
EMPOWERING STREET CHILDREN IN NIGERIA: NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND COUNSELLING POTENTIALS

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Abstract

The phenomenon of street children has been described as one of the serious growing social problems in Nigeria. The phenomenon of street children has come to stay as a permanent feature of societies across the globe. This implies that whatever effort is made to salvage the situation should emphasize taking the immediate needs of these children to them on the streets rather than eradicating street children. This is the reason why this paper advocate for the empowerment of street children through the instrumentality of non-formal education and counselling. The paper argued that living alone, lack of education, poor nutrition, diseases, homelessness, poverty, destitution, exploitation, and substance abuse among others are common features of street children. The paper concludes that street children can be empowered through the exploration of potentials of non-formal education and counselling such as basic literacy, post-literacy, vocational skills, health and nutritional education, destitution education, rehabilitation, and abode education.

Introduction

Children are gifts of God and every African man and woman expects children after marriage. When a man and a woman get married and they have not been blessed with children, the couple, and the immediate and extended family are worried. God's blessing through the children is one of the things that African society values. Children all over the world have rights. The rights of the child are well documented in The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989. The rights are many and fundamentally a child has the right to be alive. The Document states that "Children have the right to food, clothing and a safe place to live so they can develop in the best possible way. The government should help families and children who cannot afford this". In Section 9 of the Convention, it is clear that "children should not be separated from their parents unless they are not being properly looked after – for example, if a parent hurts or does not take care of a child. Children whose parents don't live together should stay in contact with both parents unless this might harm the child".

The above Document signifies that Nigerian children are entitled to safe and decent homes among other rights of the child. Unfortunately, the phenomenon of street children is increasing in Nigeria (Odeyemi & Olejede, 2006; Akpama & Inaja, 2006; Alawiye-Adams & Babatunde, 2013) and this calls for concern. UNICEF (2001) estimated the number of street children at 150 million. According to Owobu et al. (2020), street children in the Edo state of Nigeria were 9 per 10,000 adolescent

population of the State. In the street of Lagos alone, Volunteer Work Africa (2022) puts the estimated population of street children at 100,000 for reasons such as poverty, parents' separation or death, parents' unemployment, illiteracy or truancy and ill-treatment at home. These children are vulnerable to all forms of abuse including sexual assaults, intimidation, molestation and child labour, and ritualism among others. The nature of the street is certainly preventing these children from schooling. This phenomenon has further increased the number of out-of-school children in Nigeria. This situation should be salvaged and the children are rescued for the betterment of their future. It is important to acknowledge that the issue of street children globally particularly in African countries has become a phenomenon. Aransiola et al. (2009) have argued that the phenomenon of street children has come to stay as a permanent feature of societies across the globe. This implies that whatever effort is made to salvage the situation should emphasize taking the immediate needs of these children to them on the streets rather than eradicating street children (UNICEF, 2001). This is the reason why the authors advocate for the empowerment of street children through the instrumentality of non-formal education and counselling.

Social workers such as adult educators and counsellors must work with other stakeholders who are concerned about the welfare of Nigerian children to empower them to live fulfilling life where facilities and amenities for a better life are accessed. It is important to note that Nigerian "children have the right to the best health care possible, clean water to drink, healthy food and a clean and safe environment to live in" (The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989) and education. The above facilities and amenities are virtually not available on the street where street children reside. How can then the street children access these facilities for a fulfilled life? This brings us to the issue of empowerment.

The term empowerment has been described as a multidimensional construct that is held by many disciplines such as human rights, education, health, protection, psychology and economics (UNICEF, n.d). Page and Czuba (1999) argued that empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power (that is, the capacity to implement) in people, for use in their own lives, their communities, and in their society, by acting on issues that they define as important. Page and Czuba (1999) have suggested that three components are important in understanding the concept of empowerment. Empowerment is multi-dimensional, social, and a process. It is multi-dimensional in that it occurs within sociological, psychological, economic, and other dimensions. Empowerment also occurs at various levels, such as individual, group, and community. Empowerment, by definition, is a social process, since it occurs in relationship to others. Empowerment is a process that is similar to a path or journey, one that develops as we work through it. Other aspects of empowerment may vary according to the specific context and people involved, but these remain constant. In our case, we are talking about the empowerment of street children in Nigeria.

