

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF EVALUATION STRATEGIES FOR
INTERVENTION PROJECTS FOR GIRL STREET CHILDREN:
A PARTICIPATORY ACTION APPROACH**

by

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ABSTRACT

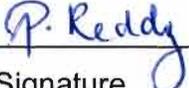
This study which was conducted in a shelter for girl street children in KwaZulu-Natal explored the programmes available to the girl street child and the current evaluation strategies for such programmes. The aim of the research was to provide insight into what criteria or indices children and service providers think should be used to evaluate the effectiveness of programmes for street children. Qualitative research methodology using a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach guided the research and allowed for in-depth discussions with the children living in the shelters as well as the staff involved. The children were between 12-18 years of age. Data were obtained through separate multiple focus group sessions with children and staff at the shelter. Seven focus group sessions were held with the children and three focus group sessions were held with the staff at the shelter. The sessions were tape-recorded and then transcribed.

The major findings of the study indicated that the children overall were enjoying their stay in the shelter. However, inconsistencies were identified between the experiences of the children and the work conducted by the staff members. Further, the findings of this study showed that programmes at the shelter being studied were evaluated, but the effectiveness of these evaluation strategies has been questioned.

Emanating from the findings, recommendations have been made with regards to practice issues and programme evaluation.

DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK

This study represents my original work and has not otherwise been submitted in any form for any degree to any tertiary institution. Where references are made of the work of others these are duly acknowledged in the text.


Signature

DEDICATION

This research report is dedicated to my father, the late Mr. Loganathan Moodley.

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I wish to convey my sincere thanks and appreciation to the following people, without whom this study would not have been possible:

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CHAPTER ONE: CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

"I was living with my mother and my brothers and sister at home. A few weeks later my uncle and I couldn't get along, we had our differences, so I just couldn't take it anymore and I decided to leave home, but not knowing where to go, so I end up at the beach. At two days, I founded help and here I'm today in TH (shelter) with new friends and a bright future ahead of me." (Phumi)

One of the most significant global challenges in social development is the increasing number of children living and working on the streets in the developing world. The United Nations Infant and Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), estimates that there are approximately 80 million children who are forced to live and work on the streets of the developing world in order to survive (Baybuga and Celik, 2004). Although there has been no official census on street children in Africa, it is estimated that there about five million (Ocholo, cited in Onolemhemhen and Pugh, 2002:33). Baybuga and Celik (2004) maintain that recently, the problem of street children has worsened worldwide due to increasing family separations and disagreements resulting from urbanisation, economic crises, political change, civil unrest, wars as well as natural disasters and epidemics. Research also indicates that street children are becoming a more important social problem in Africa (Ojanuga, 1992; Matchinda, 1999, cited in Onolemhemhen and Pugh, 2003:33).

This chapter focuses on providing details on the context and purpose of this study on programmes for girl street children. A discussion on the rationale, purpose and objectives, the significance of the study and the theoretical framework is also included.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

There are an estimated 15 000 street children in South Africa; the majority of them are African although there are also large numbers of coloured street children in the Cape (Swart Kruger and Donald cited in Kruger, 1996:238). Like in other countries around the world, street children are not only to be found in towns and cities but also living alone or in groups in the veld, in or near mine or dumping areas, in most cases near to a major city. Street children are generally between 10 to 12 years of age but children as young as 4 years old have been found in Johannesburg and Pretoria (Kruger, 1996).

In response to the growing problem of children living on the street, various organisations have used a range of intervention strategies in order to improve the plight of these children. Many children have benefited from the various programmes. For example, some have been reunited with their families, others have returned to formal schooling and others have been introduced to skills development and informal learning. However, these programmes still need improvement.

This study was developed as part of a SANPAD (South African and Netherlands Partnership in Alternatives in Development) funded project aimed at developing evaluative methods for programmes of street children¹. A research team was appointed to conduct this research. Since the research team did not have the mandate to enter organisations and evaluate existing intervention strategies, as external agents, the new research team decided the intention was to involve

¹ This research was initially conceptualised by a researcher who had suddenly resigned from University of Kwa Zulu-Natal. On her resignation, a new project leader with a newly constituted research team took over the project. One of the prerequisites of SANPAD is that an initial inception workshop be held with the Netherlands partner to consolidate the proposal. Whilst SANPAD gave the newly constituted research team the latitude to review some of the proposal details, the title as submitted in the original proposal remained non-negotiable and could not be changed. It is within the constraints of the overarching title that the students' titles had to be formulated.

service providers and children, through a series of focus group discussions to identify and develop their own evaluation criteria.

An inception workshop was held in April 2004 with stakeholders who are involved in the field of street children. The purpose of this workshop was to outline the aims, objectives and philosophy of the research project to the participants and to establish a working relationship with key role players and secure their collaboration on the project. The intention was to gain an understanding of the various programmes that key role-players are involved in, and how they think such programmes should be evaluated. The main aim was to engage street children and service providers in the field to identify indicators of successful programmes and the strategies by which these can be evaluated. The intention was not to undertake an evaluation of the shelter and the programmes described by the participants in this study; thus this is not an evaluation study. The strategies and criteria identified by the participants in this study are to contribute to an evaluation manual that might be used by any stakeholder working in the field of street children.

Representatives from the various sectors such as the police, health department, welfare and a number of non-governmental organisations attended the workshop. The participants were enthusiastic about the collaboration which facilitated access to the street children. However, as indicated in the analysis of the data, children experienced enormous problems in the identifying specific criteria and strategies. These had to be extrapolated through an understanding of their life experiences at home, while on the street and their experiences at the shelter. Service providers at the shelter were more articulate in identifying strategies but less specific about identifying specific criteria for evaluation.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of street children exists all over the world. There are as many as eight or nine street boys for every street girl (Green, 1998). Girls often leave home after traumatic experiences of sexual abuse perpetrated by fathers, stepfathers or other male relatives. The girls may leave home because they are afraid, ashamed or blame themselves, and in some instances, because their mothers refuse to believe them.

The literature regarding programmes for the girl street child is limited. However, research regarding programmes that are not gender based indicate that there is a high failure rate amongst street children's programmes (Green, 1998). Veeran (1999:227) in her study found that although facilities for street children claimed to share similar goals of intervention there was little agreement on how achievement of these goals should be measured. In only two of the seven facilities studied in a research project conducted in Durban, were external evaluations carried out by the Department of Welfare. These shelters were registered as children's homes and were thus familiar with evaluation criteria. While the main objectives of most shelters were twofold, that is to provide for the basic needs of street children and their reintegration with their families, evaluation criteria should incorporate both these criteria, however, this was not clearly specified by shelters involved in Veeran's (1999) study.

There thus appears to be a need for the development of evaluation criteria to assess the effectiveness of programmes for the girl street child.

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in a shelter for girls in the Durban area. The shelter (referred to as TH hereafter) has four Programmes: the Residential Project, Aftercare Services, Street based Outreach and Community Prevention and Intervention Work.

The Residential Programme is a shelter for young girls who have been living on the streets. This programme aims to reunify children with their families and provide for the personal development of the girls. It provides an alternative to life on the streets, with emphasis on education. The girls are allowed to live at the shelter for a maximum period of one year, which may be extended depending on the child's circumstances. The shelter Aftercare Programme is committed to the child's successful reintegration into their families by following up on the girls who have been returned to their families. The programme seeks to provide social assistance to the families and there is importance placed on taking care of the child's educational needs. The shelter, in partnership with Street Wise Durban and Amos Trust, offers support to children living on the street through a street outreach programme. This programme aims to build trust with the children and to encourage them to return to their homes or to be placed in temporary residential care. The Outreach programme attempts to present at-risk youths with positive role models and to offer support in a non-judgmental manner which means that the workers do not impose their own biases on the young person, and that they treat the girls with respect and dignity. Community Prevention and Early Intervention Work aims to provide alternatives to children, youth and their families, through prevention and early intervention work with at-risk communities. The goal is to keep families together. It works through developing trusting relationships with adults, making provision for basic needs and creating opportunities for holistic growth on different levels: mental, physical, social, emotional and spiritual. The shelter can thus be seen as a multi-pronged project that aims to help children, youth and their families through prevention and early intervention work with at risk communities.

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Research with Cape Town street girls, found that girls sometimes leave home due to poverty related social problems such as alcoholism, physical and sexual abuse, child neglect, wife-battering, gang violence, low literacy levels and high

levels of unemployment (Jackson, 2001:8). Girls thus prefer to remain on the streets than to return home to their abusers. They may also choose to live on the street for money or because their communities lack services that they need.

The effects that life on the street has on the girl child are detrimental. Their level of concentration decreases, substance abuse increases and their anti-social behaviour towards others and their property increases. The more time they spend on the streets, the harder it is for them to return to their communities (Jackson, 2001:8).

In Europe and the USA, it was found that some girls run away from home to escape overprotective parents (Blanc, 1994). Consequently their moods alternate between rebellion and self-loathing. Street child care workers in several countries found that girls are more likely to experience low self-esteem and often engage in self-mutilation (Green, 1998). The girls cut themselves to avoid being arrested, because it forces police officers to take them to the hospital. Street girls get pregnant often and frequently are not knowledgeable about how their bodies function or about sexually transmitted diseases (Green, 1998).

Research conducted in KwaZulu-Natal indicated begging was the most common means of earning money to purchase food amongst both boys and girls. Begging at street corners and traffic sections is popular with both boys and girls (Motala and Smith, 2003). Girl street children however reported that a favored place for begging also included outside bars and clubs during weekends and they earned between R10 and R15 per day (Motala and Smith, 2003).

Researchers have found that street girls are exposed to multiple risks and sexual exploitation whilst living on the street. The sexual abuse of street children overseas is 20 times higher than that of women in general (Sondheimer cited in Kruger, 1996:238). Green (1998) reports that street girls do not regard prostitution as a profession, but as an occasional response to the need for food, warmth,

money or a bed. Smit and Liebenberg (2000) conducted research with street children in Cape Town and found that young girls often provide sexual favours within the street youth, in exchange for love, protection and acceptance on the street. Green (1998) found that street girls are more at risk than adult prostitutes as they are often on their own, without any protection.

Research on street children in Nairobi indicates that the leader of a group of street boys often takes on many street girls as "wives" (Muraya, cited in Aptekar, 1996:253). The boys ensure that the "wives" are not troubled by other boys in or outside of the group and that they receive sufficient food. In return the boys are provided with sexual privileges of husbands. In addition, some of the girls on the street exchange sex for money on a limited basis. The "husbands" were content to live with the girls playing both the role of wife and prostitute. In a study conducted with street children in KwaZulu-Natal, it was also highlighted that girls sometimes received food from the boys living on the street and in exchange, some boys expected sexual favours (Motala and Smith, 2003). The fear of being raped was prevalent amongst both boys and girls living on the street (Motala and Smith, 2003).

In Harare, like other countries, there are fewer girls than boys on the street. Girls who are homeless are quickly taken up by "aunties" who are women that are reaching an age where their attractiveness as prostitutes is disappearing (Bourdillon cited in Dube, Kamvura and Bourdillon, 1996:261). Such aunties continue to earn money by collecting from the younger girls with whom they can keep their clients happy. Consequently the girls have accommodation, income and smart clothes (Dube et al, 1996).

In a study on street children conducted in Tanzania, it was noted that sex plays a much larger and more central role in the lives of street girls than boys (Lugalla and Mbwambo, 1999; Onolemhemen and Pugh, 2002). Rajani and Kudrati (cited in Lugalla and Mbwambo, 1999:338) add that the incidence and recurrence

of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) were proportionately much higher in girls compared to boys. Street girls are more likely to engage in prostitution because they have fewer options for earning a living. The girls lack assistance and other ways of life and are forced to adopt a survival behavior, which is a risk to their health and which decreases their self-esteem. Furthermore, they may be beaten and experience rough sex, while others are unpaid for their sexual services (Lugalla and Mbwambo, 1999).

Intervention projects for street children have increased in response to the need to protect the girl street child. In the past two decades there has been a greater awareness of the problem of street children, particularly in Third World countries (Veeran, 1999). There is a great amount of information regarding research on street children; however information on services to street children and shelters and their effectiveness is lacking (Karabanow and Rains cited in Veeran, 1999:223).

Teare, Peterson, Furst, Authier, Baker and Daly (1994) maintain that it is important to document the environments in which street children receive services, are provided with safety and effective treatment. Documenting programmes becomes an essential part of a systematic and ongoing programme evaluation process that can generate regular feedback to managers about the programmes' effectiveness. Teare et al (1994) add that having mechanisms in place for assessment and ongoing evaluation are important elements of a programme.

Systematic evaluation of programmes for street children would provide the information necessary for intervention effectiveness (Thompson, Pollio, Constantine, Reid and Nebbitt, 2002). A thorough evaluation is thus the important next step for providing services and policy decisions affecting street children.

As resources become scarcer, programmes that can document that they are providing effective and safe treatment for street children may have better success in receiving funding (Teare et al, 1994). More importantly, however, service providers have an obligation to the children using the shelter to document and ensure that the programmes are safe and effective (Teare et al, 1994).

This research project involved service providers and girl street children in evaluating present programmes as well as developing criteria for future assessments.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This research project has two aims overall:

1. To develop evaluation strategies for specific intervention programmes for street children through the inclusion of street children and service providers
2. To evaluate, as pilot projects, the effectiveness of specific programmes for street children.

The second aim, however, does not constitute part of this current study. It will be a later phase in terms of follow-up to this study.

There are 4 main focus areas that are part of the SANPAD project:

- Harm reduction, with specific reference to children's exposure to crime and violence
- Harm reduction programmes, with specific reference to alcohol and substance use
- Evaluation of shelters as a whole and

- Programmes for the girl child, which this research study focusses on.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives are as follows

1. To explore existing programmes for the girl street child
2. To provide recommendations for evaluation of specific programmes through a participatory action approach
3. To empower children and service providers by ensuring their active participation in the research process
4. To provide recommendations for the formulation of a manual detailing evaluation strategies for specific intervention programmes

VALUE OF THE STUDY

The study will empower children by including them and allowing them to express their concerns and what they think should be done to evaluate the services that are provided to them.

The study has provided the responses not only of the street children but also the service providers in assessing whether or not the evaluation strategies presently used are effective or not. Furthermore, the street children and service providers have provided suggestions on how evaluation strategies can be improved.

It is important to evaluate intervention projects for street children as there is insufficient research conducted in this area. This study therefore contributes to existing knowledge about street children in Durban and helps to motivate for further research in this area.

Furthermore, this study will assist service providers and policy makers in the area of street children with regards to planning, implementation, management and evaluation of such projects.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK GUIDING THE STUDY

The theoretical frameworks that have guided this research project are that of the ecosystems perspective and the structural approach.

The ecosystems perspective places emphasis on the interaction of people and their environments, that is people and their environments do not exist in isolation but are involved in ongoing transactions with each other. With regards to this theory, human beings are complex wholes with internal parts but they are also parts or members of larger groups. It refers to human behaviour in a holistic view, involving interaction with biological, psychological, social, economic, political and physical forces (Berger, McBreen and Rifkin, 1996). Sheafor (1997) adds that the ecosystems perspective emphasises the constantly changing environment to which individuals, communities and societies must adapt, thus, its limitation. The approach does not place emphasis on the need for structural changes, but on the "goodness of fit" approach.

Miley, O'Melia and du Bois (1995) describe the ecosystems perspective as focusing on transactions which refers to reciprocal interactions, that is, "the process by which people continually shape their environments and are shaped by them over time"(Germain cited in Miley et al, 1995:37). For example, street children are involved in transactions everyday. They talk to their companions on the street, buy food and have contact with outreach workers. They are also part of a larger system which engages in transactions. For instance, the shelter trains volunteers and sends staff for in-service training. Transactions are thus the means by which people and systems exchange resources with their environments.

An assessment of the different systems enables us to consider how each contributes to the existence of the problem (Tolson, Reid and Garvin, 2003). The likely impact of each system for solving or alleviating the problem of street children needs to be considered. Thus, we must consider each of the systems that are, individual, family, community, organisations and society.

In this research project, attempts were made to understand and recognise the different systems affecting the street girl child.

On an individual level, the needs of the girl street child were examined as well as the extent to which their needs are being fulfilled by programmes. The contribution that they can make in improving their situation was also examined.

In terms of the family level, the role of the family in helping children to remain at home and not turn to the streets was explored. The extent to which organisations are providing an effective service was researched as well as how they can help to alleviate the problem of street children. *Out side*

The community level and factors related to the access and availability of resources also needed to be evaluated. For example, this research examined resources and intervention programmes offered by shelters and service centers, in terms of their accessibility and effectiveness. The role of the community in alleviating the problem of street children was also considered.

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On a macro-level, there was a need to explore the policies governing evaluation of programmes for the girl street child as well as the extent to which service delivery and policy related to practice can influence policy decisions. The extent to which government policies are maintaining the problem of street children was also studied.

The eco-systems perspective was also used to understand the multiple and interacting factors at different system levels, in the etiology of the phenomenon of street children.

In view of the limitations of the "goodness of fit" of the ecosystems perspective, the structural approach was also used in this study. This approach might be termed as "blaming the system", as it focuses on issues such as capitalism and income distribution and recognises oppression or structural disadvantage as the key issue to be attended to (Ife, 2002:50). The structural approach views social problems as developing from a specific societal context rather than from the weaknesses of individuals (Mullaly, 1993). The term "structural" in structural social work is both descriptive and prescriptive. It is descriptive because the main source of social problems is described as being located in the way in which our society is structured (Mullaly, 1993). It is also prescriptive because social problems are seen as being "rooted in our social structures", then the structures must be transformed and not the individual, the family or those that are negatively affected by social problems (Mullaly, 1993:125).

Pond (cited in Mullaly, 1993:124) provides some reasons why it is necessary to attend to inequality as a major part of the structural context:

"Economic and social inequality are inextricably intertwined, and the distribution of income and wealth, the extent of poverty and privilege, have their effects on living standards, life chances and opportunities. Individuals' health and well-being are influenced by their position in the labour market, income and access to economic resources"

In terms of the structural approach, recommendations for change entail major restructuring of the society, in that it views social problems as entrenched in the oppressive structures of society (Ife, 2002). Ife (2002:52) maintains that although changes to the individual and to organisations are essential, unless changes are made to the "basic structures and discourses of oppression, which create and perpetuate an unequal and inequitable society, any social justice strategy will

have only limited value". The structural approach was used in this study to understand how factors such as poverty, unemployment and macro-economic policies have affected and continue to influence the lives of street children.

PRESENTATION OF CONTENTS

This chapter has provided an overview of the study and has discussed the background and context, the rationale, purpose and objectives of the study, the value of the study and the theoretical framework it was guided by.

Chapter Two presents the literature review and details a description of the programmes available for street children, reasons for programme failure and factors that have been found to contribute to successful programmes. Recommendations in addressing the problem of street children, as provided by the literature, conclude the chapter.

Chapter Three contains a review of literature pertaining to evaluation research. It includes a discussion on qualitative evaluation research, reasons for carrying out an evaluation and describes the three major types of evaluation. The steps involved in the evaluation process and problems that may be encountered when carrying out an evaluation are also outlined.

The methodology used in the study is described in Chapter Four. This chapter includes information on the research design, the data collection methods and process of data collection. Issues regarding reliability and validity are mentioned in this chapter as well as ethical considerations.

Chapter Five presents the findings of the study and includes responses from children and staff at the shelter. The current evaluation strategies that are used as well as the challenges faced by staff members are also discussed. A description of the inconsistencies that were found ends this chapter.

The conclusions and recommendations are discussed in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The literature review was a significant phase of this research project. It served to demonstrate that most of the research on street children has focussed on the experiences of boys, rather than girls, possibly due to their greater visibility and accessibility (Motala and Smith, 2003). However, research indicates that the experiences of boys and girls are similar and thus there are important implications for both policy and programme intervention aimed at preventing and assisting children living on the street (Motala and Smith, 2003). This Chapter is divided into FOUR sections.

Section One focuses on the phenomenon of street children and includes the reasons for children leaving their homes.

Section Two in this chapter describes the programmes available for street children in African countries. It also provides details on the only shelter for street girls in Cape Town.

Section Three in this chapter focuses on the reasons for programme failure. It is important to understand the reasons that programmes fail in order to look at how this can be incorporated in evaluation of programmes.

Section Four highlights factors that have been found to contribute to successful programmes. This discussion looks at these factors that were found to be useful elsewhere in the world. This section also mentions recommendations in addressing the problem of street children.

SECTION ONE: PHENOMENON OF STREET CHILDREN

Specific terminology has surfaced with regards to how street children are perceived and is often used by organisations working in this area to describe and differentiate between “children of the street” and “children on the street” (Motala and Smith, 2003). Lusk (cited in Ferguson, 2002:24) distinguishes “children on the street” and “children of the street”. “Children on the street” have the following characteristics, they:

TABLE 1: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN “CHILDREN ON THE STREET” AND “CHILDREN OF THE STREET”

“CHILDREN ON THE STREET”	“CHILDREN OF THE STREET”
Spend a large amount of time in the streets, usually as child workers	Work, play and grow up in the streets
Retain reasonably strong family ties	Have severed ties with their families and have limited contact with adults in general
May either return home daily to sleep or remain on the streets due to long travelling distance between home and work...	May participate in illegal activities to supplement incomes, finance drug addiction, and fulfill basic needs or for survival.
Generally do not attend school as they work from early morning to late at night	Mostly do not attend school
Often give some or all of their income to their families	Have no interaction with family
Are completely engrossed in street culture and are exposed to associated dangers (violence, delinquency, police and adult harassment, illegal substances and prostitution)	Adopt street culture and are often involved in related dangers (gang violence, prostitution and selling and trafficking drugs)

For the purposes of this study, street children were defined fairly loosely, as any child who spent some time on the street, for whatever reasons, irrespective of whether or not they lived on the street all the time or temporarily.

Reasons for leaving home

Irrespective of how street children are defined, they are still in need of proper services, support and love. In order to be of help to street children we need to be aware not only of their needs but also of the factors that have led to them living on the streets and literature on street children documents an array of reasons why children leave home.

Although the individual history of each child is different, poverty, aggravated by apartheid seems to be the main reason for children living on the street in South Africa (Richter cited in Kruger, 1996:238). Swart-Kruger and Donald (cited in Motala and Smith, 2003:64) claim that structural poverty is fundamentally a product of and was aggravated by apartheid. The migrant labour system, rapid industrialisation and the implementation of group areas legislation added to the breakdown of families and high levels of informal fostering of children with relatives (Swart-Kruger and Donald, in Motala and Smith, 2003:64). The lack of adequate housing, high levels of domestic violence and a general shortage of child care facilities in black communities also played a role in children living on the streets (Swart, cited in Motala and Smith, 2003:64). In South Africa, it was found that in most cases, some form of family dysfunction also played a significant role in children running away. This may include substance abuse, child or partner abuse, sexual abuse or conflicts with step-parents. In a research study conducted with street children in KwaZulu-Natal, it was found that many children left home due to physical abuse or neglect by their care-givers (Motala and Smith, 2003).

On a macro-level, South Africa's policy and service delivery may be contributing to children living on the street, in terms of its implementation of services. Policy and service delivery for children is characterized by a focus on poverty alleviation and on women and children as those most affected by poverty (Biersteker and Robinson in Donald, Dawes, and Louw, 2000). They also highlight policies and

formulae for redistributing resources as well as a shift to a developmental social welfare approach, which focuses on prevention, community development and self reliance. However, implementation of these services has been met with many challenges: Poor people, especially children, find it difficult or virtually impossible to access social welfare services. This is more prevalent in rural areas.

The principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as mentioned in The South African Constitution, presents a common vision which informs policies for children (Biersteker and Robinson in Donald et al, 2000). The Reconstruction and Development Programme, likewise, have provided a framework for focusing on the poorest communities and the prioritisation of children (Biersteker and Robinson in Donald et al, 2000). These policy shifts are reflected in the Inter-ministerial Committee (IMC) on Youth at Risk. The vision of the IMC is that children and youth be regarded as “our most treasured assets” and that “they and their families are valued and capable to contribute to a caring and healthy society” (Sewpaul, 2000:6). The principles of the IMC (cited in Sewpaul, 2000:5) are tabled below:

TABLE 2: PRACTICE PRINCIPLES OF THE INTERMINISTERIAL COMMITTEE (IMC) ON YOUTH AT RISK

PRACTICE PRINCIPLES OF IMC
Accountability
Empowerment
Participation
Family-centred
Continuum of care
Integration (Intersectoral and interdisciplinary focus)
Continuity of care
Effective and efficient
Child-centred focus (focus on THIS child)
Rights of young people
Family preservation
Community centred

However, the follow-through from policy to planning and implementation by means of service delivery has been slow and of limited effect (Biersteker and Robinson in Donald et al, 2000). It appears that the successful implementation of policies has been constrained by many factors which include:

- Serious backlogs in all types of services
- Insufficient financial resources
- Problems with infrastructure (transport, communication and electricity)
- Poor institutional capacity
- Inadequate information systems (making it difficult to assess the nature and extent of the problem and to monitor progress)

In view of the fact that many of these factors co-occur, particularly in poorer areas, there tends to be a multiplier effect (Biersteker and Robinson in Donald et al, 2000). This means that policies that are mainly aimed at alleviating the difficulties faced by poorer children are often least successfully implemented in those same contexts. Consequently, developing the appropriate infrastructure and capacity to support programme implementation becomes a major challenge if government policies are to be successfully directed where they are most needed (Biersteker and Robinson in Donald et al, 2000).

