



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



A ministry to at-risk homeless street youths in the central region of Lusaka, Zambia

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Abstract

The study examined the plight of homeless at-risk street youth who patronize the Lusaka Central Business District. Through observation and interaction, it was revealed that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is not providing an adequate and holistic ministry to the street youth people group. The purpose of this study was to develop, implement, and evaluate a viable intervention and ministry model that seeks to account for both the physical and spiritual needs of street youth. This model is here dubbed the PSR²D model consisting of meeting physical needs, equipping with skills, reform and rehabilitation, and most importantly, discipleship as a way of reaching the street youth. To adequately and meaningfully minister to at-risk street youths, the researcher used the qualitative method to approach the research process. After examining the problem through data derived from focus groups and observations, the researcher designed and implemented a multi-faceted ministry to reach at-risk street youth and thereby create an entering wedge for discipleship. The program started in December 2023 and was completed in March 2024.

Keywords: Homelessness; Street Children; Street Youth; At-risk; Ministry; Poverty; Urban Missions

1. Introduction

The church is vested with the task of spreading the gospel. This task has been understood to be the great commission as expressed by Jesus Christ Himself who said “Go into the world and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost”. (Matt 28:19). Various methods abound in the proclamation of the gospel. Regularly, the church conducts public evangelistic endeavors and baptizes those who believe. While this takes place in urban and non-urban centers of the world, there is a thrust toward the cities. The cities of the world present innumerable opportunities for outreach and evangelization. Meanwhile, Urban Missiologists recognize that these city opportunities ought to be harnessed for the core business of expanding the Kingdom of God. In the cities are various people groups who live on the margins of society, among whom are street youth who make the street their home. As Hamweene (2024) observes, many factors trigger children to flee to the streets and may include rapid urbanization, poverty, divorce and single parenting, abuse, family neglect, and violence, among others. In Lusaka, Zambia, street youth are a common phenomenon. In this study, the researcher sought to find a formidable approach to minister to at-risk street youth who patronize the Lusaka Central Business District.

1.1. Description of the ministry context

Lusaka, the capital and fastest-growing city of Zambia, is situated in the middle of the country. People are moving to Lusaka from rural areas, which is causing the city's population to increase. In the meanwhile, this mobility is causing the slums to grow quickly. The Zambia Statistics Agency (2023) estimates that 3,093,615 million people call the city home. The nation of Zambia and its capital, Lusaka, showcases a vibrant, diverse terrain. Zambia is home to at least 72 recognized tribes and languages. A diverse range of ethnic groups, including the majority Bantu, Asians descended from India, Europeans, Chinese, and other foreigners, make up the population of Lusaka. In the city and across the nation,

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unemployment and poverty are at all-time highs. Lusaka Times (2024). Although the government has implemented measures to lessen the suffering of the populace, its efforts fall short of meeting the requirements of its comparatively young population. It is important to note that Lusaka's urban environment offers prospects for ministry because of the city's potential for growth as well as the difficulties that its residents face.

The majority religion in Zambia is Christianity. It is a Christian Nation. The three primary religious groups that make up the religious landscape are the Charismatic, Protestant, and Roman Catholic churches. The Salvation Army, Baptists, Methodists, and Seventh-day Adventists are some of the most prominent Protestant denominations. According to Chepmekoi (2024), 75% of Zambians identify as Protestant, 20% as Roman Catholic, 3% as Animistic, 1% as Atheist/Agnostic, and 1% as Muslim. Roberts et al note that Catholicism is the single largest denomination in the country. However, Sakupapa (2024) notes that there are 1,096,000 Seventh-day Adventists in the nation.

In the central region of Lusaka, where this project was conducted, the researcher served as a church pastor and conference departmental leader for 13 years. Working near the Central Business District at the Lusaka and Woodlands Conferences, the researcher became concerned about the rising number of at-risk street youth. For example, Musukwa (2018) projected that there were approximately 13,000 street children in Zambia in 2018. Most people assume that street kids are troublesome, drug addicts, and dangerous. In addition, the public views street kids negatively since some of them indulge in vices including drug misuse, shoplifting, brawling, and using crude language.