UNICEF (n.d) has noted that a personal journey during which street children, through increased assets and critical awareness develop a clear and evolving understanding of themselves, their rights and opportunities in the world around them, and through the increased agency, and voice and participation, have the power to make personal and public choices for the improvement of their lives and their world. This process involves promoting realization, access and use of assets (which includes skills-

building for accessing and utilizing these assets); increasing critical awareness, fostering agency, and enhancing opportunities for voice and participation (UNICEF, n.d).

It is believed that non-formal education which is described by Bagudo and Yusuf (2019) as an important intervention educational activity has the potential for addressing the problems of adults and underserved individuals. Non-formal education is a utilitarian and problem-solving-based approach that helps in providing succour to individuals. The programmes in non-formal education are flexible and need-based. It is on this note that the paper advocates for the explorations of the potential of non-formal education in the empowerment of street children in Nigeria. It is important to add that counselling as a helping profession is rich and rooted in empowerment as such it is capable to empower individuals with peculiar problems. This is the reason the authors have also utilized the instrumentality of counselling in taking the immediate needs of street children to them on the street.

Who are the street children?

Street children according to Adewale and Afolabi (2013) are called homeless children, particularly in Western Europe. This is because they have no permanent place where they sleep. They can be found either living on the street or moving and sleeping from place to place in friends' houses, in markets or uncompleted structures etc.) It can be added that street children are a worldwide phenomenon because no nation across the world is exempted from the challenge of childhood neglect and parental unreadiness that results in abandonment and outright lack of care that drives such children unto the street to find ways and means of fending for themselves (Adewale & Afolabi, 2013). Street children are described as a common eyesore in major cities across the world but the problem is more prominent and rampant in developing and underdeveloped nations "*street children*" challenge has gradually become an index capable of being used to measure the level of development in nations across the globe. In other words, there are more "street children" in poor, underdeveloped and developing countries whereas, the sight and population of street children in developed countries are limited and under some relative control as a result of the citizens' welfare system of developed nations which at all times cater for and give attention and support to such children and their parents (Ademalé & Afolabi, 2013).

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia described the term street children as children who live on the streets of a city, deprived of family care and protection". It goes further to say that the ages of most children on the streets range between 5 and 17 years old. According to UNICEF (1998), street children can be categorized into i) children on the street – they work on the street but maintain more or less regular ties with their families. Their focus is home, to which they return at the end of the working day and have a sense of belonging to the local community; ii) children of the street – they maintain tenuous relations with their families, visiting them only occasionally. They see the street as their homes where they seek shelter, food and companionship; and iii) abandoned children – they are also children of the street but are differentiated from that category by the fact that they have cut off all ties with their biological families and are completely on their own. Therefore, children 'on' the street refer to 'home-based' children who spend much of the day on the street but have some family support and usually return home at night while children 'on' the street are' street-based

children who spend most days and nights on the street and are functional without family support.

One main characteristic of the "children of the street" is that they live alone in the streets, without proper or reliable shelter; they have lost contact with their parents and, as such, they do not enjoy parental protection, love and care (Lugalla, & Mbwambo, 1996). Street children share the streets with millions of adults, many of whom regard them as nuisances, if not as dangerous mini-criminals. What most of these children do on the streets is, of course, work. Children who live and work on the streets often come from slums and squatter settlements, where poverty and precarious family situations are common, where schools are overcrowded and poor, and where safe places to play simply do not exist. Yet other children come from middle-class or well-to-do families who run away from their homes.

Factors responsible for the Street Children phenomenon in Nigeria

Many factors have been linked to the proliferation of street children in Nigeria. These include family disintegration, urbanization, modernization and the impact of HIV/AIDS (Aransiola *et al.*, 2009). Owasanoye and Okunsanya (2004) noted that the extended family system has virtually disintegrated due to urbanization, the physical dispersion of family members and the influence of capitalism and globalization. This family disintegration coupled with uncontrollable population increase, increase in maternal mortality and increase in the number of children orphaned by AIDS led to the problem of street children in Africa, especially Nigeria. In the same vein, Oloko (1999) found that the factors which push children out of their homes vary from physical maltreatment and emotional problems to being sent out of the home because of misdemeanours or family financial problems. Keen (1990) found that some children flee in search of excitement, adventure, personal freedom and self-fulfilment, a comfortable, independent, and financially secure life and become part of the 'action' in society. The majority of them, however, leave as a result of socio-economic and other factors within the family or immediate environment.