South Africa's macro level policies such as the adoption of Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) have further broadened the poverty gap in South Africa (Terreblanche cited in Sewpaul, 2005a:313). The social and economic consequences of GEAR have been well reported (Bond, Hart, Naidoo and Veriava cited in Sewpaul, 2005a:313). In place of the added 1.3 million jobs that were supposed to have been created by 2001, more than 1 million jobs have been lost since 1996 (Terreblanche cited in Sewpaul, 2005a:313). The business sector's obsession "with first-world efficiency and high capital intensity has limited job capacities as they exclude large proportions of the population that are unskilled" (Sewpaul, 2005a:313). Instead of delivering on the promise of

essential restructuring of the South African economy, the policies adopted over the past nine years such as privatisation, black empowerment, and the "establishment of a globally oriented and first world capitalistic enclave", have worsened the "...deep-seated structural crisis..." (Terreblanche cited in Sewpaul, 2005b:313). Trade liberalisation has added to enormous foreign imports with consequent major local de-industrialisation and job losses (Sewpaul, 2005a). Furthermore, the decrease in tariffs in the clothing and footwear industry has the most impact on women, especially Black African women (Sewpaul, 2005a). Thus macro economic policies seem to be devised to work against poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

The South African government's macroeconomic policies have placed strict budgetary constraints on all types of spending (Biersteker and Robinson in Donald et al, 2000). Forwarding social service provision to poorer provinces and regions has meant that services in provinces that were well-resourced have in turn been reduced. However, only increasing the amount spent in the poorer provinces does not necessarily improve children's access to services. Provinces also need to reprioritise expenses towards building capacity and developing services which specifically benefit children (Biersteker and Robinson in Donald et al, 2000). Programme priorities identified in departmental policies, such as those affecting early childhood development, out of school youth, inclusion of children with special needs and juvenile justice – have for an array of reasons not seen the budgetary redirection needed to have an effect on them. In the poorer, more heavily populated provinces, social security obligations are even more than in other provinces, leaving even less to very much needed social welfare developmental services (Biersteker and Robinson in Donald et al, 2000).

Reasons for fewer girls living on the street

Most children living on the street are boys and thus most research on the subject has been based on the experiences of boys. Ennew (cited in Motala and Smith

2003:62) claims that 10 percent of the children living on the streets are girls; however this estimate is based on only a few studies.

Research on girl street children in Cape Town indicates that they remain on the streets rather than returning to their families for various reasons (Jackson, 2001). Firstly, they do not return to their home as they may continue to be abused. Furthermore, the many services that are needed in their communities to make a difference in their lives are lacking.

Lugalla and Mbwambo (1999) found that in Tanzania fewer girls live on the streets because the cultural sanctions towards girls are stronger, thus they experience more restrictions with regards to supervision or monitoring by their families. The likelihood of them being able to run away from home is also small.

In Tanzania, even if girls do manage to run away from home, most of them find accommodation with family members for whom they work as domestic servants. As they grow up and become independent, they may join the entertainment industry as barmaids, hotel attendants or prostitutes (Lugalla and Mbwambo, 1999). If girls do not find work as domestic servants, they are picked up by pimps or police. Street girls are always vulnerable to physical and sexual assault, thus making street life less appealing to girls than to boys (Lugalla and Mbwambo, 1999).

Research with street children in Uganda indicate that the lower visibility of girls on the streets is due to the fact that they are usually involved in domestic chores and are employed in kiosks and market places (Anyuru, 1996). However, in the evenings some can be seen wandering the streets selling small goods while others engage in prostitution.

Research with street children in Mexico points out that there are fewer girl street children, due to the fact that girls tend to be kept closer to the family unit than

boys and are given defined domestic chores from a young age (Connolly, Valladares, cited in Jones, 1997:41).

Although there may be gendered differences in the reasons why children leave home and live on the streets, in general, their experiences are similar and have important implications for policy and programmatic interventions (Motala and Smith, 2003).

SECTION TWO: PROGRAMMES AVAILABLE FOR STREET CHILDREN

There are numerous programmes available for street children around the world. Much of the literature regarding street children has been based on India and Latin America. However, the conditions and history is very different to South Africa and they do not provide suitable models (Cockburn, 1999). The approaches used by African countries appear to be more appropriate as outlined below:

Kenya

The best known programme in Africa is the long established Undungu Society of Kenya (USK). USK has been in existence for 25 years and it has adopted a multi-faceted, community based approach to urban development.

USK renders regular visits to the streets, mainly to establish rapport with the children while impressing upon them to leave the street life (www.undugukenya.org/programmes.htm). Children who are ill or hurt are given immediate attention. USK has Reception Centres where children who decide to leave the streets are accommodated. Immediate needs of children are provided for and the children are allowed to walk in and out of the centres as they wish in order to give them the opportunity to slowly see the need for change. Children

who have not been reunited are placed in other rehabilitation facilities, which carry out more defined interventions and programmes.

The Society has developed numerous projects, including Street Girls, rescue centres, The Parking Boys Programme, creation of employment, small enterprise development, search for affordable shelter, community nutrition and health (Cockburn, 1999). The aim is to improve the quality of life of those who are less fortunate whilst also protecting the rights of children.

Uganda

Although there is work done with street children, it is burdened with financial problems. The focus is on training and a wide range of courses are offered. There is HIV/AIDS education, including a five day crash course (Cockburn, 1999). The other programmes include an inter-family income generation plan which supplies funds for start-up financing. There is also a Voice of the Street drama group which publicises the difficulties of street children. Most of the programmes are remedial, providing food, shelter and clothing which have been criticised for their tendency to create dependency.

FOCA (Friends of Children Association) is involved in training children in skills such as carpentry, tailoring, blacksmithing, radio repairs, bicycle repairs, charcoal stove making and others. It is believed that with these skills the children will become self-employed and will be able to employ other people (Cockburn, 1999). This type of training is an expensive undertaking entailing massive human and material resources.

Ghana

In Ghana there is the Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS) in Accra and its sister organisation Street Girls Aid (S. AID), which runs a Refuge for street girls

who are pregnant (Cockburn, 1999). At the Refuge the street girls receive advice on how to take care of themselves and their babies before and after delivery. CAS has built three crèches which care for the babies and young children while their mothers are working.

CAS also manages a House of Refuge, where street boys and girls can play games, rest, receive medical care, bath and keep their belongings safe. They can also receive advice on their lives and future (Cockburn, 1999). In other programmes, children receive literacy education and learn various trades. The children on the streets are visited everyday by some of the CAS staff who check where they work and sleep.

At many places in town, 'Mini-Refuges' have been set up. Children who are unable to reach the main Refuge can visit these small kiosks and relax and interact with staff (Cockburn, 1999). They can also receive literacy classes, counselling and advice.

South Africa

There are only a few shelters for girls in South Africa that have been documented. One of the only shelters in Cape Town for girls is called "Ons Plek" which is a first phase intake shelter for girls.

At this shelter, the girls' basic needs of food, shelter, education and love are provided (Rossouw, 1997). The shelter facilities allow the family, child and staff to work together. This project also focuses on resettling the children in the community and vocational preparation. The girls are empowered by developing their sense of responsibility. They are given household duties such as cooking and shopping for food. The girls and staff make household decisions as well as the rules together. While the girls adapt to a structured environment, the social

worker and child care staff contact and interview families and explore the home circumstances (Rossouw, 1997).

Each girl is assessed in terms of her developmental level and scholastic skills. In informal education sessions, the school support teacher and volunteers begin educational activities with the girls who may not have attended school for some time (Rossouw, 1997).

A girl is returned to school when it is certain that she is committed and ready. The education staff consult closely with the staff in the team regarding decisions about schooling. The observations and assessments of the child care workers in terms of the girl's general ability and social involvement is also considered when looking at her ability to cope at school. The programme includes daily homework help and regular contact between the support teacher, child care staff and the schools (Rossouw, 1997).

Given the focus of this research study, the researcher made specific efforts to obtain information regarding strategies and criteria by which these programmes might have been evaluated. However, while descriptive accounts of the programmes were offered in the literature there was no further data available regarding evaluation. The programmes mentioned above appear to be succeeding in their task of helping children to leave the streets; however, there are many programmes that are not as successful. Their failure may be due to various factors which are mentioned in the next section.

SECTION THREE: REASONS FOR PROGRAMME FAILURE

This section details reasons for programme failure in relation to limitations within the profession care system, limitations in respect of the conceptualisation and implementation of programmes and problems in the relationship between staff and street children.

The professional care system and street children

Greene, Ringwalt and Lachan (1997) claim that shelters are our primary means of meeting the complex needs of street children. Shelters provide safe accommodation, counselling and other programmes aimed to reunite street children with their families. In addition, shelters help street children to develop the skills needed to live independently and to prevent or reduce high risk behaviour, such as unprotected sex and substance abuse.

However, red tape in the professional care system presents difficulties. On a macro-level, the shortage of shelters and the arduous methods of co-operation between the authorities are noted by de Winter and Noom (2003). Sometimes children have to wait a long time before the next step in the caring process is taken. Services are often fragmented, resulting in many referrals between residential institutions, agencies, shelters and social services (de Winter and Noom, 2003). "Facilities that should help solve these youngsters' problems have themselves become part of the problem" (van der Ploeg and Schotte, cited in de Winter and Noom, 2003:326).

Green (1998) advocates that projects are concerned entirely with helping street children or committing them to institutions. Very few investigate the reasons for children being on the street in the first place. Part of the reason for the emphasis on shelters rests on the funders who are:

"hooked on the idea of rescue. Charity is rarely free. Donors want something back, whether this is their name on a plaque or minibus, a photograph of a building or of smiling children for the office wall. Donors like to be able to visit, and to show other people round. They want visible results from their charitable investment. It is far more difficult to get them to invest in something intangible" (cited in Green, 1998:84)

Many projects view vocational training as the most important way of getting children off the street. They teach children various skills such as baking, tailoring and other manual trades. These programmes have been criticised for failing to research the job market before deciding what to teach. Furthermore, they ignore the skills that children already possess which are those of experienced traders, rather than artisans (cited in Green, 1998:85). Other projects focus on trying to convince children to return to their families, yet projects are usually helpless when it comes to changing the original home situation whether it includes, poverty, abuse, domestic violence or boredom, which forced the children to leave home in the first place.

Street children in South Africa are considered a priority group for rehabilitation programmes. The National Plan of Action for Children in South Africa plans to develop systems for the early identification of children at risk of becoming street children and to refer children for assessment and intervention (Biersteker and Robinson in Donald et al, 2000). Although the Child Care Amendment Act of 1996 requests the official registration of street shelters, poor funding of these shelters is a concern as well as the closure of a number of existing shelters for not keeping to standards (Biersteker and Robinson in Donald et al, 2000).

Programme interventions for street children

In conducting research on street children in Harare, the researchers assumed that street children were “desperately poor people, who like a drowning person, would clutch any straw that was offered” (Dube et al, 1996:262). However, they found in their experience of working with the children that they are particular about the kind of help that they accept.

Veeran (1999) reports that conventional interventions have been criticised for their authoritarian approach focussing on rules and regimental orders. The rationale behind this approach comes from the disorganised lifestyles that street

children live before being placed in a shelter. Street children tend to perceive authority negatively, thus highly structured environments such as shelters are often viewed as a threat to their sense of freedom. Street children tend to avoid organisations that adhere to strict rules and regulations. Institutions often “practice archaic and Dickensian methods of caring for children” (McLachlan, cited in le Roux and Smith, 1998:131). The children are often afraid to expose those who care for them in these institutions, as they fear being punished. The children feel that they are not supposed to make any mistakes: “if you overstep the mark you're immediately kicked out of the programmes” (de Winter and Noom, 2003). The appeal appears to be for greater trust from the social workers and the institutions. The above researchers stress that especially for those that have had failing social relationships, creating a relationship based on trust allows room for development.

Smit and Liebenberg (2000) found that programmes often lack focus and coordination. Aptekar (1996) noted that research with street children in Nairobi indicated that there was an inconsistency between the programmes’ “official philosophy” and the experiences of the children. In some instances the official philosophy was one of compassion and care, but the children appeared to be treated poorly by the people they came into contact with on a daily basis. In other cases, the children appeared to be treated well though the stated philosophy seemed strict. Aptekar (1996) claims that much depends on the people who interact with the children; those who formulated the goals or objectives and who collected the funds to maintain the programme had less influence.

Other programmes do not encourage children to return to their communities due to their dependence on subsidies (Smit and Liebenberg, 2000). However, according to Jones (1997) who conducted research with street children in Mexico, most programmes are based on the desire to ‘return’ the child to the family from which he or she had taken such care to leave. There is the inclination towards idolising the role of the family, which is regarded as safe, offering the

opportunity for education and the improvement of skills through work in the home or with a parent (Boyden cited in Jones, 1997:40). Cockburn (1993:8) adds that street children's programmes may not prepare them for the realities of life in their communities to which they must return they may be given an unrealistic view of "life out there". The reality is that often there is a parent or guardian who works long hours or is unemployed, has little free time and poor access to schooling (White, 1994; cf. Valladares, 1990, cited in Jones, 1997). It is due to these factors that a child might create an image of life on the street as offering independence and companionship of gangs, no school and the acquisition of survival skills.

There may also be competition on the part of agencies in terms of programme intervention. This creates a problem when programmes become so appealing that they have the opposite effect of drawing more children onto the street and away from their homes (Aptekar, 1996). There needs to be a way of serving their vocational needs and longing for personal growth. This requires co-ordination from service providers which is problematic due to the competition for scarce resources.

Programmes often entail a cycle of involvement that includes a high activity rate when resources are available and a decline when resources decrease. Jones (1997) claims that programmes struggle to respond to the child as an individual whose needs, personality and best plan for success might not suit established schedules. Progress, when working with street children is seldom linear and may require going back over earlier work done. Jones (1997) adds that programmes tend to see similarities in the children and the response, whereas insight and closer examination of individual life histories show differences Smit and Liebenberg (2000) add that projects choose to work with certain age groups, thereby isolating certain groups. Children are also forced to adjust to treatment programmes instead of programmes being changed to suit the needs of children (le Roux and Smith, 1998).

Richter (1991) notes that existing street children's programmes do not keep systematic records or make data collection part of their ongoing activities. Very few projects monitor the impact of their work on the children that they help or even look at their circumstances after they have left the streets (Green, 1998). This may be as a result of a shortage of staff and the lack of specific training to collect this type of information. This may also be due partly to the fact that resources are less easily justified than feeding schemes and education programmes. It has been shown that in the absence of systematic information, child care workers will act on their own non-systematic biases. Many people are in fact "working in the dark", using compassion rather than a more hard-headed approach focused on research and analysis (Green, 1998:84).

Father D' Souza (2005) powerfully demonstrated the integration of practice and research via a PAR approach in working with street children in Mumbai, India. Part of the task involved documenting the life histories and progress or lack thereof, of the children. His contention was that combining research and practice could serve to reformulate practice objectives and to enthuse practitioners working in a highly emotional and demanding environment.

The lack of information on programmes is a severe loss, mostly because they are possibly the richest and most valid sources of information based on the observations of people in daily contact with the children. The opportunity to collect the type of information that is needed for the appropriate design of the programmes to meet the needs of the children is also being lost as well as the information needed to evaluate the extent to which those needs are being met (Richter, 1991). This research was designed to meet this apparent gap in services and the lack of integration between research and practice. The main aim was to involve street children and service providers in the field to identify indicators of successful programmes and the strategies by which these can be

evaluated. This research will contribute to the development of an evaluation manual to be used by service providers and street children.

Relationship between street children and service providers

Whilst at the shelter, street children interact with social workers and other staff members. The relationship between children and service providers is perhaps one of the most critical factors that may influence the success of interventions. de Winter and Noom (2003) mention that some of the difficulties in the relationship between adolescents and service providers include inadequate communication and a mutual lack of trust. Street children will refuse help unless they have faith and trust in their service providers as often their life experiences have taught them to distrust adults. Many street children complain that there is a lack of consultation on important decisions and the rules that are adopted within the institution.

The relationship that street children share with their social workers may also influence the effectiveness of programmes. Research conducted with street children participating in substance abuse programmes at a shelter in Durban confirms that staff involved in programme development, implementation and evaluation, play a significant role in influencing the effectiveness of programmes (Ntuli, 2004). Both the staff and children involved in Ntuli's (2004) research claimed that consistency and enthusiasm of the service providers in implementing programmes would improve the programme and motivate street children to participate.

Street children feel that social workers should not interfere with restoration of family relations as that is not what they want for themselves (de Winter and Noom, 2003). Some children feel that it is their responsibility to establish contact with their 'families'. One child said "It's unnecessary for them to do that, although they know my parents, I myself will have to establish the contact" (de Winter and

Noom, 2003:331). Yet, reuniting children with their families is an important function of the social worker and is documented in policy. Perhaps the main issue is not whether or not the social worker establishes contact with the family, but the manner in which this is done. It needs to be a collaborative process with the inclusion of the child in decision-making and assessment of the child's level of readiness.

Adolescents have also complained of a lack of actual interest by social workers (de Winter and Noom, 2003). Those receiving services complain that communication with social workers is not ideal: they are not listened to and social workers do not get personally involved (de Winter and Noom, 2003). Some street children feel that as "clients" they are not sufficiently informed. They argue that it is not so much the rules that are the problem, but rather the way that they are introduced and implemented. Like most adolescents they have a need for independence and autonomy, however, they felt that they were not listened to enough and that they were not involved enough in the way the care system is managed. When asked "What is the ideal social worker?" one adolescent replied: "Someone who doesn't regard you as a client², but treats you as an ordinary human being and trusts you" (de Winter and Noom, 2003:336). This insight, coming from a street child reflects the most fundamental principle of social work, that of acceptance and respect for the people whom we work with. Acceptance of persons as they are is an essential element in the helping relationship (Hancock, 1997). Biestek (cited in Sheafor et al, 1997:76-77) describes acceptance as occurring when the worker "perceives the client as he (sic) really is, including his strengths and weaknesses, his congenial and uncongenial qualities, his positive and negative feelings, his constructive and destructive attitudes and behaviour, maintaining all the time a sense of the client's innate dignity and personal worth". Conveying acceptance and respect requires that the social worker refrain from

² The term 'client' is problematic, as it confirms the idea of the client as a "passive recipient of social work services with the social worker as the 'expert' who knows best and an implication of a hierarchical worker-client relationship (Sewpaul and Hölscher, 2004). It does not comply with empowerment-based practice which requires active involvement, on the part of practitioners. However, since an appropriate alternative is lacking, the concept continues to be used.

making moral judgements relating to clients (Sheafor et al, 1997). The worker's non-judgemental attitude helps clients conquer the common fear of being judged by others and provides the helping relationship with positive action. The need to treat each and every client with respect and acceptance does not entail support of all behaviour by a client (Sheafor et al, 1997). One can accept and care for the client as a person of worth and dignity without supporting, for example, unlawful, dangerous or socially destructive behaviour. Acceptance and respect are prerequisites for change whilst blame and judgementalism create obstacles to change that are counterproductive (Sheafor et al, 1997).

Besides the social worker, other staff members may also have a role to play in programme effectiveness. Smit and Liebenberg (2000) found that workers do not possess the skills necessary to deal with street children in a holistic manner. There are also no formal criteria for employing street workers and projects lack effective monitoring systems.

In research done with street children in Brazil, the children complained about aggressive treatment by other children and the lack of concern from guards and teachers in the shelter (Ribeiro and Ciampone, 2001). Research in progress in KwaZulu-Natal (Makopo, 2005), supports this. While the expectation is that a shelter would provide a safe "haven" from the dangers of the street, Makopo (2005) surprisingly had children report high levels of violence among the children themselves. This included beatings and burning each other between the toes especially at night. This is one of the reasons why children might run away from shelters. In the Brazilian study, one of the reasons children returned to the street was to maintain friendships that they felt were more stable and which they considered as their alternative family. Children acknowledged that they resort to shelters when they get frustrated while trying to satisfy their needs. Once the physical necessities were met, they appeared to take heart to provide for other needs such as relating to the outside world and moving about freely. Ribeiro and Ciampone (2001) maintain that the restrictions on freedom and privacy in the

shelters impaired children in determining their own identities. The shelters seemed to function for them as a 'total institution' as Goffman (cited in Ribeiro and Ciampone, 2001:47) illustrates in relation to jails and convents.

Street children often experience emotional, physical and sexual abuse from the staff and volunteers in projects established to care and protect them (Ennew, cited in Williams, 1996: 224). While many countries have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Schurink, (cited in Williams, 1996:224) reports that many children are found in adult prisons, in violent and overcrowded reformatories, or in orphanages with unqualified and often abusive staff. Child care institutions have a horrifying record of child abuse. For example, it was reported that child care workers in Brazil would encourage children to go out and rob people and then to share the stolen goods with them (Jarvis cited in Williams, 1996:224). Extensive physical abuse has also been reported, for instance, where child care workers would wake up children with cold water in winter and then strip them and beat them (Jarvis cited in Williams, 1996:224). An overview of staffing in institutions in Zimbabwe reveal that they are understaffed which may be causing rapid burnout. Furthermore, staff is paid poorly and their morale is low. When their patience is decreasing they are tempted to physically hurt the children. Street children in these institutions complain of boredom, hard manual labour, overcrowding, beatings and poor nutrition (Williams, 1996). Aptekar (1996) noted that research with street children in Nairobi indicated the children also appeared to be poorly treated by the staff they interacted with on a daily basis.

Street children have a right to expect that the staff of projects and programmes that they are involved in, are "properly recruited, trained, managed and supported" (Ennew cited in Swart-Kruger, 1996:234). This implies a responsibility on society to place standards of work with this particular group of children to ensure the accountability of programmes. Although the shelters may try to employ the person most suited for the job, due to financial constraints, they may

have to use volunteers as child care workers, who may not have the proper training for the job.

There is often the attitude that whatever takes children off the street must be good. However, if questions about suitability of staff and methods being used are not asked, children are placed even further beyond the law than they were on the streets (Ennew, 1995:213, cited in Swart-Kruger, 1996:234). More importantly, the symbolic representation of this must not be under-estimated. Street children have generally been failed and let down by significant adults and all major systems around them. When they are taken into a so-called "caring" environment that does not care, and that might turn out to be worse than the street or home, then it reinforces the belief that the world of adults, indeed, cannot be trusted.

Needs of street children

The staff employed at shelters can make a positive impact on children staying in the shelter by being aware of their needs. Father Arnold Grol who wrote about street children in 1983 said "We have to show them affection, care, service and love. Without respect and affection you cannot have a lasting influence on these children" (cited in Cockburn 1999:17). Research on street children in Swaziland also indicates that street children have the same basic needs as other children, that is, love, security and physical care (Maphalala, 1996). Clearly, life on the street cannot adequately fulfil these needs and the children develop different coping strategies to deal with their situations. Some of these strategies are seen to be deviant by society and leads to the public viewing the children with contempt and hostility (Maphalala, 1996).

Services should reflect the needs of children; it "should start where the children are" (Swart, 1991:7). Rane (2000) adds that understanding the characteristics of street children and their lifestyle is vital when developing strategies for addressing their needs. For example, not all girls living on the street are involved

in the sex work industry, as is commonly assumed, and this needs to be taken into account when providing outreach and shelter services for street children.

However, it has been revealed that street workers are not familiar with the real needs of street children. For example, in Kenya, a street girl's initiative attempted to involve the girls in handicraft, but found that they were bored by activities such as sewing and knitting (Green, 1998). Furthermore, in Zambia, quite a few training centres for farming are not seen as attractive by both males and females who are not eager to take up farming as a career. The older street children would rather be on the street than take up agriculture for a living (Phiri, 1996). However, in Uganda, FOCA (Friends of Children Association) is involved in training the children in skills such as carpentry, tailoring, radio repairs, welding fabrication and aluminium work to avoid the tendency to create dependence. The service providers of this programme believe that with these skills children can become self-employed and will be able to employ others. Their experience has shown that most of the trained former street children have become workshop instructors and artisans and are able to train newly recruited street children (Cockburn, 1999). The factors that might have contributed to this success are not mentioned by the above author.