1.2. Statement of the problem

At-risk homeless youth are becoming more and more visible on Lusaka's streets, avenues, roads, bridges, and alleyways. The researcher saw that young people living on the streets, both male and female, need a place to stay. They wander the streets throughout the day, pleading for food and cash, and they sleep rough at night. Lusaka's street children are exploited and victimized by both strangers and their peers. Along with other vices, they also find themselves involved in drug trafficking, prostitution, gambling, and alcohol misuse. There are limits to what the Republic of Zambia government can accomplish. In a similar vein, some Christian organizations and evangelical churches operate centers that offer street adolescents socioeconomic support. However, the Lusaka-based Seventh-day Adventist Church is not doing enough to fulfill the material and spiritual needs of vulnerable youth on the streets. To address the eyesore of street adolescents, a comprehensive ministry must be developed.

1.3. Statement of the purpose

The purpose of this study was to develop, implement, and evaluate an initiative that would promote a holistic ministry to at-risk street youth. Such a ministry should incorporate physical and spiritual needs; partnership and strategic alliances with other service providers; equipping with hands-on skills; and discipleship.

1.4. Justification

Few studies had been done on street youth in Lusaka, Zambia, at the time this study was conducted. Since my Union and Conference have not conducted any formal research on the topic of at-risk homeless street children, there existed a knowledge gap. This study was designed to broaden our understanding of these young people who are in danger. The plan was also intended to provide the Seventh-day Adventist Church with access to neglected urban people groups through ministries that target them, based on the advice to uplift the downtrodden and console the distressed. White (2009). This endeavor will strengthen ministering to the impoverished and needy and foster empathy for social outcasts.

1.5. Significance of the study

This study might contribute to the growth of the church in the Southern Zambia Union Conference.

- Undertaking this study is likely to equip and empower city-based ministers to minister effectively to street youth
- The study hopes to create an awareness of the unique challenges of at-risk homeless street youth and provide solutions to alleviate them.
- Furthermore, the implementation of the proposed program is likely to boost interest in urban missions
- The process of this study might provide a model of ministry that will enhance God's work.

1.6. Delimitations

The study's primary focus was on street youth, not on any other subset of Lusaka's homeless population. The focus of this study was on youth, even though homeless adults frequently visit and reside on the streets. In a similar vein, the phenomenon of street adolescents was observed throughout the city, with certain regions exhibiting noticeably higher concentrations of them. Nevertheless, the researcher focused on the bridges in *Kamwala*, the Lusaka Railway Bridges, and the Cairo Road area of the city of Lusaka's Central Business District. The study was limited to children and adolescents aged 9 to 21.

2. Methodology

The research strategy used to implement the intervention is described in this section. Awuor (2019) notes that by aiming to understand underlying reasons, attitudes, and justifications, the technique offers insights and digs deeper into the problem. In this study, the qualitative research methodology was applied. Data for the study were collected through the use of focus groups. The use of focus groups involved the consideration of the highest ethical considerations including honesty, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, and observation of participants' interests and privacy as hinted by Chapman (1995).

2.1. Target population

The youth living on the streets, ages 9 to 21, made up the study population. The target group consisted of homeless boys and girls. Targeted individuals also included those who handle or have worked with vulnerable street children. Thus, the demographic targeted in this study consisted mostly of street kids, social professionals (service providers), and Seventh-day Adventist Church members who have worked with street youth.

