sleep. They introduced us to their mwalimu [teacher], a night watchman who teaches them maths, Kiswahili and English in the evenings. They explained that many children come in the evenings and the watchman’s Indian boss provides exercise books and pencils, and blankets for them at night (fieldwork journal, 8/5/00).

The supportive relationship that the boys had developed with ‘their’ night watchman even extended to the provision of blankets and ad hoc night classes on the street, enabling them to gain some basic education on their own terms. In his interview, Luka (aged 11) confirmed that the watchman offered them protection:

RE: At night, you’re not scared of being harassed by the other kids?

L: No, because we sleep near the night watchman over there (Luka, street, 11/6/00).

⁷ Cited on p.314-315.

Similarly, Juma (aged 14) mentioned another friendly night watchman in the centre of town who offered protection to many 'street children':

RE: Who would you go to, to look after your money and things?

J: There's an *mzee* [elder, older man] called Babu Mario, at Twiga Safaris. He looks after our money and clothes. He's a very good man and he gives us a place to sleep outside, because he's a night watchman. Lots of children keep their things there (Juma, UCSC shelter, 20/4/00).

Indeed, the majority of the participants said that they developed a relationship of trust with a night watchman, shopkeeper or other adult nearby who would look after their money or belongings. One of the girls seemed to trust other women with her belongings more than men: '*When I'm on the streets, I keep my things at a shop where the shopkeeper is a girl or woman.*' (Blandina, Theresa House, 20/5/00). The girls did not mention receiving any kind of protection from night watchmen, as the boys did, and indeed, in the discussions, one group of boys suggested that street girls exchanged sexual favours with the night watchmen for money. As noted earlier in Chapter 7, Naemi suggested that the police offered street girls some protection from sexual abuse at night⁸. Lucy entrusted her clothes to girls working as prostitutes, but she and her gang dug a hole to hide their money. A few of the boys also mentioned hiding their money by digging a hole, to stop it being snatched from them by older street boys.

Street children thus developed relationships of trust with shopkeepers, night watchmen

⁸ See p.283.

(boys), and other adults within the street environment to keep their few belongings safe.

One of the boys even mentioned having forgotten about some money he had entrusted to a shopkeeper nine years earlier, which the shopkeeper duly returned to him. Juma, aged 16, had lived on the streets for several years previously and was studying at the UCSC shelter at the time of the interview:

RE: Where did you get the money [for your circumcision operation]?

J: That money I had right from the start, from 1993, right from before we went to Malawi. 20,000 Tsh. [roughly equivalent to £18]. We left it at someone's shop, they looked after it for us. Only the other day, I remembered, I had completely forgotten about it. Then I saw the person from the shop and he said come and get it, so I went to collect it (Juma, UCSC shelter 4/12/02).

This illustrates the trusting relationships street children are able to develop with adults in the community. However, on several occasions, I noted in my fieldwork journal, that boys I knew had gone to collect their money from the man they had left it with, but had returned empty-handed, only to try again another day, and thus were vulnerable to exploitation.

Access to health care

The unhygienic living conditions on the street pose several health risks to street children. According to members of staff at the UCSC centres and my own observations over the year I worked with the UCSC project, the main health risks to street children include sexually transmitted diseases, particularly gonorrhoea, syphilis and HIV (although none of the children had been tested for HIV); worms, diarrhoea, typhoid and other stomach problems

caused by unclean drinking water or eating rotten or unclean food, for example, found on rubbish dumps or the leftovers from hotels, combined with a lack of hygienic toilet facilities; sleeping outside made children susceptible to chest infections, pneumonia, malaria, skin diseases such as measles, scabies and fungal infections; burns, bottle and knife cuts and other wounds and broken bones, caused by fights or accidents, which were prone to infection and tetanus and often slow to heal; and general weakness and stunted growth (affecting younger children) due to vitamin deficiencies and damage to the brain caused by prolonged drug use, particularly glue and petrol sniffing, and pregnancy and unsafe abortions affecting girls (UCSC shelter, 28/1/01; UCSC residential centre, 16/1/01).

In view of these health risks, it is therefore not surprising that children identified their lack of access to health care as a major problem of life on the street. They associated their lack of access to health care with their inability to pay for medical treatment, demonstrating that the so-called 'cost-sharing measures' in the Tanzanian public health service, introduced as part of the IMF's structural adjustment policies, have devastating consequences for the poorest people at the grass-roots level⁹. Ennew however suggests that street children's difficulty in accessing medical care may also be associated with their appearance and the stigma surrounding their existence, which can mean that they are chased away from hospitals and clinics (Ennew, 1995:205). In response to the question, '*Who would you go to / where would you go, if you are ill?*', a significant proportion of the street children participating in the study said that there was no one / nowhere to go, while several said they would go to the hospital and a few mentioned a street children project. Some children felt that the hospital might treat them, even though they were unable to pay for their treatment:

⁹ Discussed on p.41-5.

'I'd go, I'd ask the hospital to treat me, if they refused, too bad.' (Naemi, UCSC shelter, 16/6/00).

L: [I'd go] to hospital, they help me for free.

RE: Is there any grown up here in the streets you can tell if you are ill?

L: No, I just run straight to the hospital (Luka, street, 11/6/00).

'It's hard to live on the streets because another street kid could melt nylon bags in a tin, and then burn you with it on your face. Or another drops a big stone on you and you break your leg. To get medicine, we go to Majengo hospital or Makau hospital, and we get free treatment. Or you come to UCSC and the teacher takes you to hospital' (Juma, UCSC shelter, 20/4/00).

UNICEF researchers noted that evidence about the needs of street girls suggests that they suffer from a lack of access to health care relative to boys, either because projects have concentrated on the larger proportion of boys on the street, or because of a greater lack of confidence in seeking and obtaining health care (UNICEF, 1999^a: 282). Amina, a fourteen year old girl, felt that there was no point going to the hospital since she would be refused treatment:

'I couldn't go to anyone. There's no one. You can go [to the hospital] but they would say "Pay the money first", or maybe you're seriously ill and they tell you, "you should be admitted", when you've got no money for the bed'. (Amina, UCSC shelter, 9/6/00).

During my later period of fieldwork, I learned from the nurse at the UCSC centre that Amina had come to the project when she was very ill, and Naemi, her friend, told the nurse that she had had an abortion and had got an infection, which had made her lose a lot of weight and become very weak (fieldwork journal, 25/10/02). When I talked to Amina about this, she revealed a lack of awareness about her body and about what had happened to her:

RE: The nurse told me that you were very ill, I don't know, you were pregnant and had an abortion, or isn't that right?

A: No, it's a lie. Really, I don't know if I was pregnant, I don't know how it happened, I don't even understand, even now. I ask myself.

RE: Did you take some medicine to prevent having a baby or?

A: No, I didn't take any medicine, I was feeling the same as the symptoms they said. I didn't know how a baby happens. Even now, I don't know. I remember I didn't know if I was pregnant. I was taken to hospital by Blandina's mother, I was told I was pregnant, but I didn't try to do anything, I said to hell, even if I'm pregnant, it's better not to do anything, I didn't try to do anything. But I was surprised, I just saw that on my period, I didn't see anything, I didn't know what it was, I can't understand it.[...]

RE: But you were ill?

A: I just had stomach ache, I remember. And there was a time when I became very thin. At the time when they said she's had an abortion, they said maybe I was a virgin and I slept with a man. But I'm sure that I never did anything. I was just surprised how it happened, I don't know what happened, I don't understand.

RE: And so they gave you some medicine then?

A: I used to go round with Naemi, we used to go and collect money at that time. I remember we went to beg at a certain place together, I was given Mase [a type of cough medicine], I was coughing a lot. She bought me some of that stuff, I can't remember what it's called. I took it and some tablets. Then I came here and they were surprised at me, they said to me you had an abortion? Tell us what happened. But I didn't know, I didn't know how it was aborted, because really at that time I was very young, even how to abort a pregnancy I don't understand. I was just surprised it came out. I don't know how it came out.

RE: Then you stayed at the shelter until you were better?

A: No, I didn't stay at the shelter again. At the time, I just stayed in a place with Maua, I was just ill, and I was treated.

RE: And since then you've been fine?

A: Yes, I recovered, they said perhaps the baby will die, because it's health was bad then, I carried on like that, I went to live with Halima, I went to that grandmother, and stayed there, and I recovered slowly. Because I didn't understand it.

RE: And now there's not problem anymore?

A: No, but even now, I ask myself what happened, I don't understand, I didn't use anything. Some said, Amina, did you have an abortion? Sometimes, I lie that I wasn't pregnant, I used to hear them, but I didn't know for sure if I was pregnant, but I didn't see for almost three months, then they said perhaps I was pregnant, and I went with Blandina's mum to be tested and they said it was true (Amina, UCSC shelter, 20/11/02).

Amina's confusion about what had happened to her reveals a sense of powerlessness and lack of control over her body. It also suggests that street girls internalised negative perceptions about their sexuality, which were dominant in the wider community.

As Rajani and Kudrati note, from their experience with street girls in Mwanza:

Girls may pursue sex in a cynical and calculated attempt to gain resources while continuing to think that the sexual experience needs to be 'something special'. This confusion often leaves them paralysed, their ability to seek and create healthy options seriously undermined. One particularly disturbing effect seems to be a complete numbing out – separating one's mind from one's body, and being incapable of refusing sexual advances and the abuse of one's body. Many street girls in Mwanza find it difficult to even conceptualise a desire to care for themselves. (Rajani and Kudrati, 1996: 314)

Amina's account differed greatly from the attitude of the UCSC nurse who suggested that Amina had been advised of how to abort the pregnancy by older women she was staying with, for example, by using traditional medicine, or swallowing chloroquine tablets [strong medicine used to treat malaria]. These methods were dangerous, and overdoses could cause further health complications. Although some hospitals did perform abortions illegally, they demanded high fees for the procedure, making this option beyond the reach of most street girls (fieldwork journal, 25/10/02). The stigma attached to young girls engaging in sexual relationships, becoming pregnant and the illegality of abortion prevented young women living on the street, like Amina, from accessing safe reproductive health advice and treatment, or seeking help from street children projects.

Some of the street children mentioned relying on the UCSC project for medical care: *'I don't have anyone I depend on other than UCSC'* (Juma, UCSC shelter, 20/4/00); *'I would come here to UCSC for help. Mama is at home, but she doesn't have the means to help'* (Halima, UCSC shelter, 16/6/00). Many of the children I knew on the street had come to the UCSC shelter for a short period to recover from a wound or illness, and left when they had recovered. I asked Luka about his stay at the UCSC shelter:

RE: Why don't you want to stay at UCSC?

L: Because if you stay there, you get a longing to come to town. But I went to wash myself and my clothes and eat, then we come back.

RE: How did UCSC help you, the time you stayed there?

L: I went when I was ill, I was cut by a bottle, the nurse treated me until I got better. When I was better, I stayed for about two weeks and came into town.

RE: Why didn't you want to stay any longer? Do you think it's better here in town?

L: Yes (Luka, street, 11/6/00).

This illustrates the point raised in the literature on street children projects, that children may not engage with the longer term project aims of education, 'rehabilitation' and removal from the street environment, but rather incorporate projects into their network of places to rest, wash their clothes, eat and receive medical treatment (Green, 1998; Hecht, 1998)¹⁰. The language used here by Luka to describe his desire to return to the streets – 'a longing' to go back - reveals how children are attracted to the thrill of 'deviating' from the norm and enjoying the freedom of life on the streets. In some cases, such as Luka's, this may be

¹⁰ Discussed on pp.25-6.

linked to a physical addiction to drugs, a need which is not satisfied or adequately dealt with at most street children projects.

Upendo and Nixon suggested their own strategies for accessing health care: 'When I was on the streets, I used to go to hospital because we used to live together as friends but I paid' (Upendo, Theresa House, 20/5/00); 'I didn't have anyone to help me, perhaps I would go to beg for help' (Nixon, UCSC residential centre, 16/7/00).

The children's responses suggest that there were some options open to them to seek assistance if they became ill or injured on the street, although the street environment was not conducive to a speedy recovery. The last section discusses children's strategies for meeting their recreational needs on the street.

Recreation, entertainment and relaxation

As has been noted earlier, children enjoyed being able to go wherever they wanted around town, in the company of their peers, without adult restrictions on their movements or activities. The majority of the young people mentioned different places where they could relax in town, such as by the river, on the grass outside the hospital, near where they slept at night, in a small park, where the boys played football, going to bars to watch television and films, and in response to the question, '*Who would you go to/ where would you go to play?*', over half of the children cited their friends, that is, fellow street children. Boys could often be observed catching rides on the back of buses and cars around town, which often resulted in accidents (as discussed in the previous chapter). Similarly, smoking cigarettes and marijuana, drinking alcohol and getting high on glue with their friends

represented a cheap form of relaxation and entertainment, helping street children to forget the hardships of life on the streets and dispel feelings of boredom. However, the boys were aware that such behaviour was considered 'deviant' and usually hid their bottles of glue down their sleeves to avoid confiscation or harassment from the police or members of the public. As Hill and Tisdall note, young people, especially those who are homeless, are often depicted as risk-takers, engaging in activities which have a high risk for negative outcomes, such as drug-taking etc. (Hill and Tisdall, 1997: 149). However, young people's perceptions often differ to adult's concerns about risk-taking behaviour:

Young people are often well aware of the risks they take – indeed that can be part of the attraction. Actions which adults perceive as health threatening can appear pleasurable or stress-reducing to young people. They perceive any risks as small, not applicable to themselves or so far in the future as not worth worrying about. Often the short-term risk for any individual is low, whilst rational choice may be submerged by social and emotional considerations (ibid: 150).

My observations of the street children who had lived on the street for some time, who did not want to stay at the UCSC shelter for any length of time and did not engage with the more longer term project aims of education, training or family reunification, supported this notion of young people living in a culture of 'risk-taking', surviving on a day to day basis. On one occasion at the UCSC shelter, I noted that a group of about ten of these street boys were dropped off at the shelter by a member of the public, driving a pickup van:

The boys defiantly told us that the 'rasta guy', who gave them a lift, lived near the lake a few kilometres outside of town and had taken them all on an outing, bought them food and

a soda at the lake, where they had gone swimming, and then gave them a lift back to town. They said that he often took them to the lake to relax. They soon left for town, after stealing a couple of the other children's (staying at the UCSC shelter) baseball caps. (fieldwork journal, 15/3/00)

This incident clearly demonstrates street boys's independence and enjoyment of their freedom and lack of responsibilities, negotiating and developing social contact with members of the public, not just to secure their basic needs, but also for entertainment and recreational purposes. Street girls, however, did not seem to enjoy so many opportunities for recreation and entertainment within the street environment as boys, which is linked to the greater stigma surrounding their presence on the street, as Amina shows:

RE: Who would you go to/ where would you go to play?

A: There's no one, because if you are on your own, who would you play with? Even with my friends, where would you play? There are cars here and there, and in town, there's nowhere to relax, you just wander around [...]. (Amina, UCSC shelter, 9/6/00)

Indeed, as mentioned in Chapter 7, Sophia's (aged 17) drawing of herself on the streets depicts a scene showing herself and two girl friends skipping with a skipping rope, with the words, '*We were playing and people came and beat us*', suggesting that street girls find it difficult to escape verbal and physical abuse even when they are playing, which is likely to have a detrimental effect on their self-perceptions.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the employment opportunities, survival strategies and coping mechanisms, both materially and emotionally, that children adopt to survive independently on the streets of Arusha, Tanzania. Due to public attitudes and gender 'norms', boys' presence on the street was more accepted and they were more able to survive by begging and doing casual work in the informal sector, with some boys working long hours in hazardous conditions in the mining industry. The employment opportunities available to girls and young women were more limited than for boys, due to the subversive nature of girls' presence on the street. While some girls engaged in small business activities or theft, most of the street girls were employed as domestic workers within people's homes, where they were often subject to exploitation, harassment and physical or sexual abuse, engaged in sexual relationships with older men or youths in exchange for resources, or were involved in commercial sex work. Thus, society sanctions street girls' behaviour, and attempts to reassert hegemonic power regimes and gender norms, by characterising them predominantly in terms of reproductive duties within the home, or as sexual beings (Butler, 1993). This had negative impacts on girls' self-perceptions, and on their ability to seek safe reproductive health advice and to protect themselves from abusive situations.