Jones (1997) maintains that not acknowledging the individual needs of street children would mean ignoring the lifestyle of the child on the street. On the street the child would have control over a number of freedoms – time, resources, mobility and association (Aptekar cited in Jones, 1997:47). Programmes which attempt to limit a child's freedom excessively seem likely to fail. The development of best practice, centred on the concept of empowerment implies that success is closely related to the ability of the street child to determine the nature, pace and essential goals of the intervention. Intervention should thus be based on the child and his or her needs and potential and "not upon the moral imagination of society at large" (Jones, 1997:47).

Almost 20 years ago a specialist in child development found that children in “need of care” in South Africa were “forced to fit” into the child care system, rather than having intervention programmes adapted to their needs (Baizerman cited in Swart-Kruger, 1996:232). The present situation is not totally different to that prior to 1994 when conventional child care facilities were found to “contribute to the street child problem since they require prescribed behaviour and self-disclosure in return for service” (Schurink cited in Swart-Kruger, 1996:232).

Karabanow (2002) mentions that one of the ways in which to meet a population's needs is to listen to what they ask. For example, Dans la Rue, an agency in Montreal, discovered that many street children owned pets and thus became the only shelter in Montreal that allowed pets and provided dog and cat food and supplies.

According to Anyuru (1996), some local and international organisations believe that although street children should be provided with the basic necessities, creating organisations that provide for all their needs creates dependency, which may have an adverse effect on the child's future. In order to overcome this dependency, most organisations have included training in technical skills in their programmes.

Smit (cited in Smit and Liebenberg, 1999:34) claims that not attending to the real needs of street children can, from a psychological and educational approach, result in a form of abuse itself. Thus creative ways of helping street children should be developed and researched.

Respect for street children

Whilst being aware of the needs of street children, practitioners also need to show respect towards them and this has been mentioned earlier in this chapter. Blanc (1994) found that effective interventions for street children were those that

protect children while providing them with opportunities to learn and to develop skills to ensure a better future for themselves. The effectiveness of programmes depends on their ability to display respect for children to “interpret their own lives and to make their own choices” (Allsebrook and Swift cited in Veeran, 1999:205). Many street children participate in programmes, which they have little knowledge about, spend a short while on and then leave without their problems being resolved or their needs being met. Cockburn (2001) claims that children will desert programmes that do not meet their needs.

The independence that street children have forged for themselves on the streets is clearly important in their lives and has been extensively documented (Schärf et al, Schurink and Swart, both cited in Swart-Kruger, 1996:233). More than two decades ago, international and African specialists on street children verified that incarceration in formal institutions destroys the spirit of a street child and coping strategies and does not substitute them with anything valuable (Ahua and Yacouba cited in Swart-Kruger, 1996).

SECTION FOUR: RECOMMENDATIONS

Authors have put forward many recommendations on trying to deal with the problem of street children. In using the ecosystems perspective, these recommendations are made with regards to the different systems that the street child interacts with.

Knowledge about street children

According to Lugalla and Mbwambo (1999), knowledge about who the ‘children of the streets’ are with regards to their age, gender, place of origin and social and economic characteristics is the first and most crucial step in formulating policies which will impact positively on the lives of street children. Information about their historical backgrounds and the socio-economic characteristics of their families is

important as it helps us to understand the reasons for these children living on the streets.

Lugalla and Mbambo (1999) stress the need to know about how 'children of the street' meet their basic needs as this knowledge will have implications for policy planning. It will provide enlightenment on how street children survive and point out the existing urban resources which are being used by the children.

Active participation

Programmes may be more successful if they allow active participation by street children. Cockburn (1999:16) mentions that service providers in Zimbabwe have pointed out that children's capacity to determine their own destinies and to evaluate their own experiences has throughout history been "underrated, undervalued, and undermined". Dube et al (1996: 266) mention that the street child should be "looked at with appreciation as a skilful survivor, who, against all odds at home and on the streets, managed to survive and has developed the means to do so". de Winter and Noom (2003) indicate that the young develop much better in an atmosphere that allows them to actively participate. They should experience a "sense of connectedness, feeling wanted, welcome and necessary" (de Winter and Noom, 2003:327). Research in youth care indicates that involving youth in the planning and implementation of their own treatment can be effective. Treatment programmes that actively involve young people in interventions as well as their living environment have been shown to have a greater and more permanent effect (Ross and McKay, Jagers and Slot, de Winter cited in de Winter and Noom, 2003:327). For example, female adolescent offenders in a correctional institution in Ontario, Canada were actively allowed to participate in a treatment programme in the institution. The findings indicated that many major behavioural problems such as assault, self-inflicted injuries and property damage were eliminated after a few weeks and this improvement was

maintained for a further five months when most of the girls were released (Ross and McKay in Ross and Gendreau, 1980).

The right of children to participate actively in decisions affecting their lives can be found in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Motala and Smith, 2004). Article 12 stipulates that children that are able to form their own opinions have the right to express those views in matters affecting them. Article 12 of the Convention also states that a child should be given the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative procedures affecting them (www.unicef.org/crc/fulltext.htm).

Researchers have recently indicated that children's participation should be promoted because according to Johnson et al (cited in Motala and Smith, 2003:64) "we adults risk missing out on the richness and innovative perspectives that can be offered by children and young people with varying experiences and from varying situations". Thus, in order to create strategies to understand the problems affecting children, one must include the experiences and perceptions of children (Motala and Smith, 2003).

Lugalla and Mbwambo (1999) advocate that children themselves should be involved in developing policies and strategies that are aimed to assist them. In order to display respect for street children, they need to be involved in decision-making processes in issues that concern them and affect their daily life on the street. Lugallo and Mbwambo (1999) emphasise the need to be aware that street children have experience, are knowledgeable and know their needs and the problems they experience. They are also able to plan their own strategies to overcome these problems. Policies and other efforts aimed at assisting these children must start with recognising the strength and usefulness of this experience and knowledge.

Rights of street children

Karabanow (2002) mentions that in order to empower street children, agencies need to work together to advocate for their rights. Police harassment of street children is a common example of where their rights have been taken advantage of. Trussell (1999) mentions that in order to reduce distrust, hostility and aggression between street children and the police, educational programmes should be introduced to police on how to be more understanding and respectful towards street children. For example, Dans La Rue (an agency in Montreal that helps street children) has been active in advocating against police harassment of street children for minor crimes and sensitising the community to the street culture (Karabanow, 2002).

Williams (1996) maintains that educating street children about the law and their rights is possibly one of the most crucial steps to take in their individual empowerment. For example, a South African organisation, Street-Wise, uses the children's experiences on the streets, with the police and in the courts and uses role-plays to teach the children how they could cope with situations common in their lives (Williams, 1996).

Research conducted with street children in KwaZulu-Natal indicates that sexually abused street children are not accessing any of the rehabilitation and therapeutic programmes available. Childline, an organisation providing services to abused children, reported having received only one referral from organisations dealing with street children in the last year (Motala and Smith, 2003). This can be attributed to the low levels of reporting on sexual abuse in general in South Africa and specifically by street children. The lack of awareness of their rights and perhaps disappointment with the ability or willingness of service providers to deal with violations of their rights is perhaps responsible for this (Motala and Smith, 2003).

Public awareness

Educational awareness campaigns are also needed to increase public understanding of the plight of street children. Street Kids International has created a video, "The Karate Kid Story" that allows the stories of street children to be told in a heart warming way. The video serves not only as a prevention tool but helps communities to better understand the experiences of street children. In Uganda, there is a Voice of the Street drama group, which makes the public more aware of the plight of street children (Cockburn, 1999). Performances by the group take place in open markets and street corners where the public is given the opportunity to understand the children's problems and how society views them. Service providers are thus seen as "partisans to the cause of the homeless, being able to provide important resources and knowledge but also friendship and support to a population that has seldom been acknowledged and listened to" (Karabanow, 2002:382).

Aptekar (1996) adds that the programmes developed to address and change public attitudes towards street children is lacking. Official and public awareness of the causes of the street child presence is needed (Ross, 1991). This will require co-ordination amongst a variety of people and agencies. This will result in shifting away from blaming individuals to offering solutions to some large scale societal problems. Smit and Liebenberg (2000) recommend that the public should be aware of the negative consequences about giving food, money and clothes directly to street children.

Greene (cited in Greene et al 1997:559) found that many street children regard shelters as dangerous places and feel that shelters do not help those that need it. Greene (et al, 1997) also recommends that shelters should increase their outreach efforts to improve the awareness of street children to the availability of shelter services and to dismiss false perceptions about shelters.

Businesses should be able to report problems experienced with street children to a 24 hour support service. They could contribute to such a service and accept responsibility as partners in the process. Businesses could inform their customers about not giving money to street children, but rather to support co-ordinated programmes. Retailers must be encouraged to stop selling glue and thinners to children (Smit and Liebenberg, 2000).

The security services for trains should be improved so as not to allow free access to trains. Children travelling without a ticket should be reported to a co-ordinating body that helps street children (Smit and Liebenberg, 2000).

Contact with the outside world

It is also important for children to develop positive relations with the outside world (Karabanow, 2002). For, example, an organisation called Toronto's Street Kids International has formed bike courier projects where children serve as messengers between business communities. This allowed the street children to have a positive relation with society as well as a chance for future employment. In addition, in this programme there was an increase in the children's self-worth, self-esteem and confidence (Dalgish cited in Karabanow, 2002:380). Unfortunately, the author does not indicate the type of research conducted and the actual results to support this claim, this claim wholly rests on the subjective impressions of the authors rather than empirical evidence.

Role players

Families

Garlick (2002:39), of the Themba Club (a shelter on the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast) states that the boy on the street should be seen as "the visible manifestation of deep-rooted problems at home". This is equally applicable to the

girl on the street. Garlick (2002) stresses that without stabilising the family, the street child will not rehabilitate completely. In trying to help street children, the Themba Club decided to develop programmes with the children in their own homes and in their communities. In June 2002, with funding from a Dutch organisation, Kern-konsult and in partnership with trainers from a Dutch NGO, the Baumanhuis, the Themba Club launched a Mobile Outreach Unit. They provide children with school fees and uniforms. They also work with the schools, community leaders and nurses at clinics. Thus, part of the work is also to establish support systems for the family. In situations where children are starving, the family is given a food parcel; however one adult from the family must work for a day at a shelter to earn the food.

Shelters

Ribeiro and Ciampone (2001) state that to help street children measures such as ensuring favourable circumstances for returning home (including support to the family), treatment for drug abuse, efficient educational activities, attendance at the local school in the community and more personalised and effective treatment must be taken by shelters.

Ross (1991) predicts that if during their formative years, street children have no access to informal education and rehabilitative programmes that street shelters provide, there is a considerable likelihood that street children will turn to crime for a living.

Sihlangu (1999b), in reporting on the experience of the White River Help Our Children, in South Africa (WRHOC), claims that children need to come to the shelter at least in twos, in order for them to feel secure and to have a friend for support. Whilst living at the shelter they should be involved in daily chores they would normally do at home. The diet should be kept simple. For example, the children have bread and jam/peanut butter for breakfast and lunch and porridge

and vegetables or beans or tinned fish in the evening. Meat is cooked once a week. The thinking behind this diet is that if reunification is to be facilitated, the children should be provided with the type of food they would find at home or else a new need will be formed which their parents will not be able to fulfil (Sihlangu, 1999b).

Staff

Staff members need to be committed to returning street children to their homes as soon as the child and home are prepared. The time the child spends in the shelter must be used to have an impact on the child's emotional, social and educational growth (Jackson, 2002a). Having trained and permanent working staff that plan for the long term is seen as leading to an organisations success (Jackson, 2002b).

Street children indicate that a solution to their problem with social workers is to have better communication and better co-operation with their social workers, agencies and institutions (de Winter and Noom, 2003). Many street children feel that better communication would form the basis of greater trust in one another. The children have had negative experiences with adults, thus it is believed that the relationship between the social worker and the child should not be focussed only on 'professional care'. There should also be room for personal contact, emotional support and humour (de Winter and Noom, 2003). The children favoured a "greater say ... in their own journey through the care system" (de Winter and Noom, 2003:333). This does not imply that they should make all the decisions, but rather that in the long term a shared approach by the adolescents and the social workers would be more successful.

Programmes

The programmes that have been successful have been those that create an environment where children feel safe, cared for and part of a community (Karabanow, 2002). Karabanow's (2002) research indicates that agencies and programmes have had success when they adopted street education and prevention strategies. These initiatives have provided for basic needs, fostering the children's strengths through community building, linking with external communities and advocating on children's behalf. These services together establish a safe and caring environment where children are able to build an empowered community.

Richter and Swart-Kruger (1995) emphasise that interventions should include a consideration of life options and future possibilities. Many people working in street youth programmes have noted that attitudes, behaviour and values can be completely changed when assisting with identity development and engaging in life story repair. These programmes consider the traumatic histories of street youth as well as their adjustment to street life, individual self-worth, trust in the possibility for growth and hope for the future (Richter and Swart-Kruger, 1995). They deal with where the children have come from, what they have done while living on the street and their plans for the future. Through this process, street youth are given the opportunity to link their past and future.

Cockburn (1999) concludes that there needs to be a paradigm shift in child care in South Africa focussing on non-residential programmes and prevention. However, the two challenges facing this shift are accountability and evaluation. For instance, it is fairly easy to do a head count and if there are many heads the claim is that the programme is thriving, but measuring success or failure in a non-residential setting is a more complex task (Cockburn, 1999).

Communities

The role of the community in helping to prevent children from turning to the streets cannot be overemphasised. Community Involvement in programmes and projects for street children should be encouraged (Phiri, 1996). Ons Plek, a shelter for girl street children have successfully prevented children from becoming street children because community members refer girls when they first begin to sleep at a neighbours house, a pattern that tends to precede running away (Jackson, 2002a). Jackson (2002a) adds that developmental community work is the ideal method of preventing street children.

Although Lugalla and Mbwambo (1999) claim that street children should be able to live in an urban environment which asserts their dignity, health and security, Dube et al (1996) maintain that any programme aimed at helping street children should not end in the streets but in the communities where the children were born and grew up in. A programme which ends in the streets is regarded as being remedial rather than preventative (Dube et al, 1996). The children on the street should thus be seen to be a symptom of a wider problem and we need to be proactive in treating the causes and not only the symptom (Cockburn, 1999). Practitioners in Zimbabwe have questioned whether the street is the most important point of intervention. They suggest that we need to return to the community, focussing on parents in low-income areas to ensure that any strategies and solutions stem from the community. Strengthening communities means strengthening families which cannot be achieved via a residual, conservative framework as proposed in the Draft South African Family Policy (Sewpaul, 2005b). Sewpaul (2005b), in critiquing this policy states that the burden of coping with South Africa's vast problems is reduced to the level of individuals and families, without recognising the structural sources of unemployment, economic oppression and exclusion, inequality and poverty on people's lives. It does not attend to the "profound roles that society and state play in contributing to way that families cope" (Sewpaul: 2005b:315). While the draft

Family Policy briefly mentions the effect of environmental factors on family life, it often emphasises that “the family is a powerful agent for political, economic, cultural and social change” (Sewpaul, 2005b:316). However, it does not recognise that families are also subject to the powerful influences of socio-political, cultural and economic factors.

Lugalla and Mbwambo (1999) add that long term programmes for street children must be community based. Community based approaches may be able to provide better alternatives to the system of institutionalising children in rehabilitation centres where they are supplied with food, education and shelter.

A community based street worker involving home, schools and social services and mainstream education could be introduced. The worker could be a resident of the community and existing services and resources could be incorporated into a holistic structure. Programmes involving at-risk youths should also be developed. In addition, availability and accessibility of programmes should be the main concern in the community. The Police, schools, the justice system and municipality should become partners in this process (Smit and Liebenberg, 2000).

Ennew (cited in Williams, 1996) mentions that ten years ago the Director of the Undugu Society programme for street children in Nairobi wrote about programme related research with street children. The Director stressed that the team has to study the community to determine which method will be most suited to the African situation. It is likely that an African approach may need to be established based on people's traditions, religions and superstitions. Lugalla and Mbwambo (1999) also mention the role of the traditional African family in assisting children in gaining access to basic subsistence and social services. There is also a need for communities to become facilitators in the providing of children's priorities and needs.

le Roux (1997) recommends that poor communities need to be uplifted to prevent an increase in the numbers of street children. An integrated approach involving the government, church and members of the community needs to be adopted.

Smit and Liebenberg (2000) state that there should be a co-ordinating body to link and monitor projects and infrastructures located in the community. Funding should be focussed on programmes in the community of origin, whilst government funding should only be given to those programmes that are part of a holistic and monitored programme. Those that are interested in initiating projects for high risk/street children should report their ideas to this co-ordinating body which should then provide feedback to social services. This process will prevent duplication of services and ensure constructive co-ordination.

Government

In his first State of the Nation address on 24 May 1994, the former president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela insisted on street children not being disregarded in the proposed Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). On 16 June 1994, in remembering the Sharpville massacre, he emphasised that their problems should be addressed constructively. He showed his concern by establishing a presidential trust fund, The Nelson Mandela's Children's Fund to help street children. A year later he endorsed the Convention on the Rights of the Child and on 1 June 1996 he initiated a National Programme of Action to better the welfare of South African children (Swart-Kruger, 1996). However, these political and policy pronouncements appear too be inconsistent with governments macro-economic policy which further disadvantages the poor. The effect that the government's macro-economic policies have on the lives of children and their families is mentioned earlier in this chapter.

Despite the fact that South Africa has a new Constitution with a Bill of Rights, street children feel that on a daily basis, their lives have not changed much.

Many regional and local alliances meet regularly to discuss street children; the National Department has a Working Committee on street children, apart from the National Plan of Action for Children launched in June 1996. However, contrary to policy imperatives, the street children themselves are noticeably absent in many of these processes and they are seldom consulted by members of these forums (Swart-Kruger, 1996).

Policy planners need to be aware that if they can help street children to gain a clearer understanding of the possible risks of street life and are trained to protect themselves, they can be empowered to improve their well-being (Lugalla and Mbwambo, 1999). Ribeiro and Ciampone (2001) outline from their research with street children in Brazil that there needs to be political action to establish social policies that address the needs of children and their families.

Ross (1991) maintains that local authorities have a significant role to play in caring for street children. They can help by providing land, buildings and funding. The coordination of resources, expertise and objectives is needed to all those involved in helping street children. There is an urgent need to develop new policies and practices which “do not institutionalise and imprison street children” (Ross, 1991:72). This contrasts sharply with the approach adopted by the Durban eThekweni Municipality. In May 2005, more than 187 street children were rounded up by Metro Police before the tourism Indaba and taken to various shelters (Sunday Tribune, 15 May 2005). The move was viewed by many as an attempt to brush the embarrassing matter under the carpet. Rachel Bell of Swansea, England, who has been working with street children in Durban for four months, regarded the council's act as shocking, lacking kindness, possibly illegal and an abuse of human rights (Sunday Tribune, 15 May 2005). According to Ward 27 councillor for North Beach, Avrielle Coen, a similar round up occurred at Indaba 2004 and there is still an awaiting court case over the alleged abuse of the rights of children living and working on the street (Sunday Tribune, 15 May 2005). The councillor reported that she had been contacted by people who had

seen police personnel, not outreach workers violently picking up the children and putting them in their vans. Three of the children that had been picked up during the Indaba 2005 laid charges of assault with the Point Police (Sunday Tribune, 15 May 2005). During an interview held with the municipality's street children consultant, Mr Visvin Reddy, with the leader of the SANPAD project, Prof. V. Sewpaul and myself on 23 May 2005, Mr Reddy claimed that street children should be forcibly removed from the street and placed at shelters and not given a choice about whether or not they wanted to leave the street. His reasoning for not giving the children a choice was "Would you give your own child a choice?" In November 2005, police and members of the Point Community Policing Forum rounded up children again ahead of the arrival of an international fleet of around-the-world yachts in Durban (Sunday Tribune, 12 November 2005).

Balanon (1989) stresses that in order to further address the needs of street children, there needs to be lobbying for more receptive and effectively enforced national legislation for the protection of children. We need to advocate for more budget allocation by both national and local governments to programmes and services for street children. Professor Aptekar who has researched the problem of street children extensively in many different countries recommends that what is lacking and most needed, are programmes that address and change public attitudes, including those in power. This can be found to be true in South Africa, where more support and understanding is needed from local, provincial and national government (Cockburn, 1999).

Swart-Kruger (1996) recommends that state ministries develop an integrated and hands-on approach to street children. It is risky to leave the care of street children to countless NGO's without adequate methods of monitoring and assessing their interventions.

Stop Lee

Education

Teachers should be educated and sensitised to recognize and understand the needs, dynamics and realistic problems of high risk learners. All school dropouts should be reported directly to a co-ordinating body. Special attention should be given to parent involvement in education with an emphasis on parents of high risk children. Financial support should be given to families having difficulty to send their children to school due to financial reasons (Smit and Liebenberg, 2000).

The police

Smit and Liebenberg (2000) suggest that police should be trained to work effectively with children on the street, at police stations and during court procedures. Police should be encouraged to report all problems experienced with street children to a co-ordinating body.

Networking

It has been found that managers and workers at shelters fail to maintain effective co-operation with other role-players such as the justice system and the police and also lack effective links with the community in which they work (le Roux and Smith, 1998). Yet, communication between policy-makers, development and health planners, non-governmental organisations and grass roots organisations is necessary if policies are to be realistic and bring about positive change (Lugalla and Mbwambo, 1999).

Kuse (1997) maintains that in addressing the problem of street children there needs to be a holistic approach that incorporates primary prevention programmes which focuses on involving communities and at-risk families in empowering them to prevent vulnerable children such as abused and neglected children, school-dropouts and truants from choosing to live on the streets.

Interventions should at this level attempt to integrate at-risk families with their communities. This needs a broad systems approach, which includes both formal and informal social support systems, which involves role-players such as community members, professionals, local government officials and institutions such as schools and churches (Kuse, 1997 and Balanon, 1989). Secondary prevention programmes should focus on developing pro-active intervention strategies within communities, in order to prevent children from living on the street permanently.

Research

Smit and Liebenberg (2000) recommend that programmes should be permanently research-based to ensure that the needs and dynamics are addressed. The co-ordinating body should monitor and provide feedback to social services on a regular basis. The police, the justice system, businesses and municipalities should be included as partners in the process. In addition, identified role-players from state departments and business and local authorities could meet with the co-ordinating body to monitor, plan and evaluate the available services.

Consideration must be given to children already living on the streets through health and welfare programmes, education and the development of further research so that intervention proposals can be formed (Ribeiro and Ciampone, 2001). Balanon (1989) proposes that consolidation of situation analyses be conducted on street children. There should be a comparison study on the effectiveness of centre based programmes as compared to community based programmes. The efforts made to reach out and better the lives of street children and their families must be linked with broader and national programmes based on structural change that is, changing the economic, political and cultural circumstances that has led to and will continue to lead to thousands of children living on the streets.

According to Greene et al (1997), research should also investigate obstacles that prevent street children from using shelters, such as their eligibility requirements (for example, age, gender and restrictions on behaviour). The perceptions of street children surrounding shelters, their services and accessibility should also be considered.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided a review of literature surrounding street children. The discussion focussed on the reasons for programmes failing, what is needed for successful programmes and recommendations for helping street children.

The following chapter provides a discussion on evaluation research. It details the value of conducting evaluations, the process that is involved and the problems that may be faced.

CHAPTER THREE: EVALUATION RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

The idea of evaluation is often not pleasing to programme management staff and service providers (Louw in Donald, Dawes and Louw, 2000). In times of overwhelming need, programme staff prefer to focus on alleviating that need. They do not want to invest time and money on an evaluation exercise which may put the programme at risk, or which may reflect negatively on programme staff. Yet, the process of evaluating one's own efforts is an element of daily life of striving to do things better and of improving performance.

This chapter on evaluation research is divided into 5 sections.

Section One in this chapter provides a definition of evaluation research and describes qualitative evaluation research. It also lists some questions that evaluation aims to provide answers to.

Section Two focuses on the reasons for carrying out an evaluation with regards to better service delivery, clients and human service professionals.

Section Three highlights the key issues that need to be examined when designing a programme evaluation. This section also outlines the three major types of evaluation, goal-based, process-based and outcomes-based evaluations.

Section Four focuses on the steps involved in the evaluation process, it also provides a problem solving approach to evaluation. Types of data collection are also discussed in this section.

Section Five presents the problems that may be encountered when carrying out an evaluation.

SECTION ONE: QUALITATIVE EVALUATION RESEARCH

Evaluation research is defined by Rossi and Freeman (1989:18) as the “systematic application of social research procedures for assessing the conceptualisation, design, implementation, and utility of social intervention programmes”. It is thus the task of evaluation researchers to review and improve the ways in which policies and programmes are conducted.