3. Findings and discussions

The study utilized four Focus Groups in the collection of data. The Focus Groups were labeled A, B, C, and D as expressed in the table below:

Table 1 Focus Group Labels

No	Label	Participants	Place	# of Participants	Date
1	A	Street Youth	Railway	9	30/09/23
2	B	Street Youth	Kamwala	8	01/10/23
3	C	Church Leaders	Railway	9	16/09/23
4	D	Caregivers	Kamwala	7	23/09/23
		Total		33	

As can be demonstrated above, Focus Group A was composed of 9 street youth participants; Focus Group B had 8 street youth participants; Focus Group C had 9 church leaders familiar and working with street youth; and Focus Group D had 7 caregivers affiliated with an orphanage adjacent to the Lusaka Central Business District.

3.1. Demographic Outline of Focus Groups

3.1.1. Focus Group A

Focus Group A's nine participants were split up as follows: Four girls and five boys. The eldest was twenty years old, and the youngest was ten. Not a single double orphan existed. On the other hand, four had both parents still living at the time of the focus group discussion, while five had grown up with just one parent.

Table 2 Age, Gender Table

#	Gender	Age
1	Male	14
2	Male	15
3	Male	16
4	Male	18
5	Male	20
6	Female	14
7	Female	15
8	Female	14
9	Female	10

The distribution of gender is expressed visually in a pie format and presented in the figure hereunder:

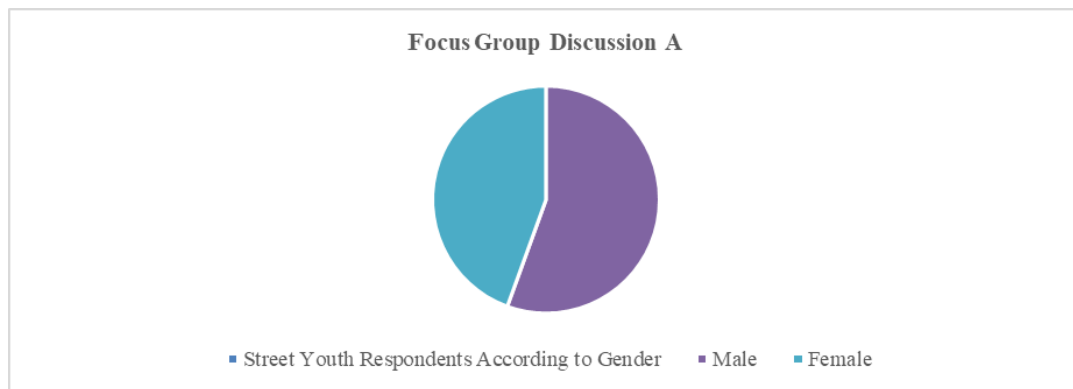


Figure 1 Focus Group Discussion A

3.1.2. Focus Group B

Eight people participated, four of whom were boys and four of whom were girls. The eldest was seventeen years old, while the youngest was fourteen. Three of them were doubly orphaned. Three had one living parent and two had both living at the time of the focus group discussion.