Public perceptions linked to children's age and stereotypes about 'deviant' street youths made begging a less reliable survival strategy for more physically mature street children, forcing older girls and boys to engage in more 'deviant' activities, such as commercial sex work and theft. While street children who engaged in these activities condemned them as morally 'bad', they also enjoyed the excitement and thrill of danger, and freedom of life on the streets (as discussed in the previous chapter). By defiantly rebelling against the 'norms'

of adult society, they were inverting the usual adult-child hierarchy, showing their agency in non-conformity. In so doing, they conceptualised 'deviancy' in a positive light, rather than negatively, as a stigma.

Street children were shown to develop fairly stable attachments to territories and solidarity amongst one another (generally in separate gender groups), as a form of protection and comfort. They developed networks of social contacts within their surrounding environment and community to meet their needs for food, clothing, medical treatment, protection, education and entertainment. The children's responses suggested, however, that these social networks did not meet their emotional needs for support, counselling and advice, resulting in a high level of self-reliance, solitude and distrust of others. This illustrates the paradoxes and contrasts of children's experiences of life on the streets, discussed in the previous chapter. The next chapter takes up many of the issues raised in this chapter, identifying the needs, priorities and aspirations of girls and boys living on the street. In the light of the previous chapters, I will offer some policy recommendations for gender-aware, child-focused development planning.

Chapter 9



Photograph 18: Former street boys showing their homemade cars made from recycled waste at the street children project (Arusha, 2002).

Responding to the Experiences of Children and Young People

Chapter 9

Responding to the experiences of children and young people

Introduction

The previous chapters adopted a child-focused approach to analyse the experiences of children and families affected by AIDS, and street children in the home environment and on the streets. Children were shown to be active participants in the construction of their social worlds, within the constraints and possibilities of the social institution of childhood, the socio-economic situation and levels of national poverty in Tanzania. This chapter attempts to respond to children and young people's experiences, by integrating concepts of children's 'rights' and 'needs' with Moser's framework of 'practical' and 'strategic' gender interests and needs (Moser, 1989). Following the theoretical discussion, empirical data of the children's perceptions of their needs, priorities and aspirations will be compared with project workers' views of the needs of street children. I will discuss how street children's differing life-course trajectories reflect their different attitudes towards street children projects set up for their benefit. In the light of the previous chapters, which highlighted the importance of children's agency and participation, the level of children's participation in street children projects in Arusha will be analysed, as well as children and young people's participation in decision-making processes at the regional and national level. I will explore project workers' suggestions for legal and social policy reform, and discuss ways to redress the structural inequalities and power imbalances facing young people within the family and wider community.

Concept of 'rights' and 'needs'

Before discussing the perceived needs and interests of street children and other children in difficult circumstances, it seemed pertinent to examine the concepts of 'rights' and 'needs' in greater detail. As was discussed in the first chapter, the idea of universal rights is based on Western concepts of rights, individuality and liberty, which can be at odds with cultures based on community and reciprocity, such as many African societies (Omari and Mbilinyi, 1997; UNICEF, 1999^a)¹. The idea of someone having a right is inextricably linked to someone else having a corresponding duty to fulfil that right (Hill and Tisdall, 1997: 23). Hill and Tisdall demonstrate how the practical implementation of children's legal rights can be problematic:

For example, a child may have a right to an adequate standard of living. But who has the duty to provide the adequate standard of living? What would this duty entail? In the UK, primary responsibility for children's living standard lies with parents. But if parents are unable to meet this duty, the state has secondary responsibility. Who is the 'state'? The duty no longer is clearly on individuals, but becomes a wider collective responsibility. What if the state is unable to fulfil its responsibility? Do other states have a responsibility? [...] Does the child still have the right to an adequate standard of living, if no one individual or institution is an identifiable duty-holder? [...] (ibid).

The fulfilment of children's rights to an adequate standard of living is clearly problematic in countries of the South, such as Tanzania, where state welfare assistance is virtually non-existent. Historically, philosophers accorded children rights (for

¹ Discussed on pp.32-6.

example, to education) but denied children rights to agency or liberty, using the argument that children lack rationality (ibid: 25). However, as we have seen in the previous chapters, when children leave home for the streets, they are very often making a rational choice in favour of one lifestyle over another, and they are capable of surviving independently on the street at a young age, thereby refuting the notion that children lack rationality. The view of most children's rights proponents is currently that children have rights, but not the same rights as adults. Furthermore, children's rights to participation and agency must be balanced by regard to their best interests, and first and foremost, adults have a duty to protect children's welfare (ibid: 26).

While the concept of 'rights' has been most prominent in legal and philosophical contexts, the concept of 'needs' has been more central in psychology and social policy (ibid: 39). As Hill and Tisdall point out, 'both rights and needs entail an implication of an obligation to respond', however:

Whereas rights are based on moral or legal status, needs are derived from human characteristics perceived to be inherent to individuals or everyone. The rights perspective tends to concentrate on mechanisms to ensure that claims can be made and met. A needs approach is interested in the nature, causes and distribution of the circumstances which appear to warrant a response. In some respects rights can be seen as entitlements to have certain needs met.[...] (ibid).

There have been many debates in the literature about what constitutes a 'need', however, it has been suggested that, in general, a 'need' for something can be taken to denote a gap between a person's current state and a desired state or goal, such as good health or happiness (ibid: 51). A distinction is often made between 'basic needs', which

correspond to the minimum requirements for living, and 'specific needs', which allow for more particular activities to take place. It has been suggested that children need the material, personal and social resources for both current and future effective social participation (ibid: 52). Ideas about the minimum requirements for living and what constitutes a 'desired goal', are of course based on value-judgements and likely to differ cross-culturally. Furthermore, 'a need can all too readily be seen as a personal deficiency associated with a negative status, even when the intentions behind responses to need are rooted in benign intentions' (ibid: 63). The concept of 'needs' has been associated with the language of top-down planning, which makes people appear passive (March et al., 1999). A 'right', on the other hand, implies a legitimate claim which derives from a respected status as a person or citizen (Hill and Tisdall, 1997:63).

The 'needs' and 'rights' concepts have developed from the ideologies of social work and the legal professions, both of which tend to play down the impact of social structural inequalities, and advocate individual, remedial solutions to social problems (Boyden, 1997). However, the concept of children's 'rights', as set down in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) has increasingly been recognised as a useful framework to define clearly stated goals for development programmes (Grainger et al., 2001). Indeed, in recent years, there has been a growing debate about rights and a trend towards rights-based approaches to development programming among certain donor countries and international welfare organisations (ibid). The main guiding principles of the UNCRC have been identified as non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, survival and development, and participation (ibid: 46). Within the context of this study, the concept of children's 'rights' is useful, particularly in relation to children's rights to participation and agency. The concept of 'need' is however also

useful in assessing the nature and extent of children's circumstances to form the basis for shaping services and resources to reach children within the community.

'Practical' and 'strategic' gender needs and interests

This discussion surrounding 'rights' and 'needs' can be related to approaches to gender analysis and development planning, in particular, Moser's framework of 'practical' and 'strategic' gender needs. This framework was developed as part of the paradigm shift from Women in Development (WID) in the 1970s to the Gender and Development (GAD) approach of the 1980s and 1990s. Moser's framework builds on Molyneux's (1985) concept of 'practical' and 'strategic gender interests'. Practical gender interests and needs are 'formulated from the concrete conditions women experience, in their engendered position within the sexual division of labor and deriving out of this their practical gender interests for human survival' (Moser, 1989:1803). Practical needs, therefore, address 'an immediate perceived necessity which is identified by women within a specific context' (ibid). Strategic gender interests and needs, on the other hand, are concerned with more longer term needs, which challenge structural inequalities and call for empowerment and a more equal society:

Strategic gender needs are those needs which are formulated from the analysis of women's subordination to men and deriving out of this the strategic gender interest identified for an alternative, more equal and satisfactory organisation of society than that which exists at present, in term of both the structure and nature of relationships between men and women (ibid).

This framework can be extended to not only include analysis of the unequal power relations which exist between men and women, but also the subordination and power imbalances which exist between adults and children, which intersect with gender inequalities, and other inequalities based on ethnicity, religion, class, sexual orientation, ability etc.

Moser's framework has been criticised for her use of the concept of 'needs', with its negative associations with the language of top-down planning, which effectively denies people's agency (March et al., 1999). Thus, Molyneux's term 'interests' represents a preferred term in some contexts. Moser's framework is however useful to distinguish between the immediate and more longer term needs and interests of street children. The practical needs of street children can be seen as relating to their basic needs for survival, arising from their concrete experiences of life on the streets. Meeting street children's practical needs would thus centre around improving their living conditions and reducing the risks they are exposed to. This approach alone, however, fails to challenge the social structural inequalities which oppress street children. Street children's 'strategic' needs and interests, on the other hand, perhaps relate more to a 'rights' perspective, based on the concept of young people's respected and equal status in society. 'Strategic needs and interests' would, therefore, aim to challenge both the oppressive adult-child relations that subordinate young people, and the wider structural inequalities facing children and young people in difficult circumstances, and in particular, street children. 'Strategic' interests would also include the idea of 'empowerment' and children's right to participate in all decisions affecting them, recognising their agency as 'social actors' in their own right.

Children and young people's 'practical' needs

The discussion above has identified how street children's rights and needs could be conceptualised using Moser's framework of practical and strategic gender needs and interests (Moser, 1989). This section explores street children's own perspectives of their needs on the streets, and young people's priorities and aspirations for the future, including those of school pupils and children affected by AIDS. I will analyse data from group discussions and individual interviews with the young people, and compare their perceptions of their interests and needs with the perceptions of project staff of the needs of street children.

Young people's perspectives and aspirations

In individual interviews, the street children and former street children were asked to imagine that they were in a position to help a street child and describe how they would help her/him. Their responses give insight into their perceptions of the needs of young people living on the street. In response to the question, 'Imagine you are an adult, who has a good job, and you want to help a street child, what would you do to help him/her?', the street children mentioned providing food, clothing, shelter, education, teaching him/her good behaviour, showing love and caring for him/her, finding him/her work, and bringing him/her to street children projects:

'I'd take him to my home and I'd look after him' (Luka, street, 11/6/00).

'If for example, I worked and I got some money while s/he didn't have any, when I'm buying food, we would both eat together, when it's tea, we would

drink it together. Also, I could build a place for them to sleep and I would help them, give them food there and educate them as well' (Simon, street, 11/6/00).

'Advise him/her, love him/her, get him/her clean clothes, then be close to him/her. If I had money, I wouldn't give it to him/her because it would corrupt him/her. I would buy things for him/her, food, and somewhere to sleep' (Lucy, Theresa House, 20/5/00).

'I would help him because I know about all the problems of the streets. I would advise him/her to come to UCSC and listen, he could get something to help him, for example, if he hears about seven things and likes three of them, his life will be changed. For example, they taught me the difference between the behaviour of town and that of here [UCSC shelter], so now I regret it. If I have money, I would ask him if s/he likes education or work – if s/he says education, I would take him/her to school' (Juma, UCSC shelter, 20/4/00).

'If perhaps she is just wandering around on the streets, and doesn't have any work, I would advice her to look for work at someone's place, and to work there, or come here [Theresa House]. There are others you can tell them, and they would refuse, and if she doesn't want to, you can advise her to look for domestic work, and she would do it' (Upendo, Theresa House, 20/5/00).

'You can help him/her if you have the means, you can take him/her and educate him/her, even at school, but only if s/he agrees him/herself, if s/he refuses, just leave him/her alone' (Amina, UCSC shelter, 9/6/00).

‘I would just tell him/her to come here to the centres like here, I would bring him/her’ (Devi, UCSC residential centre, 16/7/00).

These responses show a perceived need for advice, guidance, teaching of moral values and love, as well as meeting street children’s basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, education. Many of the young people felt that it was the street child’s decision whether or not to be helped, and that if they refused, people should respect their decision.

Several of the children mentioned assisting a street child to find work, recognising their independence and desire to earn a cash income, discussed in Chapters 7 and 8. These responses thus demonstrate street children’s sense of agency in the construction of their social lives and their rejection of the image of themselves as passive ‘victims’ on the street.

In response to the question, ‘What are/were your needs on the streets?’, in individual interviews with the young people staying at the UCSC centres, Theresa House or on the street, most of participants cited their basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, education and health care - their ‘practical’ needs and interests. This can be seen as a direct response to the hardships and denial of their basic needs which young people experience in the street environment (identified in the previous chapter). This corresponds to children’s right to an adequate standard of living, as set out in Article 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: ‘State Parties recognise the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development’ (UNCRC, 1989: 27). Two of the girls, however, did not feel that they ‘needed’ anything, as long as they were assured of a small cash income: ‘I used to get money, and I would buy second-hand clothes’ (Blandina, Theresa House, 20/5 00). This illustrates the young people’s sense of agency and self-reliance, perceiving a

‘need’ as a negative ‘personal deficiency’ which made them appear passive (Hill and Tisdall, 1997: 63; March et al., 1999), which they rejected because it implied that they were unable to survive independently on the street. Lucy suggested that the street lifestyle was centred around satisfying her daily needs and helping her family, rather than thinking about more longer term individual goals, such as education:

RE: What were your needs on the streets?

L: Living on the streets means that you can’t say that you need education. So mostly, the thing I wanted was money.

RE: Do you think the basic needs of boys and girls are different on the streets?

L: You know, everyone has his/her own ideas. It could be that you need to get money to buy a certain thing. For example, I needed to get money so that I could buy my things for myself and for my family. That was what made me leave home (Lucy, Theresa House, 20/5/00).

Amina, on the other hand, who was living on the streets at the time of the interview, perceived education as very important, once her survival needs had been met: ‘You need food, clothes, if you are ill, to be taken to hospital, and to go to school. I want to finish primary school and if it’s possible, to even send me to secondary school’ (Amina, 9/6/00, UCSC shelter). Indeed, in response to the question, ‘What do you like/ like doing?’ a large majority of the street children interviewed said that they liked studying/ going to school, in spite of the problems they experienced within the school environment (discussed in Chapter 4).

In addition, education was cited first in all of the five group discussions with the street children in response to the question, ‘What do you like/ prefer?’ (see Table 1, p.99 for composition of groups). Further responses included having a good job, self-development, knowing God (the girls at Theresa House, a Roman Catholic project,

20/5/00); and playing football, wearing nice clothes, and cleanliness (UCSC shelter and residential centre, 28/4/00). All three groups of boys cited their future aspirations, which included owning a car, becoming a bus conductor, pilot, football player, train driver, army or naval captain, police officer, shopkeeper, builder, politician (Street, 7/5/00; UCSC residential centre, 28/4/00; UCSC shelter., 17/4/00). The jobs aspired to by the boys represented conventional male-dominated professions, while the girls did not mention specific jobs they would like to do. This reveals that street girls had lower expectations and aspirations than street boys, and perhaps suggests that street girls had internalised negative perceptions of their status, and the opportunities available to young women with little education.