Poverty has also been identified as one of the factors forcing children to the street. According to Kopoka (2000), poverty is also forcing an increasing number of street children on the streets. In some instances, it is parents or guardians who send the children to work on the streets to support their families and others are forced on the streets to find food and shelter which is not forthcoming from their families.

The prevalence of broken families in Africa has been identified as one of the factors responsible for the phenomenon of street children in Africa (Kopoka, 2000). Family institution in Africa is going through a lot of upheavals. Fewer and fewer children have stable and loving family environments. Many families have broken up with children left to fend for themselves. Many families are also increasingly characterized by absent parents, lack of communication between parents and children, alcoholism and domestic violence. Many children run away to the streets to avoid violence and abuse in their families. It is now a common occurrence to hear terrifying stories of abuse of children by parents or family members. Children as old as three are increasingly being sexually abused, starved and ignored by the family and community at large. It is today not surprising to see parents or guardians using force or threats to send their children out to beg, steal and work to earn income for the family. Adults are

increasingly using children as sources of income and thus violating and denying children their basic rights as human beings (Kopoka, 2000).

Some argue that the emergence of street children is bound up with the totality of urban problems - that the phenomenon is exclusively urban: there are no "rural street children." (Kopoka, 2000). While it is true that street children are usually found in urban areas, many of these children have rural origins. So the problem extends beyond urbanization. It is becoming increasingly clear that there is no single cause for street children. Some of the children have taken refuge in the city from natural or man-made disasters. Others are the offspring of prostitutes. Handicapped street children, rejected by their families, also constitute a distinct and relatively large category. A number have been disowned by a "respectable" parent unwilling to acknowledge the embarrassing outcome of an affair. In such cases, the children do not invariably come from the poorest families. In West Africa, fieldworkers have discovered street children from various backgrounds, including a son of a taxi driver, a nephew of a dentist, and even the grandson of a former minister (Kopoka, 2000).

Problems associated with Street Children

As already noted, the street child is any girl or boy who has not reached adulthood, for whom the street (in the widest sense of the word, including unoccupied dwellings, wasteland, etc.) has become his or her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood; and who is inadequately protected, supervised, or directed by responsible adults (UNICEF, 2004). Furthermore, street children are categorized as either '*on the street*' or '*off the street*'. Children '*of the street*' live and sleep on the streets in urban areas and streets are their homes whereas children '*on the street*' have their homes and only come to the streets to beg for money during the day and return home in the evening. The former group has no contact with family while the latter lives with family (Chireshe *et al*, 2014).

Like any other social phenomenon, street children face serious problems of compounding nature. But, most of these problems are a result that most people in today's society see childhood as a process of becoming an adult even though childhood includes the content of social and structural positions in different communities depending on where a child is growing up (Giddens, 2014). And the fact that, sadly, childhood nowadays is no longer a universal social construction but, depends on the experiences a child gets in society. Specifically, the UNICEF (1998) offered the causes of the phenomenon as family breakdown, armed conflict in nations or between nations, poverty, natural and man-made disasters, famine, physical and sexual abuse, exploitation by adults, dislocation through migration, urbanization and overcrowding, and disinheritance or being disowned.

As to the kinds and forms of problems faced by street children, Debrito (2014) summarily observed that street children's living situation is filled with difficulties and often related to drug abuse, violence, crime, family disruption, abandonment, disease, prostitution, and so forth. Adewale and Afolabi (2013) also note that street children in most cases suffer from malnutrition, extreme hunger, health problems, substance abuse, theft, commercial sexual exploitation, harassment by the police, physical and sexual abuse by society and most cases social rejection as an unsuitable member of

society which may remain with the child for the rest of his or her life. Thus, the problems are hereby categorized and discussed.

Educational Status and Skill

Most street children were non-school going and most of the school-going street children were the beneficiaries of some NGO intervention. The school-going street children reported that they were being taught some skill development training by the NGO. Among the vast majority of street children, the absence of any specific skills was stunningly found to secure a decent living. Most of them were adept in their informal occupation like remnant collection, rag picking, carrying shopping goods for others mostly in a basket on their head, etc. Most of them wished to study if they get adequate financial support to maintain their living because they had to earn living at the cost of very hard lowest paying work (Abdul Hai, 2014). Furthermore, Kopoka (2000) observed that the Ministry of housing, for example, didn't offer much to street children. Moreover, relocating families into cigarette packet-sized apartments does not necessarily reduce the incidence of street children, as the Western experience shows. From the standpoint of the Ministry of Education, street children are dropouts lacking the familial background necessary for them to benefit from education. For education bureaucrats, street children had better leave the field free for those who can benefit from education. The Labour ministry considers them un-trainable because they lack education and are therefore unemployable.