Table 3 Age and Gender

#	Gender	Age
1	Female	14
2	Male	19
3	Female	15
4	Female	15
5	Female	17
6	Male	17
7	Male	15
8	Male	16

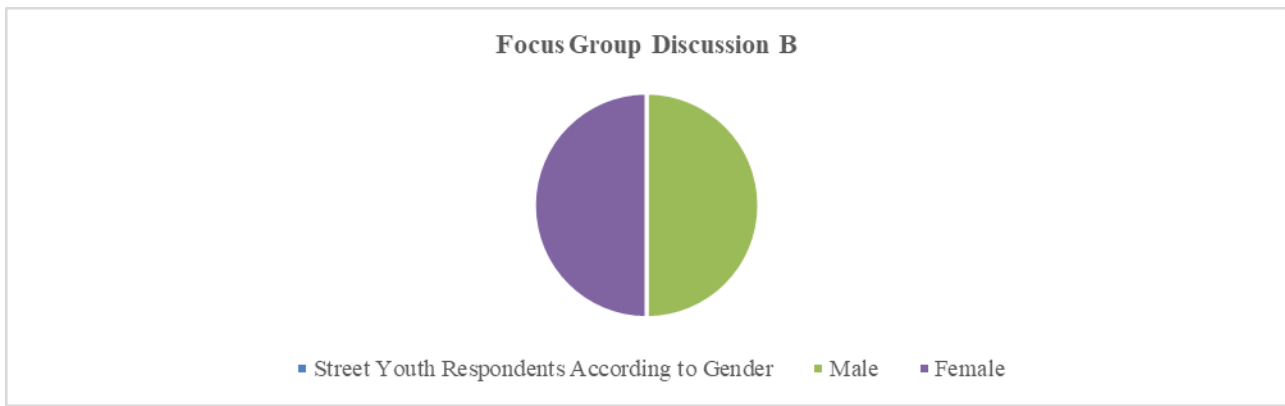


Figure 2 Focus Group B

3.1.3. Focus Group C

There were nine participants in all for Focus Group C. The participants were Lusaka Central Seventh Day Adventist Church members at the time. Their involvement and/or interest in working with and for street adolescents led to their selection.

3.1.4. Focus Group D

Nine people participated in Focus Group D. At the time of the group discussion, the participants were employees of the orphanage and refuge center - Fountain of Hope. They were chosen based on their involvement in the Fountain of Hope initiative, which involves working with and for street adolescents. These nine individuals work as carers at Fountain of Hope in a variety of roles, including security, administration, teaching, and cooking.

4. Discussion of Group A and B Findings

4.1. Triggers into the Streets

The results of Focus Groups A and B indicated that two major factors that push young people into the streets are poverty and peer pressure. Focus Group B noted the loss of parents through death (being left orphaned) as a contributing factor to children venturing into the streets, whereas Focus Group A identified volition and fear of punishment as additional concerns.

4.2. Difficulties and Challenges

A comparison of the problems and obstacles faced by young people living on the streets reveals similarities and differences between Groups A and B, as shown in the following illustration. This validates important difficulties.

Table 4 Difficulties and Challenges

GROUP	Challenges	Common Challenges
FGD A	Lack of clothes and shoes, mosquito bites, peer pressure	Hunger, lack of shelter, displacement and government agencies' interference/police harassment, loss of friends due to mop up operations
FGD B	Bullying, hunger, lack of love, sexual abuse, forced drug use	

4.3. Risks on the Street

The threats that street youth in Lusaka confront were described by Groups A and B. The following table lists some typical dangers along with other significant risks:

Table 5 Risks on the Street

GROUP	Risks Encountered	Common Risks
FGD A	Mental illness, car accidents, loss of personal effects, attacks from gangs, being wrongly accused, abduction, intoxication	Falling sick/disease and lack of clinical care, death, arrest and police brutality,
FGD B	Drug overdose, depression, early pregnancy, unprotected sex	

4.4. Nights

Similarities between Groups A and B's requirements for the places where street kids spend their nights are evident from an analysis of them. While there are some commonalities, the study also revealed several discrepancies, which are shown in the table below:

Table 6 Nights

Group	Places of Rest at Night	Common Resting Places
FGD A	Bars, small-group-rented places, open-design restaurants, home of adult men in exchange of sex, homes of well-wishers	Open places/spaces, roadsides/corridors, bus terminus, phone booths
FGD B	Drainages, public markets, post office, around malls, card boxes	

The aforementioned illustrates how adolescents are faced with a variety of possibilities when darkness falls. The reality that street kids struggle to find a quiet place to sleep or sleep rough is becoming more and more apparent. The chilly, open, hazardous places are the easy choice for young people living on the streets.