In focus group discussions with school pupils, all of the groups said that they liked going to school, as well as playing football, running and other games, helping their parents and doing work at home. When they were asked about their future aspirations, groups of boys and girls cited specific jobs and professions they would like to follow. The school boys' responses were very similar to those of the street boys, mostly reflecting conventionally male-dominated professions: 'soldier, footballer, driver, pilot, police officer, priest, engaged in business, teacher, education officer, President!' (boys, primary school focus groups, Nov/ Dec. 2002). The girls' responses showed a broader range of aspirations, some of which included more traditionally male-dominated professions: teacher, doctor, secretary, nurse, captain of a ship, pilot, TV presenter, news reporter, engaged in business, go to secondary school, go to university (girls, primary school focus groups, Nov/ Dec. 2002). This reveals the girls' rejection of stereotypical gender roles. In comparison to the street girls' and former street girls' responses, school girls had much higher aspirations. This is probably related to the fact that the brightest, most articulate school pupils were likely to have been selected by teachers to participate in the focus group discussions. The school girls were therefore

likely to come from more middle-class backgrounds, where their education was valued and they were encouraged to have high aspirations for their future, compared to the street girls, who came from poorer backgrounds². This can be seen as supporting the evidence that children growing up in poverty may have more limited aspirations than their better-off peers, and ‘In a context of continuous disappointment, low expectations can be considered a psychological coping strategy’ (Harper et al., 2003: 548). The findings from this study, however, reveal that gender was a salient factor, combined with poverty, which influenced children’s aspirations.

When asked to think of the things that were most important to them for their future, the girls living on the streets at the time said that their priorities were: ‘to study, to live in a nice place, and do any kind of work’ (UCSC shelter, 31/3/00). This was echoed by the boys on the street: ‘education, a place to live and a good job’ (street, 7/5/00). These responses reveal that while the priorities of children still living on the streets centred around more immediate concerns to improve their lives, such as shelter and work, the more longer term goal of education was equally important to them.

The young people living in more settled residential settings, as might be expected, had more longer term aspirations and goals for the future, which included education and skills training to be able to support themselves, as well as a desire for a family:

‘education, skills, development, having children, a husband and good health’
(girls at Theresa House, 20/5/00).

² See p.82, 91 and 99 for composition of focus groups.

‘to learn to drive and have a car, education, to farm, play football, learn how to be a carpenter, to have a house, money and a wife, and to be president!’ (boys at UCSC residential centre, 28/4/00).

Only the group of boys at the UCSC shelter mentioned being reunited with their family as a priority, a response which may have been partly influenced by the boys’ desire to seek my approval as a teacher at the shelter³, and their awareness of the UCSC project goal concerning family reintegration. When I asked the group of boys at the UCSC residential centre more about their aspirations for family life, they told me that they thought it best to have two to five children, because then they could educate all of them, whereas if they had ten children, some might become street children. I asked ‘what about if you don’t have any land/ a farm?’, and they replied, in that case, they would only have one child (residential centre, 28/4/00). This shows the young people’s perception that becoming a street child is directly linked to parents’ inability to provide for their children, which has implications for family planning and influenced their own aspirations for family life.

The importance of education for young people’s future was also emphasised by school pupils when they were asked about their priorities for their future. All six groups of boys and girls mentioned education as the first priority: ‘The most important thing above all else is education, if you don’t have education, your life will be bad, because you can’t find work without education’ (boys, primary school, Arusha, 14/11/02). The groups of boys mentioned a range of personal qualities which were important for them, such as good manners, being obedient, being trustworthy, calm, intelligent, creative, living together with others. One group of boys also mentioned growing crops and

³ See pp.72-8.

rearing cattle as a priority for their future. While one group of school-girls mentioned respect for their elders, their responses were much more focused on ensuring that their basic needs were met, such as having sufficient food, clothes, good health and generally enjoying a good standard of living. It is interesting to note that of all the focus groups conducted with school pupils and street children, only one group of school boys mentioned 'love' as important for their future. However, as noted in Chapter 4, children's ideas about their families meeting their basic needs and providing a good upbringing can be seen as stemming from the concept of 'being loved' by their parents and relatives⁴. Indeed, the experiences of several street children in Chapter 5 demonstrated the importance to children of feeling loved at home⁵, and as noted above, street children suggested that a way to help a street child was to be close to him/her, so that they felt loved and valued.

The responses of three children from AIDS affected households about their priorities for the future did not vary markedly from those of the street children. They focused on education, employment, and a good house to live in. Charles, a 17-year-old living in a child-headed household, identified the needs of orphaned children and young people such as himself in terms of emotional as well as material support:

'We need people to look after us, provide for our education, financial support, food and shelter, advice/ counselling, and for people to get to know us by being close to us.' (Charles, 12/12/02)

Charles' response is very similar to the street children's perception of their needs. This highlights the point raised in Chapter 6 that 'AIDS orphans' should not be singled out

⁴ See p.110.

⁵ See pp.176-185.

for development assistance, because other vulnerable children in poor communities suffer many of the same disadvantages⁶. Studies have suggested that while some targeting is necessary to make efficient use of scarce resources, targeting resources only at orphaned children may be discriminatory, as well as stigmatising for the children involved (Grainger et al, 2001: 44). Charles did however identify a specific priority for children orphaned by AIDS, but which would also benefit other young people trying to support their families - gaining access to capital to develop the household's business activities:

RE: Tell me the three most important things for your future.

C: Education, a good house which will last a long time, and to get some capital which would help to develop our livelihood, doing business. (Charles, 12/12/02)

In individual interviews with street children, the young people's priorities and aspirations reflected the responses of the focus groups. Their responses centred around the strategic goals of gaining education and vocational training, so that they could obtain work to support themselves in the future. As is clear from many of these extracts, many children saw street children projects as providing the opportunity to gain education and skills. This provides further evidence for the point raised in UNICEF's study on Children in Need of Special Protection Measures in Tanzania, that running away from home to become a street child could be a strategy for obtaining educational opportunities, quite apart from access to other basic needs such as food and shelter (UNICEF, 1999^a: 272)⁷.

⁶ See p.246.

⁷ Discussed on pp.281-283.

Nixon, who was studying in Standard 5 at primary school and was head boy at the time of interview, valued the educational opportunities offered by the UCSC street children centre. His aspirations were focused on doing well in school, so that he could obtain a good job later:

RE: What kind of work do you want to do when you are older?

N: [I want] to work in the tour guide business or any kind of work which is good.

RE: What do you think about your situation now?

N: I think it's good.

RE: Do you want to continue to secondary school if you can?

N: I will do everything I can to continue at school.

RE: How do you feel about living at home with your relatives again?

N: Now I don't think so because if I go back home, I'll have to go without school and I won't be happy. I would most likely become a thief. [...]

RE: What are your needs now?

N: Because here at the centre, I get everything, I just need to make more effort in school.

RE: How do you see your future?

N: I think it will be good (Nixon, aged 17, studying in Standard 5, primary school, UCSC residential centre, 16/7/00).

When I returned in 2002, Nixon was one of 20 pupils who had been selected from the 120 pupils in his year to go to a government secondary school. The UCSC project had managed to find a sponsor for him who agreed to pay all his schooling expenses through secondary school, and Nixon was about to start his second year at secondary school, which he was enjoying.

Almost all of the participants saw education as offering them the best prospects for future employment. The boys living on the streets at the time of the interview saw education as important for their future:

RE: What do you want to do when you are older?

S: When I'm older, I want to do any kind of job for a better life. For example, be a driver, even a farmer.[..]

RE: What are your needs now?

S: For my future, I need to go to primary school, clothes and food (Simon, street, 11/6/00).

During my later period of fieldwork, Simon was still living on the street, obtaining meals most days from the Arusha Referral Service⁸ street-based programme, but had not accessed any of the educational opportunities offered by the various street children projects (fieldwork journal, 29/10/02).

Juma (aged 14 at the time) saw the UCSC project as offering him a valuable opportunity for vocational training, but also highlighted the need for age-appropriate service provision for young people attending the UCSC project. Juma had been in contact with the UCSC project for several years, but still felt unsettled and unsure of his future.

UCSC staff had tried to reintegrate him into his home community, following a home visit to his father's polygamous household, although his mother had separated from his father. Juma had found it very difficult to settle into the family again, and had returned to the streets. He spent a brief period at the residential centre, but had come back to

⁸ Arusha Referral Service street-based feeding programme provided meals four days a week for up to 100 street children (mainly boys) in the centre of Arusha (fieldwork journal, 29/10/02). See p.403 for more details.

town and had been staying at the shelter for over a year, without any further action from members of staff. When I enquired about how we could help Juma, senior members of staff appeared reluctant to investigate vocational training or work opportunities for him, with an attitude that implied that it was Juma's fault, he had refused to be reintegrated into his home, and that they had done all they could to help.

When I interviewed Juma, he seemed worried that when he became fifteen in less than a year's time, he would have to leave the centre. This relates to the UCSC policy aim to concentrate on younger street children, that is, those under the age of fifteen, as they were deemed easier to 'reintegrate' (UCSC Annual Report, 1999). The following extract shows Juma's sense of anxiety and insecurity about his future, expressed several times throughout the interview:

RE: [At start of interview] What do you like/ like doing?

J: I would like to ask all the teachers here at UCSC to help me, if they can, for me to have a future.[..]

RE: When do you feel safest?

J: Here at UCSC I don't feel completely safe because I don't know what my future will be. [...]

RE: How do you feel about the centre?

J: I feel good, but not very good, because I am still asking for help and because you stay here until you're fifteen and I haven't got a good foundation for my life yet. [...]

RE: What do you expect from UCSC?

J: I expect them to find me work because they took me home and I went to school at my step-mother's place, but failed [...].

RE: How long do you expect to stay here?

J: I was told that when I become fifteen, they want me to leave.

RE: What would make you leave?

J: My age. [...]

RE: What is the most important thing that UCSC can do for you in the future?

J: If they can take me to school, look for work for me, I'll be grateful. I would like to go to school anywhere they decide, but not at my step-mother's. And I can't stay with my real mother because she only has one rented room and is a petty trader at the market. (Juma, aged 14, UCSC shelter, 20/4/00).

Juma's responses support the findings of the UNICEF study, *Children in Need of Special Protection Measures in Tanzania*, that street children staying at NGO projects complained that there was little preparation for life once they became too old for the institutions (UNICEF, 1999^a: 273). This highlights the need for street children projects to provide care and opportunities which are age-appropriate and can be sustained as the young person matures. In the face of limited resources, the UCSC policy of concentrating on younger street children, could be justified, but this leaves a gap in service provision for older street children, and there should be some continuity of support and appropriate alternative arrangements made for young people who have been in contact with the UCSC project for some time.

During my later period of fieldwork, I was pleased to find Juma attending a three year vocational training course in construction work, while continuing to live at the UCSC shelter. This had been made possible when a private individual had offered to sponsor Juma for the duration of his course. The resources available did not however cover the cost of local transport to the vocational training centre, so Juma had to get up at 5am

everyday in order to arrive in time for an 8.30am start, walking a round trip of 12 kilometres a day (fieldwork journal, 2/3/02). Thus, sustained under-funding continued to undermine the ability of the UCSC project to provide the services they would like to offer to street children. Juma still envisaged needing financial support when he finished his construction course:

RE: So how do you see your situation now?

J: I think it's a bit better now, not very good, [...] but overall if you look at the others in town, my situation is better than them.

RE: And when you finish your course, do you think you'll continue to live here?

J: No, I won't stay here.

RE: You'll rent a room?

J: Perhaps if UCSC rent somewhere for me, because even when I finish studying, I won't have anything, because it's still time for me to study. If I pass and get the certificate, it would be better for me to continue studying a bit more, because you know I stopped going to school when I was in Standard 5. If I could study English it would help a lot. Many on my course finish and then go and study English course.

RE: Do you think UCSC will agree for you to study on an English course?

J: I know UCSC won't agree to it. Really, they don't have the money. Even if they did, they wouldn't agree. Because they've already educated me for three years. So I need to try and find a sponsor, even if I could study for one month. If you know how to speak English, you have a chance to get good work. (Juma, UCSC shelter, 4/12/02)

Juma's situation highlights the fact that providing former street children with vocational training is not enough in itself to enable young people who have been living in institutional care settings to make the transition to independent adult life. Other kinds of support which would enable young people to gradually become independent include financial support, training in basic life skills, extra tuition in Swahili, Maths and English, budgeting, setting up a small business etc. and having support workers available to advise and support young people.

The girls living on the street at the time of the interview looked to the UCSC and the Theresa House project for the opportunity to study and somewhere to stay, as Amina (aged 14)'s response illustrates:

RE: What kind of work do you want to do when you are older?

A: I want to be a nurse.[...]

RE: How do you see your future?

A: For example, when I'm on the streets, I see my future as bad, because I'm on the streets. Because now that I was told that there's a school where Blandina and others study, and they will take me, then I see my future as good.

RE: What are your needs now?

A: I need a nice place to stay, to be bought good school uniform and exercise books, clothes, food, to live somewhere nice.

RE: Is there anything you want to add?

A: For me, I just want to go to school (Amina, aged 14, UCSC shelter, 9/6/00).

During my later fieldwork visit, Amina told me about her experiences over the past two years. When the UCSC project moved to a larger compound, which had the capacity to

accommodate girls, some younger street girls were recruited to stay at the UCSC shelter. Amina lived with the other girls there at the time, and attended a vocational training school where she studied cookery for several months. Soon after the younger girls were moved to the UCSC residential centre to attend primary school, Amina started truanting and eventually ran away from the UCSC shelter to be with other street girls and stopped attending school. Despite the efforts of her school teacher to encourage her to return, Amina found it too difficult to settle back into the UCSC shelter and return to school:

‘My teacher from school came and said, Amina, just come back to school, we’ll go and ask for you to return. I said ok, but they said, you should go to school and take the exam. I came back here [UCSC shelter] and found my clothes had been taken and my shoes had been stolen, some clothes were left and one pair of shoes, but my best shoes had been stolen, the ones I walked to school in, and there were no exercise books. [...] I said, without my books, how can I study? Especially the exam, I won’t do well because I wasn’t there from September to November up to now, I have been away for a long time, how can I do the exam now? They said to me, just go and do the exam, they were encouraging me, but I didn’t think I could, as I’ve already missed a lot of my studies’. (Amina, UCSC shelter, 20/11/02)

This shows that despite street children’s aspirations and best intentions to study, they may find it difficult to live in an institutional environment and engage with longer term educational goals, following their experiences of life on the street. Amina cited the lack of peer company, UCSC’s lack of resources to provide her with the necessary school equipment, and restrictive rules which infringed her freedom of movement outside the

centre imposed by UCSC project staff as the factors which made her leave and drop out of school. Amina expressed a desire to continue her studies, if she could attend school and live with her female friends:

A: My situation now is good. But what bothers me is to go back to school in the New Year, then because I've got my friend, we'll go together and then it'll be good, I'll try my best until I finish school. [...]

RE: Do you think you could stay here on your own without your friends?

A: No.

RE: You think it's hard without any other girls around?

A: You're lonely here just with the boys, without any other girls here with me. Before the other girls left, I stayed here properly, I did well, I didn't used to go anywhere, I lived here with them properly.

RE: Do you want to add anything, or explain anything else to me?

A: I just want to say this, if they want to take us back to school, to buy us all the equipment we need, so we won't skive off, because you just think about it all, instead of just staying, being happy to study. (Amina, 20/11/02)

Amina's account illustrates the importance of solidarity and friendship that street children enjoy among their peers (usually identifying strongly with those of their own gender). It also emphasises the need, within a street children project dominated by street boys, for street girls to be accommodated together with other girls for mutual support, friendship and understanding.

The different experiences, aspirations, and life-course trajectories of street children over time reflect the diversity of children and young people who come to live on the street.