There are both qualitative and quantitative methods of conducting evaluation research. The focus of this research project was on qualitative evaluation. The aim of qualitative evaluation is to understand reality as it is seen by the persons being studied (Valadez and Bamberger, 1994). It encourages researchers to try to understand the meaning of specific activities or beliefs in the context of the culture being considered. Valadez and Bamberger (1994) add that qualitative methods for evaluation can be justified on the basis of ethical considerations. Development programmes are supposed to have an impact on the lives of large numbers of people. The programmes focus on a set of implied or explicit assumptions about the needs of the population, about their responses to certain types of interventions and about how their lives will be affected. Due to the fact that many programmes produce significant changes in the lives of the population (some which are not positive), planners have a moral obligation to attempt to understand how they feel about the programmes and how it is affected by them. This implies that in order to understand the ways in which people respond to and change a project, it is necessary to understand the ways in which they experience it (Valadez and Bamberger, 1994). Rossi and Freeman (1989:449) add that qualitative evaluation approaches focus on the need for in-depth knowledge and an understanding of a programmer's “concrete manifestations in attaining valid knowledge about a programmes effects” .

Rossi and Freeman (1989) maintain that evaluating established programmes requires understanding the social conditions when they were initiated and tracing the ways in which they were modified from their beginning to the time of the evaluation. There are many programmes that are no longer useful and have been founded on intervention models that are no longer relevant, some may have even lost their objectives over time. These programmes need to be adapted and discarded and replaced with programmes that bring about greater benefits or abandoned all together (Rossi and Freeman, 1989).

Existing programmes are considered to be more difficult to evaluate in terms of their impact and efficiency (Rossi and Freeman, 1989). However, evaluations can help to ensure that the programme is being implemented appropriately and can assist with planning of programme improvements.

Every evaluation must be modified to its programme. The tasks that the evaluators have to achieve differ depending on the stage of activity at which they are brought in and the needs and interests of stakeholders such as policy makers, programme managers and funders (Rossi and Freeman, 1989). Rossi and Freeman (1989) add that the scope of each evaluation is reliant on the specific purposes for which it is being conducted. Furthermore, how the evaluation questions are asked depend on what type of programme is being evaluated, that is, whether it is a new intervention, a change or expansion of an existing effort or a well-established, stable service activity.

Smith (1990) outlines a few of the questions that programme evaluation aims to answer:

1. Is the programme effective?
2. Does it seem to have the desired effect?
3. Is the programme on the right path?
4. Are people being helped?

5. Are people accepting the service?
6. What was the outcome of the services they received?

In order to evaluate how a programme is being evaluated one needs to ask:

1. Who is the programme serving?
2. How many people are receiving services?
3. Is the programme being implemented according to the programme plan?
4. What are the programme's initial successes and failures?
5. What are the major blockages in implementing the programme?
6. Which of these are practical problems that can be overcome?
7. Which problems point to significant flaws in the programme design?

SECTION TWO: REASONS FOR UNDERTAKING EVALUATION

There are many reasons for carrying out an evaluation of an organisation's programmes. Smith (1990) mentions that programme evaluation provides a service to organisations, agencies and institutions that are able to use it well. The person involved in evaluation research can assist the agency to keep its commitment to its mission and to the goals and objectives of its programmes. McNamara (1998) claims that programme evaluation can also help with understanding, verifying or increasing the impact of services on clients.

Programme evaluation may also lead to better programme planning. For example:

1. Trying to determine programme goals leads to greater understanding of the programme and its goals.
2. The need to describe a programme for purposes of evaluation means that a more comprehensive description of the programme will be devised.

3. Formulating a questionnaire in which consumers are questioned about the intervention helps to conceptualise the programme more clearly.
4. After the study is conducted, programme planners, supervisors and administrators can meet to discuss specific evaluative findings rather than programmes described in vague terms.

Besides leading to better programme planning, evaluation is also important in terms of effectiveness of social work services. Reamer (1998) argues that regardless of the types of clients or problems that are dealt with, social workers must be interested in the effectiveness of their efforts. Thus, considering the effectiveness of social work intervention is one of the main purposes of social work research and evaluation. Irrespective of whether one is helping an individual client, a group, a family or a community, a social worker must try to answer an essential question: Are my efforts effective and achieving the outcomes that I and my clients are in search of?

Human service professionals also have a responsibility to be accountable for the services that they provide (Smith, 1990). They are accountable to the clients to whom they provide services and as ethical practitioners, also to themselves. In addition, they are accountable to supervisors, administrators and the employing institution or agency as well as to funders, the various branches of government or the voluntary sector that support the agency. Furthermore, they are accountable to the community they serve or the one in which the programme is located.

Smith (1990) maintains that one of the reasons for evaluation is to enhance belief systems. Researchers have observed that persons providing direct service are often enthusiastic about what they do and how they do it. Programme staff are usually interested in improving their performance and would like to find out whether their activities are making a difference (Louw in Donald et al, 2000). This commitment may be vital in implementing a specific service strategy. The best human service workers are those that not only believe in what they do but also

question it to reach better practice. If staff are persuaded that evaluation will assist with the above, they may begin to include evaluation into programme processes, to support the intervention and to make evaluation an integral part of it (Louw in Donald et al, 2000).

Smith (1990) also adds that programme evaluation encourages choice where participants of programmes are asked directly about its usefulness. It inquires what participants have gained and their feelings about the service. Those receiving services can thus be empowered through programme evaluation, especially when their opinions and feelings about the service are fed back into programme planning. In addition, evaluation is also useful in determining the extent to which significant needs are being dealt with (Reamer, 2000).

Evaluations may be undertaken for other reasons (Chelimsky cited in Rossi and Freeman, 1989:43): for management and administrative purposes, to assess the appropriateness of programme changes and to identify ways of improving service delivery. Evaluations may also be carried out for planning and policy purposes, to test new ideas on how to deal with human and community problems, to decide whether to develop or restrict programmes and to support advocacy of one programme as opposed to another (Chelimsky cited in Rossi and Freeman, 1989:43). Evaluations may also be carried out to test a social science hypothesis or a principle of professional practice (Chelimsky cited in Rossi and Freeman, 1989:43). The main goal is thus to plan and implement an evaluation that is as objective as possible (Chelimsky cited in Rossi and Freeman, 1989:44).

Smith (1990) adds that evaluation provides for knowledge building. It informs us about programming efforts and how well social problems are being managed. The positive outcomes that do work can be documented. Similarly, the reasons for some programmes not working can also be documented. The extent to which better programming efforts are documented implies that we can establish a knowledge base of programme interventions.

Valadez and Bamberger (1994) outline some main types of information that evaluation programmes can produce. Indicators of project progress can include selection of participants, progress of physical implementation, utilisation of project funds, income and follow-on projects as well as drop-outs. The above authors refer to accessibility/affordability of services, impact on target population and impact on national policies as indicators of project effectiveness. Indicators of project efficiency can comprise of performance of individual project components, general efficiency in terms of design, finance, implementation and cost recovery and a comparison with alternatives.

SECTION THREE: DESIGNING PROGRAMME EVALUATION

There are four major issues that need to be considered when planning an evaluation:

1. Who wants the evaluation and why?

Programme evaluations may be carried out by people who do not have a significant investment in them (Reamer, 1998). One needs to find out who is requesting the programme evaluation, the level of their interest and investment in the process and the ways in which they might use the results. This information will be useful in deciding which people to involve in the evaluation and in what ways. One needs to identify the principal stakeholders, the people with an interest in the program evaluation. These usually include agency administrators and staff. Their expertise may be needed concerning the programme to be evaluated as they may have ideas about what should be evaluated and how the agency might work together in carrying out the evaluation (Reamer, 1998).

2. What are the goals of the programme evaluation?

Some programme evaluations have fairly straightforward goals: to determine the programme's effectiveness and to obtain information about the programmes implementation (such as staffing arrangements, resource allocation and supervision) (Reamer, 1998). These goals are referred to as "manifest goals" which are the "official" goals that are publicly declared. However, some programme evaluations are designed to achieve "latent goals" which refer to goals that are pursued "beneath the surface" (Reamer, 1998).

3. How will the results be used?

The results may be used internally, that is the agency may want to find out more about the impact of their services and means of improving them (Reamer, 1998). In this case one should be aware that staff may be worried or threatened by the results. They may feel that their jobs, beliefs or professional reputations are at risk. This may influence the concepts and issues discussed in the evaluation, how items are phrased, data collection and the sources used (Reamer, 1998).

Secondly, the results may be used mainly by an outside body (Reamer, 1998). Funding sources may often request that social service agencies collect evaluation data that the agency is not very interested in and would not collect otherwise. Thirdly, programme evaluation results may be used both internally and externally. Taking into account who is going to be using the data may affect the research design and data collection procedures. If the data is to be used by an external organisation, one needs to be aware of their needs and include questions and measures that will be useful for them. Furthermore, knowing how the information will be used may affect decisions regarding what kinds of data are collected and how questions are phrased (Reamer, 1998).

4. Who should design and carry out the evaluation?

Staff members who are responsible for carrying out and overseeing the programme evaluation need to be knowledgeable about research design and methodology such as sampling, validity, reliability, instrument construction, data collection procedures and data analysis (Reamer, 1998). If the intention is to make the staff to feel part of the programme evaluation it will be useful to involve them in the planning stages, when design questions and overall goals are discussed. This can help engage the staff and help them feel that their knowledge and skills are valued and may bring about goodwill and support (Reamer, 1998).

Smith (1990) adds that the practice of evaluation research implies that the researcher must develop a helping relationship with the administration and staff to help the agency. The researcher must have human relations skills and personal characteristics to make people feel at ease and not intimidated. The researcher will benefit from this relationship by gaining a better understanding of the organisation and the programme being evaluated.

McNamara (1998) outlines other key considerations:

1. What kinds of information are needed for the evaluation?
2. From what sources should the information be collected such as clients, programme documents?
3. How is that information to be collected?
4. When is the information needed?
5. What resources are available to collect the information?

Major Types of Programme Evaluation

McNamara (1998) outlines 3 different types of programme evaluations that need to be considered:

Goal-Based Evaluation

This type of evaluation aims to establish the extent to which a programme has met its goals and objectives. In using this type of evaluation, one would need to examine how the programme goals were established and the stage of the programme's progress towards achieving its goals. Other questions that need to be answered:

1. Do personnel have adequate resources to achieve the goals?
2. How should priorities be altered or modified to change the focus to achieving goals?
3. How should goals be established in future?

Further questions that need to be asked to assess the programme's usefulness in achieving certain results include (Smith, 1990):

1. What is the impact of the programme?
2. Which of the programme goals are achieved?
3. Which of the programme goals are not achieved?
4. Is the programme efficient in achieving certain goals?
5. Are the programme results clearly related to the programme's impact?

Process-Based Evaluation

Besides a goal-based evaluation, one could also carry out a process-based evaluation. Posavac and Carey (cited in Louw in Donald et al, 2000:67) describe

monitoring the implementation of programmes as “the most fundamental form of program evaluation” and describe it as “an examination of the program itself – its activities, the population it serves, how it functions, and the condition of its participants”. Evaluation is very often seen as important at the end of the process. Louw (in Donald et al, 2000) however argues that programmes can be improved throughout the process. The successful completion of each step intensifies the programmes eventual impact. Louw (in Donald et al, 2000) provides many reasons for the importance of monitoring implementation or of “process evaluation” in the overall reasoning behind the programme.

This part of the evaluation provides proof that planned activities have actually been carried out. This information is essential for the reasons of accountability to funders and others. It is also important to know not only that the programme has been put into operation but that it has been implemented in such a way that it is likely to have an effect. Poor implementation is often seen as a major cause of failure of the programme to lead to change. A potentially strong plan may be developed into the design phase, but if it is inadequately implemented, it has little chance of being effective. Although Louw (in Donald et al, 2000) stresses the importance of monitoring the reliability of the programme, this does not mean that the programme should be fixed. The argument is that these must be documented. If one adjustment is doing better than the other, we need to understand precisely how and why this occurred. Furthermore, documenting the progress of the programme may be of use to others who may want to engage in similar kind of work.

Monitoring implementation can also provide feedback on the value of service delivery. If an assessment can be carried out in the initial phase of the programme on how well services are being rendered and problems and difficulties can be recognised, such information can be fed back on a short feedback cycle to improve the programme. This type of evaluation of progress is

most appropriate to make changes to the delivery of a programme in its initial stages.

Whether people take part in sufficient numbers, and whether the planned recipients are being reached, is another part of implementation that needs to be monitored. In addition, one needs to know as soon as possible whether those involved in the programme are doing better.

This type of evaluation is useful when programmes are long established and have changed over time. Examples of questions that can be considered an evaluation to understand the processes in programmes are (McNamara, 1998):

1. What is required of staff for service delivery?
2. How are staff trained about service delivery?
3. How do clients enter the programme?
4. What is required of clients?
5. What is the general process that clients experience with the programme?
6. What do clients consider to be the strengths of the programme?
7. What do staff think are the strengths of the programme?
8. What do staff and clients recommend to improve the programme?

Outcomes-based Evaluation

This type of evaluation facilitates enquiring whether the organisation is conducting the appropriate programme activities to bring about the outcomes that are needed by the client (McNamara, 1998).

Louw (in Donald et al, 2000) distinguishes between immediate and longer-term effects with regards to the overall outcomes of the intervention. Some of the goals of the programme may be achieved quite soon after the programme has been implemented. These are referred to as “outcomes” after Linney and

Wandersman (cited in Louw in Donald et al, 2000:68). These are changes that can be observed or measured in the behaviour of target populations.

Other effects may be long term or ultimate effects which Louw (in Donald et al, 2000) refers to as "impacts" after Linney and Wandersman. These changes are observable at the community level, such as changes in social indicators. These are effects to be achieved only after many of intermediary outcomes have been reached.

This distinction is important as it makes clear our expectations regarding what should happen as a result of the intervention and when it should happen. It may also serve as a guide to the organisation as to what to measure and at what stage of the whole programme. Making the distinction clear also helps to prevent unrealistic expectations. When working with difficult social problems, it is unreasonable to expect the intervention of one programme to have an impact on its own; however, it may display significant outcomes. Thus, outcomes may in due course make an involvement towards achieving an impact at community level. Evaluations of specific outcomes can thus assist in preventing discouragement if the impact is not clear (Louw in Donald et al, 2000).

Although outcomes and impacts are usually considered as a final phase of the programme and its evaluation, one can examine outcomes in the early stages of the programme (Louw in Donald et al 2000).

There are a range of questions that need to be answered in establishing whether programmes are ineffective or inefficient in having the desired impact on communities (Rossi and Freeman, 1989). For example:

1. What is the nature and scope of the problem requiring new, expanded, or modified social programmes? Where is it located and whom does it affect?
2. What feasible interventions are likely to improve the problem significantly?

3. What are the appropriate target populations for a particular intervention?
4. Is the intervention reaching its target population?
5. Is the intervention being implemented in the ways envisaged?
6. Is it effective?
7. How much does it cost?
8. What are its costs relative to its effectiveness and benefits?

Generally, an outcomes based evaluation includes the following steps (McNamara, 1998):

1. The major outcomes that are to be examined need to be identified.
2. Observable measures or indicators need to be specified for each outcome.
3. The number or percent of clients that have one commits to achieving specific outcomes needs to be specified.
4. Information that is needed to show these indicators needs to be identified.
5. How this information is to be collected needs to be decided.
6. The findings then need to be analysed and reported.

SECTION FOUR: STEPS IN PROGRAMME EVALUATION

In carrying out the different forms of evaluation, one would need to follow a series of steps in a process described by McKendrick and Tripodi (cited in de Vos in de Vos et al, 2002:389).

The first step is to determine what is to be evaluated. In this step the focus is on the outcome of intervention which refers to the effectiveness of service and the relationship between input and output which refers to whether the service is efficient and economic in using input to attain the preferred result. This step is followed by identifying the “consumers” of evaluation. In planning for evaluation,

the organisation must have a clear understanding about who the users of evaluation findings will be and then plan the evaluation appropriately.

Next, one needs to obtain the assistance and support of the service providers and the management concerned. Those that are involved in the work to be evaluated should play an active role in discussions about what is to be measured, why, how and for what purpose.

Fourthly, one needs to clearly specify programme objectives in measurable terms. An objective is an accurately worded statement of preferred changes in behaviour such as "Not to gamble for a period of at least six months after the treatment programme". The objectives of the evaluation process also need to be specified. These objectives should be agreed upon within the organisation.

The sixth step in evaluating programs is to choose variables that can be measured to reveal the preferred outcome. Variables to indicate change are taken from an analysis of several sources: The characteristics presenting the problems and needs of clients, the possible, reasonable potential for change, the nature of the organisation's programme and activities, detailed outcome objectives that have been devised and how it is imagined that the organisation's interventions will show themselves in measurable ways in the lives of clients.

Next, one needs to choose a suitable research design. The research design should be efficient, which means that it must essentially produce the knowledge required, it should be the simplest, inexpensive way of obtaining the knowledge, and it should be acceptable to the people involved.

During the next stage the persons involved in the work of the organisation will be facilitating a measurement process that they helped to create and plan which they believe will be valuable to themselves and to the clients. After implementing

the measurement process, the findings are analysed to determine their meanings.

Finally, one needs to report the results of the programme evaluation. The outcome of the measurement process is a set of conclusions that must be reported to the “consumers” of the research and used to improve present service policy and practices.

Problem-solving sequence for evaluation

One could also adopt a problem solving approach to evaluation since interventions begin because an individual or a group has found a problem of some kind within the community. Louw (in Donald et al 2000) mentions that one of the greatest causes of failure to carry out evaluations that prove useful is a lack of adequate consideration of what happens at the beginning of the process.

In relation to such an analysis of causes, two factors are important, to understand in theory the practical problem that is confronted and how the intervention might bring about change. Evaluators will require programme managers and planners to ponder on the questions: “Is the programme intent appropriate to the problem it wishes to tackle?” This implies that an understanding of the nature of the social problem that is being dealt with and the processes that shaped it need to be understood (Chen and Rossi cited in Louw, in Donald et al 2000:64). Louw (in Donald et al 2000) stresses the need to be familiar with the literature in a particular area. Being familiar with the literature means that it is less likely that what others have tried already will be repeated. Furthermore, it incorporates and reviews the knowledge in a given area, allowing for overall conclusions to be extracted from many individual studies. In addition, being familiar with the knowledge often allows consequences for policy and practice such as determining the circumstances under which an intervention is likely to be more or less successful – to be clearly declared and understood. Research at the early

stage of programme development need not only refer to literature searches, but also searching for programmes and ideas in the same field of interest and with similar interest (Louw, in Donald et al 2000).

Shadish, Cook and Leviton (1991) outline a problem solving sequence for an evaluation which includes

1. identifying a problem
2. creating and implementing alternatives to reduce it's symptoms
3. evaluating these alternatives
4. adopting those that results suggest will reduce the problem satisfactorily.

Two of the questions that should be asked during this process is "What has not been tried? and "Why have they not been tried?"

Data collection

An important phase in the process of carrying out an evaluation is the data collection phase. The major methods of data collection are primary methods such as individual interviews, questionnaires or direct observation. The evaluator must also decide who would be the most likely source of data about the programme, that is, the client, the client's family, the worker or the administrator. If direct observation is chosen, there must be clarity regarding what will be observed. Secondary methods of data collection include case records, school reports and others. If secondary records are to be used, it must be ensured that the data are recorded in a complete and systematic manner (Smith, 1990).

Dimock (1997) claims that choosing the most suitable procedure for data collection is dependant on the goal of the evaluation project and the criteria selected to assess it. In selecting which method to use, McNamara (1998) advises that the following questions should be asked:

1. What information is needed to make present decisions about a programme?
2. Of the information needed, how much can be collected and analysed in an effective and practical manner?
3. How accurate will the information collected be?
4. Will the method allow for all the needed information to be collected?
5. What additional methods could be used if more information is needed?
6. Will the information appear reliable to decision makers?
7. Will the type of people in the sample agree with the methods?
8. Who can carry out the method now or is training needed?
9. How can the data be analysed?

There are various ways of collecting data that can be used to evaluate a programme. Data may be collected by using questionnaires, surveys or checklists (McNamara, 1998). This method is useful when there is a need to obtain a large amount of information in a non-intimidating manner. The advantages of this method are that it can be completed anonymously, it is fairly inexpensive to hand out and it can be given to many people.

Self Reports is one method of data collection which refers to asking participants and employees about themselves and their experiences. These may be collected by individual interviews, telephone interviews, group interviews or written questionnaires (Dimock, 1997).

Dimock (1997) adds that many organisations collect personal data of clients when they begin working with them. This "face sheet" type information includes name, age, sex and other details. This information may be supplemented with either an intake interview or an extensive written questionnaire. The result may be a case history including information on personal, social, educational, financial and family background factors. It may also include a needs assessment which will describe the present problems that need help.

Dimock (1997) describes Post Meeting Reactions as another method of self reporting whereby participants are asked to give reactions to a specific meeting or programme session. It can be done by means of a written questionnaire or a three minute interview after the session has ended. Telephonic interviews may also be used.

Reports from others which entail asking others who know the participants about them and their experiences may also be a means of data collection (Dimock, 1997). These reports may be collected by means of personal interviews, phone interviews, group interviews or by written interviews. The persons reporting may include participants in the same programme, or people that know the participant from other situations such as friends, family, teachers and neighbours. Peer ratings have proven to be quite accurate in identifying personal details and leadership qualities compared with other measures (Dimock, 1997). However, one would have to take note of ethical considerations and obtain consent of the person being evaluated. Ethical issues need to be discussed upfront and be agreed upon when using such an evaluation strategy.

Peer ratings refer to people in the same programme or organisations that interact with one another can be asked to judge or rate their peers on selected criteria. They are called "peer ratings" to distinguish the ratings that come from others who have the same status in the organisation (Dimock, 1997).

Direct Observations where one observes the participants and workers in the general functioning of the organization is also a useful method. They are usually carried out by workers or independent observers. They also may be carried out by other people in the programme such as parents, management members or other workers in the organisation. Dimock (1997) mentions that using more than one observer increases the accuracy of the observations. One cannot base conclusions on a single observation; a series of observations might be required to make reliable conclusions.

Dimock (1997) provides a comprehensive guide for evaluating group work. This guide entails different areas which provide a summary of the group's progress.

TABLE 3: AREAS OF EVALUATION OF GROUP'S PROGRESS

AREAS OF EVALUATION
Unity (Degree of unity and cohesion)
Self-direction
Group climate
Distribution of leadership
Distribution of responsibility
Problem solving
Method of resolving disagreements within the group
Meets basic needs
Variety of Activities
Depth of activities
Worker-member rapport
Role of the Worker
Stability

SECTION FIVE: PROBLEMS WITH EVALUATION

In order to carry out a successful evaluation one needs to be aware of the problems that may be experienced. For example, the problems may be ill-defined and stakeholders may disagree about problem priority (Bryk cited in Shadish et al 1991:444); programme goals can be unclear or contradictory (Whole cited in Shadish et al, 1991:444); and implemented change attempts might be minor compared with possible impact.

Evaluators have also realised that policy makers, programme officials and project employees place greater importance on improving their jobs and promoting their beliefs than to the evaluator's goals of identifying better options for problem definition or programme design. Large programme effects are found to be rare because bold new programmes and elementary changes in existing programmes are rare.

It is hoped that evaluation results would be used to develop effective social programmes and to terminate or radically change ineffective ones (Suchman cited in Shadish et al 1991: 448). Evaluations can sometimes affect programme budgets. Evaluations can change internal programme priorities, affecting services and manner of provision, preferred goals and enforcement of regulations.

Valadez and Bamberger (1994) outline some major organisational and management issues that may affect evaluations. One of the issues is that the individuals whose support is needed for conducting the studies or using the results may have little motivation to co-operate. Evaluations are often seen as intimidating because poor evaluation results may lead to budget and staff reductions or criticism from higher levels of authority. Some participants may also believe that nothing valuable will be found from a favourable evaluation. In some cases, agencies may be opposed to the additional work involved, none of which they think will be of use to them.

When there is an overwhelming need, staff prefer to carry on with improving that need, than spending time and money on an evaluation exercise which may put the programme at risk or which reflect negatively on staff (Louw in Donald et al 2000).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided a brief overview of evaluation research. It focused on the definition and key issues involved in the process. The different types of evaluations and steps involved were also discussed.

The next chapter provides details on the research methodology that was used in this study. The research design, data collection methods and procedure are outlined. The chapter also considers the limitations of the design and methodology as well as issues concerning reliability and validity. A presentation on the ethical considerations and method of analysis concludes this chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the research methodology implemented in this study. It begins with a discussion on the research design and then proceeds to describe the data collection methods and procedure. Thereafter, the limitations of the design and methodology are considered, followed by a discussion on issues concerning reliability and validity. A presentation on the ethical considerations and method of analysis ends this chapter.