4.5. Finding Food

A further examination of the food challenge revealed that 83% of participants in Groups A and B believed that food was a major problem for homeless street kids. Findings on where and how they get food are shown in the table below:

Table 7 Finding Food

Group	Source of Food	Common source of Food
FGD A	Well-wishers, drug suppliers (induce or reward them with food), stealing	Garbage bins, work for cash to purchase food
FGD B	Shelters, orphanages, begging	

4.6. Hygiene Challenge

Upon closer analysis, groups A and B demonstrated the importance of hygienic needs. Even if some people want to wash and take a bath, they typically lack access to hygienic facilities. It is considerably harder for young people living on the streets to use the fee-paying restrooms and toilets that are available. As a result, some street youth choose not to bathe, some bathe sometimes, and still others choose to use unclean water sources. Research indicates that for some, shelters and orphanages offer a way to lessen this urge.

4.7. Violence on the Streets

Focus groups A and B report that one of the main issues on the streets is violence. All eight members of group B have experienced bullying or aggressive treatment in one form or another. The important finding of the study is that bullies are easily recognized. These include those who have lived on the streets, people with larger statures, gang leaders and commanders, and older boys who want to have sex with girls. Thus, it stands to reason that those who are new to the streets are more vulnerable to bullying by more experienced and larger individuals. In a similar vein, women run the risk of being exploited sexually.

4.8. Sex on the Streets

Analysis of the topic of sex reveals that sex activities are carried out by street adolescents. There are a variety of reasons. It could be done for fun, to obtain benefits like food or protection, to succumb to peer pressure, or simply to feel like you "fit in." Sometimes, however, sex is used as a tool of coercion, to cause suffering and compel obedience. The results show that both FGD A and B participants were aware of the existence of street sex activities. The study demonstrated the existence of consenting, forced, or coerced sex as well as survival sex. The comprehensive extent of the difficulty was demonstrated by an investigation of both groups, which included information on prostitution, pedophilia, group sex (orgies), rape, sexual harassment, and survival sex among street youth.

4.9. Drugs: Supply, Access, Use, and Effects

Members of FGD A and B concurred that drugs pose a significant issue for young people living on the streets. Although all seventeen individuals acknowledged the problem of drugs, eleven of them utilized different drugs. Therefore, at the time the focus groups were held, 64% of the participants used drugs. The results show that certain substances are widely available in public places. These consist of blue mush, stickers, marijuana, and cigarettes. Despite its accessibility, cocaine is regarded as a luxury substance.

Table 8 Drugs

GROUP	Suppliers of Drugs	Why they use Drugs	Effects of Drugs	Drugs in use
FGD A	<i>Chibolya</i> community members, established drug leaders,	To become fearless; so as not to worry about or feel the sting of mosquitoes	Mental illness, violence, verbal abuse, trembling, passing out, uncontrollable laughter, respiratory complications, fearlessness, altered reality, temporal amnesia, aggression	Sticker, Marijuana, cigarettes, blue mash, nsuko ortobacco, Cocaine
FGD B	Street youth, airport staff, gang leaders/ commanders, community members, business persons, call-boys	To forget their problems; to sleep peacefully; to feel high/good; to feel that they are somebody	Intoxication, altered sense of reality, susceptibility to accidents, respiratory ailments, mental instability, kidney failure, irritability, delusion, tremors, and addiction.	

4.10. Who They Look Up To

Analysis of groups A and B revealed that the people who matter to street adolescents are defined by them. The persons they consider to be significant in their lives are shown in the following table:

Table 1 Persons Held in High Esteem

GROUP	Important Figures	Common Important Figures
FGD A	Well-wishers, gang leaders, pastors and church-based caregivers, caregivers (orphanage/shelter owners)	Well-wishers, caregivers
FGD B	Parents, counselors, caregivers, self, and well-wishers who come to the streets	

The results show a variety of significant individuals, including gang leaders and parents. Pastors and other church-based carers who receive this unique acknowledgment from street youth are of great importance. In the context of the effort to expand urban missions, this discovery was vital.

4.11. Family Contact

According to the investigation, there is some degree of link between street adolescents and their family members and their origins. Here is a representation of that fact in Table 10.