Of the 16 children originally interviewed in 2000, all but one of the participants could be traced over two and a half years later during fieldwork at the end of 2002. Nixon⁹ and Gasper, two of the three boys who had been living at the UCSC residential centre and attending primary school there, had progressed to Secondary school and continued to live at the residential centre. One of the boys, Devi¹⁰, had dropped out of primary school, spent almost a year on the street, and had returned to the UCSC residential centre to study vocational training. Of the four boys staying at the UCSC shelter in 2000, Juma continued to live there and was attending a vocational training course¹¹; Emmanuel attended primary school while living at the UCSC residential centre; the other two had stayed at the UCSC residential centre for about a year where they attended primary school, but had decided to leave the centre to return home – Justin returned home of his own accord, while Michael left when his father came to find him.

Of the three young women interviewed at Theresa House, Lucy and Upendo had completed their vocational training courses, and had been supported by Theresa House to set up their own businesses and live independently in the community. Blandina had returned to the street, and lived with her ‘husband’ / partner in the same compound as her mother. She occasionally came to the Arusha Referral Service feeding programme for a lunchtime meal (fieldwork journal, 25/10/02). Halima, who had been living in very crowded accommodation with her mother and other street girls at the time of the original interview, was reported by her peers to be living with her ‘husband’ / partner and baby in 2002. Amina and Naemi, two of the street girls interviewed, were still living in temporary accommodation with their peers/ boyfriends, and had attended vocational training courses facilitated by UCSC for a short period. None of the other street girls had any news of Farida, the young woman who had a small child, who

⁹ See p.375.

¹⁰ See pp.391-392.

¹¹ See pp.376-8.

worked as a commercial sex worker. Simon, who was living on the street when originally interviewed, was still living on the street in 2002, and often received meals at the Arusha Referral Service street-based programme (fieldwork journal, 29/10/02). Luka, as reported in the previous chapter, had been tragically killed in an accident with a bus in 2001, while living on the street¹².

These different life-course trajectories of street children also illustrate the diversity of children's attitudes towards institutions set up for their benefit, and their differing relation to the street and the purpose it serves for individual children. While some children perceived street children projects as offering them valuable educational opportunities and a safe place to live, others found the institutional setting difficult to adapt to after the freedom and independence of the street lifestyle. Despite street children's expressed desire for education, some children dropped out of formal education and vocational training, which is likely to be linked to a combination of poor quality education, limited vocational opportunities, and young people's difficulty in engaging with longer term educational goals due to chaotic lifestyles and lack of support and guidance. This highlights the need for education to be interactive, child- and young person-friendly, and relevant to children's daily lives and aspirations.

This section has identified street children's and children from AIDS-affected households' own perceived needs, priorities and aspirations. These focused on meeting their practical needs for survival and to improve the quality of their lives – food, shelter, clothing, medical treatment, financial support etc., as well as for advice, guidance and love, education and training, to earn an income and have a good job. The perspectives of the young people interviewed did not differ markedly according to age or gender,

¹² See p.265-6.

although the street boys participating in focus groups had higher aspirations for future employment than the groups of street girls, as did school boys and girls. Former street children living in more settled residential accommodation identified family life as a priority and had more longer term aspirations than those still living on the street or staying in temporary shelter. The next section explores the perceptions of project staff at the main street children development projects in Arusha and at the national level, in relation to the needs of the street children they aimed to assist.

Perspectives of project staff

Most of the project staff interviewed at street children's centres in Arusha - UCSC, Theresa House, and the co-ordinator of the Forum for Child Concerned NGOs in Arusha¹³ (FOCNA), acknowledged that street children's practical needs for food, clothing, shelter, health care etc. must be met, and emphasised the importance of the more longer term need for education, which corresponds to the children's own responses. The UCSC co-ordinator and the manager of the UCSC residential centre saw counselling as a priority, after meeting street children's basic needs:

'First of all, they need to be provided with their basic needs. And they need attention to be given to their problems. And then counselling is very important because once you find a child who has been damaged in his ideas or in his life, then you have to bring him back, it means you have to talk to him and know his problems, then you can design the means and ways of rehabilitating him.' (Co-ordinator, UCSC shelter, 18/1/01).

¹³ Forum for Child Concerned NGOs in Arusha (FOCNA), an umbrella group of 27 NGOs working with children in Arusha.

The language of social work, based on the hegemonic global concept of childhood is illustrated here, suggesting that the street lifestyle is perceived as ‘morally deviant’ and damaging for children, who are seen as ‘victims’ who need to be ‘rehabilitated’ (Boyden, 1997). This individualistic notion of street children plays down wider structural inequalities and effectively denies their agency.

A project worker at the UCSC residential centre, thought that street children centres offered the only effective way to meet the needs of street children:

‘I think that street children are helped most at centres. [...] If s/he is at the centre, you can look after him, for example, even you, you could give her/him some clothes today, and if you come back again next year, you will find s/he’s still got those clothes. But if s/he’s on the street, s/he won’t have those clothes after a couple of weeks. Because s/he could be hassled, or they would wash the clothes and then they would get stolen or disappear, or they would sell the clothes to get money to eat.’ (Project worker, UCSC residential centre, 21/1/01)

However, the chair of the umbrella NGO, National Network for Organisations working with Children (NNOC)¹⁴, who was also the co-ordinator of the Youth Cultural Information Centre¹⁵ in Dar es Salaam suggested that children’s need for educational activities, livelihood skills, security, love and access to health care was more important than meeting their basic needs for food or shelter in an institutional setting:

¹⁴ National Network of Organisations working with Children (NNOC), an umbrella NGO established in 2001 based in Dar es Salaam, which by the end of 2002 had 29 members from different regions across Tanzania

¹⁵ Youth Cultural Information Centre provides arts and informal education activities, livelihood skills, access to health care, advocacy for children’s rights and family reunification for children in difficult circumstances in Dar es Salaam

‘They need love and care, that’s very important. Education came up very strongly from almost every street child when we do the assessment, they all want education, they want something to do. From our experience here, we are not providing food or whatever, [...] we don’t provide food, we don’t provide shelter, but they come, they want something to do, we term it as livelihood. They also want security, that is also very important to them, so those are for me the main areas. And also health services, and especially access to health because most of them don’t have access to health services, and sometimes they are not acceptable’. (Chair of NNOC, Dar es Salaam 27/11/02)

Similarly, the co-ordinator of the Tanzania Movement for and with Children (TMC)¹⁶ perceived the needs of street children more in terms of advocacy for children’s rights, and ensuring a child-focused approach in national policies and laws:

‘If you talk with street children, they feel neglected at the community level, societal level, national level, family, they have a world of their own. [...] Having centres is not the best way of solving the problem, and we cannot stop them running away from home, we are trying with child rights, but how at least do we reduce the number going to the streets, how do we support them for them to realise this is their world as well, they have a right to be happy, how do other people treat them, in the street or if they receive help, do NGOs provide it. And when they are in court, how do people treat them within the legal system.

‘How best are they being reflected in the national plans, priorities? Health services, we are saying children under five should get free medical services, but

¹⁶ Tanzania Movement for and with Children (TMC) was launched in 2001 as part of the Global Movement for and with Children. By the end of 2002, it had 70 partners (mostly from NGO sector) in 20 regions of Tanzania.

what about these children who cannot pay, or receive proper medical services? Or if they go to a police station and they have a legal case to report, how are they being treated? Are there personnel at the police station with special expertise in listening to children in a way that is not treating the street children as thieves or adults?’ (Co-ordinator, TMC, Dar es Salaam, 28/11/02)

This rights-based approach represents a more strategic, longer term view of the needs of children and young people in difficult circumstances, which challenges the structural inequalities facing them in society, and can therefore be conceptualised as their ‘strategic needs’¹⁷. The strategic needs of street children are discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

When project staff were asked whether the needs of boys and girls differ, the UCSC co-ordinator, and the manager of the UCSC residential centre, both perceived a difference in terms of counselling. The manager of the UCSC residential centre, thought that mother and father-figures in a child’s life provide important role-models for the child’s socialisation according to gender ‘norms’ and traditional gender roles:

‘There is a small difference [in the needs of street girls and boys] because a girl deserves a mother’s love in order to assure her self-development, because traditionally for us, you find a mother teaches a little girl good behaviour, so that, for example, she’s not a prostitute, and a boy is taught by a father, they put them together in a place for circumcision, and they are taught there’ (Manager, UCSC residential centre, 21/1/01).

¹⁷ See p.364.

The perceived importance of informal teaching within the community is clearly evident here, revealing how children's presence on the street subverts 'norms' of childhood and disrupts the traditional socialisation process. The implication is that by living on the street without adult supervision, children miss out important stages in the child's progression to adulthood, which are used to impart the community's moral values about sexuality and gender roles (Omari and Mbilinyi, 1997)¹⁸.

The manager of Theresa House, the Roman Catholic project for young women, thought that the needs of street children varied in terms of practical gender needs and the perceived vulnerability of girls to sexual advances, pregnancy and HIV infection:

'The needs of girls are greater. Once a boy has got some clothes, it's enough, but a girl needs body oil, she needs sanitary pads, pain relief medicine for the time.....you know the problem of girls, medical treatment too, the costs are greater for girls. Girls need more advice than boys because they are at more risk than boys, for example, if she puts herself forward a little, she meets boys, she could get pregnant, even the question of AIDS, girls become infected more easily'. (Manager, Theresa House, 12/6/00)

A project worker at the UCSC shelter echoed these sentiments, mentioning girls' perceived vulnerability to rape:

'Questions about safety, safety, what is needed is each for themselves, boys and girls. Girls are in more danger because even if they stay with those boys, they can do things to them and sometimes it's inevitable that they rape them, so they

¹⁸ Discussed on pp.38-9, and in Chapters 4 and 5.

are more likely to have to run away again and again'. (Project worker, UCSC shelter, 22/1/01).

This highlights the potential dangers of mixed accommodation for street boys and girls, and suggests that separate accommodation would represent a safer environment for both street girls and boys, as my own experience at the UCSC shelter revealed and which formed the starting point for the study¹⁹.

The co-ordinators of FOCNA, NNOC, and TMC also highlighted the perception that street girls' needs differ because of the stigma associated with prostitution:

'The difference comes only with the stigma, the label that society puts on them. Boys are called robbers, thieves, difficult children – this is the label. The girls are labelled as prostitutes, therefore their needs are different only because of the stigma, because when it comes to handling, they need to be handled differently, but they are human beings'. (Chair, FOCNA, 5/12/02)

'Their needs do vary, boys, if we ask them, most of them say they want to do small business or something, girls would not go for that, they will say I want to go to school or I want to live somewhere, for most of the boys that is not a priority, but the girls, they say, shelter, a safe place. Also their life, girls' life is very hidden, street girls, it's a hidden life, while boys are very open, if he's stealing you know he's stealing, because he does that in the day time, but girls, especially for those who are prostitutes, they are always hiding, unless you are looking for them at night'. (Chair, NNOC, Dar es Salaam, 27/11/02)

¹⁹ See pp.68-72.

This highlights the point discussed in the previous chapter that girls' presence on the street subverts gender 'norms' as well as 'norms' of childhood, and therefore is sanctioned by society through discrimination and stigmatisation²⁰. Project staff suggested that street girls' association with prostitution was the main reason that so few street children projects provided services for street girls, illustrating the findings of the UNICEF study on Children in Need of Special Protection Measures (UNICEF, 1999^a).

When project staff were asked if the needs of street children varied according to age, several perceived a difference in terms of the priorities for education:

'Age is very important, the younger ones need to be enrolled in primary school and the older ones in vocational training. It is very difficult for the older ones to start primary school, firstly, they won't be accepted by their peers, they will see him as a big boy and so he won't feel happy studying together with them, and playing little games, so it would be difficult'. (Manager, UCSC shelter, 22/1/01).

This raises an important point about the inappropriateness of formal primary education for older street children who have missed out on several years of school due to time spent on the street. Indeed, Devi, a seventeen year old boy who had been studying in Standard 3 of primary school at the UCSC residential centre at the time of interview, subsequently dropped out of school and returned to the street for over a year. When I talked to him over two years later, he told me that he had found maths and English particularly difficult, and was embarrassed studying in a class with much younger children. After contact with UCSC project staff, Devi had returned to the residential

²⁰ See pp.287-291.

centre, where he was studying carpentry and construction (Devi, UCSC residential centre, 8/12/02).

Devi's story suggests that young people who drop out of the system of formal primary education offered by the street children projects may feel that the centre can no longer offer them many opportunities and decide to return to the street, where there are some (though limited) opportunities to earn money²¹. This underlines the importance of providing age-appropriate, relevant education and training opportunities for older street children. Furthermore, as Ennew notes, 'More children would attend schools if the education was relevant to their lives, experiences and aspirations in content and more interactive and respectful in its methods' (Ennew, 1995: 205). An alternative programme of informal tuition should be offered, alongside any vocational training, to enable older street children to learn basic literacy and numeracy skills without having to rejoin formal primary education, in order to prepare them for adult life when they become too old for the centre.

The manager of the residential centre thought the emphasis of a child's upbringing differed according to age:

'There is a difference in their needs, because you teach a young child, perhaps, the right way to live, to live together with his friends, and an older youth, you teach how to prepare for his future' (Manager, UCSC residential centre, 21/1/01).

²¹ See Chapter 8.

This notion of the kind of upbringing street children need corresponds to the third and fourth project objectives cited in the UCSC Annual Report: 'To rehabilitate street children into community life as responsible individuals, and to make the children self-reliant and self-supporting through education and skills training' (UCSC Annual Report, 2000)²². UCSC members of staff thus seemed to recognise the agency of young people, but felt that they needed to learn moral values to correct 'deviant' behaviour, and needed to be equipped with education and skills training, in order for them to lead independent lives within the community.

The perceptions of NGO project staff working with street children in Arusha of the needs of their target group thus seemed to correspond largely to the young people's own perspectives and aspirations. Having explored the 'practical needs' of street children and other children in difficult circumstances, the next sections explore children and young people's 'strategic needs'.

Children and young people's 'strategic needs'

As discussed at the beginning of the chapter, children and young people's 'strategic needs' and interests aim to challenge the oppressive adult-child relations that subordinate young people, and the wider structural inequalities facing children and young people in difficult circumstances. This includes the idea of 'empowerment' and children's right to participate in all decisions affecting them, recognising their agency as 'social actors' in their own right. As Ivan-Smith points out, 'Children's true participation means looking at children as contributors to development and as active participants in the development process' (Ivan-Smith, cited in Johnson et al., 1998:

²² See p.53.

261). The gains and advantages of including children in the development process have been widely documented (ibid). As discussed in Chapter 1, however, children's views and experiences are rarely taken into account in development policy and programmes, which has resulted in a high level of failure of many street children projects (Green, 1998: 61).

The next section thus examines street children's participation in the main development projects set up for their benefit in Arusha. Children's experiences of the UCSC project are explored, followed by a brief overview of the services provided by the other main projects working with street children in Arusha and staff attitudes towards children's participation, at Theresa House and Arusha Referral Service, based on interviews with project co-ordinators. I will then discuss advocacy for children's rights and children and young people's participation in decision-making nationally, and explore how legal and social policy reform, and advocacy in the community could help to challenge the structural inequalities facing young people in Tanzania.