RESEARCH DESIGN

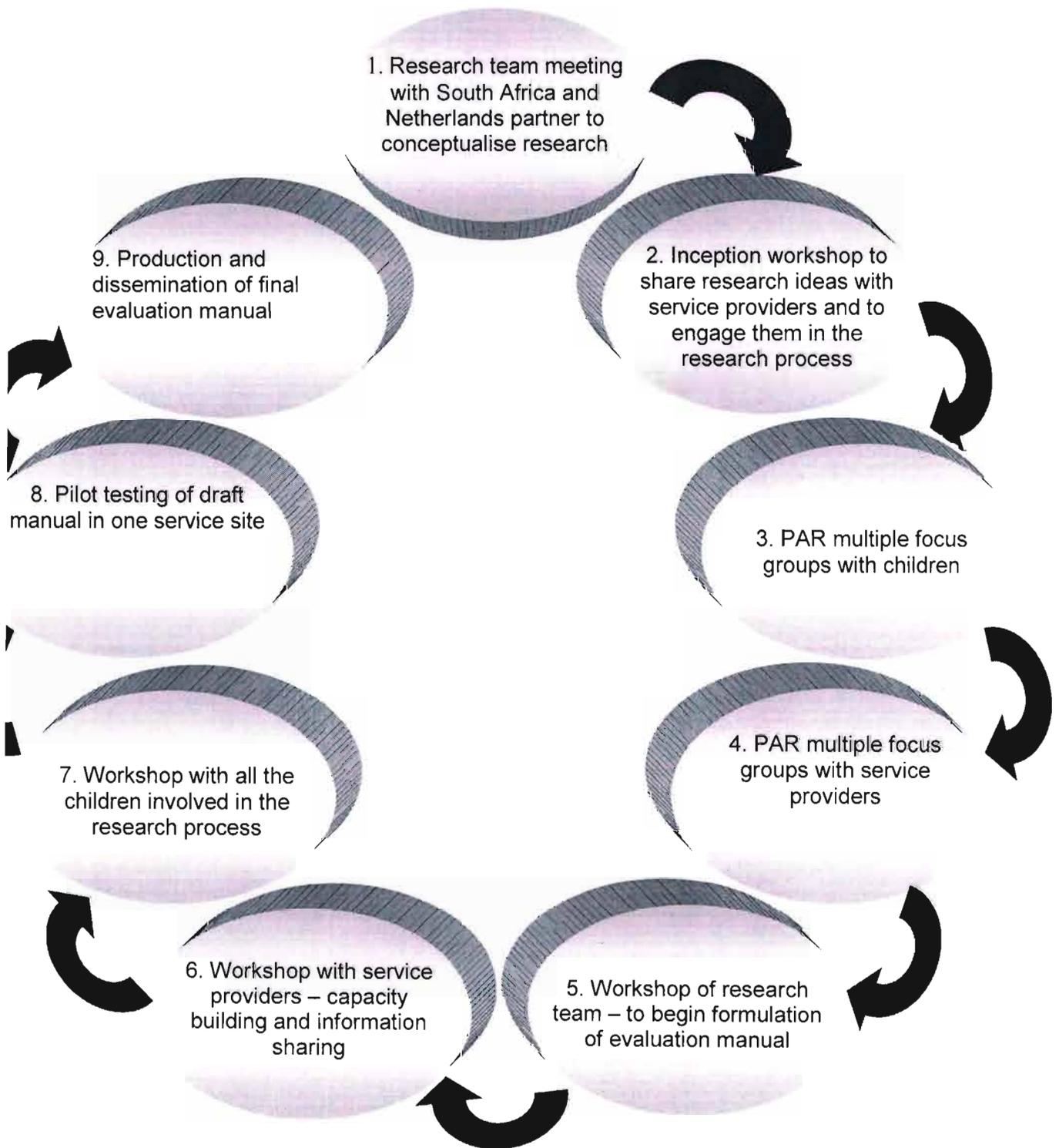
The research design adopted in this study was that of Participatory Action Research (PAR).

Kurt Lewin, known as the founder of modern social psychology, first mentioned PAR in the 1940s as a "way to bridge theory and practice and solve problems through planning, action, and investigating the results of actions" (Gardner, 2004:52). He rejected the idea that researchers analyse an objective world independent of the meanings understood by participants (Gardner, 2004). Healy (2001) concurs with Lewin and adds that PAR encourages the participation of oppressed people in building knowledge and action by promoting change. Marlow (1998) mentions that this action and knowledge will be of direct benefit to groups of people. Bhana (in Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002:228) describes PAR as having the aim of "producing knowledge in an active partnership with those affected by that knowledge and for the express purpose of improving their social, educational and material conditions". PAR with young people, as was the case in this study, is seen as a way of sharing knowledge and experience in order to express young people's opinions, promote recommendations and produce change (Bostock and Freeman, 2003). PAR also refers to doing or

accomplishing, a wider social or community goal through the process of research. In this way, action is focussed and reflective (Parkes and Panelli, 2001).

PAR methodology is built on four integrated processes – planning, action, observation and reflection (May et al, 2003). These processes continue in successive cycles until research objectives are reached. Each cycle builds on the preceding one, incorporating results from the previous cycle into planning and action of the next cycle. PAR involves “forms of inquiry where researchers and participants establish collaborative relationships in order to identify and address mutually conceived issues or problems through cycles of action and research” (Parkes and Panelli, 2001:87). PAR thus identifies research as an “active and relational process” where knowledge can be constantly built through reflection on present information and the analysis of new and specific actions (Parkes and Panelli, 2001:102). The cycles of action and reflection within the PAR approach used in this study are reflected in Figure 1:

FIGURE 1: CYCLE OF ACTION AND REFLECTION WITHIN THE PAR APPROACH



Note:

The stakeholders in Phase 2 included service providers, policy makers, police officers and representatives from the Department of Health. Phases 3 and 4 were a simultaneous process. In Phase 6 the workshop with the service providers entailed capacity building and the sharing of information. The workshop included an expert from India, the research team and relevant stakeholders. There were 3 independent but linked studies conducted by 3 Masters Degree students and all the children involved in the study will be involved in a workshop in Phase 7. I, as a researcher and co-coordinator of the research process, was involved up to Phase 6, Phases 7, 8, and 9 are still to occur.

A further aim of PAR is to promote collaboration throughout the research process (Marlow, 1998). Participatory action research thus focuses on the involvement of all the participants and role-players in the research project. Strydom (in de Vos et al, 2002) adds that both the researcher and the participants are equally involved and they also assume equal responsibility for the findings of the research.

Nelson et al (cited in Bostock and Freeman, 2003:47) recommend that researchers using a PAR approach should “develop egalitarian and authentic relationships and trust”. In this research study, relationships were developed mainly between the children in the focus groups, as they shared information and experiences about services in the shelter.

Furthermore, in PAR, participants are actively involved to assess their problems and ways of resolving them. PAR aims as much as possible to create an environment and structure within which participants ask and search for answers for their own questions (Hess, 2001). In this process, their knowledge and skills increase and the social structure in which they function is transformed. The tools that are used in PAR acknowledge the value of the opinions of the participants in the research. PAR removes the distance between the researcher and the participants and includes the community being studied as an active participant in

the research, with an end purpose of empowering the community to bring about change (Gardner, 2004).

One principle of PAR is that the beneficiaries of the research should be those that are directly involved in it (Hall cited in Khanlou and Peter, 2004:2336). Thus, PAR encourages people to make use of their own knowledge for empowerment. The PAR model is seen to be a shift from the dependency model to the empowerment model, where the community can play an active role in improving its quality of life. PAR emphasises the empowerment of the least powerful groups and individuals in society and tries to "know with others, rather than about them" (Bhana in Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2002:230). A successful PAR project is one where there is not only a better understanding of a problem, nor even an elimination of a problem but an increased awareness in people of their own abilities and resources to mobilise for social action. (Bhana, in Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2002). On an individual level, empowerment helps participants to begin to view themselves as being able to make a difference and being worthy of expressing their opinions. This model encourages capacity building that aims for growth and participation. The goal of PAR is seen to be improving self-esteem, self reliance and self-determination (de Vos et al, 2000).

Nelson et al (cited in Bostock and Freeman, 2003:471) also mention empowerment as one of the key values of PAR. The notion of empowerment was applied to this research study as the use of qualitative methods and a relatively open agenda gave the children the opportunity to discuss their own experiences without being restricted by the researcher's preconceptions. The participants fed back that giving them this opportunity to discuss the issues that concern them was important to them.

A further characteristic of PAR is that it involves a commitment to work with knowledge from the bottom up instead of the top down (Bhana, in Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2002). The interests of the research participants take priority over

those of the researcher (Bhana, in Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2002). PAR, since it involves the participants at all phases of the research ensures that community members have access and control over the findings (Bhana, in Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2002). Thus, although the researcher's task is to advance knowledge, in PAR the primary obligation is to enable communities to act on their own behalf.

"Getting to know" the community is considered a fundamental principle of PAR (McIntyre, 2003:32). PAR engages with the community where they are not seen as suppliers of information but rather have a valuable contribution (Bhana, in Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2002). PAR acknowledges that community members are most familiar about their community needs and circumstances (Gardner, 2004). PAR allows for both the researcher and the community to gain knowledge, skills and experience (Bhana, in Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2002). The researcher gains experience of the problems of the community as well as the feasibility of solutions (Bhana, in Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2002).

Researchers involved in PAR express a high degree of concern for the well being of individuals and communities. Their interventions focus on changing individuals and social systems, and promoting a sense of community. The researchers view themselves as "facilitators of a community process of inquiry, rather than as principal investigators – building community-researcher partnerships" (Gardner, 2004:52-53). Babbie (2001) refers to the researcher as a resource, in his definition of PAR, to empower the participants to be more effective.

I was aware that a major difficulty in conducting PAR is building trust between the researcher and the participants as Gardner (2004) warned. In order to develop trust between myself and the group members, especially with the children, I referred to the skills I had used in the practice of social work, provided by Corey and Corey (1987). I used attending and listening skills. I was attentive to the verbal and non-verbal behaviour of the participants. Corey and Corey (1987)

claim that if members feel they are being listened to and deeply understood, they are liable to trust that others care about them. For example, during the session on the need for individual therapy, I sensed by both the verbal and non-verbal messages that the children were not ready to talk about past experiences and thus I did not probe further.

I also used the skill of empathy to develop a trusting relationship with the participants, that is, I tried "to understand their world through their eyes" (Corey and Corey, 1987: 126). I avoided responding with critical judgement, being defensive or telling participants how they should feel. In order for the participants to trust me, I sometimes disclosed matters about myself as recommended by Corey and Corey (1987). The children often asked me questions about whether I was married or not and how many children I had and I felt that this helped them to get to know me better and also encouraged the children to be open about their lives.

The value that I considered most important in developing a trusting relationship was that of respect. I demonstrated respect by expressing the warmth and support that I honestly felt and by being genuine (Corey and Corey, 1987).

DATA COLLECTION

Before the data could be collected, a telephonic enquiry was made to the shelter regarding permission to conduct the research. Gaining entry was fairly simple since the service providers had attended an inception workshop as discussed in Chapter One, that highlighted the value of their engagement in the research process and were thus keen to participate. I was given the opportunity to explain the nature and purpose of the study to the shelter co-ordinator who requested a copy of the research proposal as well as a written request before giving permission. I was thereafter allowed to undertake the research at the shelter.

Sampling strategy

Strydom and Venter (in de Vos et al, 2002) describe a sample as taking a part of a population and assuming that it represents the entire population. The method of non-probability sampling that was used is that of purposive sampling.

Purposive sampling indicates that the sample that will be chosen will have elements that have characteristics of the population (Singleton et al cited in Strydom and Venter in de Vos et al, 2002:207). The respondents for this research project included girl street children that have been receiving services in a shelter as well as service providers from the shelter. The research site chosen was the only shelter in the Durban area that accommodates girl street children.

When commencing with the study, the shelter had eight children in their residential facility. The sample was comprised of eight children and seven staff members. The street children and staff were all black and Zulu speaking.

Method of data collection

Data were collected by means of focus group discussions for the purposes of this research project.

Focus groups

The focus group as a method for data collection provides relevant information, and allows for street children to have a voice and be taken seriously (World Health Organisation, 2002). Focus groups basically refer to group interviews (Greeff in de Vos et al, 2000). Schutt (1996) claims that focus groups are used for the collection of qualitative data by means of open-ended questions formulated by the researcher. Focus groups are a type of group interview in which communication between participants produces data (Bostock and

Freeman, 2003). Specific topics are discussed with help from the facilitator. The aim is not to reach an agreement with everyone but rather to support debate and to examine people's thoughts, how they think and the reasons for those thoughts. Focus groups with street children are advantageous as it does not discriminate against those that cannot read or write. In addition, it encourages participation from those who are unwilling to be interviewed individually (Kitzinger, cited in Bostock and Freeman, 2003:466).

According to Morgan (1988) focus groups depend on interaction within the group, the themes of which have been provided by the researcher. It is a way of trying to understand participants' feelings about a service or product. The participants that are selected have various characteristics in common that are linked to the theme of the focus group. The contributions of the members of the focus group are considered to be the important data that is needed (Morgan, 1988). The members of focus groups are chosen based on their ability to provide the data needed for the research.

Focus group discussions with the staff and children were held between August and November 2004. There were seven sessions held with the children and three sessions held with the staff members. It took a longer time for me to gain the children's trust and to establish rapport with them, thus the need for more sessions with them. The focus groups with the children normally took place on a Friday afternoon from 14h30 – 15h30 whilst the sessions with the staff took place on a Monday morning from 11h00 – 12h30. The fact that sessions with the staff and children took place concurrently allowed for the triangulation of data.

In preparing for the focus group sessions, I tried to ensure that we always had a comfortable venue for the focus group discussions. I followed the guidelines provided by Krueger (1998) for focus groups and ensured that I was familiar with the key questions for the sessions which I limited to between two and five questions.

During the sessions, as far as possible I maintained the role of moderator, that is, I guided the discussions and listened to what was said but did not participate, share views or shape the outcome of the group (Krueger, 1998). I avoided sharing my views as it could have been a cue to participants about what was required and may have limited the range of opinions expressed (Krueger, 1998).

My role of the researcher in the focus group was to encourage participants to disclose their feelings, attitudes, opinions and wishes, without forcing the members to reach a consensus (Krueger and Casey, Barbour and Kitzinger, cited in Greeff in de Vos et al:306).

My major responsibility as a facilitator was to keep the group focussed on the topic and gain as much information as possible from the children and service providers. This required me to probe for detail so that their thoughts and views were clearly reflected (Cohen and Garrett, 1999). I needed to develop the ability to observe and respond to non-verbal messages. I also needed to be flexible and genuinely interested in hearing the children's and staff member's thoughts and feelings.

I showed interest in the participants. I truly believed that the participants had valuable knowledge to share irrespective of their level of education, experience or background. For example, when participants repeated their ideas several times, I demonstrated respect towards participants as a lack of respect would have hindered meaningful communication. I made use of active listening skills by summarising and paraphrasing responses to ensure that I had a correct understanding of what was said. I also attempted to show positive regard towards participants, I truly believed that each one had a unique wisdom and had a valuable contribution to make.

I also tried to ensure that our discussions allowed for everyone to participate. There were times when we went around the circle and asked everyone for a

response or comment. Different members assumed different roles in the group. Some of them were more outspoken, like Lindiwe, often initiating discussion, whereas others, like Zinzi, listened and were more passive. There appeared to be no dominant members.

I listened carefully, synthesised information and fed it back and probed for clarification (Krueger, 1998). I tried to discourage simultaneous discussions and tried to bring shy members into the discussion (Krueger, 1998). I also provided participants with an opportunity to ask questions.

I had to be aware of some of the personality dynamics of street children in order to work effectively with them. Mangwana (1992) describes street children as having a limited attention span. I thus included one or two icebreakers in every session to avoid monotony and the children becoming bored with the session. I was sensitive to the fact that that my initial contact with the children may be characterised by defensiveness, misgivings and distrust (Mangwana, 1992).

I also was aware that there is no "right" strategy for working with street children: apart from being genuine. Street children are able to see through adults who profess to be what they are not, this is particularly true of street children, who have a distrustful nature, brought about by harsh realities they confront daily (Sihlangu, 1999a:20).

Krueger and Casey (cited in Bostock and Freeman, 2003:467) highlight that focus groups with young people are different to that of adults. For example, "peer pressure is powerful" and can affect the opinions that are expressed (Bostock and Freeman, 2003:467). Thus, I had to continually stress that all opinions were valid, including the negative ones. I had to pay attention to informality, language, dress and introductory exercises to encourage participation in the group (Bostock and Freeman, 2003).

Feedback from the participants regarding the sessions was generally positive as it seemed that participants appreciated the sessions as opportunities to talk about topics rarely referred to on a day-to-day basis (Bostock and Freeman, 2003).

Tape recorders were used to record focus group interviews for the purposes of data collection. Transcripts of the focus group discussions with the staff and children were the primary data source.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

Before I could begin with the data analysis, I had to ensure that all the tape recorded sessions had been transcribed. Transcribing was a tiring and lengthy task but provided a valuable opportunity to listen and re-listen which helped me to familiarise myself with the data and to formulate ideas about emerging themes.

In order to analyse the data collected, I followed some of the guidelines provided by Terre Blanche and Kelly (in Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2002). I took all the material and immersed myself in it again by working with the texts. I read through the transcripts many times and made notes, thereby identifying themes and concepts that were revealed in the group sessions. I did not settle on one theme too quickly, but looked at many different themes. Since there were many themes that emerged, I rearranged them so that there were a smaller number of main themes, with several sub themes under each.

Terre Blanche and Kelly (in Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2002) also recommend that data should be coded whilst developing themes which refers to highlighting different sections of the data as being illustrations of, or related to one or more of the themes. I thus coded phrases, lines, sentences and paragraphs that included material that was relevant to the themes being discussed. The content of the text signified a discrete idea, description or incident. Although there are different ways

of doing this, I used the cut-and-paste function in my word processor to rearrange pieces of text. After I had completed the process of analysing the data, I put my interpretations together by writing a description of the phenomenon I studied by using thematic categories from my analysis as sub headings (Terre Blanche and Kelly, in Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2002).

ISSUES OF VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Babbie and Mouton (1998:122) define validity as “the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration.” Lincoln and Guba (cited in de Vos, in de Vos et al, 2002;351-352) propose that the strength of the qualitative study that aims to explore a problem will be its validity since the information gathered will contain in-depth description of variables and interactions thus it cannot help being valid. Blanc (1994) adds that PAR has a high rate of validity as participants normally express their feelings as they have a greater interest in the research. I attempted to use a ‘feedback loop’ to validate findings as data were always taken back to the participants for verification.

Marshall (cited in Sewpaul, 1995:47) provides the following checklist that was useful in assessing validity:

Questions related to how the research was conducted:

- Was the researcher aware of his/her own perspective and influence?
- How did the researcher handle himself/herself?
- Did he/she challenge himself/herself and accept challenges from others?
- Was he/she open to new encounters?
- Has the researcher grown personally through the experience?

Questions related to the relationship with the data:

- Is the level of theorising appropriate to the study and to the data?
- Is the theorising of sufficient complexity to reflect the phenomena being studied?
- Are alternative interpretations explored?

Questions related to contextual validity:

- How do conclusions relate to other work in the area?
- Is the researcher aware of relevant contexts for the phenomena studied?
- Is the material useful?

Reliability is defined by Babbie and Mouton (1998:119) as “a matter of whether a particular technique, applied repeatedly to the same object, would yield the same result each time.” The reliability of qualitative data may be queried as there are no statistical checks and figures (Sewpaul, 1995). The reliability of data may be improved through accurate documentation of the methods of data collection and by means of reliable recording of data (Sewpaul, 1995). Reliability in qualitative research, may also be improved by reporting as much of the original data as possible (Sewpaul, 1995).

In order to maintain reliability in this study, the guidelines provided by Babbie and Mouton (1998) were followed. The questions asked in the focus groups were relevant and clearly presented. Some questions were repeated in follow-up group sessions with the girl street children to check if responses were the same. All responses were properly documented. The data that is provided is quoted from the staff and children’s own language.

The suggestions made by Berg (cited in Alston and Bowles, 2003:50) were also useful in ensuring reliability in this study. When asking about a particular issue, I used extra questions which were worded slightly differently. I also carefully explained how data was collected so that the research could be replicated. In

addition, the results were supported by my own observations during the focus group discussions.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

One of the important ethical considerations is that of informed consent. This refers to the participants being made aware of the goals of the research and the risks involved. Judd et al (cited in Strydom in de Vos et al, 2002:65) adds that when participants do not have informed consent, their right to self-determination is adversely affected. It allows for the participants to actively participate whilst simultaneously overcoming any possible aggression or tension. Loewenberg and Dolgoff (cited in Strydom in de Vos et al, 2002:66) claim that informed consent is needed even if the participants are not interested in being informed. In this research study, both the girl street children from the focus groups as well as the service providers participating in the workshops were informed of the aim of the research and its requirements.

Monette, Sullivan and De Jong (1998) maintain that confidentiality is an important ethical concern; it implies that particular information or responses will not be linked to any specific individual who participated in the research. All participants were informed that their contributions will be held confidential and that the reporting of data would be anonymous. I took care to protect the identities of participants by changing their names.

There may be possible consequences for the service providers in terms of their funders. For example, this study reveals the poor attitude that child care staff have towards the children in the shelter, funders will not be pleased with this finding and may seek explanations.

Since I am an academic member of a tertiary institution, unrealistic expectations may have been raised. The service providers and children may have felt that I

have all the answers to their problems. I addressed this issue by clearly outlining to both the staff and the children the purpose of this study. I also explained to them the extent to which the findings would be of benefit to them.

A further ethical issue I was concerned about was harm to the participants, especially the children. According to the NASW Code of Ethics (cited in Marlow, 1998:189) "Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should protect participants from unwarranted physical or mental distress, harm, danger or deprivation". I was aware that the research process may raise emotionally distressing issues. I thus informed participants that no-one is obligated to answer any of the questions asked.

Attempts were made, throughout the research process, to ensure that the data collection and data analysis processes accurately reflected the feelings and responses of the participants. This was ensured by tape recording the focus group discussions and thereafter transcribing them.

Strydom (in de Vos et al, 2002) identifies release or publication of the findings as an ethical consideration. According to Strydom (in de Vos et al 2002:71) the findings of the study must be presented to the reading public in written form. Researchers should record the findings as "accurately and as objectively" as possible (Strydom in de Vos et al 2002: 71). If mistakes were made in the study, this may lead to other researchers wasting their time and finances by depending on the findings (Dane cited in Strydom in de Vos et al 2002:72). Once the dissertation is completed the findings will be published in journals and a copy of the dissertation will be available in the library. The taped records of the focus group sessions will be destroyed upon completion of this dissertation.

LIMITATIONS OF DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In order to assess the study's findings and recommendations, the potential limitations related to the research design and methodology needs to be discussed. The limitations of these methods may have affected the interpretation of results, therefore, they need to be acknowledged. The following limitations need to be taken into account.

There are limitations to a PAR model. PAR is adapted to the "needs, resources and priorities of the community and the researcher", thus, the study's generalisability may be narrow (Frasier et al, 2004:80S). This claim is supported by Strydom in (de Vos et al, 2000) who add that one of the limitations of PAR is that it prevents the researcher from generalising research to other communities because of its limited focus on one community. Thus, it cannot be assumed that the opinions expressed by the participants in this study represent the views of street children and staff of shelters in South Africa or any other place in the world.

PAR calls for the inclusion of participants in every stage of the process. However, given the politics and expectation of funding agents, this was not feasible in this study. The research protocol was finalised before the workshop with various stakeholders – indeed, in this particular instance, much of it was finalised before the entry of the new research team into the process.

With regard to language, all the focus groups were conducted in English, although participants in this research study were Zulu speaking. However, two group members, on a few occasions assisted with the translation of the information into Zulu during the focus groups with the children. I did not perceive language to be a major problem as most of the children were able to understand English and were able to speak it to an extent. However, it is possible that if experiences were shared in Zulu, this may have affected the findings.

A further limitation is that of respondent bias. There is the possibility that staff and children may have presented favourable views. The children may have felt the need to protect themselves and thus might not have been completely honest in their responses.

As a researcher I had to deal with an ethical dilemma with regards to discrepancies in the children's and staff's views, that is, knowing on the one hand that the issues raised by the children needed to be addressed – but having to maintain confidentiality as requested by the children, on the other hand.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have discussed the research design, the sampling method used, the method of data collection and data analysis. The following chapter deals with the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

The transcribed data from the focus groups were analysed using guidelines for qualitative analysis provided by Terre Blanche and Kelly (in Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2002) as described in Chapter Four.

In this chapter, a demographic profile of participants is presented together with an overview of the focus group discussions. The findings of this chapter are presented under the major headings of:

Responses from children

Responses from staff

Current evaluation strategies

Challenges faced by staff members

Inconsistencies in data obtained from the children and the staff

INTRODUCING PARTICIPANTS – STREET CHILDREN FROM THE SHELTER

Names have been changed to protect identity

Sindi was a 16 year old girl from Mandeni. Her mother is unemployed and her father is deceased. She has one older and two younger siblings. She had been living on the streets for about a year and had spent some time at a drop-in shelter. She left home because her mother did not have money to pay school fees. She came to the shelter because she wanted to return to school. Her dream is to finish school and become a soldier. Sindi was an active participant in the group. She could speak English fluently and was able to contribute to discussions.