Table 2 Family Contact

GROUP	Established Contact	Who they are in touch with
FGD A	Yes	Grandparents, uncles and aunties, as well as brothers and sisters
FGD B	Yes	

4.12. Literacy

According to the investigation, street children are eager to learn, especially if it means they can read and write. Most of them had at least a basic lower elementary level of reading and writing proficiency. Their interests are expressed and their literacy levels are displayed in the following table.

Table 11 Literacy

GROUP	Reading and Writing	Interested in
FGD A	6 out of 9 could read/write	Vocational arts/crafts and careers
FGD B	7 out of 8 could read/write	

4.13. Sport

It was observed that all participants in Group B and a portion of FGD A were interested in a variety of sports, such as football, netball, and other local competitions. Local games and sports were valued as forms of relaxation.

4.14. Health Challenges/Complications

The health issues and problems that street youth face are displayed in the table below. There are common and uncommon areas in the comparison of the findings of illnesses and diseases experienced by young people living on the streets. In this element of the study, the main finding is that street adolescents suffer from a variety of ailments, some of which are basic and don't require much treatment, and others of which are complex.

Table 12 Health Challenges/Complications

GROUP	Health Issues	Common Health Issues
FGD A	Malaria, chicken pox, and other respiratory complications.	Skin Diseases COVID-19
FGD B	Eczema, abdominal pains, headaches, body pains, body malaise, and eye problems	

4.15. Urgent Needs

The researcher sought to find out what street youth consider to be urgent needs. All participants voiced their desires freely. The study showed that street youth are human beings with defined needs. The need mix includes love; a desire to return to school; finding a sponsor to fund the school budget; start-up for a small business venture like a retail shop; learning a skill like driving a motor vehicle; and decent shoes, clothes, and warm blankets. Overall, the needs that stand out are going back to school, finding capital, starting a small business, and good shoes and warm blankets and clothes. Below is a detailed table depicting individual needs:

Table 13 Street Youth Needs

Focus Group	Participant	Need
A	R1	To complete school and help my parents, love; school
	R2	School; blankets/warm clothing
	R3	Startup to start business; school
	R4	Capital to start business. I want a driver's license
	R5	Business
	R6	Retail Business; to complete school
	R7	Go back to school
	R8	Retail business
	R9	School first; Business
B	R1	School – uniform, bags, shoes
	R2	School
	R3	Sponsor to go to school
	R4	School bag and shoes
	R5	Clothes
	R6	Shoes
	R7	Business -startup
	R8	School

4.16. Comparative Analysis of FGD C and FGD D Findings

Participants in Focus Groups C and D were carers and service providers, thus in order to clarify ideas and identify trends, their answers were examined and contrasted.

4.16.1. Perception of Street Youth Demographic

The results indicate that Groups C and D thought there were more boys than girls on the streets of Lusaka. They also saw that there were more and more girls living on the streets. Group D included into the conversation a topic that Group C had not covered: the increasing number of babies born to street girls. As a result, although the number of street youth is increasing, some of that growth is biological.

4.17. Discussion of Group C and D Findings

4.17.1. Triggers

The study shows that a variety of factors might push or cause young people to from their families and enter the streets. The following table provides examples of these factors:

Table 14 Street Youth Needs

GROUP	Stressors	Common stressors
FGD C	Poor upbringing, parental negligence or lack of proper home care, youth stubbornness/delinquency, lack of proper family attachments, search for a better life, broken homes, abuse of drugs and alcohol by parents, exposure to the streets by their street vending parents, allurements by the prospects of a good life on the streets, search for freedom on the streets, being orphaned, lack of contentment, unhealthy-toxic homes, mistreatment at home, prolonged exposure to street life, easy access to drugs, fleeing sexual abuse at home, and failure to live with step-parent/mistreatment by step-parent.	Parental negligence/ lack of care/ love, drugs/ alcohol in the home, search for a better life, child abuse/ mistreatment; broken homes
FGD D	Poverty, family divisions or lack of oneness; peer pressure, lack of recreational and sport activities in the community, lack of care at home including negligence of children by drunken guardians or parents; lack of family cohesion and care, loss of parents through death; exploitation of children by guardians, lack of parental love, and the fact that children themselves want to explore life.	