Street children's participation in Arusha

UCSC project

One of the overriding messages arising from the UNICEF study on 'Children in need of special protection measures' in Tanzania concerned the participation of children in decision-making processes (UNICEF, 1999^a). Indeed, the importance young people place on being listened to, being respected and treated fairly was illustrated in a game on children's rights I played with a group of boys at the UCSC residential centre. Using cards with pictures illustrating the whole spectrum of children's rights outlined in the

UN Convention and African Charter (produced in Swahili by Kuleana Center for Children's Rights, Mwanza), the boys picked out the right 'to receive education', and 'to study', as the most important, followed by 'to receive nutritious food' and 'to live in a safe house'. They then identified their right 'to be listened to', 'to be respected', 'to unite', 'not to be harassed', and 'not to be beaten' as the next most important, regarding all of these as of equal importance and relevance to their lives. Other cards such as the 'right for children to be protected from the effects of war', the 'right for equal treatment for boys and girls' etc. were not considered relevant to the group of boys (UCSC residential centre, 26/1/01). The importance the boys placed on being listened to, respected and treated fairly indicates that adult caregivers should take special care to safeguard these fundamental children's rights to participation and agency within an institutional, residential setting.

Most of the young people interviewed who were staying at the UCSC centres felt satisfied with the running of the centres and the way that staff dealt with problems. Some of the young people suggested that staff occasionally beat the children as punishment for breaking the rules of the centre, despite the organisation's policy of condemning corporal punishment against children. Juma, aged 14, seemed to accept this as a punishment for particularly bad behaviour at the UCSC shelter:

RE: If you could change the running of the centre, what would you do? For example, would you change the timetable of activities, or the food, the work, the staff?

J: There's nothing to be changed, everything is fine.

RE: Are you satisfied with the way staff handle problems here?

J Yes, for example, being beaten for a big mistake, but for ordinary mistakes, you are given a punishment (Juma, aged 14, UCSC shelter, 20 4/00).

During fieldwork, however, I observed some children leaving the shelter to return to the street, complaining that they had been beaten by certain members of staff (fieldwork journal, 26/1/01). Physical violence against children represents an inexcusable violation of their rights, but as discussed in Chapter 4, is sadly part of the cultural construction of childhood in Tanzania, as in many other societies, and was thus difficult to dispel completely from ingrained staff attitudes, especially when it was widely condoned and practised in schools and in the wider community (Omari and Mbilinyi, 1997)²³. The young people's response to corporal punishment was to reject the abuse of the adult-child power imbalance by running away from the centre, further demonstrating their agency in constructing their social lives (James and Prout, 1997).

Devi, aged 17, complained that some members of staff at the residential centre did not listen to all the children fairly and favoured some boys over others:

RE: If you could change the running of the centre, what would you do? For example, would you change the timetable of activities, or the food, the work, the staff?

D: I would just change one teacher because he doesn't listen to us.

RE: Do you have meetings every week?

D: We have them every month. But it would be better to have them every day before dinner, if someone has sworn at someone, he should be given a punishment.

²³ See pp.113-115.

- RE: The staff don't beat the children here do they?
- D: There are some who beat them.
- RE: Are you satisfied with the way staff handle problems here?
- D: There are some who prefer some children like Isaak Gerald. If it's his case, they say 'later' and then later, it's just not listened to again.
- RE: And Isaak doesn't get punished?
- D: No.
- RE: Are there other children like Isaak who are favoured?
- D: Amani.
- RE: Why do you think they favour them?
- D: I don't know.
- RE: Do you think it's all the members of staff who favour them?
- D: Just two of them.
- RE: Do you think this happens often?
- D: Yes.
- RE: And other children feel bad about it as well?
- D: Yes.
- RE: Do you think that's one reason why so many children ran away from the centre at that time?
- D: Yes. (Devi, aged 17, UCSC residential centre, 16/7/00).

This reveals the vulnerability of children living in an isolated residential institution, where they were dependent on their adult caregivers. It also suggests that there were insufficient channels of communication open to children at the centre to participate in meetings with staff and voice their concerns. This represents an infringement of their right to be listened to and have a say in all decisions affecting them, as set out in

Articles 12 and 13 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989).

The fact that the young people had to resort to the strategy of 'running away', to bring their concerns to the attention of project workers at the centre in town suggests that staff at the residential centre were failing in their responsibility to safeguard the rights of children in their care. This also demonstrates how street children play an active role in their social worlds and develop resistance strategies when they feel their rights have been infringed (James and Prout, 1997).

During my later period of fieldwork, the children at the UCSC residential centre asked staff for an emergency meeting because they were so frustrated with not being listened to. They were refusing to go to school because their school uniform was in need of repair and members of staff had promised them new shoes etc. many times, but it had never materialised. If they went to school with torn shoes, they were caned or sent back home (fieldwork journal, 7/12/02). When I interviewed Nixon, one of the older boys who had lived at the residential centre for many years, he suggested that the children's meetings at the centre had stopped completely, thus the children had to call an emergency meeting to express their views:

RE: How do you find it here at the centre?

N: If we were carrying on well, we wouldn't have any problems.

RE: There's not enough school uniform...

N: There's not enough kit for all the children.

RE: And do you have meetings every month, or every week, or none at all, only in an emergency?

N: It's only in an emergency, if an emergency happens, that's all.

RE: There was a time when there were meetings every week, wasn't there?

- N: It used to be every week, every Tuesday. But the other day, the way things were going, it forced that meeting to happen.
- RE: Why do you think things have changed?
- N: I don't know why, even the teachers themselves don't know.
- RE: If an emergency happens, like yesterday, does everyone feel free to talk? They're not afraid of the teachers...?
- N: Those who are intelligent speak up, they're not afraid, they give their opinions.
- RE: Maybe just the younger ones...
- N: Maybe just the younger ones are afraid. (Nixon, UCSC residential centre, 8/12/02)

This suggests that the children's views were not being listened to, or acted upon, and their material needs were not being met by the management of the centre. Over the fieldwork period, several young people, who became disenchanted with the mechanisms for discipline or with their treatment by members of staff at the centre, rejected the services offered by the UCSC project and returned to life on the street (fieldwork journal, 26/1/01). This supports the findings of the UNICEF report on children in need of special protection measures in Tanzania, that punishment and lack of resources in projects were the main factors leading street children to return to the street whether temporarily or permanently (UNICEF, 1999^a: 273).

As mentioned earlier, several studies have highlighted the fact that most street children projects in Tanzania provide services predominantly to boys, and the number of girls in projects which provide services to both boys and girls is very minimal (Lugalla and Barongo, 2000; UNICEF, 1999^a). During the fieldwork period, the UCSC project was keen to respond to the identified lack of service provision for street girls in Arusha. The

UCSC shelter was moved to a larger building which had space for a separate girls' dormitory, a girls' dormitory was built at the residential centre, and more female social workers and nurses were employed at the two centres, in order to accommodate and support street girls. By the end of 2002, there were eight girls aged 8-14, who stayed first at the shelter in town, where home visits to the girls' families were conducted by project staff. The girls whose families were not able to support them to attend school were then accommodated at the residential centre, where they lived with roughly 50 boys.

In a focus group conducted with the girls, they appeared satisfied with the running of the centre. They told me, however, that on one occasion, six of the girls ran away from the centre, because they missed their mothers, siblings or friends, but had been persuaded to return to the centre, and visit home in the school holidays instead. They had now been enrolled in primary school, which they were enjoying (girls, UCSC residential centre, 7/12/02). As with other street children projects in Tanzania providing services to girls, the girls represented a small minority compared to the number of boys staying at the centre, and as such, their needs were an add-on to a much larger project working with boys, without much gender planning for girls' particular needs or interests. This was illustrated by staff attitudes, for example, while staff supervised the boys playing football on a nearby playing field in the afternoons, there was no attempt by staff to organise any alternative sports or other recreational activities with the girls. Furthermore, when activities are organised specifically for girls, there is a danger that they may reflect stereotypical gender roles. Gender planning and analysis throughout the project, and gender-awareness training for project workers would ensure that projects addressed the particular gender needs and interests identified by girls and boys.

In view of the small population groups of street girls, smaller development projects might be more appropriate to ensure a gender-balance.

Young people's experiences of the UCSC project in relation to participation and gender equality have highlighted key issues of concern. This suggests that the goal of 'child-initiated, shared decisions with adults', proposed as the top rung in Hart's ladder of participation (1992), is still a long way off (Hart, cited in Ennew, 1994). The next section gives a brief overview of the services provided by Theresa House, a small Christian project working with young women from poor backgrounds, including some former street girls.

Theresa House

As mentioned in Chapter 3, I was only able to gain a snapshot view of the other projects working with street children in Arusha due to limited contact time with the young people and staff there. The data I collected about Theresa House is therefore based on an individual interview with the manager of the project.

Theresa House was a small Roman Catholic project set up in 1999, aiming to provide training opportunities to young women, aged 10-20, from poor backgrounds who had completed primary or secondary school so that they could gain skills to become self-reliant, as an alternative to commercial sex work or domestic work as a 'house girl' (Manager, Theresa House, 28/5/00). Training offered to the young women included tailoring, embroidery, reading and writing, and hotel management courses for those who finished Form 4 secondary school. There were also plans to teach batik-making. Of the eight girls staying at the centre, only one had finished Form 4 and was studying hotel

management, others had finished Standard 7, Standard 4, and 2 at primary school, while the other three had never been to school at all. The young women at the centre had a highly structured routine, with a rota for cleaning and cooking the meals for everyone in the house, combined with working in the garden, growing vegetables, sewing and then going to school in the afternoon, while weekends were free for visiting friends and family and going to church on Sundays.

The manager explained that when the project was first set up, staff found it difficult to stop the young women from going back to town at night:

‘We took three months to analyse their behaviour and on Wednesdays and Saturdays, the disco nights, they used to run away to go to the disco. We had to put in place some surveillance because youths used to come looking for them, even as far as here. And we saw that it was dangerous, so we put a padlock on the gate and put in place rules for them, which we drew up together. So they are just allowed to go to town on Saturdays and Sundays but they are forbidden from sleeping outside the centre or from being over an hour late in the evening. They used to run away and return in the morning the next day, and we recorded it, if it happened three times, we gave them a warning and if they do it again, we suspend her for two weeks, so that she sees the importance of living here. Others failed and wrote us letters saying that they cannot stay here like prisoners, and they left. Of the nine original girls, only two stayed’ (Manager, Theresa House, 28/5/00).

Indeed, later in the interview, the manager stated that either herself or her colleague had to sleep at the centre with the girls, otherwise they ‘might not sleep here, they could

bribe the night watchman and go to sleep away from here and return early in the morning' (Manager, Theresa House, 28/5/00). When asked about the rules of the centre, the manager emphasised that the most important ones concerned girls' absence from the centre at night, being late back, or telling lies when asking for permission to visit her family, which could all result in being expelled from the centre, following a warning. These comments suggest that, although the rules of the centre had been drawn up in consultation with the young women, the project was driven by restrictive notions of girls' sexuality, likely to be linked to the Roman Catholic philosophy of the centre. Indeed, the UNICEF study found that the few projects working with street girls tended to be motivated by Christian principles based on notions of girls' sexual vulnerability and usually aimed to 'rescue' girls from the dangers of the street by placing them in a closed environment (UNICEF, 1999^a: 282).

The idea of girls' presence on the street subverting cultural values and gender norms can be linked to Butler's theory of 'gender performativity', as discussed in the previous chapter (Butler, 1993)²⁴. As Butler suggests, 'acting out of line with heterosexual norms brings with it ostracism, punishment and violence', whereby society reasserts hegemonic power regimes and gender norms (ibid: 315). Theresa House seemed to be typical of projects aiming to assist street girls, since it was based on restrictive notions of girls' sexuality, confining girls within a domestic setting. Theresa House was located some distance from the centre of town and, in comparison to the UCSC project, was much more enclosed, with a high iron gate and fence surrounding the house and courtyard, intended to stop the girls escaping (fieldwork journal, 20/5/00). As the UNICEF researchers noted, street girls, who, like street boys, were accustomed to their independence on the street, were likely to reject such a restrictive environment:

²⁴ See pp.287-291.

When street children programmes do cater for the special needs of girls, they focus on sexual vulnerability at the expense of rights of self-determination. The tendency is to remove girls from the dangers of the street and place them very quickly in a closed environment. Such hasty action, with its lack of respect for the girls' autonomy, often results in a large number escaping once more to the freedom of the street (UNICEF, 1999^a: 282).

The three former street girls interviewed at Theresa House said that they were satisfied with the running of the centre and how problems were dealt with by project staff. However, Blandina, aged 14, ran away from the centre soon after the interview, accompanied by another street girl who had been persuaded to stay at Theresa House after contact with the UCSC project, and returned to the street (fieldwork journal, 4/6/00). This suggests that enclosed institutional environments are inappropriate for many young women living on the street, in the same way as many street boys reject such an institutional setting. The next section examines a new initiative aimed at the so-called 'hard core' street children in Arusha, those who preferred to stay on the street rather than in an institutional setting.

Arusha Referral Service

Arusha Referral Service (ARS) was a partnership project established in 2001 by three local NGOs/ CBOs working with street children in Arusha, as a response to the Municipality round-ups of children on the street. It built on the work of Friends of

KIDS²⁵ (Kids in Difficult Situations)'s volunteer-run street-based feeding programme, which provided meals and informal educational activities four days a week to children on the street. ARS brought the work of Friends of KIDS together with the expertise of more established NGOs working with street children, and established a steering committee comprising government representatives from the Municipality, District Office and Social Welfare department, to play an advisory role. The overall goal of the project was to reduce the number of street children by 80 per cent over a five year period. The specific objectives of the project were firstly to develop the street-based programme into a full day drop-in informal education and basic needs programme, secondly, to try to reunify children with their families and refer children and families on to other services, thirdly to build the capacity of NGOs and CBOs working with children in Arusha, and fourthly, to undertake participatory action research with the 'hard core' youths 'for them to come up with ways of disengaging with street life and implementing those strategies' (Co-ordinator, ARS, 17/12/02).

The establishment of the project, in co-operation with Arusha Municipality, resulted in an agreement that the Municipality would no longer conduct any round-ups of children living on the street. In 2000 and 2001, the Municipality conducted two round-ups, which resulted in many street children being detained in remand homes for periods of up to a few weeks until they were sent back home under police escort, only to return to town within days (Community Development Officer, Arusha Municipality, 15/11/02). During my second period of fieldwork, the street-based feeding programme was in operation, which an average of 80 street children (mostly boys) attended at lunch time four days a week, where they received a meal, could access first aid and medical

²⁵ Friends of KIDS (Kids in Difficult Situations), a volunteer organisation, formed by a group of concerned expatriate volunteers in 2000, which works under Arusha Rotary Club. Provides a street-based programme of meals, clothes, access to first aid and medical treatment and informal education activities, such as sports events, for street children in Arusha.

treatment, and social workers identified and interviewed newcomers to the street and visited children's families. Project workers also held a weekly meeting with the children before the meal to discuss issues of concern or any changes to the programme. The co-ordinator suggested that the project hoped to gradually develop the level of children's participation in the decision-making about the programme:

RE: To what extent do children participate in the decision-making about the programme?

C: We have these weekly meetings with them on Wednesdays before the meal. It's something we're still trying to work to build up, because to try and get their attention, with those many children for more than 15-20 minutes is something of a miracle. It's something we're trying out, but we want to try to get it going much more once we've got the kids more into the rhythm of it. They've elected a representative, a leader of their own, who is a street kid himself. He also sits on the steering committee, he works quite closely with us, as he's the in-between person with us and the kids. We involve them in trying to come up with the rules for the street-based programme, so we facilitated that. We have had some children turning up later on Wednesdays though to avoid the meeting. Eventually, it would be ideal if we had a full day programme, because you tend to have more control over them, for lack of a better way of saying it, than if they come in for an hour and then leave. (Co-ordinator, ARS, 17/12/02)

This highlights an important point raised in the literature on children's participation, that children also have the right *not* to participate in a given process, as do adults, and this must be respected (Johnson et al., 1998). While ARS's efforts to include a street children's representative on the steering committee represented a significant step

forward in terms of young people's participation in street children projects in Arusha, there was a danger with just one older male representative, who had spent several years in residential care attending vocational training school, that the voices of other street children would be neglected. This approach could lead to tokenism, which in Hart's ladder of child participation, represents one of the first rungs of non-participation (Hart, 1992, cited in Ennew, 1994). Given the diversity of children living on the street, a larger, more representative group of children is necessary to move towards the goal of child-initiated shared decisions with adults.