Phumi was a 17 year old girl from Umlazi. Her mother is unemployed and her father is deceased. She has one older and two younger siblings. She lived in a one room house with her mother and siblings. She could not cope because her mother sometimes did not have money to send her to school and decided to leave home. She lived on the streets for two weeks in the South Beach area of Durban. She came to the shelter because she wanted to attend school which is her dream for the future. She was fluent in speaking English and was often the first to respond to questions asked. She clarified issues if the others were confused. She was an active member in the group.

Fiki was a 14 year old girl from Klaarwater. She was unaware of her mother's details but lived with her father and two younger siblings. She had been abused by her father and her aunts. She described her father as being irresponsible. She had been living on the streets with friends for about two weeks. She wanted the shelter staff to mediate between her father and herself. Her dream is to complete her schooling. Fiki was a quiet member in the group and would only respond if directly asked to do so.

Nolundi was a 16 year old girl from Umtata. She lived with her mother and five siblings. She was unaware of her father's whereabouts. Her mother sells clothing for a living. Her stepfather was using the money to pay school fees to buy alcohol. She had been living on the street for about a week. She came to the shelter as she liked the idea of "coming to a place where there is girls". She had no plans for her future. Nolundi was active when it came to issues that were close to her. She rarely volunteered answers.

Lindiwe was an 18 year old girl from Ashdown Township in Pietermaritzburg. She claimed that her father is deceased. She lived with her mother and four siblings. Her mother is unemployed. She had been abused since she was a child by her mother and other family members. She has been living on the streets for three years. She came to the shelter because she wanted to continue her schooling.

Her dream for the future is to become an actress. Due to the longer length of stay on the street compared to most of the others, she was quite streetwise and this was reflected in her response to the group.

Zama was 12 years old and from Mayville in Durban. She lived with her parents and two siblings. Her mother is unemployed. Her 16 year old brother works as a taxi conductor. She could not provide a reason for leaving home. She has been living on the street for three years. She agreed to come to the shelter as she wanted to complete her education which is her dream. She was supportive in the group but had the tendency of being playful.

Nomsa and Zinzi were siblings aged 14 and 12 years respectively. They lived with their father on South Beach. Nomsa was physically beaten by her father and reported to her teacher at school that she and Zinzi had been forced to leave home. The teacher contacted the shelter and the children were taken there. The children claimed that their father was selling illegal drugs. Even though Nomsa was the "clown" in the group and would make jokes for the others to laugh at, she did not disrupt the process of the group. Zinzi appeared uninterested in the group in the beginning but contributed more as the sessions progressed.

The profile of the children reveals that four of the children had a mother who was unemployed. Three of the children left home because they could not afford to pay school fees. Three of the children lived without a father. Four of the children had been abused whilst living at home. All the children had been affected by poverty, unemployment and abuse which forced them leave home and live on the street.

CHILDREN'S LENGTH OF STAY ON THE STREET AND IN THE SHELTER

The following section describes the length of stay on the street and in the shelter of the children in the sample.

TABLE 4: CHILDREN'S LENGTH OF STAY ON THE STREET AND IN THE SHELTER

NAME	AGE	LENGTH OF STAY ON THE STREET	LENGTH OF STAY AT THE SHELTER
Sindi	16	1 year	7 months
Phumi	17	2 weeks	7 months
Fiki	14	2 weeks	6 months
Nolundi	16	1 week	4 months
Lindiwe	18	3 years	6 months
Zama	12	3 years	7 months
Nomsa	14	Less than a week	3 months
Zinzi	12	Less than a week	3 months

As can be seen from the above table the average age of the children was 15 years which is consistent with the findings of Richter (1991) who claimed that street children are aged between 7 and 18 years of age with the majority being between 13 and 16 years.

The children's average length of stay on the street varied across the sample from less than a week to three years. This finding is also supported by Richter (1991) whose research indicates that about one third of children return home within a short period, another third live on the streets for periods between 6-18 months and one third remain on the streets for more than two years.

Having provided the profiles of the children the next section provides a brief summary of the focus group discussions.

OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN'S FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS:

Multiple (7) sessions were held with the same group of children at every session. The principles of PAR and the PAR cycle described in the Methodology Chapter was utilised within the focus groups formats by means of a feedback loop which was maintained from one session to the next by clarifying and summarising information at the beginning of each of the sessions. The intention was to produce “knowledge in an active partnership with those affected by that knowledge and for the express purpose of improving their social, educational and material conditions (Bhana, in Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002:228). This, however, posed an enormous challenge in working with the children. While children described their life experiences quite fully, they experienced great difficulty in identifying criteria and strategies for evaluation. The only strategies mentioned by them were verbal reports, reports from parents and school reports. The closest that they could come to with regards to specific criteria that might be included in evaluation was “behaviour”. While the main aim was to involve the children in identifying indicators and strategies of successful programmes, given the design of this study, this was located against a holistic understanding of the children’s experiences. Also, while the children could not articulate specific indicators and strategies, these were as reflected in the conclusions and recommendations extrapolated from their lived experiences in the shelter.

Session One

Since this was the first session we spent some time getting to know one another. When participants arrived for a focus group session, I greeted them and tried to make them feel comfortable (Krueger, 1998). In introducing the group, I welcomed members, gave a brief overview of the topic related to the purpose of the group and together we established the ground rules (Krueger, 1998). I assured members that whatever was to be discussed would be kept confidential. I established a sense of openness by informing participants that there was no right or wrong answers.

During this session, participants were asked to draw a map of their life or “the journey”. The participants were given paper and writing material to complete the exercise. Once completed, each member had to come in front of the group and explain their “map” to the rest of the group. There were many diversions in their “maps”, possibly indicating the difficult journey that had brought them to live on the street until they had been brought to the shelter. The drawings also consisted of houses, road signs and sometimes shops. Some maps indicated their reason for leaving home, for example Nolundi wrote on her “map” that “My mother she don’t like me and my father he don’t like me”. A few of the children drew happy scenes such as a happy family living in a nice house, reflecting their idealised fantasies rather than the realities of their lives. This exercise was useful as it helped me to become familiar with the group members and their life histories.

At the end of this session and the sessions that followed, I brought closure to the group with a summary and invited comments. I also thanked each member for coming and for their contribution.

Session Two

The session and every session hereafter began with a round of feedback that gave the children the opportunity to describe how they were feeling and anything else that they felt like sharing.

This session began with an ice-breaker, which became the norm for every session to avoid monotony and the children becoming bored with the session. During this session, the children were asked to complete an exercise “All about me”. I felt the need to include this as it was necessary in order to build a relationship with them. Thereafter, we spoke about how they felt about living in the shelter and what they liked about it.

Session Three

It was during this session that the tape recorder was introduced to the group. Before taping the session, I mentioned to the group that the session will be tape-recorded. I showed them how the tape recorder operated. Issues regarding confidentiality were discussed before the tape recorder was switched on. I mentioned who would be listening to the tapes, who will be reading the transcriptions and how the transcriptions will be used. There were no objections to tape recording the sessions. Although at first they appeared to be intimidated by the presence of the tape recorder, they became less aware of it as the sessions progressed.

During this session we spoke about what are the programmes that they are involved in whilst staying at the shelter and what the participants did not like about being in the shelter. The children reported that on Mondays they attended sewing classes, on Tuesdays they were occupied with chores, on Wednesdays they attended in-house meetings and on Fridays they did the washing of their clothes. Their Saturday mornings were spent doing spring cleaning and on Sunday mornings they attended church service. They mentioned that the main reason for them remaining in the shelter was because it allowed them to attend school.

Session Four

We discussed the reasons for some girls absconding from the shelter because one girl was missing from the group as she had absconded the week before. We discussed their relationship with the social worker which appeared to be a positive one. We spoke about the efforts the staff are making in reuniting them with their families. Their relationship with the child care staff was also mentioned. The children highlighted the problem they experience with the child care staff with regards to telephonic contact from parents. We looked at the lack of parental

contact. The extent to which programmes are helpful and how their experience of living in the shelter could be made more valuable was also discussed.

Session Five

We discussed how they had decided to come and live in the shelter. We spoke about their communities of origin. Some of the children expressed the lack of resources in their areas. This session focused on their relationship and contact with the social worker in the shelter. Children stressed the role of government in preventing children from living on the street.

Session Six

During this session we discussed how the various programmes at the shelter are evaluated, that is, the weekly activities such as the sewing classes and group work as well as the camps and workshops. It became clear during the session that members were still not comfortable talking about their past experience before and whilst living on the street. We also discussed the Child Care Plan. The children mentioned how staff could check whether the programmes at the shelter were successful. They spoke about the ways in which the shelter could be improved. One child mentioned that their health is not given much consideration. Since children were going home for the holidays we discussed their feelings around this.

Session Seven

We looked at ways in which children still living on the street can be helped. We had an overall discussion about previous sessions. Children were asked to record and discuss their successes, failures and hopes for the future. The session concluded with a party and gifts for the children.

RESPONSES FROM CHILDREN

Contact with Families

The children acknowledged the efforts made by the staff at the shelter in trying to reunite them with their families and Nomsa mentioned:

“They talk with your family”

“They talk with parents what is the problem and they solve our problem”

The inclusion of families in programme intervention with street children is considered important. The World Health Organisation (WHO) and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA, 2000) recommend that for a programme to be effective it needs involvement of family members. Veeran (1999) emphasises the involvement of families of street children once they have decided to enter a programme. Teare et al, (in Teare, Peterson, Furst, Authier, Baker and Daly, 1994) mention that in shelters where the primary focus is on treatment, the focus must be on the whole family and on preventing isolating the child as the only recipient of services.

There is also a need to recognise that although street children do not have contact with their families, the possibility of a reunion is still possible (Lugalla and Mbwambo, 1999). Intervention strategies should aim at reuniting children with their families, which mean that policies or programmes must include their families (Lugalla and Mbwambo, 1999). This was supported by Phumi who said:-

“The thing is to try and get all the And talk to them, maybe have a workshop and then get all the members, not just one parent, get them all together, talk to them”

The children expressed great disappointment when parents did not attend workshops. Phumi reflected the feelings of the other participants when she said:

“The parents are not supporting us”

“I think they should try sometimes to visit us during the weekends, spend some time and then go home. They don’t do that at all, they don’t come and visit. They only come during the workshops, when they call for them”

The children expressed how they feel when their parents do not attend the workshops. Sindi said “It’s like they don’t like us” while Phumi vehemently stated: “Hate, we hate them when they do that”.

It appears as though parents disregard the importance of validating love and support that adolescent’s need at this stage in their life cycle. The parents disregard for their children can be traumatic for a child (Wise, 2000). The child will often blame him/herself for the breakdown in the relationship which may lead to feelings of guilt, resentment and despair and a decrease in their self esteem (Wise, 2000).

There are many possible reasons for the parent’s non-attendance at workshops. The one possibility is that there are external pressures on family life. The parents may be working and unable to take time off from work. Perhaps the children may have tried their patience whilst they were at home and they are now not willing to take them home.

A major issue that seemed to come up for discussion more than once was telephonic contact with their parents. They claimed that their child care workers do not give them their calls. One child complained “Sometimes when the parents ‘phone they put the ‘phone down” and another added “They take out the phone, sometimes we don’t get our phone calls on Friday. Phumi expressed her frustration:

“They just tell us “Oh your mother phoned s he said Hi!” You know then we get upset, because they have to give us the phone.”

“They don’t give us the phone.”

“You know we can hear a phone ringing, they go and answer the call, they talk to the person and then the person asks for us, they say “Oh

she's downstairs, she's so far away, I cannot call her, or she's doing that. No, just leave a message." Then they come and tell us "Oh some phoned to say..."

But they don't call for us. We know that that call is for us. "

Yet, in the Minimum Standards of the shelter, under the section titled "Prohibited Behaviour Management Measures", the actions of "Deprivation of access to parents and family" and "Denial ... of visits, telephone calls or correspondence with family and /or significant others" are "expressly forbidden". Thus the child care workers do not seem to be enforcing this right of the children at the shelter.

When asked for possible reasons for such behaviour by the child care staff, Nomsa reported "Sometimes they are jealous because they (family) are 'phoning for us".

Anger towards the child care workers stood out as a powerful emotion among many of the children with regards to not being given the telephone calls. Lindiwe seemed to capture the feelings of the other girls when she said she felt "upset, I could hit someone".

The telephone may represent their lifeline and the main, perhaps only means of contact with their families, thus the hurt, anger and disappointment with the behaviour of the child care staff. There are a few possible reasons for the child care staff's behaviour. It is possible that they have a "don't care attitude" towards the children. They may have their own judgments about street children and underestimate their need for parental contact. Further, the plight of the child care workers themselves may be contributing to their behaviour. It was only after my data collection that I found out that two of the child care workers based at the shelter were in fact volunteers and not earning a salary for their services, thus, they themselves were not being validated. Further, they worked a one week shift where they stayed at the shelter away from their own families.

Such behaviour and attitude as displayed by the child care workers is contrary to empowerment based practice. It reflects a lack of validation of the children's needs. Yet, validation is the single most important empowerment strategy that service providers can use. Negative labels such as "You're just a street child" are disempowering and demoralizing. It adds to feelings of inferiority, lowered self-esteem and morale (Sewpaul, 1993:194). The development of people requires that practitioners practice "unconditional regard and acceptance of all beings" (Sewpaul, 1992:23). However, the child care workers appear to have difficulty in demonstrating this acceptance or what Biestek (cited in Sewpaul, 1992:23) refers to as a "special kind of love". Sewpaul (1992) claims that in the absence of such regard and acceptance, healthy development might be compromised.

Feelings towards staff members

Awareness of needs:

The children reported that the staff are not aware of their needs as Lindiwe said "they don't ask us". Phumi reported that "They don't bother" and "They can hardly talk to you once they see you not in the mood or you not talking to anyone then they will think that something is wrong with you, then they will ask you." The above responses from the children again reflect the fundamental problem of poor attitudes and lack of validation.

The children's responses support much of the literature which was mentioned in Chapter Two which confirms staff's lack of awareness of the needs of street children (Green, 1998 and Baizerman, cited in Swart-Kruger, 1996:232,). Street children have the same needs as other children, as mentioned in Chapter Two (Maphalala, 1996). It is thus not surprising that they were sensitive to the fact that they were being labeled according to the board above their building which said "Homeless". They felt that it was a false assumption made about them and Lindiwe stated:

“We are not homeless; first of all, we got our parents”
 “If we should have been staying 5 years or more then we say we don’t care whether they call us homeless”

Sindi added “We stay one year not all your life”

Social Worker:

It was clear that the children shared a good relationship with the social worker and had many positive comments about her. Phumi said:

“I like T (social worker) because everyday you must talk true. If you have a problem you must go to see Sister T. Sister T solve the problem.

“She is understanding and she is a kind person”

“She don’t just like ignore you when you want to tell her something, she’ll sit down and talk to you and say whatever problem you have, then she’ll solve the problem”

Sindi added “She not shout at you” and another said “She’s honest”.

The above comments made by the children contradict the claim made by de Winter and Noom, (2003) regarding a lack of actual interest shown by social workers towards street children, that communication with social workers is not ideal and that they are not listened to.

In this instance the social worker appears to exemplify what Karabanow (1999:347) refers to as a “good worker “in the eyes of the agency:

“First of all, a good worker is someone who fits in ... with the kids, it’s just that simple ... who kids feel comfortable around ... someone who’s not just gonna sit down in the office ... not talk to the kids ... someone who’s always talking to them (the kids) ... seeing what they need ... if they want to talk about something.”

Child Care Workers:

The children's relationship with the child care workers was not as positive as that with the social worker, but it also varied as Phumi stated that "Some treat us better than the others" and another said "They shout at us". The child care workers, may not be popular with the children, possibly because they have to enforce many of the rules, for example, children reported that they are not allowed to watch television after 9 o'clock even if the programme they are watching has not ended. Phumi said "They will just take out the aerial and put it in their rooms so that you can't watch the TV"

They also do not have confidence in the how knowledgeable the child care workers are. In response to the question about whether child care workers assist them with their homework, Zinzi said "They don't know nothing"

There is a differential status that exists between social workers and the child care workers in terms of salaries and service conditions and this may be a contributing factor in terms of the attitude that the child care workers have towards the children. Social work is a devalued and undermined profession. However, in the pecking order in this context, child care workers have even less status and prestige. They are themselves not really validated, even though they are entrusted with huge responsibilities in working with traumatised children.

Positive comments about the shelter

Overall, children mentioned that they enjoyed staying at the shelter. The children acknowledged the many opportunities that they have been given whilst staying at the shelter. Phumi said "when you first came here you didn't know how to sew but now we know how to sew and we even know how to work on a computer." Nomsa added "They are teaching you that you must cook" Fiki said "and teach you respect and not to swear another person"

The children expressed how much they enjoyed attending the camps that were held by the shelter. Phumi with great excitement mentioned:

“It’s fantastic”

“It’s nice because it’s in the bush”

“You know from here, there is a time for breakfast and a time for supper. From there, you just eat anytime you want to, there’s always a tea!”

Sindi added “So very very nice, cos it’s so very very cold” and Nolundi said “I like to play all the games”

It appears as though the camps are not just fun filled but also a learning experience for the children:

Nomsa said “Because you learn lot things, more information” and Sindi said “If you camp, you must talk together and must do the things together”. Phumi added “Ja, we do a lot of work together and then we go to the waterfall”

The children felt that their stay at the shelter had been beneficial as one said “what we saying is that T H really helped us a lot”.

The above responses reflect the children’s power to discriminate and appreciate the opportunities provided. At the same time they were critical of some of the behaviour and attitudes of staff members.

Evaluation of programmes:

When discussing how programmes are evaluated, my question appeared unclear to some participants, thus I asked them how the staff knew whether they were enjoying the programmes and the responses were:

Lindiwe said “They don’t know” (referring to staff and if they know whether they are enjoying the sewing programme). Phumi added “it depends who’s on duty” (asks about the programme) and “They don’t really much ask us, only the one, the one that does sewing, she is the one who maybe ask us how do we feel about it, are we enjoying it or not”

When asked for possible ideas on how programmes could be evaluated, children had little to say. Phumi said that “Not all of us would like to write, maybe if it would be better if we talk about it.”, so it appears as though written evaluations would not be suitable, but that verbal evaluations would be more effective.

Others agreed that their academic performance could be used to assess how they were doing as one child said “They can just see by our (school) results, I guess”. The children mentioned that their behaviour could also be used to assess their improvement. They agreed that reports from parents would be useful in evaluating how they have benefited whilst staying at the shelter.

Resources in the community

The children highlighted that they are not keen to use resources in the community as they have had negative experiences in their community of origin. A few of them reported that they would not approach the local resources due to the poor treatment received:

Phumi sadly said “I wouldn’t like, I wouldn’t like to go there’ and Nolundi complained “No, I don’t want to, because they bullish ...” Fiki expressed her frustration and said “Because our social worker at home explains I can’t help you”

One of the reasons is a lack of trust for the service providers. Many reported that they would not have left home if there were adequate resources in the

community and they received better treatment. The literature in Chapter One alludes to the fact that the lack of resources such as adequate housing and a general shortage of child care facilities in black communities have played a role in children living on the streets (Swart, cited in Motala and Smith, 2003:64).

Role of Government

The children felt that the government needs to play a major role in helping girls living on the street as well as those who are at risk. They mentioned that the government should be providing for basic needs like food and shelter. The government needs to build houses as many homes are overcrowded. They mentioned that their parents were unemployed and need money. The government should also supply financial help for parents and HIV infected persons. They felt that the government must “also provide job opportunities” and there should be no payment of taxes. They stressed that the pension that their grannies receive is insufficient and felt that this social security should be increased for grandparents who are caregivers of grandchildren. The government should provide financial aid to beggars, mothers, orphans or single parents but “not fathers”.

This insight on the part of the children reveals that they are recognising the impact that macro level structural factors have had on their lives. The adverse effect that the South African government’s macro-economic policies have had on the lives of children and their families is discussed in Chapter Two.

Research commissioned by the Finance and Economics Directorate of the Department of Social Development (Samson, Lee, Ndlebe, et al in Sewpaul, 2005b:319) and conducted by the Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) show that social grants play a vital role in alleviating poverty and in encouraging social development. The study by Samson et al (cited in Sewpaul, 2005b:320) maintains the following:

- “Social grants provide potential labour market participants with the resources and economic security necessary to invest in high-risk/high reward job search.
- Living in a household receiving social grants is correlated with a higher success rate in finding employment.
- Workers in households receiving social grants are better able to improve their productivity and as a result earn higher wage increases.”

The children explained that there is a need for resources in their communities and the government needs to build “Places where children can go, the nearest for help” and “Like a place where we could find people we can talk to and tell them whatever your story might be. People who can understand and help you.” They felt that the person working at these centres should be a professional person, “like a social worker”.

The children are here referring to possible measures for preventative work and for family preservation. They are saying that if issues of poverty, unemployment and lack of resources were addressed, they would not have become street children. As is mentioned in Chapter One, the literature indicates that in South Africa, the main reason for children leaving home is poverty and lack of community resources (Swart-Kruger and Donald, cited in Motala and Smith, 2003:64).

Recommendations:

The children made one recommendation that most of them felt strongly about and that was that their stay at the shelter should be longer:

Lindiwe said “maybe to take years” and “Maybe for 4 years or 6 years or 3 years”
Zinzi added “or 3 years, more than a year, more than a year, not to make for a year like T H (shelter)”

The reason for this longer stay was supported by all participants when Lindiwe stated:

“Because you know what, when you visiting home, sometimes you have to get used, some of us have been saying Hey, maybe about some too many years, so when we going back home ... we not used to home ... we not used to stay at home anymore, it's just not normally to stay, you not used to your friends, to your family to anything. “

It appears as though returning home may be anxiety provoking for the children. One of the possible reasons may be that returning to home implies returning to poverty or abuse that was there before they left. The maximum length of stay in the shelter is a year, only extended if an alternative placement with the family or another institution is not found. The year at the shelter is supposed to be sufficient time for the child and family to address the issues that resulted in the child leaving home and to prepare both parties for reunification. Considering the fact that many of the children return to the street after being reunited with their families (as mentioned by the social worker later on in this chapter), perhaps their recommendation for a longer stay in the shelter is not unrealistic. There is no legislation governing a child's stay in a shelter, thus the shelter staff is at liberty to determine the child's length of stay and can opt for a longer length of stay should they wish to do so. As stated in Chapter Two, reunification needs to be a collaborative process where the child is included in an assessment of readiness to return home. However, the policy at TH indicates a maximum stay at the shelter is one year, thus the child has to fit into the policy objectives of the shelter rather than the other way around. Further, intervention appears to be based on predetermined time frames of TH rather than empowering the child. Empowerment implies, as mentioned by Jones (1997) in Chapter Two, that a programme's success is closely linked to the ability of the street child to decide on the nature, pace and needed goals of the intervention.

Having provided feedback from the children, the following section provides details of the staff members as well as an overview of the focus group discussions.

STAFF MEMBERS' VIEWS ON PROGRAMMES CONDUCTED AT THE SHELTER

This section of the chapter documents the views of staff members who were involved in the study. They stated their understanding on how their programmes are evaluated. It must be noted that, staff members stated that they were content with their present evaluative strategies.

The table below indicates the profile and roles of staff members who participated in this study:

TABLE 5: THE ROLES AND DUTIES OF STAFF MEMBERS

Position	Gender M / F	Work experience with street children	Activities / Roles
Social Worker (Shelter)	F	5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling • Family reunification and family preservation • Supervising shelter staff, • Co-ordinating shelter activities • Making referrals • Networking with other organisations such as schools.
Child Care Worker 1 (Shelter)	F	7 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focussing on personal hygiene, and social skills • Attending to children's basic needs like, food, clothes and schooling • Supervising activities of the children. • Performing daily housekeeping chores • Supervising conduct and behaviour
Child Care Worker 2 (Shelter)	F	2 years	
Child Care Worker 3 (Shelter)	F	5 years	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> of children Keeping records of children's behaviour Assisting children with homework
Child Care Worker (After Care Team)	F	9 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with children and families. Linking family with support structures in their communities Conducting workshops and camps with children and parents Following up on child's reintegration in the family
Social Worker (Community Work Team)	F	1 ½ years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing support and counselling to at-risk families Referring families to necessary resources
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referring youth to relevant programmes such as homework and school support Providing parenting skills to parents Helping with accessing of grants Conducting awareness campaigns Carrying out youth and family preservation camps and workshops
Community Development Worker	M	2 ½ years	

OVERVIEW STAFF FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS:

The focus here was specifically on the staff members identifying evaluation strategies and getting them to contribute to the development of the manual. Again, the feedback loop was used from one session to the next. The staff was far more articulate in identifying evaluation strategies. However, despite their assertion that they were happy with the evaluation criteria currently being used, however, when viewed against literature there are clear shortcomings. This actually provides the justification for the development of specific evaluation criteria and strategies and the development of a manual to be used by service providers working with street children.