Lack of Adequate Nutrition: Lack of food, clean water and adequate health care are among the untold hardships faced by street children. The causes of malnutrition among street children are multiple and interrelated. Consumption of tainted food, inadequate dietary intake of essential nutrients, faulty dietary habits, and repeated illnesses are the immediate causes of malnutrition among them. Street children can usually get some amount of food to eat, but they do not have nutritious or balanced diets. This deficiency thus manifests itself in the form of anaemia, malnutrition, and vitamin deficiencies). They eat discarded food considered rationally impure and medically harmful. Circumstances decide which food the children should eat. Sometimes they also eat at a very lower price in the roadside open-sky restaurants squatting almost on the pavements and footpaths. Street children who do not have the capacity of earning take squandered food thrown away in the garbage by hotels, community centres and city dwellers etc. For the vast majority of street children access to food is precarious. In some acute cases, some of the street children have to pass a day with little or no food at all. Their sources of food collection vary. They encounter an acute hand-to-mouth existence (Abdul Hai, 2014). The most common types of purchased food eaten by street children represent typical cheap folk foods. Observation revealed that street children often eat food very fast, almost swallowing food whole, and in large quantities. This might be a reflection of the type of lifestyle they experienced which entails quick actions and movements. When food cannot be purchased, children eat what they can find in the trash. Nutritional status, both past and present, is a key factor in children's health, physical and emotional well-being, and cognitive development. Street children are at exceptional risk of a wide range of health outcomes and malnutrition. Street children often employ different strategies to acquire food. Most referred to begging, cleaning cars at traffic lights, selling white tissues, or having temporary jobs if available. Others admitted that they steal food,

and some explained that they eat the remains of food in garbage cans (UNICEF, 2001).

Homelessness: Pratibha and Ansu (2016) observed that children who choose the streets as their home face the most acute problems related to shelter. They are vulnerable to all ranges of weather conditions be it the burning heat of summer, the rainstorms or the chilly winter nights. These children do not suffer merely from physical homelessness, but also psychological homelessness since they have "nowhere to belong". Furthermore, Abdul Hai (2014) noted that street children congregate wherever there is a possibility to find money and food. Mostly they have no fixed and permanent place to live and sleep. A standard place to live and sleep is secondary- they choose to sleep near their sources of income, taking some care to avoid being rounded up by policemen and other governmental officials. During day time they used to move from here to there and take a rest at marketplaces, roadside and other places. At night boys mainly sleep in the areas like pavements (footpaths, public parks, etc), under and over the over-bridges. Most of the girl participants live in the slum with their parents and relatives. They frequently change their living place.

Health, Diseases and Treatment: Street children live in an atmosphere of continued physical and mental strain. Because many of them rummage through the garbage to find food; others go hungry for days, drinking water or taking to drugs to diminish their pangs of hunger, street children were found suffering from different skin diseases. However, cold fever, sneezing, diarrhoea, dysentery, cough, headache etc. are common diseases in those children (Abdul Hai, 2014). It was also observed that most of the beneficiary street children were aware of different Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and none of them reported to be suffering from them. Street children suffer from skin diseases, pain in the stomach, defects in eyesight etc. Their friends help them during sickness. These children have a limited scope of free treatment and other medical facilities. The pattern of health-seeking behaviour of street children shows that there is consensus among street children that the first place to seek medical help is the public hospital, even though in most cases children have to be accompanied by older adults or relatives when going to public hospitals (and then comes the drop-in centres of NGOs). Self-prescription of medicine is common among street children who often consult each other when medical help is needed. None of the children has health insurance access to public hospitals (UNICEF, 2001).