I have discussed various issues concerning the participation of young people in the main development projects providing services to street children in Arusha. The discussion highlights the challenge to adult-child power relations, particularly in institutional settings, posed by the idea of children's participation and accepting children as equal partners in the development process. These ideas will be discussed further in the next section, which explores advocacy for children's rights and children's participation in decision-making processes at the national level in Tanzania.

Advocacy and children's participation at national level

During recent years there have been a number of new initiatives which have successfully advocated for children's rights at the national level and aim to increase children and young people's participation in decision-making processes in Tanzania. The National Network of Organisations working with Children (NNOC) was formally registered in 2001 as an umbrella organisation of organisations working with children, particularly children in difficult circumstances. NNOC's main aims were to advocate together as one voice on children's rights issues, to act as a linking organisation,

bringing together all the organisations working with children in Tanzania, to mobilise resources for the use of all the organisations, and to provide a forum for organisations to discuss issues of concern, share expertise and experiences (interview with chair, NNOC, 27/11/02). By the end of 2002, there were 29 member organisations from different regions across the country working with street children, disabled children, children living in orphanages and other children in difficulties.

NNOC encourages young people's participation within its member NGOs, and have facilitated several national forums for young people to come together to give their views and influence policy. Young people do not participate at present at the executive committee level, but the chair expressed his commitment to involving children and young people more in the decision-making of the organisation in future: 'We think, in the future, children should get more time to participate in the decision-making of NNOC, maybe at the higher level as well' (Chair, NNOC, 27/11/02). Recent successes have included developing a NNOC child reunification policy, which all the members can use to standardise procedures for working with children in difficult circumstances; facilitating the participation of children and young people and NNOC member organisations in the national level discussions at the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on Children in 2002. The UNGASS process reviewed the past ten years progress at the national level towards achieving the goals set out in the UN *World Fit for Children* document, based on UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. NNOC, with the support of Plan International, Save the Children Fund and UNICEF, came up with a child-friendly version of the UN document, which was translated into Swahili, so that children could discuss it in forums to feed into the UNGASS process.

NNOC also facilitated the launch of the Tanzania Movement for and with Children (TMC) in 2001, as part of the wider Global Movement for Children²⁶. The main goal of TMC is to 'build a Tanzania fit for children' (Co-ordinator, TMC, 28/11/02). Working through 70 partners, mainly NGOs but also the private sector, in 20 regions in Tanzania, TMC aims to influence national policies to promote children's issues and advocate for children's rights. As the co-ordinator pointed out, the idea behind the TMC was to create momentum for children's voices to be heard and included in the development process, in the same way as the women's movement and the shift towards gender and development in the 1980s and 1990s meant that women were seen as partners in development:

'How do we put children on the national agenda? We know that the women's movement was a great achievement for women's rights, but now for children, if we're saying 60 per cent of the population of Tanzania are children and young people, then there is a big group of our resources that is missing in contributing towards our developmental issues in Tanzania' (Co-ordinator, TMC, 28/11/02).

Following the UNGASS process, NNOC/ TMC members and children and young people were involved in regional workshops to help formulate the National Plan of Action for the next ten years, to show how they will take forward the UN *World Fit for Children* document. NNOC and TMC have also been involved in other national processes, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, Poverty Week, public expenditure review: 'At the Ministry level, there is that respect for NNOC, I'll be

²⁶ The Global Movement for Children brought together children, adolescents and adults to produce the document 'A world fit for children' in the run-up to the UN Special Session on Children. The main focus of the Global Movement for Children was a major worldwide campaign of pledges called 'Say Yes for Children' launched around the world from March 2001, which was presented to Nelson Mandela and Graca Machel at the Children's Forum in New York, May 2002 (UNICEF, 2002^a).

honest, they can't do anything which concerns children without inviting us!' (Chair, NNOC, 27/11/02).

The co-ordinator of TMC suggested that the level of children and young people's participation in Tanzania had grown significantly since 1990 and TMC was taking the lead in advocating for children's participation:

'At the national level, if you look at what happened in 1990 and last year, there has been a great change in how children participate. The movement is trying to make sure that all the national guidelines, national policies, have elements or specific articles about children's participation and how best can they give their views. Even now we're pushing at the public expenditure review, the budget guidelines of Tanzania, to include a specific item which says that all the sectors, when they're budgeting should consider children and young people when they are budgeting for different activities' (Co-ordinator, TMC, 27/11/02).

The Junior Council, was another initiative which emerged from the Tanzania Movement for and with Children. This was a national council of children, made up of representatives aged 10-18, elected from each region in Tanzania, which met for the first time in December 2002. Recognising the diversity of young people and the need to ensure the council was representative, some special seats were reserved for disabled children, street children, young refugees etc. and the guidelines for elections emphasised the need for boys and girls to participate equally as candidates in the election process, which was conducted through NGOs, schools, districts and regions:

‘At the national level, children have decided to establish a Junior Council of the United Republic of Tanzania, which is coming soon. It’s an initiative of children, they wanted to make sure that they have a national body, where they can talk and share different things, but also influence the government directly. They felt that there were a lot of NGOs supporting them, working with them, but if you look at are they being taken seriously, it’s not happening. (Co-ordinator, TMC, 27/11/02).

The co-ordinator suggested that support for the establishment of the Junior Council had been slow from certain sectors, which highlights the fact that ‘children’s participation poses a fundamental threat to adult/child power relationships, which makes its institutionalisation a great challenge’ (Johnson et al., 1998: 175). It remains to be seen to what extent a youth-led Junior Council will be able to exert influence over government policy.

The chair of NNOC and co-ordinator of TMC both acknowledged the challenges involved in increasing the level of children’s participation within NGOs, and identified the need for capacity building, both of project workers and children, to enable them to participate in decision-making more fully:

‘I think first of all, participation itself is a difficult thing, both for adults and children, so I think first of all, the staff have to be trained in child participation, they have to be ready to cope with it. And also children themselves have to be encouraged to participate, because this was not our tradition. Children are just told what to do and they do, they say, “yes, sir”, but now they need to become

aware that their ideas are important, so they are trained to be ready to participate. so they don't worry' (Chair, NNOC, 27/11/02).

'First is the question of capacity building, how do we support NGOs to have a common understanding, what does it mean? A lot of them are talking about children's participation, but in practice they totally abuse children's participation itself. So how to build skills of NGOs, and how do we create a link so that they can share experiences, they are doing that, but if you look at children's participation, there is still a big question. From the government level to the local level, people see it as a threat. "Why do you want to give power to children? How can I sit at a table with a child as a partner and discuss issues, I have ten years' experience, university education, but now you're telling me to sit with a Standard 6 child [child who has completed six years of primary school]!" It's still quite a challenge, but we believe after some time, we will succeed in children's participation. It's not only in Tanzania, it's a challenge everywhere.'

(Co-ordinator, TMC, 28/11/02).

This again highlights the fact that children's participation challenges adult/ child power relations, which many adults perceive as a threat. It illustrates the point made by Pridmore that despite children's responsibilities at the household level, as demonstrated in Chapters 4 and 5, children are largely excluded from decision-making processes, which makes institutionalising children's participation particularly challenging:

Although children's participation in the work of the family and particularly in child-care is traditional, the notion of children as partners in decision-making processes is both new and radical and some would argue that it is neither

desirable nor achievable. It remains to be seen how far institutions will ever overcome traditional resistance to admitting children to the decision-making process in societies where they are traditionally the least powerful members.

(Pridmore, in Johnson et al., 1998: 152)

The efforts of NNOC and TMC to advocate for children's rights at the national level in Tanzania, and encourage children and young people's participation in national processes have made significant steps towards addressing the strategic needs of children and young people in difficult circumstances. Challenges facing NNOC included communication difficulties between member organisations, lack of dedicated staff time and an office base, and lack of resources to enable member NGOs to participate in meetings etc.(interview with chair, NNOC, 27/11/02). Other challenges identified by TMC were how to facilitate children's participation in the movement, how to involve the private sector in a meaningful way, how to influence the media to take children's issues seriously, how to localise the movement into the regions, so that they can create their own movements which they take forward at the local level (interview with co-ordinator, TMC, 28/11/02). Despite these challenges, however, both organisations' plans for the future included: developing their advocacy work for children's rights, sharing information and expertise between NGOs, and encouraging and facilitating children and young people's participation as active partners in the development process.

The next section explores ways to redress some of the structural inequalities facing children and young people in Tanzania through legal and social policy reform, based on the suggestions of project staff working within the NGO and statutory sectors.

Legal and social policy reform

Several of the NGO project workers/ co-ordinators interviewed and the Community Development Officer for the Arusha Municipality suggested several areas of legal and social policy which should be reformed in order to address the needs of street children and other children in difficult circumstances. Project staff felt that many of the laws were outdated, since they were formulated during the colonial era, and thus needed to be revised to take account of the current socio-economic situation in Tanzania, and the specific goals for children's rights set down in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The chair of the umbrella NGO, Forum for Child Concerned NGOs in Arusha suggested that some progress was being made to revise laws concerning children:

‘When addressing the issue of children, some laws seem to be harsh, some outdated, they were made when there weren't these problems. The Tanzanian Law Commission has been commissioned to identify the laws that need to be amended, and there is also a proposal to prepare a Children's Statute, a law which will deal with children in all circumstances, all the sections from different laws, are supposed to be all in one document. This is in progress, and we have attended some training to share with those who we are trying to identify the laws to be amended’ (Chair, FOCNA, 5/12/02).

In particular, project staff pointed out the need to standardise the definition of a child throughout Tanzanian legal policy. The Tanzania Movement for and with Children, and the National Network of Organisations working with Children, had a key role to play in advocating for children's rights and child-centred policies at the national level:

‘The challenge that we have at TMC and towards child rights in Tanzania, is how to keep the movement going in terms of how do you inspire more people to take an active role in working together in changing the situation to ensure children have the best start in life. And how do we best influence the government, how to have proper channels through policies, legal reform and other national processes that are going on to focus on children and take children’s issues seriously. Because the government has ratified and signed the UNCRC, but if you look at the laws in Tanzania most of them don’t reflect the UNCRC’ (Co-ordinator, TMC, 28/11/02).

Particular areas of concern suggested by project staff were:

- Schools – corporal punishment should be abolished, all teachers should receive training in children’s rights, child-friendly schools should be created.
- More training initiatives and opportunities should be set up aimed at primary school leavers to enable them to gain livelihood skills.
- Child labour – government should implement the forthcoming national policy guidelines on child labour in Tanzania, to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, and protect working children to ensure a decent wage, consider their education etc.

The co-ordinator of TMC highlighted the fact that since children are dependent on work to support themselves and often their families, children’s working conditions should be improved and their employment rights should be secured, rather than abolishing child labour altogether:

'Kuleana [Centre for Children's Rights] was saying we shouldn't eliminate child labour, because they believed if we eliminate child labour, there is evidence that children are doing it because they need to get support for their families, for their education, for their lives. So if we say no child labour at all, where will they go, what will they do, how will they survive? The Ministry has issued a code of conduct supporting the employment of children and young people, to ensure they get a better wage, consider their education etc. [...] Issues we are raising within this document is how best can children participate in making sure that those guidelines can actually help working children, what is their role? On the other hand, we are saying we should eliminate the worst forms of child labour, but what about the other forms? There is a national steering committee working on the policy on child labour, which will take a while, but there's a lot of push from NGOs as well'. (Coordinator, TMC, 27/11/02)

- Police – change attitudes towards street children through training in children's rights, and raising awareness about street children. Employ police officers with special expertise in listening to children at police stations, ensure that children who have committed a crime are not harassed or detained in police custody, but placed in remand homes if necessary.

The manager of the UCSC shelter pointed out that at present, the police confiscated street children's money, locked them up in police custody if they saw them sniffing glue, and released them the next day (Staff discussion, UCSC shelter, 28/6/00). The chair of NNOC said that workshops held with police officers in Dar es Salaam on children's rights had been very successful to date and had resulted in a large reduction in the number of children being arrested, thus children's rights training seems to have a

positive effect on changing police attitudes towards street children (Chair, NNOC, 27/11/02).

- Legal system – adopt more child-centred approaches in court etc.
- Media – should receive training in children’s rights and give issues concerning children a higher priority.
- Healthcare – change discriminatory attitudes of medical personnel towards street children, provide free health care services to street children and other children in difficult circumstances
- Family planning – provide better access and education about family planning services.
- Reduce rural-urban inequalities in access to services, for example, improve rural hospitals, schools, electricity supplies, etc. to reduce the incentives for people to migrate to urban areas.
- Provide government funding to develop community safety nets – the *balози*²⁷ [village leaders] could help to identify poor families in need of assistance to pay medical costs and school expenses.
- Raise awareness of the importance of partnership and networking between NGOs working with children in difficult circumstances, NGOs should be transparent and share information and expertise so that they can advocate together for children’s rights through the National Network of NGOs working with Children, Tanzania Movement for and with Children and regional networks.

²⁷ *Balози* is a village leader of ten households at the local political level, within the structure of the ruling CCM party [Revolutionary Party].

The co-ordinators of FOCNA, NNOC, and TMC all suggested that competition and a lack of transparency and trust between NGOs working with children had hitherto hindered the opportunities for networking, sharing of expertise, and collective advocacy for children's rights. This reflects the findings of several studies conducted on street children NGOs, which suggested that the lack of co-ordination and networking between NGOs and government had resulted in duplication of activities and wasting of scarce resources (Lugalla and Barongo, 2000; UNICEF, 1999^a).

The suggestions of street children and advocacy project workers give several indications of possible policy interventions and ways to build the capacity of personnel in various sectors which are concerned with street children to better meet their practical and strategic needs. The final section explores how advocacy and education at the community and household level could help to challenge the unequal adult-child power relations, which children rebel against when they leave home for the street.

Advocacy and education at the community and household level

A strategic need identified by the young people at the UCSC project was for staff to advocate for children within the community. As noted in the reports of home visits in Chapter 4, UCSC project staff discussed with parents and other family members the harm caused to children by corporal punishment etc. and tried to change parents' negative attitudes towards their children for running away and leading a 'deviant' lifestyle on the street. Thus, staff conducting home visits seemed to act as advocates for the children, and try to reduce tensions and conflicts between the generations in a limited way. This role in advocating for children's rights within the community could however be developed further with the participation of former street children staying at

the centres, to reach a wider audience. Creative participatory techniques, such as drama, dance, rap songs, videos etc. could be used to send a direct message from former street children to members of community groups, churches, schools, the police etc. and inspire discussion of why children leave home for the streets and challenge societal attitudes towards street children. Indeed, street children NGOs in Moshi and Dar es Salaam used drama and film to advocate for street children's rights within the community (for example, the film *Neema* produced by Youth Cultural Information Centre). In addition, Kuleana Center for Children's Rights, Mwanza played a leading role in advocating and campaigning for children's rights at the national level since 1994, through their widely distributed publications and posters.