Session One

When participants arrived for the session, I greeted them and tried to make them feel comfortable. Since this was the first session we spent some time getting to know one another. Each staff member introduced themselves and indicated the role that they played at the shelter. In introducing the group, I welcomed members, gave a short overview of the topic related to the purpose of the group. I promised members that whatever was to be discussed would be kept confidential. Like with the groups with the children, I created a sense of openness by informing participants that there were no right or wrong answers.

The social worker explained admission criteria for children at the shelter and the maximum time that a child is allowed to stay. The staff provided more information on the camps and workshops that are held with the children and parents. The reunification process was discussed. The extent to which programmes are considered successful was discussed. We looked at how problems are managed in the shelter and training offered to child care staff.

Session Two

The Community work team spoke about the drop-in centre in the community and how it is evaluated. The ways in which the camps and workshops are evaluated and their effectiveness was mentioned. Reunification and children's reintegration was further discussed as well as how this process can be improved. The staff elaborated on how they work towards the personal development of the child and the role of the Child Care Plan in this development. The lack of parental contact was highlighted in this session.

Session Three

During this session we talked about the need for evaluation. We spoke about how programmes are evaluated. The questions asked during evaluation of camps were included in the discussion. The staff informed about how evaluation data is collected and how information from the evaluation is used. We looked at how successful reunification is and at how children are helped to deal with past issues. Health issues of the children were discussed. The extent to which children are involved in decision-making was discussed as well as their exposure to the outside world. Staff mentioned the criteria used for their employment. Staff members also expressed the ways in which the shelter and programmes offered could be improved.

The shelter has four main programmes: outreach, rehabilitation, aftercare and prevention. The outreach team did not participate in this study as they were not able to attend any of the focus group discussions. The next section highlights the discussions regarding the different programmes offered by the shelter:

SHELTER PROGRAMMES

According to the staff, the programmes conducted at the shelter are aimed at bringing about holistic development of the children. The children are looked at individually, in terms of needs and problems.

In house meetings

In house meetings are held every Wednesday afternoon with the children, social worker and the child care staff. The meeting is chaired by the social worker. The staff and children may bring up issues for discussion. One of the aims of the in house meeting is to address issues that children have with each other, such as the language used. Describing the purpose of the in-house meetings, one of the social workers said:

"the in-house meetings teach them ... is you know ... like when they have issues like I have an issue with X, then I can just jump at X's throat and talk anyhow I want to, we there to just make them, you know you cannot talk like that, you have to say it like this, okay we understand that X has done this and this, A B C and D to you, but then you don't talk to X like that, you don't use that language, you know we there for that so that helps a lot because when they on the street they talk anyhow, they use any language they want to, but we there to put them on the line, in a way"

The meetings also "allows them (children) to communicate to teach them even to say things at home, so that if they are not happy about, it will prevent them going back to the street" (Shelter Social Worker)

The children found the in-house meetings to be useful and one of them said:

"It is a good idea, we have a say in the things that we want, the things that we don't want. Someone is troubling you..."

Reunification

According to the Child Care Act of 1983 (www.actsonline.co.za) reunification services refer to

" a service whereby a social worker and where applicable in consultation with the child and youth care worker renders a service for the purpose of empowering and supporting parents, the family and children in alternative care, which aims at enabling those children to be reunited with their family and community of origin in the shortest possible period of time, in a manner consistent with the best interests of the child and subject to a provisional maximum time frame of two years or such extended period "

One of the social worker's main duties at the shelter is to assist the children with reunification. She also helps to find homes for those that don't have homes to return to. Usually most families are happy to be reunited with their children, but

as the social worker said “it depends on what the child did before she left home, most of the time... some of the children left home in not good terms”

Reunification with families is a process and children are prepared throughout the year. The children are treated the way they would be if they were at home. For example, a lot of the meals that are prepared consist of traditional food. In addition, when a grocery item has been finished such as margarine, they are not purchased immediately. One of the child care workers explains:

“when something is finished, like in the shelter like something ... that they can live without it like rama, like maize, we don't buy it, at the same time it's finished, we just wait until the time is coming for the day it comes to buy it, that will teach them that even at home, food gets finished”

Since many children come from poverty stricken homes, the families are given food parcels or grocery hampers when they go home for visits which are donated by a church. The shelter also helps with paying for school fees and school uniforms.

The social worker claims that she is not the one that tells the children when they should return home. She said:

“I think I'm not the one who usually tells them when they should go back home. When they are ready, then they come to me and say 'I would like to go home, I would like to go back home, I think I would like to go home and visit: Usually it's them telling you”

Although the children decide when they are ready to return home, the children are encouraged to return home within the one year period. If the children are not reunited with their families within the one year, they are placed in alternative care such as foster care.

Education

The shelter places emphasis on children attending school whilst away from home. Most of the children cope academically, they are helped with their homework. Once the children are reunified with their families, the social worker helps to readmit them to a school in their community.

Problems in the shelter

There are behavioural problems that are experienced with the children at the shelter. Examples of behaviour problems displayed by the children include stealing, physically hurting one another, the use of inappropriate language and smoking. The social worker describes how problems with the girls are managed:

“Usually the child care staff deal with the behavioural problems because they do behaviour management like they come up with strategies. But we discuss it first as a team but then they are the one that implement the strategies that we talk about. We try and manage as best we can.”

Individual Attention

The shelter staff reported that they try to treat each child as an individual. For example if they observe that a child is not interested in an activity they discuss this with the child. The fact that there are two child care workers on duty at a time allows for individual attention to be given to each child:

“we try by all means to work with a child as a unique person, as an individual person and I think that the fact that the staff is ... usually 2 staff on duty, so that the young people that we serve the quality care. It's not 1 staff, so that if the other staff is involved in physical, like the cooking, whatever routine, the other one can be involved in the development of the young person as such, that we do more of”(Child Care Worker).

Workshops

There are six workshops held in a year. A different theme is chosen for each workshop. The theme is usually chosen together with the parents and children. The workshops are used to address issues that the family may face once reunited such as drug abuse. The workshops focus on discussions between the parents and children with the staff being facilitators.

Parent's poor attendance at workshops

The attendance of parents at the workshops held at the shelter is poor. The staff have tried different methods of trying to improve the attendance such as telephoning them, personally inviting them and providing transport. Parents are also given money to use public transport to attend, but this has not improved the attendance. The attendance is so poor that at some workshops only one parent was in attendance. The staff mentioned that the children are upset when their parents do not attend the workshops. The children are prepared for the workshop the week before and when parents do not attend they are disappointed. The social worker described the feelings children experience:

"It makes them very sad. I mean you could see in their face ... some of them don't even eat for the day cos the parents didn't come and they promised to because usually when like we phone the Saturday then the parents will say "I'll come". We tell the child that "So your granny comes, your father will come, your sister will come". So they know who's gonna come, that day, but then when they don't they get very sad"

After Care Programme

The purpose of the after care programme is to work with girls that have been reunited with their families which may require "linking them with the social or support structures" (Child Care Worker).

The After Care Programme hosts workshops and camps throughout the year. Each workshop has a theme. The theme for the last workshop was focused towards helping parents to understand the developmental stage of their children. Issues surrounding behaviour and communication between parent and child were also tackled.

Camps are held with both parents and children with the goals “to strengthen the relationship between the parent and the child” and to “find out how things are at home and how the relationship between the child and the parent are” (Child Care Worker). The parents and children are involved in various activities that are applicable to their daily lives.

Community Work Programme

Community

The community work programme services two communities which are poverty stricken. This community is divided along political lines between an ANC (African National Congress) stronghold and an IFP (Inkatha Freedom Party) stronghold. Although they support two different political parties, both areas share the same socio-economic conditions. This community was identified after research was done with street children in the Point Area and Durban City to find out what were their communities of origin. The research indicated that most of the children were from Inanda and Amaouti.

The aim of the community work programme according the child care worker is “to strengthen the family ... and to reunify the family” The community work team conducts programmes which include sports and arts where they:

“Try to nurture the talent of young people. We try to identify the areas in which they fit and then we try to nurture such talents as they have been identified” (Community Development Worker)

The social worker assists the community members to access social grants such as the Disability Grant, old age pension and the Child Support Grant. Community members are also helped to apply for identity documents.

Drop-in Centre

There is a drop in centre in one of the above-mentioned communities. It is a small prefabricated building that was established two years ago. According to the community worker "The drop-in centre for instance is responsible for their people including the teenager we help them with their schoolwork, in terms of giving support to their schoolwork"

The community development worker describes the community members as being unemployed and "instead of them having to be found in undesirable places, the drop in centre is far more appropriate and safety refuge for them because I mean it prevents them from getting into all sorts of unaccepted behaviour".

Networking

The staff employed at the centre network with the social workers at the Department of Social Welfare in terms of helping community members to apply for social grants.

The staff also work with class teachers at school in the following way:

"if we have identified a child as having a problem there are 2 approaches that we normally conduct. Either we do a home visit whereby we get hold of the parent of the child or whoever is responsible for taking care of the child, we engage in a talk, we interact, eventually we get to the core of the problem and if it transpires that the problem is far more on the education part of the child, I mean we will approach the class teacher and then we will

interact with them and try to come with some ways of helping the child to improve in such areas where he lacks”

Workshops

The community work team hosts camps and workshops to raise awareness of a particular issue or concern. The issue or concern that is the focus of the workshops is based on the trend of the cases that are monitored over a three month period. The community development worker explains:

“If for instance we notice that there has been a number of clients who have reported perhaps a similar case, perhaps it might be that of accessing grants. They may not have the ideas of how to go about it, so we will try to co-ordinate a workshop that will specifically talk on this subject as to how they can access grants. If for instance the focus is on increasing awareness on early teenage pregnancy, again the focus of the workshop will take action along those lines”

Camps

The community work team conducts camps over a weekend for children and parents. The camps are held in a nature retreat area that is peaceful. The idea is that it will be more suitable than an urban environment as the community worker says:

“its far more ideal for us to run our activities in such a place so the tension and the stress that you normally experience in the busy hectic schedule of the township can really get up to the parent or the child so we try as much as possible to encourage them to ... to such areas where they can come to contact with themselves”

The camps are preceded by workshops:

“the camp will be a build up towards what has been already said and done in the workshop and then it's more of a follow up programme than any other sort of a thing...the emphasis is on depending on the focus or the theme of the workshop. If it's on strengthening the

relationships within the family ... the camp will also build up on that theme and try to emphasise. We encourage open discussions between the parents and their children the likes, what the parent is like about the children as well as what the children is like. Also in the long run they reach a common ground where they both compliment one another" (Community Development Worker).

The parents and children are engaged in many activities at the camp to:

"encourage team building and an atmosphere that will reduce stress, tension and promote healthy relationships between the two groups, being that of the parent and the children" (Community Development Worker)

The camps are considered to be more successful than the workshops in terms of attendance and this may be due to the fact that "people are always eager to go and see a place they are not normally used to and to be away from the hustles of the township" (Community Development Worker).

Recommendations:

Number of Workshops

The staff at the shelter indicated that the number of workshops that are run at the shelter should be cut down as it was felt that it was not effective and parent's attendance was low. The social worker proposed that instead of having six workshops for a year, this should be reduced to one.

Family's access to resources

The social worker stated "things need to change with the family". It was felt that families need to have access to resources in the community. Although people in the community receive welfare services they need help in applying for Identity Documents, Child Support grants and pensions. Furthermore, the families often

become dependant on the material aid provided by the shelter. The situation at home can overwhelm a child and she may not be able to cope and thus return to her life on the street. The social worker remarked:

“It’s usually poverty that takes kids back to the street, so we reunify them with the family, the poverty is still there. If there is no income generation, the child may feel that there is no point in remaining at home and may return to the street.”

It was felt that if the family had access to resources, they may be able to access social grants and the child will return to more improved circumstances than when she left. The role of poverty and lack of community resources in contributing to children leaving home and living on the street has been discussed earlier in this chapter.

Vocational Training

It was felt by staff that children sometimes need temporary jobs and vocational training because sometimes there are girls who can’t go to school and there is nothing for them to do at the shelter. This recommendation is supported by literature which claims that programmes need to be comprehensive, that is, they need to provide medical, psychological, social, residential, educational and job training services (Peralta, 1992). Since most street children are either illiterate or have had their schooling shortened at the primary level, the combination of basic education with skills training is important for them to participate effectively in the labour market (Anyuru, 1996). This recommendation is further supported by research conducted with street children in Cairo and Alexandria who when asked how to develop current services and programmes, 18% indicated vocational training (UN ODCCP Report, undated).

CURRENT EVALUATION STRATEGIES

The focus group discussions with the staff revealed that they are aware of the purpose of carrying out evaluations. As the social worker reported:

"I'm sure we evaluate just to ... measure the ... I'm not really sure if I should say the amount of work that we doing and also to to check if we are on the right track in a way, are we doing what we are meaning to do"

They do have evaluation strategies in place and these are discussed below.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires are often used to evaluate programmes at the shelter. The residential facility uses an evaluation questionnaire that they formulated, which children in the shelter are asked to complete before they leave at the end of the year. The shelter social worker left shortly after the data was collected and although requests were made to the shelter for the questionnaire, they were not able to locate it.

The staff involved in the camps conduct their own evaluation by means of evaluation questionnaires. The social worker completes a written evaluation at the aftercare camps. The next camp is planned around the feedback received from the evaluation.

Questionnaires refer to a set of written questions on a sheet with spaces provided for respondents to reply to the questions. There are two disadvantages of self-administered questionnaires (World Health Organisation, 2002). Firstly, only those that can read and write will be able to answer the questions. This is supported by the girls who felt that not all of them like to write, that a verbal evaluation would be better. Secondly, there is less opportunity for street children to explain unclear answers. It is recommended that a questionnaire can be used

in the form of an interview guide, that is, the interviewer reads the questions and records the children's responses (World Health Organisation, 2002).

Parent's reports

At the shelter for girls, parents also come to the drop-in-centre and provide reports on their children. The girls also mentioned that their parents could report on them after a weekend visit or holiday.

Verbal Evaluation

Verbal evaluations are conducted with parents and children at the workshops held by the shelter staff. These are similar to Post Meeting Reactions which were described by Dimock (1997) in Chapter Three. Staff felt that this method of evaluation was effective. One staff member expressed the following view: "I feel that what we are doing right now is far more appropriate, it's the best way of retrieving information, the most required information so as to help in future workshops".

A verbal evaluation is also done with the parents and children at the camps and is considered to be effective because participants can be active in discussions. The girls reported that camps are evaluated verbally, it is done immediately after an activity "then after we finish all the work that they've been giving and then they will ask, you know, how do you feel about, is there anything you learnt, stuff like that".

These verbal discussions are similar to focus groups discussions and are often used to discover what street children might think or feel (WHO, 2002). The advantage of using focus group discussions is that they often fit easily into the daily working environment of a street children's project. However, when one is interpreting the information, one has to be aware that the consensus that usually

forms in the group does not necessarily represent the views of all the members. It is possible that a few children may dominate the discussion and children with low self-confidence may not contribute (WHO, 2002). In addition, some street children may feel that it is more important to agree with the dominant view of the group than to seem different. The staff members, however, did not support this claim and felt that all the children felt comfortable to voice their opinions during discussions.

Statistics

Statistics are used with regards to monthly reports indicating the number of children in the shelter as well as the numbers that attended workshops and camps. Two of the indicators of how successful a programme is the number of children who are returned to their families and never return to the street and the number of children who are referred to the shelter.

With regards to the drop-in centre, the number of children that have come to the centre, dropped out or not attended consistently would indicate the extent of the programme's success. A register is kept for the attendance.

The advantage of using this method for evaluation purposes is that a large amount of reliable information can be acquired without questioning many people and little additional time is needed to collect the required information (WHO, 2002). People usually accept the validity of information collected from existing records because they are regarded as being objective and accurate. Furthermore, the systematic collection of data is essential for internal monitoring purposes and allows comparisons to be obtained with other approaches (Jones, 1997).

However, there are possible ethical problems associated with using statistics in evaluation. For example, the number of children served is not necessarily an

indicator of project success (de Borms, 1998-2000). Qualitative monitoring such as interviews and life-stories may sometimes be more suitable, but it involves specialized knowledge and time. In addition, an excessive focus on statistics can also generate “sensationalistic claims”, or under document the quality of the change to the lives of a few children (Jones, 1997:46). The effect of projects on the lives of children can be fully considered only after many years (de Borms, 1998-2000).

Aftercare Camps

Camps were considered by the staff as an effective evaluation tool. The social worker reported that often when home visits were done, the parents were absent. Its at the camps when both children and parents were present that the social worker was able to assess their development. Both parents and children are engaged in different activities at the camp. The goal of the camp is to “strengthen the relationship between the parent and the child”. The camp is used by the staff to assess the home situation as well as the relationship between parent and child.

Observation of behaviour

Observation is used as a tool in evaluation by the staff. When a child visits the home and returns with the social worker when reunification is unsuccessful, the child is observed for 3-4 weeks thereafter. The team then sits and does an assessment on the child. The child’s strengths and weaknesses are identified by the staff. For example, if it is observed that the child is stealing in the shelter, this behaviour is closely monitored. A childcare worker is assigned to help her to work on just that particular behaviour. During supervision with the social worker and child care worker, child care workers report on how the child is coping. The case is then reviewed. Observation is used as a tool at the camps. Questions are asked on what was observed during the camps.

Observation can be considered as the technique most closely linked to everyday life (WHO, 2002). It refers to studying and recording the behaviour of individuals or groups (WHO, 2002). Direct Observations where one observes the participants and workers in the general functioning of the organization is also a useful method for evaluating a programme's success. They are usually carried out by workers or independent observers. They also may be carried out by other people in the programme such as parents, management members or other workers in the organisation.

Observation is useful in collecting accurate information about how a programme is conducted (McNamara, 1998). One of the advantages of this technique is that the observer can choose when and where to carry out the observation procedure. The type of observation most commonly used at the shelter is non-participant observation, that is, the observer makes observations without his or her presence influencing the behaviour of those being observed (WHO, 2002). Observation is often used to measure indicators of the progress that children are making. It is also a useful method of checking the accuracy of information gathered by other means such as at interviews (WHO, 2002). Another advantage is that most people, with training, can become reliable observers. Dimock (1997) mentions that using more than one observer increases the accuracy of the observations.

The disadvantage of observation is that it can affect behaviours of programme participants (McNamara, 1998). Furthermore, the presence of the observer may cause the children to act differently than they would if they were not being observed, thus observations are not always valid (WHO, 2002).

Academic progress

Staff network with teachers who are involved in the evaluation as they report on the child's academic progress. It is the childcare worker's role to follow up a child's school progress. Educators are also consulted to assess the girls' performance in the community work programme.

The presumed lack of interest in learning by street children was contradicted by their suggestion to have academic progress to be used as an indicator of a successful programme. The girls reported that staff could look at their school results to assess their progress, as one child said "they can just see by our results" The girls also reported that the opportunity to go to school was one of the positive aspects of the shelter, with many claiming that receiving an education was their dream.

The use of academic progress as an indicator of success is supported by WHO and NIDA (2000) who report that in order to have an effective programme ongoing evaluation should use many markers of risk reduction and social integration such as stable living conditions and readmission into the educational system.

Having an education is seen to be important for street children and was reported as one of the main reasons for them remaining in the shelter. Research with street children in Bombay revealed that they wish they could wear a school uniform and attend school. One child stated "going to school, wearing, a uniform and with a school satchel would make me just like other children from rich families" (Kombarakaran, 2004: 202). It is amazing how street children make special efforts at school (de Oliveira, Baizerman and Pellet, 1992). Even if they did not attend school it does not indicate that they do not value learning as one youth said; "I left school when I left home...Now I am studying in the school of life. I learn from my observations. I want to learn to read, to write and to draw..." (de Oliveira et al, 1992).

As was discussed in Chapter three, data may be collected by using questionnaires, surveys or checklists (McNamara, 1998) which is useful when there is a need to obtain a large amount of information in a non-intimidating manner. Yet, besides the use of questionnaires, survey and checklist were not used in evaluation at TH. The service providers did not mention the types of information that their various evaluation strategies produce such as progress of physical implementation, use of project funding and income as mentioned by Valadez and Bamberger (1994) in Chapter Three. They also did not state how evaluations impact on the target population and on national policies as indicators of project effectiveness

INCONSISTENCIES

The fact that the focus group discussions with the children and the staff were held concurrently allowed for the triangulation of data. In accordance with Apteker's (1996) findings as discussed in Chapter Two, there appeared to be inconsistencies between the experiences of children and what the staff mentioned. The following inconsistencies arose from the data:

Contact with the outside world

The children's lack of contact with the outside world was an issue that was raised by Lindiwe. Most of the children wished that they could go out of the shelter over weekends. Sindi complained "We always inside" and "Don't like ... not going to take fresh air in the weekend. It's so boring in TH every weekend and we always inside". Zinzi added "We don't go somewhere" and "We always in the TH (shelter). We don't go somewhere". Phumi made a request: "I want to go somewhere on the weekend, like maybe a walk to a park or just go to the pool or maybe the beach or we can just go and see other children. We haven't seen other children like ours."

They expressed a wish to visit other street children in shelters. Children reported feeling isolated from the outside world “we feel like we are on our world”. Lindiwe felt that she was being imprisoned:

“Because all our friends are telling us that we are in prison, all the time they are teasing us “Ooh, can’t tell me anything, you are in prison. You want to take a walk with me on Saturday; I’m going to workshop and then something, something something. Ooh I can’t go there, my friends will say...”

However, this is in contrast to what staff members mentioned. The social worker confidently reported:

“Different organisations will call and say we’ve got this function for the kids, both the community and the kids that live in the home, shelter, can you please attend and then we take them there. We take them out to the beaches ... we take them out to the pool, they take a walk if they want to, if the staff on duty is fine with walking, so they very much exposed to the outside world ... as well as the netball activity, in the community”

Yet, linking children with the outside world is considered important as it allows street children to feel normal rather than identified as a “deviant subculture” (Karanbanow, 2003: 380). In theory, the shelter supports this ideal as children’s participation in sports and recreational activities is encouraged in the Section “Development Opportunities and Programmes” of the Minimum Standards since it is a “developmental opportunity” which will enable the child to meet the goals of their Care Plan and Individual Care Plan. However, in practice, this does not appear to be the case.

They had been to visit the beach once this year and they had been to the park twice in the year. Zinzi wanted to go “To the pool and the beach” and Phumi “To movies” and Sindi “To the park” .

The above finding concurs with the results of research conducted with street children in Cairo and Alexandria. When asked to identify the best programmes they received, street children in Cairo and Alexandria stated that recreation (games and play) represented the best programme (UN ODCCP Report, undated). Street children in the above research study chose recreation as their basic need and a first priority. This implies that street children's attitudes are similar to their counterparts in normal families regarding enjoying recreation and play (UN ODCCP Report, undated).

Children from the shelter reported that they do not engage in regular sporting activities. It had been 4 months since they had played volleyball, which was supposed to be the normal programme for Saturdays. Yet, through competitive games street children learn about winning/losing, fitness, cooperation and commitment (Pérez and Salazar, 2001). Sporting activities have "pride of place within the cultural lives of children" (Pérez and Salazar, 2001:63). Sport has the ability to form a sense of "community" among street children. It is believed that the experience of playing team sport supports the development and acceptance of values which are useful to both the individual and the community at large. These social values consist of respect for authority, acceptance and teamwork with one's peers and self discipline (Pérez and Salazar, 2001).

One has to bear in mind that the shelter is a non governmental organisation that does rely heavily on donors for its operation. Thus, although the staff may want to take the children out of the shelter they may not be able to due to financial constraints.

Lack of Active Participation

According to the staff, children in the shelter are actively involved in decision-making. As one staff member said:

“They’re involved, a hundred percent should I say ‘cos when we make the rules we call them, we gather them together and then we talk to them. We thinking about introducing this rule, which says this and this, how do you feel about it and everyone has a say and then from what they say, then we decide that okay this rule is fine”

However, the children reported that sometimes they are not consulted on decisions. Phumi complained:

“No, they just come and tell us once its up... they didn’t tell us that we are not allowed to drink milk anymore, so when you asking you have to drink milk, they just told us that ‘No, no more milk from now on, we will be taking juice’

A further example of the children’s lack of participation is with regard to the Child Care Plan (CCP) as well as an Individual Development Plan (IDP). It was claimed by staff that children are involved in this process. However, when children were interviewed in focus groups they all reported that they remember filling one in during admission but none remembered being involved in its review. As one child stated, “even if they do they wouldn’t tell us” when asked about a review of their behaviour.