The push and pull factors are the two groups into which the aforementioned components can be separated.

4.17.2. Shelter

It may be shown from a comparison of Groups C and D that they are without shelter. Results indicate that individuals spend their evenings in a variety of dangerous locations, including malls, open streets, sidewalks, drainage systems, and improvised stores.

4.17.3. Difficulties on the Streets

The C and D participants both demonstrated that while homeless youth face a variety of obstacles outside of housing, there are many more. Group D, for example, raised the issue of gangs as a major worry. The majority of Lusaka's street-dwelling youth cite food as a key problem, according to the data.

4.17.4. Street Risks

Street youth are vulnerable to several threats, as has been mentioned previously in the discussion. When it comes to threats that street children face, Focus Group D identified malaria and STDs as the two main ones. Furthermore, Group D unequivocally listed other hazards, including drug-related problems, automobile crashes, fatalities, injuries from street fights or gang disputes, and sexual abuse (particularly of females by older boys). Findings about sexual abuse point to the issue of unintended pregnancies and the participation of non-street people in the sex trade with underage street children. Group C also noted that drug addiction and weather exposure are risk factors for street-based sexual abuse and are a precursor to disease. FGD C did not present detailed discussions on risks.

4.17.5. Violence/ Harassment

According to the survey, there is violence on the streets. The results show that each group engages in a variety of violent behaviors. Both groups were found to have high rates of sexual violence. It is evident that while physical violence was a problem, verbal and mental abuse also occurred.

Table 15 Violence/Harassment

GROUP	Forms of Violence	Common forms of Violence
FGD C	Rape, physical fights	Sexual violence
FGD D	Sexual, emotional, verbal – mob justice, inflicting pain on others at will	

4.17.6. *Survival Activities*

According to the report, street kids will stop at nothing to survive. The results thus demonstrated that they engaged in a variety of survival activities, including prostitution, begging, and theft. The observation that stealing, begging, selling drugs, and taking on piece jobs are frequent ways to make ends meet serves to highlight how commonplace some of these activities are.

Table 16 Survival Activities

GROUP	Activities	Common Survival Activities
FGD C	Stealing, begging, selling drugs, piece jobs, prostitution, street vending	Stealing, begging, selling drugs, piece jobs, prostitution
FGD D	Stealing, begging, engage in drug business, piece jobs, prostitution	

4.18. Substance Abuse

The results indicate that carers in Focus Groups C and D recognized the problem of drug misuse and addiction among young people living on the streets. According to the report, these substances are sourced from drug suppliers and dealers in a variety of locations, but primarily from Chibolya, a slum close to the Lusaka CDB. Chibolya has a well-known reputation for serving as a drug corridor. The drugs that are frequently used and handled on the streets, the reasons why young people use them, and their actual consequences are displayed in the table below:

Table 17 Substance Abuse

GROUP	Common Drugs	Why they use drugs	Actual Effects
FGD C	Marijuana, Bostic/glue, injectables, and cough syrups	to numb themselves against elements of weather like cold; to escape the feeling of fear when night comes; to feel high and happy; to escape pain; to evade hunger	Damage of internal organs, development of respiratory diseases,
FGD D	Sticker, volo (marijuana), blue mash, petrol, aeroplane fuels, Bostic, nsuko (tobacco), nyele (codeine), and cocaine	To “fit in”, to feel warm at night, to forget their problems, to evade hunger/problems, to become fearless/assertive	Abnormal behavior; susceptibility to disease and accidents; become violent; calloused; loss of a sense of reality; slurred speech

4.19. Social Network Supports

It was discovered that young people living on the streets look up to particular people. The following table provides an overview of these individuals:

Table 18 Social Networks

GROUP	Persons looked up to	Common Persons looked up to
FGD C	Drug suppliers, well-wishers, gang leaders (protectors), and operators of shelters	Well-wishers, gang leaders
FGD D	volunteer workers, gang leaders with power and authority, all those who render help, all who show them genuine love, and above all, they admire themselves.	