When the women participating in the focus group at a local community centre were asked at the end of the discussion entitled, 'Street children – whose responsibility?' about what could be done both within the home and within the community to prevent a child from leaving home for the street, they gave several suggestions:

- To provide children with all their needs, such as food, shelter, clothing, education, health care, love
- To love all children, and not to discriminate on account of gender
- To educate parents about the need for family planning to ensure that children's basic needs can be met, and provide more family planning services
- To involve children in activities within the home
- To raise children with the family's religious values
- To educate the community about the ways to prevent the presence of street children (Vocational Training Centre, 4/5/00).

This shows an awareness, amongst the women, of gender discrimination within the home and wider community, which impacts on both boys' and girls' decision to leave for the street. It also highlights the need for more community education and accessible provision of family planning services to enable parents to make informed choices about the number of children they want and are able to provide for. These responses also reveal a perception that the parental role entailed more than just providing for children's basic needs - the women thought that education, love, informal teaching within the home, and religious values were just as important. The women participating in the focus group expressed their thanks to me at the end of the discussion for helping them to see street children in a more favourable light, as children just like their own, rather than simply as 'thieves', and that any child could become a 'street child' for a whole range of reasons (Vocational Training Centre, 4/5/00). This suggests that if resources were available, community workshops to discuss why children leave home for the street could help to change society's negative attitudes towards them and encourage positive parenting skills, which would help in the longer term strategic goal of challenging oppressive adult-child relationships within the household.

The two managers of the UCSC shelter and residential centre echoed several of the women's suggestions for ways to prevent children from leaving home for the streets at the community level. The manager of the shelter explained that the Swahili saying '*Kila mtoto anakuja na riziki yake*' [Each child comes with his/her own blessing] was often cited as a justification for large families, preventing people from planning how many children they have. This reveals the perception that children are valued as a potential resource for the household. The managers also emphasised the need to develop more awareness and community education about positive parenting skills,

parental responsibilities to their children, and for parents/ guardians to show love and be close to their children. They also felt that community education in rural areas to explain about the situation of street children, and the loss and harm that is caused by children living on the streets, both to the children themselves, and to society as a whole, would help to prevent children leaving home for the streets (Staff discussion, UCSC shelter, 28/6/00). The chair of NNOC explained that the lack of awareness in rural areas about the situation of street children had motivated the Youth Cultural Information Centre to produce the film *Neema* [girl's name meaning 'The grace of God/ God's blessing] with street children:

'We made a film here of street children called *Neema*, that came from a true story. And why we made that, we found that when children go to the street, nobody is coming for them, nobody is following them, and when you go to the rural areas, they don't know, they just think that cities are good, children will be comfortable, so there's a lack of information. I think we need to inform the people in the communities that children going to the street is not a good thing. And once they are in the street, it's very hard, very difficult to go back to their normal [lives], it will take them some time' (Chair, NNOC, 27/11/02).

Using drama, the film shows the role that village elders in rural areas could play in helping children who left home for the street to reintegrate into their home communities. It also illustrates how elders could bring parents, who neglect their responsibilities towards their children, to account using traditional processes for settling disputes within the community.

Conclusion and policy recommendations

This chapter has examined a range of ways of responding to the experiences of children in difficult circumstances in Tanzania, which were explored in the previous chapters.

Moser's framework of 'practical' and 'strategic' gender needs and interests was adapted to distinguish between the immediate and more longer term needs of street children and other children in difficult circumstances. The practical needs of street children aim to improve their living conditions, addressing immediate perceived necessities identified by the children themselves, and reducing the risks they are exposed to. Strategic needs on the other hand represent a more 'rights-based' perspective, and encompass more longer term goals which challenge the oppressive adult –child power relations that subordinate young people, as well as the wider structural inequalities facing young people.

Street children identified their basic survival needs for food, clothing, shelter, health care etc., emotional needs, such as love, advice, guidance, teaching of moral values, as well as the more strategic goals of education and training, employment and livelihood strategies. Children from AIDS affected households identified very similar needs, which emphasises the point discussed in Chapter 6, that development assistance should be targeted at all vulnerable children in poor communities, based on a broader concept of children in difficult circumstances, rather than just 'AIDS orphans'. School pupils and children in difficult circumstances all identified education and training as the key priority for their future lives. Street boys, school-boys and girls were shown to have higher aspirations for future employment than street girls, revealing that street girls had internalised negative perceptions of their status, and the opportunities available to young women with little education. This suggests that low expectations may be a

psychological coping strategy for children growing up in poverty, but that gender is key factor, as well as poverty, in influencing children's aspirations. The differing life-course trajectories of street children reveal the diversity of children's attitudes towards NGO projects set up for their benefit. While some valued the educational opportunities offered by institutions, others rejected such an institutional setting after the freedom and independence of the street.

The perceptions of project staff interviewed at the main street children projects in Arusha of the practical needs of street children largely conformed to the children's own perspectives, although there were some specific needs identified according to gender and age. In addition to the needs identified by the street children themselves, some further practical needs could be formulated from street children's concrete experiences detailed in the previous chapter. These practical needs would aim to improve their living conditions, reduce the risks they face while on the street and strengthen their own survival strategies. These could include:

- access to free and impartial health care, including sexual health services and information, to address street children's lack of access to medical treatment and lack of protection from sexually transmitted diseases
- access to free, confidential counselling services, and street outreach advice and support workers who they can share their problems with, to address feelings of loneliness, isolation and emotional detachment within the street environment
- clean, safe shelter with separate facilities for girls and boys
- access to clean water, washing and toilet facilities

- access to informal education activities and vocational training to enable street children to learn basic literacy and numeracy skills, and livelihood skills to support themselves
- protection from exploitation, harassment, violence and sexual abuse, with regard to child domestic workers, commercial sex workers, young people working in the mines, and other young workers, children begging in the street etc.
- freedom to play, relax and associate together in public spaces
- protection from police harassment and incarceration

This list is by no means exhaustive, but offers some suggestions for practical improvements to the lives of street children as a response to their experiences.

As noted earlier, children and young people's strategic needs and interests focus on more longer-term goals and ways to challenge the structural inequalities and oppressive adult-child relations facing young people. This includes children's participation rights and valuing children as active participants in the development process. Key issues relating to children's participation in the main development projects working with children in Arusha were identified. The section on young people's participation in the UCSC project suggested that for many street boys, the UCSC project offers valuable educational and vocational training opportunities. Some street children however, complained of a lack of resources and unfair punishments at the centre, which made them leave the centre to go back to the street temporarily or permanently. Street children felt that their views were sometimes not listened to or acted upon by the management of the project, which represents a denial of their right to express their opinions and have a say in all decisions affecting them, as set down in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Efforts had been made to accommodate street

girls, but as a small minority compared to the large numbers of boys accessing services, their specific gender needs and interests were at risk of being neglected.

Theresa House, a small Christian project aimed at street girls, was shown to be typical of projects working with street girls, which are largely based on restrictive notions of girls' sexuality, linked to the Christian principles of the project. This again illustrates Butler's theory of 'gender performativity', which sanctions individuals, such as street girls, who do not conform to the hegemonic gender norms of society. While some young women conformed to the regime at the centre, some street girls found it difficult to adapt to such an restrictive institutional setting and returned to the street. Arusha Referral Service represented a new street-based initiative which aimed to assist street children on the street, rather than in an institutional setting. Mechanisms were being set up to enable young people to participate more in the decision-making of the project, although achieving meaningful child participation proved challenging. At the national level, the National Network of Organisations working with Children in Tanzania (NNOC) and Tanzania Movement for and with Children (TMC) had an important role to play in advocating for children's rights, and facilitating children and young people's participation in strategic policy interventions at the local, regional, national and international levels.

Children and young people, NGO project workers, and mothers at a community centre, identified several areas of legal and social policy reform at the national level, and advocacy and education at the community and household levels, which would aim to address the structural inequalities facing children and young people in Tanzania. Policy recommendations, formulated in the light of previous chapters, include:

- Education – corporal punishment should be abolished, all teachers should receive training in children’s rights, create a child-friendly learning environment in schools, which provides quality education which is interactive, participatory, non-discriminatory towards gender, ability or other differences, and relevant to children’s daily lives and aspirations. Provide gender-awareness training for all teachers to eliminate gender discrimination and harassment of girls and young women in schools, and prosecute teachers who abuse their position of power.
- Provide more training initiatives and opportunities for primary school leavers and older young people to enable them to gain livelihood skills, basic life-skills, and access to micro-credit to enable young people to start up their own businesses.
- Child labour – government should implement national policy guidelines on child labour in Tanzania, to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, provide meaningful livelihood alternatives for children and families and education and training opportunities for children withdrawn from labour. Protect working children from harassment and exploitation - ensure a decent wage, reasonable hours, employers to consider children’s education etc., particularly with regard to child domestic workers.
- Police – provide training to all police officers on children’s rights and gender awareness, and raise awareness about the situation of street children and child commercial sex workers. Train and employ officers with special expertise in listening to children at police stations. Ensure that children who have committed a crime are not harassed or detained in police custody, but placed in remand homes if necessary, improve the provision of remand homes for young offenders.
- Legal system – adopt more child-centred approaches in court etc.

- Media – provide training in children’s rights and gender-awareness, and give issues concerning children a higher priority, present positive images of children, rather than as ‘victims’ or ‘deviant’ youths.
- Health care – provide children’s rights training and raise awareness about street children to reduce discriminatory attitudes of health personnel towards street children, provide free health care services to street children, children orphaned by AIDS, and other children in difficult circumstances and their families
- Family planning – provide better access to and education about family planning services and protection from sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV.
- Develop child- and youth-friendly sexual health clinics, where children and young people can access free and impartial sexual health information, counselling and services
- Reduce rural-urban inequalities in access to services, for example, improve rural hospitals and health clinics, schools, electricity supplies, access to clean water, transport and roads etc., to reduce incentives for rural-urban migration
- Provide government funding to develop community safety nets to support poor households – for example, identifying children and families in need of assistance to pay medical costs and school expenses
- Develop community education and raise awareness about the situation of street children, child domestic workers, child commercial sex workers, and other vulnerable children, children’s rights, gender discrimination, Female Genital Mutilation, impacts of HIV/ AIDS on children and families, and encourage and promote positive parenting skills within the household and wider community.
- Raise awareness of the importance of partnership and networking between NGOs working with children in difficult circumstances. NGOs should be transparent and share information and expertise so that they can advocate

together for children's rights and facilitate children's participation in decision-making processes through the National Network of NGOs working with Children, Tanzania Movement for and with Children and regional networks.

- Develop service provision for girls and young women in difficult circumstances based on awareness about their daily lives and own needs, interests and aspirations.
- Provide training on child- and youth-participation and gender-awareness for adults and children within NGOs, local, regional and national government structures and statutory authorities, schools, religious organisations, and the community. Develop mechanisms to enable children and young people to participate in decision-making processes from the level of the household, local community, regional to national and international levels.

These suggestions point to several possible policy interventions which attempt to challenge structural inequalities and oppressive adult-child, gender-discriminatory relations facing young people, from the micro level of the household through to community, regional and national levels. These measures to address the strategic needs of street children, other children in difficult circumstances, as well as young people in Tanzania generally, would bring many positive benefits to society. The quality of children's lives, as well as those of their families and communities would be improved, boys and girls would be able to contribute to the development process as equal and valued partners, and democratic processes would be strengthened. These policy recommendations are, however, very far-reaching, often broad and of a long term nature, which makes their implementation particularly challenging. Political commitment, an enabling environment and adequate resources are necessary to bring

about change over time. The final chapter takes forward many of the issues discussed here to draw some conclusions and explore the way forward.

Chapter 10



Photograph 19: Having fun, taken by street girl, aged 16 (Arusha, 2002).

Conclusions

Chapter 10

Conclusions

This thesis has furthered our understanding of the gendered experiences, needs and aspirations of street children, children orphaned by AIDS, and other children in difficult circumstances in Tanzania. To date limited literature exists in this area. This chapter draws out the key issues emerging from the study, re-evaluates the concept of 'street children' and explores some ideas for the way forward.

The child-centred ethnographic research methodology adopted in this study was shown to be appropriate for gaining an insight into children's perspectives. In particular, the use of participatory techniques such as drawing and photography enabled children with low levels of literacy to express their feelings visually and have more control over their representation of their lived realities. I adopted a reflexive stance with regard to the child and adult participants, as the children also did, in the ways they accepted me as a *mzungu* [European – used to mean 'white person'] young woman, and in my role as teacher/ social worker at the NGO street children project where I worked. While the ethical importance of listening to children and young people's views and believing their narrations guided my approach, Goffman's metaphor of social interaction as performance was useful in revealing the different impressions children and adults alike try to create for different audiences (Goffman, 1959). This highlights the fact that narratives and perceptions of 'truth' or 'reality' depend on who is speaking about whom, but all are equally valid.

The findings of this study highlighted certain key overarching issues, which build on ideas explored in the existing literature. Using the social construction of 'childhood' as

the theoretical framework, and the tools of gender analysis, the study showed that the economic and socio-cultural context has a major impact on children's social lives. The hegemonic global concept of 'childhood' which dominates international development policy, human rights discourse and national social policy was shown to cause tensions with 'traditional' African cultural values and concepts of 'childhood'. The duties children perform within the household as part of the socialisation process are based on traditional gender roles and the division of labour, which restricted girls' opportunities for recreation and study, while boys had more freedom to explore the outside environment and more time for homework. Corporal punishment was shown to represent an integral part of the cultural construction of childhood in Tanzania, which was experienced as overwhelmingly negative by the boys and girls participating in the study. Adults, however, seemed unaware of the negative impacts of their actions and resistant to change. I argue that there is a link between poverty and corporal punishment, as poor households may be more likely to resort to physical violence to discipline children due to the greater strains, anxieties and conflicts of interest within these households. The young people's accounts suggest that corporal punishment subordinates children, and severely inhibits a continued dialogue between adults and young people, marginalising them from decision-making at the level of the household, school and community.

The discussion about the school-learning environment in Tanzania, a key component of the social institution of childhood, highlighted key issues of concern which reinforce inequalities and negatively impact on children's education. Corporal punishment in schools was shown to be widespread, levels of poverty meant that some parents could not afford school fees and other expenses, leading to high drop-out rates, and school provided a 'girl-unfriendly learning environment', with girls experiencing

discrimination, sexual harassment and expulsion due to pregnancy (Kuleana, 1999).

Significantly, my research showed that there was an apparent contradiction between the Western values of formal education and religion, and African cultural values, expressed through the traditional teaching and customs of the family and community, including initiation rites. This interface of conflicting world-views creates tensions and has negative impacts on parents' ability to guide and protect their children. This was manifested in the difficulties parents faced in trying to guide and 'control' recalcitrant or rebellious children. Some boys from poor households misbehaved, were irresponsible in their agricultural duties, or engaged in theft from neighbours in the community, which parents and other relatives responded to with corporal punishment, which triggered the boys' move to the street. This indicates that some children may leave home to escape from trouble, in the community as well as in the family, that their own misdeeds have caused. This also raises issues about how parents can, and should, respond to such misbehaviour.

My research demonstrates that traditional initiation rites and male circumcision represent a characteristic of the cultural construct of childhood which can have potentially positive impacts on boys and young men. Positive benefits for boys include a sense of acceptance amongst their peers, a sense of belonging to their family and ethnic group, and becoming a more responsible member of the community.

Surprisingly, in some cases of street boys who returned home for their initiation rites, the cultural values instilled in them as part of the informal teaching which accompanied the circumcision ceremony helped to curb their formerly rebellious behaviour in running away from home to the street. However, girls' initiation into womanhood in preparation for marriage, which includes Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) amongst some ethnic groups, has particularly negative consequences for girls and young women.

Quite apart from the immediate and long term physical, psychological and sexual damage it causes, FGM and the informal teaching that accompanies it pressurises young women into becoming sexually active at an early age, and contributes to girls' lower educational performance, to teenage pregnancies, forced early marriage, and school drop-out rates. Thus, my research suggests that while boys and young men suffer from oppressive adult-child relations, girls and young women also face gender discrimination, gender-based violence and inequalities with the home, community and school environment.