Yet, children’s participation in this process is legislated in regulations under the Child Care Act of 1983 pertaining to shelters (www.actsonline.co.za). Section 31A of the Act indicates that a child living in a shelter has a right:

- “b) to a plan and programme of care and development, which includes a plan for reunification, security and life-long relationships;
- c) to participate in formulating their plan of care and development, to be informed about their plan, and to make changes to it;
- e) to a regular review of their placement and care and development plan;
- g) to be consulted and to express their views, according to their level of maturity, about significant decisions affecting them”

These rights are further mentioned in the Minimum Standards of the shelter under the section titled "Rights of children in Residential Care" where the above are stated. Under the section "R4N2 Child Plan Principles" the child's participation is emphasised:

"The young person is extensively involved and consulted throughout the process by way of on-going sessions with the Social Worker or designated case manager"

In addition, it appears as though they are passive recipients of decisions made for them with regards to the CCP and the IDP as one staff member reported about reviewing of the CCP 'I will say the weaknesses, the developmental areas, or you still need to work here...', yet the children are supposed to be involved in this process and they are together with the staff are supposed to decide on the developmental areas that need to be worked on.

As is evident from the literature, discussed in Chapter Two, the importance of children's active participation has been well documented. The right of children to participate actively in decisions affecting their lives can be found in Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Motala and Smith, 2004). Article 12 as mentioned in Chapter Two, stipulates that children who are able to form their own opinions have the right to express those views in matters affecting them and that a child should be given the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative procedures affecting them.

The literature attests to the need for programmes to be founded on respect for the ability of street children to make decisions and choices about their own lives (Allsebrook and Swift cited in Veeran, 1999:223). Services should be action orientated. Street children should be included in determining plans of action, and they should also be able to establish how they could benefit from programmes (Veeran, 1999). Street children have to also be part of the planning process, especially in NGOs that provide services by means of drop in centres (UN

ODCCP Report, undated). Green (1998) mentions that often children are not paid attention to, taken seriously or encouraged to contribute to the policies and projects which are supposed to benefit them.

Since sanctioning the International Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, participation has become a human right for children and young people. The active involvement of children and young people in their own environment and decision-making is considered beneficial for both the individual and the society (de Winter cited in de Winter and Noom, 2003:326). Participation may be beneficial for two reasons. First it encourages civil education. In a democracy young people need to be taught and practice skills such as the ability to negotiate, to develop independent, analytical opinions about social issues, to behave in a socially responsible manner, to value other people with different circumstances, opinions and interests and to show unity and community strength (de Winter and Noom, 2003). Secondly, developmental studies indicate that children and adolescents succeed better in an environment that satisfies basic human needs for social relations and unity. By providing them with a chance to make their own contributions and by treating them as valued members of society or of a community, social as well as individual purposes are achieved (de Winter cited in de Winter and Noom, 2003).

Anyuru (1996:275) asserts that one of the most important characteristics of programmes for street children, is that solutions must be reached together with the children and must not be planned for them "They know best what they want and when they need it". Many social workers have the attitude that "we know best", and plan for street children without consulting with them (Smit and Liebenberg, 2000:30) which is consistent with what one staff member said in referring to camps "Your camp is based on what you want to achieve" . Thus it appears that camps are used not in addressing the needs of the children or their families but on the aims of the staff member involved.

Focus on therapy

When one considers the life of a street child before and after leaving home, they have had many traumatic experiences as mentioned in Chapter One. However, the girls reported that the only time they were interviewed was at admission. The social worker however reported that her main duty is to interview the girls and that she counsels them on a regular basis. The social worker mentioned:

“every programme, every activity in the shelter, everything is ... designed in such a way that you help girls deal with the issues that they had on the street ... everything is designed in such a way, we have group, we have in house meetings, they are able to voice out, you know, they helped to ... talk about the issues in the in-house meetings”

Children also reported that when orientated to the organisation the focus is on the future and returning home. There is lack of therapy on dealing with the past. The children would not describe what this past was and did not want to talk about it in the group because as one said “No, no because we would cry” and another pointed out “It hurts our feelings “. I did not probe further as this was not the primary objective of the group discussions. I asked them if they would like to talk about it in the group and assured them of confidentiality but they did not want to. Some members felt that they would prefer individual therapy. A possible reason for not wanting group therapy is that some of the members were new and the children were unsure of whether or not they could be trusted.

An NGO in Mexico called Casa Juconi considers the counseling of street children to be important (Jones, 1997). Children need to be helped to confront problems in their lives, become aware of issues of sexuality, improve skills of self-control and learn to live with a family once more. The essential feature is to inspire a sense of self worth and confidence (Jones, 1997).

As was discussed in Chapter Two attitudes, behaviour and values of street children can be completely changed if they are assisted with identity development and engaging in life story repair (Richter and Swart-Kruger (1995). Giroux (cited in Sewpaul, 2000:304-305) claims that an examination of the historical and social constructs of our lives “helps to reterritorialise and rewrite the complex narratives that make up (our) lives”. Sewpaul (2000:305) adds that a critical and emancipatory approach introduces significant issues concerning how we create our identities within particular historical, cultural and social relations. It appears as though these issues of the children were not all addressed by the staff at the shelter. It requires a great deal of skill and the child care workers clearly were not equipped to do this. The social worker also did not mention it.

There was a lack of congruence between what the staff perceived as objectives and what the children thought were the objectives. As one child stated, “Well, everything that we do, it’s all about going back home”. Many children agreed that the focus should be different such as helping them to deal with their past experiences. Yet, they did not want to deal with it. They all indicated that they would prefer to discuss it on an individual basis. The staff confirmed that there is a focus on children returning to their families. This was most clearly expressed by one of the social workers who said:

“I think we prepare them, we prepare them right through the year because the workshops that you run, most of them like they target the child to prepare them for like home, the camps, we run camps to prepare them to go home. We also run like day to day in-house meetings like we remind girls all the time and the child care team usually reminds the girls all the time at the shelter everyday that you know we looking forward, like we looking forward to going home and everything we do it’s like towards going home”

Research with street children in Cairo and Alexandria indicated that only 12% of the children identified returning to their families as a first need and 22% of children emphasised that returning to their families could solve their problems (UN ODCCP Report, undated). Thus, family reunion should be considered an

option, but not the only option. Returning children to their families is an expensive process. It includes many steps such as visiting the family first, understanding the problem of the child, attempts at reconciling them both, sending the child to the family and making regular visits to the home while the child is with the family to monitor their adjustment. This can be an expensive process, more so when children are from communities that are a great distance away and where families need material assistance as is often the case in South Africa. (UN ODCCP Report, undated).

The social worker said the following with regards to successful reunification:

"Its, I would say its 50/50 cos most of them go back to the street, like a large number, they go back to the streets so I won't say.. part of it is successful and ja but at the same time there are many factors that affect the reunification, because, the reunification might happen properly, but then the issues at home may force the kids to go back to the street. I think things need to change with the family ... the situation at home overwhelms the child and then she can't cope and then she goes back to the street or something, ... it's usually poverty that takes kids back to the street, so we reunify them with the family, the poverty is still there. I mean there is no means of like income generation or stuff like that so the situation is as the child ...so I mean there's no point for her to stay at home so she might as well go back to the street. "

The above finding is supported by research conducted with street children in Bombay which indicates that several children returned to the street after a short visit home because the home situation had not changed, and in some instances, worsened (Kombarakanan, 2004).

The above discrepancies were of concern and needed to be addressed. I faced ethical constraints as I could not inform the staff of the children's complaints because I would not be adhering to the ethical requirement of confidentiality. I suggested to the children that we have a joint focus group with the staff and children so that these issues could be discussed, however the children did not

agree. They felt that it was already late in the year and they were to go home within a short time, so it would not make a difference. However, a report with the findings will be given to the organisation so these issues can be attended to.

CHALLENGES FACED BY STAFF MEMBERS

The staff members reported that one of the obstacles to successful reunification is the home situation. Many children have been reunited with their families but half of them return to the streets.

One of the challenges faced by staff members, when using the Care Plan and IDP is abscondment by children from the shelter:

“we can do an IDP and then we can do a Care Plan and then you plan it that maybe N will make sure that she will observe so and so and supervise her, but that so and so will just abscond, so which makes it difficult” (Child Care Worker).

Children are not forcefully kept at the shelter and are thus able to leave if the shelter does not meet their needs or expectations.

The staff faces many challenges in their community work. Due to the poor economic conditions in the homes, food parcels are handed out to families but as one community worker mentioned, “which in the long run creates a dependency then they become lazy”. It was found that often the granny was sole breadwinner and families were dependant on the pension. This claim is contradicted by research mentioned earlier in this chapter regarding the significant role that social grants play in alleviating poverty and promoting social development.

People in the community have been disappointed in their leaders who have not kept their promises. The community workers found that it is also difficult to engage local women in income generating projects such as gardening as they

are not interested. These food gardens could not only help as a source of income but promote good health.

Furthermore, being an NGO, the organisation is heavily dependant on overseas donors, thus they are not able to meet all of the community's expectations.

According to staff members, the lack of interest most parents display in their children also presents a challenge. Parents were described by the staff as being unco-operative. The possible reasons for the lack of interest shown by the parents is discussed earlier in this chapter.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented an overview of the findings of this study. Responses regarding the programmes at the shelter from the perspective of the children and the staff have been presented. The findings have shown how programmes are currently evaluated at the shelter as well as challenges faced by staff members.

Chapter Five summarises major findings and proposes several recommendations.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

As discussed in Chapter One, there have been many projects initiated to help street children. This study took place within one such project, a shelter for girl street children in KwaZulu-Natal. The main aim of the research project was to develop evaluation strategies for intervention programmes for street children by including both street children and service providers. The objectives of the study were to explore existing programmes for the girl street child and to provide recommendations for evaluation of specific programmes through a participatory action approach. Two further aims of the study were to empower children and service providers by ensuring their active participation in the research process and to provide recommendations for the formulation of a manual detailing evaluation strategies for specific intervention programmes.

The sample included street children in the shelter as well as service providers. Focus group discussions were held with both the children and the staff at the shelter. The discussions were tape-recorded and then transcribed. The data was then analysed by identifying themes and sub themes that emerged from the data.

In this chapter, the major conclusions drawn from the study are presented. This chapter also provides recommendations based on the findings of the study.

MAJOR CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

In this section, the major findings are discussed:

Programmes available to the girl street child

The literature regarding programmes for the girl street child was found to be scarce, however, there was literature available on programmes for male street children in Africa and other parts of the world. In KwaZulu-Natal there is only one documented programme available for the girl child, which was studied in this research project. Overall, the children commented positively on their stay at the shelter. The programme has offered the girls many opportunities. The children acknowledged the efforts made by the staff in trying to reunite them with their families. However, they also expressed their disappointment when their parents fail to maintain contact especially when they do not attend workshops planned for them. The children also complained that the child care staff were not giving them the calls from their families although depriving access to family is forbidden in the shelter, according to its Minimum Standards. The children shared a positive relationship with the social worker, but not with the child care staff. The children complained about the poor attitude that the child care staff displayed towards them. The children were able to make a few suggestions on how they thought programmes at the shelter should be evaluated. During the focus group discussions the children mentioned the lack of resources in their communities of origin and stressed the government's role in preventing children from leaving home and living on the street.

The analysis of the data revealed major inconsistencies with regards to the claims made by the staff and the experiences of the children at the shelter. The staff mentioned that the children have regular contact with the outside world, but this claim was contradicted by the children insisting that they had not been outside of the shelter (except for school attendance) and that they felt isolated. The children indicated that the focus of their stay at the shelter should not only be based on their reunification with their families but also on receiving therapy to cope with their experiences whilst living at home and on the street. The social worker claimed that the children receive regular counseling but the children did not agree. Consistent with the literature, the children also emphasised a lack of active participation in decision-making as well as staff not being aware of their

needs. The programmes appear to be more managed by the staff than allowing for the children's participation.

Current evaluation strategies for programmes

The strengths and limitations identified with regards to evaluation at the shelter by the children and the service providers were picked up in formulating recommendations for evaluation strategies and indicators that would be incorporated into a manual that is being developed by the research team. . One of the objectives of this study was to assess the extent to which the programmes in the shelter were being evaluated. Three of the four programmes offered at the shelter were reviewed and the findings indicate that there are formal evaluation strategies in place for these programmes. Although these evaluations were mostly verbal, they did occur. The extent to which evaluation was used to improve programmes was unclear as well as the effectiveness of these evaluation strategies. While staff claimed to evaluate programmes with children, the children complained that they were not included in major decisions affecting them.

Criteria/indices children and service providers think should be used to evaluate the effectiveness of programmes

The children experienced some difficulty in understanding the use of criteria in evaluation but indicated that their academic reports and parental feedback could be used to signify a programmes success. While staff reported satisfaction with evaluation methods used, much of the evaluation appeared to be informal, for example, several camps and workshops are held, but there appears to be no evaluation of long term outcomes and impacts.

Staff did not appear to see the role of evaluation in informing policy as their responsibility. The role of evaluation is important for policy purposes, which was

mentioned in Chapter Three. Evaluations allow for the testing of new ideas on how to deal with human and community problems, to decide whether to develop or limit programmes and to support advocacy of one programme as opposed to another (Chelimsky cited in Rossi and Freeman, 1989:43). There was no indication of staff involvement in policy formulation, advocacy and lobbying despite recognising the impact of structural factors. At a workshop held with Father D' Souza and service providers (Street Children's Evaluation Research Workshop, 2005), some ideas for formal evaluation of street children's programmes were formulated (See table 7 for one example of such an evaluation). The ideas were based on the Logical Framework for evaluating programmes which was introduced by Father D' Souza to service providers at the workshop.

TABLE 6: THE LOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING PROGRAMMES (STREET CHILDREN'S EVALUATION RESEARCH WORKSHOP, 2005)

GLOBAL OBJECTIVE	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	EXPECTED OUTCOME/RESULT
To promote a substance abuse free community	To lobby for the prohibition of supply of glue to under age children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police to distribute awareness pamphlets • Workshops with shopkeepers to highlight effects of glue sniffing • Individual visits to shopkeepers • Publicity via radio and newspaper articles 	By 2010, 90% of shopkeepers in the CBD have signed a pledge not to sell glue to street children
All children will be attending school by 2010	Every child between 3-6 years to attend an educational programme (Early Childhood Development)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of Early Childhood Development (ECD) Programmes • Ongoing parenting skills programmes 	By 2010, 90% of children are attending ECD programmes

RECOMMENDATIONS

Street children are a complex problem and need to be viewed on different levels, in terms of causes and prevention. Addressing these issues takes place on different levels which coheres with the ecosystems approach adopted in this study. Based on the findings of this study and the literature reviewed, recommendations are made with regards to practice issues, evaluation strategies and further research.

Practice Issues:

Therapy

There is definitely a need for individual counselling for the children. Since most of the children attend school during the day, it might not be possible for the social worker to render individual counseling to the children more than once a week. It is recommended that each child have an "appointment day" with a set time to see the social worker on an individual basis. This would provide children with an option to talk about issues that are important to them and the social worker will have an opportunity to gain insight about the child's life. Should the social worker have insufficient time to allocate for individual counselling, the child should be referred to an outside resource.

Awareness of needs

WHO and NIDA (2000) identified a characteristic of an effective programme is one in which staff conduct regular needs assessments of the street children and provide regular staff evaluation and feedback. The children could be asked about their needs during the in-house meetings and also during individual counselling. With regards to evaluating staff members, the children could be given a regular checklist (See Table 7).

Contact with the outside world

The lack of consistency regarding children's exposure to the outside world was a source of concern. The literature and the experiences of the children confirm that they need to have contact with others outside of the shelter. The staff could liaise with other shelters in Kwa-Zulu Natal so that joint recreational activities could be arranged such as outings or sports and games. During these activities the children will have the opportunity to meet others in a similar situation as themselves and be inspired by them. They could also have joint workshops with other children to address issues common to other shelters regarding problems with staff, programme implementation and other issues.

Active participation in decision-making

According to the findings of this study, and the literature, it is imperative that for a programme to be successful, it has to allow for the active participation of children in decision making.

The active participation of the children in the shelter in decision making should be encouraged, this means that the child's views and feelings are taken into consideration but may not always affect the decision to be made. For example, it should not be so much the professional knowledge or the client's view that is the focus of attention, as the process in which both points of view are balanced against one another and integrated (de Winter and Noom, 2003). It is not only the staff who is able to decide what help is of good quality. If it were exclusively left in their hands to define it, it would be a misjudgment of the fact that children have a right to their own views, wishes and needs. This does not imply that one should leave the "discussion on quality" to the children (de Winter and Noom, 2003:336). Similarly, this would be a misjudgment of the fact that children are in a "process of evolution" in which they desperately need the experience, encouragement and concern of adults in order to perform independently (de Winter and Noom,

2003:336). A dialogical, participatory approach indicates that together the main problems should be identified, possible causes and solutions sought and its development regularly assessed.

The children at the shelter should be consulted on decisions affecting them. The children should be active participants in decisions regarding changes to rules and routine at the shelter. This consultation could occur during their in-house meetings or group discussions.

Child care workers

In order to change the attitude that the child care workers have towards the children, they need a supportive structure in the shelter to help them cope with problems that they are experiencing. A support group could be established where they could meet fortnightly to discuss issues of concern. There should be regular in-service training provided to the staff where they could gain more knowledge about working with children in shelters. There is a National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW) that needs to address issues such as salaries and working conditions of child care workers which would assist in the validation of child care workers.

Advocacy

Children have identified the role that government has to play in preventing children from leaving their homes and living on the street. Service providers need to heed these messages and need to become advocates for children.

For example, issues regarding Children's Rights and protection can be dealt with by following the activities used by three organisations in Alexandria and Cairo. Children's rights can be supported by conducting training programmes with police officers who deal directly with cases of exposure to crime. Furthermore,

awareness campaigns on child rights and protection can be carried out since working with street children, in general terms involves recurrent confrontation with issues of child rights and protection (UN ODCCP Report, undated). Social workers and child care workers can adopt the role of child advocates.

Veeran (1999:231) mentions that NGOs and CBOs through their involvement on a grassroots level with communities, need to provide the “interface” with government. This shared role is central in formulating practical and appropriate policy guidelines. For example, the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), in Mumbai India, and its field action project for street children, plays an important role in advocating for issues for street children (Rane, 2000). The project workers arrange street plays, children's rallies, poster exhibitions on themes such as children's rights and child sexual abuse at public places as a regular activity. These activities generate public awareness about problems of street children in difficult circumstances as well as street children. Similar awareness programmes are arranged for different groups such as school educators and learners and youth groups with audiovisuals and experiences shared by children to help sensitise people at various levels (Rane, 2001). These kinds of advocacy functions need to be adopted at local and national levels in South Africa.

Government

de Winter and Noom (2003) maintain that children's participation should not only be encouraged in a relationship and institutional level, but also at government and policy levels: all parties concerned will benefit from learning more about one another, what ideas they have and from engaging in discussions about what form the local and national policies should take

South Africa is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, thus there is a responsibility to increasingly realise the rights of all children living in South Africa, regardless of whether they are living with families or on the streets, and despite their race and gender (Motala and Smith, 2003). Internationally, our

constitution has been commended for its “progressive outlook” and for protecting specific rights for children in the Bill of Rights. Section 28(2) of the constitution specifies that a child’s best interests are of vital importance in every issue relating to the child (Motala and Smith, 2003).

The landmark October 2000 ruling handed down by the Constitutional Court in the Grootboom case (Government of South Africa and Others v Grootboom and Others, 2000 (1) SA 46 (CC) is of particular importance for street children (Motala and Smith, 2003). The significance of this case is that in terms of the ruling, children who are orphans, abandoned and not in the care of their families for other reasons, have a direct claim against the state to be provided with “basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services”. The ruling was and continues to be important in indicating the responsibility of the state with regards to vulnerable children to make certain that the social risks that may accompany homelessness are avoided (Motala and Smith, 2003).

The children have highlighted the role that social security plays in the lives of children and in preventing them from becoming children who live on the street. The Government needs to re-examine the devastating effects that its macro-economic policies are having on children living in South Africa. At present the caregivers of children are provided with a child support grant until a child reaches the age of 14. Research mentioned in the previous chapter clearly indicates the positive outcomes of social security, thus an extension of the child support grant until a child turns 18 should be encouraged. The Economic Policy Research Unit (EPRI) goes further to propose a Basic Income Grant (BIG) for all South Africans.

Evaluation Strategies

Evaluation of programmes

Although the staff indicated that their present evaluation strategies are effective, they could consider other possibilities, for example, peer research, might provide an important input.

This is supported by WHO and NIDA (2000) who mention that for a programme to be effective it needs the involvement of not only parents, the community, police and government officials, but also peers. Since many street children prefer to be in groups whilst on the street, effective street intervention should consider peer-to-peer counseling as an option (UN ODCCP Report, undated) since these groups provide all the functions that sociologists expect of the family: financial support, safety, emotional and affective relationships and health care.

The staff could use many other indicators of project progress other than those mentioned in Chapter Five. Other indicators of a successful programme that could be used include use of project funds, accessibility/affordability of services, impact on target population and impact on national policies.

The reasons for undertaking evaluation need to be more clearly defined by the staff in the shelter in order to carry out a useful evaluation. For example, the organisation needs to outline whether the purpose of the evaluation is to keep its commitment to its mission and to the goals and objectives of the programme or to assess the impact of services on the children. Furthermore, the evaluation strategies currently adopted do not provide information related to the outcome of services received. Smith (1990) as mentioned in Chapter Three indicates questions such as "What are the programmes initial successes and failures? and Which problems point to significant flaws in programme design?" need to be considered.

Most importantly, staff at the shelter need to know how to use the information gathered from evaluations conducted to improve the conditions for children at shelters. Smith (1990) maintains that after the evaluation is carried out,

programme coordinators, supervisors and administrators should meet to discuss specific evaluative findings rather than programmes described in vague terms which appear to be the case at the shelter. The staff at the shelter could have "evaluation meetings" to discuss the use of the evaluation data in order to improve programmes at the shelter. The children could be consulted to determine what they think should be used to assess a programme's success.

The children and staff need to be involved in the evaluation of programmes. For example, children and staff can be asked about the strengths and weaknesses of the programme. Both children and staff should be able to make recommendations in order to improve the programme (McNamara, 1998).

The actual process of evaluation provided by the staff members appears unclear. The steps provided by McNamara (1998) for an outcomes based evaluation in Chapter Three should be applied to programmes at the shelter:

1. Identify major outcomes to be examined
2. Specify observable measures or indicators for each outcome
3. Identify information that is needed to show these indicators
4. Decide how this information is to be collected
5. Analyse and report findings

Given that children expressed dissatisfaction with staff attitudes and their lack of involvement, and the fact that staff were not aware of the issues that the girls raised, a simple checklist (See Table 8) filled in on a weekly or bi-monthly basis by children might prove useful. In a similar vein, a checklist (See Table 7) may be used by staff to provide feedback on the children's behaviour.

TABLE 7: CHILD'S CHECKLIST OF CHILD CARE OF CHILD CARE WORKER/SOCIAL WORKER/STREET OUTREACH WORKER

<i>Behaviour</i>	<i>Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
Keeps promises that are made to children			
Treats all children equally and fairly			
Uses physical punishment on children			
Is approachable			
Attends to children on a regular basis			
Respects children's point of view and opinions			
Listens to children			
Plays games with children			
Provides planned group activities			
Helps to maintain contact with the family			
Understands the problems that children experience			
Serves as a positive role model			
Allows children to participate in decision making			
Protects children from physical harm			

TABLE 8: WEEKLY CHECKLIST OF CHILD'S BEHAVIOUR WITH INCLUSION OF THE CHILD

<i>Behaviour</i>	<i>Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
Demonstrates respect towards other children			
Engages in group activities			
Does homework			
Helps with domestic chores			
Use of abusive language			
Displays physically aggressive behaviour			
Takes responsibility for self care such as bathing and dressing			
Takes care of personal belongings			
Displays sexual/promiscuous behaviour			
Intake of substances			
Demonstrates respect towards staff members			
Stealing			
Attends meetings			
Attends group discussions			

Further research

This was a small study therefore findings cannot be generalized. There is a need for such a study with large samples and in different contexts.

There will be a pilot project to evaluate the draft manual which has already been planned by the research team. There needs to be training of service providers with regards to the use of the manual, evaluation, monitoring and follow-up

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study revealed that programmes at the shelter being studied were evaluated, but questions have been raised regarding the effectiveness of these evaluation strategies. Many of the specific strategies for evaluation that were mentioned in the literature in Chapter Three were not mentioned by staff members. The need to engage children's active participation in decision making and the poor attitude of staff members has been highlighted. Had the programmes been properly evaluated, staff would have been aware of the children's concerns. In order to prevent children from resorting to a life on the street, there needs to be engagement at all levels to ensure multilevel participation and sustainability, as endorsed by the ecosystems approach elucidated in Chapter One.

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