Substance Abuse: Many street children resort to using psychoactive substances (such as alcohol and drugs) in an attempt to escape from the overwhelming pressure of their traumatic past and their daily problems (Abdul Hai, 2014). The street children indicated that almost all street girls consume substances, which include cigarettes, glue, and tablets (Parkinol). They explained that substance abuse is mainly connected with street life and peer pressure, as a means to endure pain and torture. They explained that being under the effect of substance abuse, they expose themselves to attacks and sexual exploitation. Thus, the use of drugs by street children although functional in most circumstances tends to add to their health and other difficulties. The drugs used by street children are usually those, which are most readily available and cheap like a kind of tobacco intoxicant. Some of the respondents said that they had a smoking habit, while some others replied to be addicted to grass (Indian hemp). Street children get used to substance abuse to keep themselves awake for work or be intoxicated for a thrill. To get to sleep, they may use drugs like dandy (a type of glue) etc. to anaesthetize physical or emotional pain or to replace the need for food. These

are likely to increase health risks and may lead to higher levels of exploitation and violence (UNICEF, 2001).

Furthermore, UNICEF's (2001) report indicated that health and risk factors associated with substance/drug abuse among street children can be grouped into two types: behavioural and physical risk factors. Behavioural risk factors, as explained by street children themselves, included violence, stealing, begging, quarrelling, telling lies, or being sexually abused to get the substances or drugs to consume. The physical risk factors included chest ailments, skin diseases, nutritional diseases, and various forms of substance-induced violence based on how they obtain the substances/drugs they consume. The main problem with the types of substances consumed by street children is that most of the common types are legal substances, which are available for sale in the market. They easily have access to buying tobacco and glue. They have access to these illicit drugs through many people or dealers who exchange drugs with them in return for various forms of exploitation. Substance or drug abuse among street children often entails congregations, which are the most enjoyable. Substance abuse is mostly viewed as a common type of activity among street children. Research indicated that they accept each other's drug habits, even those who do not consume them. However, the surrounding communities where street children reside or tend to congregate do not accept their drug habits, especially because they often connect these with violence and robberies when they fall under the effect of the substances or drugs they consume. Most families of street children do not accept their children's drug habits. Lack of awareness often leads their families to try to keep them at home by force instead of referring them to health or rehabilitation centres where they can get treatment. Most of the children relapse again to their drug habit after escaping from their families because they did not encounter any sort of effective treatment. Street children often tend to hide their substance abuse or drug habits from parents and/or the community at large. Observation showed that they normally gather in gardens, isolated places, empty wastelands, or under bridges to consume substances or drugs.

Deprivation of Needs and Lack of Resources and Opportunities: The varied needs of street children are rarely met. They frequently go hungry; wear torn, tattered and dirty clothes or sometimes, no clothes at all. They have no permanent place to stay, no educational facilities, no facilities for hygiene and in brief, no facilities at all (Abdul Hai, 2014). Moreover, UNICEF (2001) explain that a picture emerges of youth with a general awareness of what they need to succeed in life, realities of diminished expectation in terms of their futures, and little if any awareness of "how to get there from here". The street children stated that those needs and hopes can be achieved through having permanent jobs, can be rendered through NGOs and GOs and the kind of help they offer, emphasized the role of vocational training, emphasized that returning to their families could solve their problems, focused on the role of literacy education, could not identify the most proper means to achieve their hopes, if they have any, and stated that providing them with a shelter or permanent residence in an institution could help them. Furthermore, street children expressed that care and protection, help when needed, good treatment and understanding, and advice, and some of them could not identify their basic needs from the society at large as main needs from the society at large.

Exploitation: Children on the street have to work to survive. Since they have no skills with which to bargain for fair pay or to fight for their rights, they are very vulnerable to employers who look to make a profit from them. Weiner (1991) felt that child labour and the presence of children on the streets must be seen as less a phenomenon of poverty and more of a phenomenon of social attitudes, exploitation, compulsions and sensibilities. Likewise, Abdul Hai (2014) observed that it was evident in the responses of the street children that most of their occupations were informal. However, the means of their survival were found to be quite atypical. Some of the street children, who used to live with their parents in the roadside shanties, had to do different kinds of unpaid household works by the sides of income-generating activities mostly on the roads. But the majority of the street children used to do non-domestic work for their living. However, considerable numbers of street children were found to be involved in different marginal occupations (e.g. begging, street vending, remnants and edibles picking from dustbins, prostitution, selling flowers on the roads to the passerby etc.) and few of them responded for wage labour (Minti, working in tanneries, lathe machine etc.).

People have argued that the traditional response to street children by most governments in Africa and elsewhere has been repression (Kopoka, 2000). Street children arrested for minor theft or roaming around are often held in custody until somebody can be found to take responsibility for them. This can take weeks or months. Detention in harsh circumstances is common lot for street children everywhere. This tells us more about the real attitude of governments than any examination of national legislation. Kopoka (2000) further argued that like the government, the community also stands accused of failing to address the problem of street children. We as individuals and as a society have failed to live up to our responsibilities as parents and as custodians of the young. The community tends to hide its head in the sand hoping that the problem will go away. Unfortunately, the problem is not going away, but increasing to alarming proportions.