4.19.1. *Learning, Interests, and Religion*

The majority of FGD C and D participants struggle with writing and reading. Participants in group talks are split into two categories: those who are literate and those who are not. Thus, among street youth, literacy appears as a

determinant. Results show that they do not have access to books and other study-related materials. Research on religion revealed that although participants acknowledged the existence of God, the church, and Christianity, they found it difficult to live out their faith and moral principles while living on the streets. Although some attend church on Saturday or Sunday, the study revealed that Islam is gaining popularity among young people living on the streets because of the support they receive.

4.19.2. General Health Issues

In terms of general health concerns, the investigation reveals that street youth face a variety of health difficulties. There are two types of disabilities: those that are temporary, like sicknesses and ailments, and those that are permanent, such as being maimed in violent street fights when different things are utilised. According to the report, it is not unusual to come across young people who have knife combat scars on their bodies. Focus Group D noted that some people might lose their eyes, teeth, or limbs. Street adolescents experience locomotive issues as a result of drug use. Group C and Group D concur that the diverse range of health concerns includes illnesses like COVID-19, colds, STIs, disorders associated to nutritional deficiencies, and problems. Below is a comparative expression of health challenges:

Table 19 General Health Issues

GROUP	Health Problems	Common Sicknesses
FGD C	Covid 19, common colds, STI's, nutritional deficiency related ailments, injuries	Injuries
FGD D	Disabilities, injuries, locomotive issues	

5. Conclusion

The study revealed that street youth in the Lusaka Central Business District are at risk. Various factors trigger their entry into the streets. While on the streets, they struggle to obtain good food and decent clothing. Their challenges include lack of shelter, violence, and abuse among others. Girl street youth face the challenge of sexual abuse. Street youth succumb to illicit activities which include the use of narcotics and other intoxicating substances as well as engaging in prostitution as a survival measure. Street youths are human beings who long for love, affection, and attention. They desire education, sanitation, and spiritual help. These detailed findings call for a holistic ministry to be conducted in the favor of street youth. A ministry to street youth was eventually, and successfully conducted to address identified needs. This holistic approach not only targeted their spirituality but also their physical needs. Group and personal counseling were provided. Food and clothing, and blankets were availed, and life skills were imparted. The involvement of the Seventh-day Adventist Church during the implementation of the initiative has opened the door to ministering to people who live on the margins of society tangibly.

Recommendations

The study recommends the following solutions:

- To help parents raise responsible children, churches in the Southern Zambia Union and the Woodlands and Lusaka Conferences should regularly offer parenting skills training.
- The Community Services branch of the church, such as Dorcas and the Adventist Men's Organization of Woodlands and Lusaka Conference, ought to support feeding programs for undernourished and hungry street youth.
- Self-reliance initiatives ought to be put in place at RAC and other inner-city churches to allow street kids to receive practical training.
- Regular seminars for street adolescents should cover topics such as prostitution, alcoholism, drug misuse, physical, verbal, and sexual abuse of children, and quitting smoking. Parents ought to be educated about the value of employment and education, as well as the risks associated with child abuse and neglect.
- The Department of Child and Youth Development ought to intervene to help street adolescents gain access to this Education, as the Government of the Republic of Zambia currently provides free schooling.
- To ensure that the general public, and street adolescents in particular, have access to clean water, city councils across the nation should provide controlled water points in and around their cities. Municipalities should also build more public restrooms.
- The state, acting through the Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC), ought to maintain vigilant oversight over the drug supply chains that connect to infamous locations such as Chibolya. Since end users are aware of the

connections, DEC should also pursue the drug dealers' cartel from the end users upward to the different sources.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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