The study argues that chronic poverty exacerbates and reinforces social marginalisation and gender inequalities, which in turn has negative consequences for children within the household. Leaving home to earn money to help support the family was an altruistic motive adopted by some children, in response to poverty. As is often the case, female-headed households appeared particularly vulnerable to impoverishment and insecurity. The study suggests that children whose mothers remarry tend to experience rejection from their mother and step-father, since according to custom, step-fathers are not expected to provide for older children from their wife's first marriage. Step-mothers, in the boys' experience, often subjected boys to harassment, neglect, physical and verbal abuse and exploited their labour, due to resentment and jealousy of boys' inheritance rights to their father's property over their own children. Significantly, however, children from a first marriage were also rejected by their father in some instances, illustrating that it is 'social', rather than 'biological' paternity which is important within African societies (Lockwood, 1997). Some men, particularly those involved in polygynous relationships, emphasise or de-emphasise particular relationships at particular times, resulting in the rejection, impoverishment and marginalisation of women and their children. Children's socio-economic status in relation to their father

was therefore shown to be dependent on the status of the father's relationship with the child's mother. Children's experiences of polygamous household structures revealed the economic pressures facing 'autocratic' father figures, but interestingly, also suggested that the large polygamous family could be seen as a source of support and company. The study demonstrated that in some cases the economic pressures, domestic violence and conflict of interest within poor households caused the breakdown of the family, and the household disintegrated.

The HIV/ AIDS epidemic is exacerbating the chronic poverty, social marginalisation and gender inequalities experienced by poor households in Tanzania. As would be expected, female-headed and child-headed households are particularly vulnerable to extreme poverty and insecurity, resulting in a lack of access to health care, education, property, livelihood and food security. The stigma surrounding HIV/ AIDS is still pervasive in northern Tanzania, and results in discrimination and ostracism within and outside the immediate family circle. The research highlighted how the burden of care falls predominantly on the different generations of women. Significantly however, the study demonstrates high degrees of women's resilience, and suggests that women's social networks were crucial to the survival of female-headed households. These networks were characterised by a fluidity of movement between rural and urban areas, and enabled women to cope with caring for children and sick and dying relatives.

As children negotiate their way through the constraints and possibilities of the social institution of childhood (James and Prout, 1997), children from AIDS-affected households must also cope with the AIDS stigma, the prolonged terminal illness of one or both parents, siblings and other relatives, bereavement and meeting their own survival needs as orphans. As would be expected, this has a detrimental impact on

children's psycho-social well-being at the level of the household and community and places children and young people from AIDS affected households at risk of dropping out of school. Significantly, my research demonstrates that seeking a living independently in the street environment is a survival strategy adopted by some children and young people who are ostracised by their extended family following the death of their parent(s). Furthermore, orphaned children are susceptible to exploitation and harassment as domestic servants within the extended family or in wealthier households in urban areas. Their vulnerable situation makes them more susceptible to HIV infection themselves.

The study also identified age-related and gendered vulnerabilities of young people to HIV / AIDS. In addition to orphaned children, young people living on the street, and girls and young women generally, were shown to be particularly vulnerable to HIV infection themselves, due to their low socio-economic status, sexual harassment, gender discrimination at school, lack of access to health care and lack of awareness and education about sexually transmitted diseases. Furthermore, some cultural practices such as traditional circumcision ceremonies, peer pressure and societal expectations to start sexual activity early, and early marriage, further increase young people's vulnerability to HIV. These factors constrain the ability of young people from poor communities to mitigate the risks and impacts of HIV/ AIDS.

This study argues that a complex myriad of factors influence children's decisions to leave home, and that children very often make a conscious choice of one lifestyle over another. Levels of national poverty and the socio-economic pressures facing families in Tanzania were shown to severely strain the intergenerational relationships between adults and children. In response to extreme poverty, social marginalisation,

subordination within diverse household structures, exploitation, rejection and feelings of 'being unloved' by parents, relatives and the extended family, some children exert their agency and seek out independent lives on the street. Poverty and social marginalisation are compounded by gender discrimination and oppressive adult-child relationships within the school and community, which also influenced children's decision to leave. Some children, particularly boys, may be motivated to leave home by a desire for an 'easier life' in town away from agricultural labour, or to escape trouble within the family and community caused by their own behaviour, viewed as irresponsible by the family and community. However, some street children's experiences of 'home' defy attempts at categorisation, revealing the diversity of children who become street children, and their own agency in constructing their social lives.

For some children, running away from home could be seen as an attempt to get parents and relatives to express the love that they feel is lacking. These children, who wish to return home and be reconciled with their family, are more likely to benefit from the services offered by street children projects, which can facilitate family reunification and reintegration into the children's home communities, or provide opportunities for education and training, when parents and relatives are unable or unwilling to support their children. In these instances, children and young people can be seen as re-accepting what Hecht (1998) terms the 'moral economy of the household' and becoming responsible members of the family once more. For other children, the street appears to be a transitional stage, until they can assume a more adult and independent status in the community. However, children who had spent extensive periods on the street found it very difficult to return home and adapt to a predominately rural livelihood, due to the 'deviant' street behaviour they had grown used to and their own self-perceptions. While some street children valued the educational and training opportunities offered by street

children projects, others found it difficult to engage with the longer-term educational goals of street children projects and rejected institutional settings, further illustrating their agency and independence in creating their own social worlds.

The study explored in detail children's experiences and perspectives of living, working and sleeping on the streets of Arusha, Tanzania. Key findings include children's overwhelming perception that life on the streets was 'bad' in terms of their physical and emotional well being due to a lack of basic needs, an unhygienic living environment which made them susceptible to illness, harassment, verbal and physical abuse, street violence, drug use, the risk of sexual coercion and sexual abuse, which consequently made them vulnerable to HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. Surprisingly, however, street children also seemed to have internalised negative connotations of 'street life' dominant in the wider community, accepting the normative view that street life is morally 'bad', due to the 'deviant' behaviour they were forced to adopt as survival strategies, such as drug use, prostitution, stealing, extortion, violence and sexual abuse. Significantly, despite exposure to often severely traumatic conditions on the street, girls and boys demonstrated considerable resilience, actively constructing their social worlds and refuting images of them as 'helpless victims'. The young people mentioned several positive aspects of street life which compensated to some extent for the risks and difficulties they experienced. These included the freedom of movement, both within and beyond the town, the thrill of danger and adventure, the attractions of 'modern' urban lifestyles, employment opportunities for a cash income, educational opportunities from street children projects, and the sense of self-esteem they gained by earning their own money and leading independent lives away from oppressive forms of adult control within the household. An important finding of this research is therefore the extent to which street life can be characterised by a series of paradoxes and

contrasts, with children's negative experiences being mediated by the excitement and thrill of deviating from the 'norms' of adult society. Thus, through non-conformity, street children reveal their agency, and may conceptualise 'deviancy' in a positive light.

A significant finding of this research is the extent to which girls have different experiences of living on the streets than boys. Although street girls only represent an estimated 20-30 per cent of young people living on the street in Tanzania, many of the research participants perceived a greater threat to girls in terms of their sexuality by living on the street. This widely held perception of greater sexual vulnerability was accompanied by a higher level of discrimination and verbal, physical and sexual abuse from members of the public, which girls' internalised in their self-perceptions. The research suggests that boys' presence in the outside environment on the street is more accepted and they were more able to survive by begging and doing casual work in the informal sector, with some boys working long hours in hazardous conditions in the mining industry. Judith Butler's theory of 'gender performativity' (1993) was used to theorise the process whereby girls who do not conform to the conventional gender role of performing reproductive duties within the home, such as street girls, destabilise the identity category and subvert norms of 'gender' as well as norms of 'childhood'. Society sanctions individuals who do not conform to hegemonic gender norms. Thus, the recruitment of girls found on the streets into wealthier households as domestic servants, forced early marriages, violence, exploitation, prostitution, ostracism and punishment of street girls can all be seen as society's reassertion of hegemonic power regimes and gender norms. Significantly, this discrimination was also reflected in the lack of service provision for street girls, and the few projects that did work with street girls were largely based on restrictive notions of girls' sexuality, often linked to Christian principles, which was illustrated by the case study project which worked with

street girls in Arusha. The stigma surrounding girls' presence on the street was shown to have negative impacts on girls' self-perceptions, and on their ability to seek safe reproductive health advice and to protect themselves from abusive situations.

Public perceptions linked to children's age and stereotypes about 'deviant' street youths made begging a less reliable survival strategy for more physically mature street children, forcing older girls and boys to engage in more 'deviant' activities, such as prostitution and theft. Street children were shown to develop fairly stable attachments to territories and solidarity amongst one another (generally in separate gender groups), as a form of protection and comfort. Street children demonstrated considerable resilience by developing networks of social contacts within their surrounding environment and community to meet their needs for food, clothing, medical treatment, protection, education and entertainment. Significantly, however, the children's responses indicated that these social networks did not meet their emotional needs for support, counselling and advice, resulting in a high level of self-reliance, solitude and distrust of others. The photographs street children took to represent their lives on the streets illustrate the intense solidarity and friendship that develops between young people in the street environment, as well as their freedom, independence and resilience. They also illustrate the different gendered experiences of street girls and boys, since the boys' photographs were taken in public spaces in town with their male friends, while the girls' photographs showed themselves in a domestic setting with boyfriends and male partners, and carrying out reproductive duties within the home.

In response to the children and young people's experiences, I used Moser's framework of 'practical' and 'strategic' gender needs and interests to distinguish between the immediate and longer-term needs of street children and other children in difficult

circumstances. The practical needs of street children aim to improve their living conditions, addressing immediate perceived necessities identified by the children themselves, and reducing the risks they are exposed to. Strategic needs on the other hand represent a more 'rights-based' perspective, and encompass more longer term goals which challenge the oppressive adult –child power relations that subordinate young people, as well as the wider structural inequalities facing young people.

Street children identified their basic survival needs for food, clothing, shelter, health care, emotional needs, such as love, advice, guidance, teaching of moral values, as well as the more strategic goals of education and training, employment and livelihood strategies. It is significant to note that children from AIDS affected households identified very similar needs. This emphasises the idea that development assistance should be targeted at all vulnerable children in poor communities, based on a broader concept of 'social orphans' and children in difficult circumstances, that is children whose parents and guardians are unable to provide for them, rather than just children orphaned by AIDS. This would avoid labelling children as 'AIDS orphans', which stigmatises them, and also because many other poor children suffer the same hardships. It is generally recognised that compared to institutionalisation, community-based care for orphans is cost-effective, builds on local communities' own coping strategies and, because it keeps children in a familiar social, cultural and ethnic environment, reduces their distress (UNICEF 1999^b). Whilst such community-based initiatives are proving the most successful way of coping with the orphan crisis, they are still in their infancy and need to be significantly scaled up and replicated in other sub-Saharan African countries in order to deal with the crisis effectively (ibid). This requires political will and the mobilisation of far more resources than are currently available.

As well as addressing street children and orphaned children's material needs and rights to food security, shelter, education, health care, inheritance, and livelihoods, and protection from exploitation and abuse, my research calls for street children and orphaned children's psychosocial needs to be addressed. This includes love, guidance, emotional support, information about protecting themselves from HIV / AIDS, and life skills to cope with their situation. In addition to these 'practical' needs, young people's 'strategic' needs must be addressed in order to challenge the structural inequalities facing them. This includes advocacy to protect children and young people's, particularly girls', rights to education, health care, protection from exploitation, violence and abuse, and rights to participate in all decisions affecting them, within the family, community and street environment.

Surprisingly, my research found that school pupils, street children and other children in difficult circumstances all identified education and training as the key priority for their future lives, despite the un-conducive learning environment identified at school. Their belief in the value of education emphasises the need to eliminate gender discrimination, and provide good quality education and training, which uses engaging, interactive methods, and is relevant to children's everyday lives and aspirations. A significant finding is that street boys, school-boys and school-girls would appear to have higher aspirations for future employment than street girls, revealing that street girls had internalised negative perceptions of their status, and the opportunities available to young women with little education. Whilst low expectations may be a psychological coping strategy for young people growing up in poverty, I argue that gender may be a more salient feature than poverty in influencing children's aspirations.

The study demonstrated the complex ways that young people exert their agency. This was manifested in the differing life-course trajectories of street children and the diversity of children's attitudes towards NGO projects set up for their benefit. While some children valued the educational opportunities offered by institutions, others rejected such an institutional setting after experiencing the freedom and independence of the street. Several street children identified a lack of resources, unfair punishments, and lack of participation in decision-making at street children projects in Arusha as key factors which made them go back to the street temporarily or permanently. This suggests that despite project workers' rhetoric about involving children, the reality of bringing about meaningful children's participation in decision-making processes within NGOs set up for their benefit has hitherto proved challenging and is often seen as a threat to adult-child power relations. New initiatives at the national level present promising steps forward in terms of advocating for children's rights at the strategic level, and facilitating the participation of children and young people in decision-making processes. However, in order for the views of children and young people to be listened to and acted upon, as equal partners in development, a change in attitudes is necessary among adults at the national, regional, community and household level.

The findings of this study thus call for a re-evaluation of the concept of 'street children', based on the lived realities, experiences, needs and aspirations voiced by children themselves. Children and young people in difficult circumstances show resilience in the face of adversity, particularly in the ways they develop social networks to meet their survival needs. I argue that street children's gendered life-course trajectories are characterised by considerable diversity and fluidity of movement between difficult home environments, the street, the mines, NGO projects, rural and urban areas. The research has highlighted the complex ways that children and young people negotiate

their way through the constraints and opportunities of the social institution of 'childhood' in Tanzania. As part of this process, children's relationship to the street varies according to their experiences, needs and aspirations at particular periods of their lives. This highlights the need for further research over a longer period, to explore young people's continuing relationship with the street, the opportunities they are able to access to escape their marginalised status, and their re-acceptance of the 'moral household economy' and their reintegration as 'responsible' members of the community. This relates to emerging theories about the intergenerational transmission of poverty (Harper et al., 2003), and emphasises the importance, within this, of recognising children's agency.

Despite the numerous NGO reports into street children and other children in difficult circumstances in Tanzania which often focus on remedial NGO interventions, there is a need for a more holistic approach to researching the experiences of children as social agents in their own right, and into their understandings and the ways they experience 'childhood'. Furthermore, this study has highlighted the importance of a gendered perspective in the analysis of children's experiences and the social structural inequalities facing children and young people. The use of gender analysis, combined with the theoretical framework of the social construction of 'childhood' has proved enlightening in this case study of street children and other children in difficult circumstances in Tanzania. This suggests the need for international development policy and programming to adopt gender-aware, as well as child-focused, rights-based approaches to address children and young people's strategic needs.

Particular themes which could not be explored in depth within the scale of this study, but which warrant further research include: how children conceptualise the notion of

'love', and the ways this is expressed by their parents and guardians; how girls view female initiation rites, and female genital mutilation, and their strategies for rejecting or conforming to the practice; the impacts of the paradox in concepts of 'childhood' between Western individualism, Christianity and human rights discourse on the one hand, and 'traditional' African cultural values on the other; the experiences of child domestic workers and child commercial sex workers; the link between poverty and corporal punishment/ domestic violence; the factors which cause family breakdown and some poor households to disperse. Only when adults learn to listen to children's views, experiences and aspirations, gain an insight into their perspectives, and involve girls and boys in decision-making processes from the macro level of international development policy, to the micro level of the household, will the UN goal of building 'A world fit for children' with children's participation, come closer to being realised.

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