This blame game situation calls for concern among social workers including non-formal educators and counsellors. It is on this note that Non-formal and Counselling options are explored to address the phenomenon.

Non-formal Education Options

Non-formal education has been described as an important educational intervention for all including disadvantaged people and groups (Bagudo & Yusuf, 2019). Citing Courtney, Bagudo and Yusuf (2019) described non-formal education as an intervention into the ordinary business of life--an intervention whose immediate goal is changing, knowledge, attitude, behaviour, skill or competence. This understanding portrays non-formal education as a multi-purpose educational programme. The following are the non-formal education options for ameliorating the plight of street children in Nigeria.

Basic Literacy Programme: Basic literacy is a programme that is meant to take care of children, youths and adults who have no form of previous formal education. It provides opportunities for learners to acquire the skills of reading, writing and numeracy in any language to use the skills in their day-to-day activities. This

programme can profit street children who have no previous form of formal education to develop the skills of reading, writing and numeracy.

Post-Literacy Programme: Street children who might acquire some levels of formal education but not up to competing primary school can enrol on post-literacy programmes to consolidate the already acquired skills of reading, writing and numeracy. This programme will ensure the acquisition of permanent literacy skills.

Vocational Skills: Poverty and economic factor have been identified as one of the important reasons for the street children phenomenon in Africa. Vocational skills acquisition has been recognized to have economic emancipation potential for children, youths and adults. Street children can learn any interesting trades and vocational skills that will guarantee them self-dependence economically. This opportunity will help reduce poverty among the children and in the end help empower street children.

Health and Nutritional Education: One of the serious problems associated with the street children phenomenon is health and nutritional challenges. This problem can be addressed when street children are provided with opportunities contained in health and nutritional education programme. This programme teaches learners preventive health. This programme is less cost-effective.

Abode Education: Abode Education is a non-formal education programme that empowers learners with skills of sleeping in any place learner can find themselves. One of the features of street children is that the street is their abode. This type of education will avail them of opportunities to adjust to street life as far as sleeping is concerned.

Counselling Options

- i. Organizing rehabilitation programs where some agencies provide an environment isolated from the streets where activities are focused on assisting children to recover from drug, physical or sexual abuse. Likewise, full-care residential homes should be established and serve as the final stage of a rehabilitation process, where the children are successfully kept off the streets, but live completely in a provided environment. Finding foster homes for such children should also be encouraged and strengthened. Institutional care centres catering for large numbers of children and group homes where a small number of children live together with house parents employed by agencies should be established and strengthened.
- ii. A follow-up programme that monitors and counsels children and families after the child has left the 'residential programme' should be mounted and reinvigorated.
- iii. Guidance personnel should work to inspire street children to forsake smoking and other substance addiction.

Suggestions

Based on the foregoing, the following were put forward as suggestions to serve as stepping stones upon which solutions to the problems are found or to serve solutions themselves.

- i. Teachers, parents/ guardians, religious leaders, counsellors and community leaders have a major role to play in moulding the character of the growing children in the community.
- ii. There should be feeding programmes where the opportunity to easily get food should be made available at the cost of just a token of money or altogether for free.
- iii. Other street-based programmes like financial services (banking and entrepreneur programme), medical services, family reunification, legal assistance, drop-in centres/right shelters, street education, and outreach programs designed to bring the children into closer contact with drop-in-centres of NGOs and GOs should be enhanced, created and established.
- iv. Provision of non-formal education to ensure that working children get at least a basic education through programmes like the Destitute Children Tuition. This is intending to nurture community support and seeks to mainstream the children into government schools for their formal education.

Conclusion

The child street phenomenon is an issue that the community, society and the nation should work earnestly towards eradicating. Though it may seem herculean, careful and realistic planning should prove also effective. Countries like Nigeria should take the advantage of the efforts by UNICEF, UNESCO, WHO and other NGOs to eliminate the menace. Grass root plans should be made and intensified so that families should be made aware of the magnitude of the problem; to this end, governments should implement plans that will economically strengthen their people to reduce their inability to take responsibility for their children as proposed in Non-formal Education and counselling options.

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