Social Work with Street Children in Iringa, Tanzania

Challenges and Possibilities

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Abstract

There is a large number of children living or spending most of their day on the street. The situation for those children is harsh since they for example do not get their basic needs met. Several organizations’ work includes interventions towards street children in their programmes, but the amount still increases every year. The aim with this study is to examine and explore which challenges the OVC-program face when working with street children, and how these challenges are addressed in their daily work. A qualitative approach was chosen where observations and interviews with personnel were conducted at the OVC-program in Iringa, Tanzania. The result shows that it is hard to know if the program’s goal – to reduce the number of street children in Iringa region – is reached as it is newly implemented. However, the program’s evaluation shows a positive trend. Focus in the work to fulfil the goal is primary the personnel’s attitudes towards the children. The result also shows that an empowerment-based approach is used in the daily work. By combining control and participation the possibility to help the street children to achieve autonomy increases. One challenge in the work is that this control limits the freedom on the street that the children desire. Consequently the relation between control and participation is important to create a successful intervention.

Keywords: Street children, Tanzania, control, participation, autonomy, empowerment

Introduction

All over the world, there are countries and caregivers who are less able to take care of their children, and organizations worldwide are working to prevent these children from ending up on the street. UNICEF (2011) estimates a total of 100 million street children all over the world. This picture, however, is not entirely unambiguous depending on definition and lack of data (WHO, 1993). Even if street children can be found in many countries, they are most common in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Only in Africa, it is estimated that 10 million girls and boys are living or working on the street (UNICEF, 2011). One of the African countries, Tanzania, faces the same problems. Reliable statistics regarding the amount of street children in the country, however, are not possible to determine. In the Iringa region there are approximately 8 000 street children (Masanja, 2012). Despite that the Tanzanian law: The Law of the Child Act, 2009, states for example children’s right to be sheltered, fed and educated – there is still a lot of children lacking their basic needs (UNICEF, 2012).
To meet this escalating and serious issue, both governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) all over the world are working with street children (UNICEF, 2008). Non-governmental organizations work in different ways to strengthen these vulnerable children’s rights as well as meet their basic needs, such as offering food and shelter. By using different prevention programmes, organizations hope to decrease the number of children that end up on the street (Käime-Atterhög & Ahlberg, 2008; Dybicz, 2005). Many organizations also focus on educate street children in their legal rights and also try to make the children view themselves as full members of society (Teresita, 2002). Altogether, organizations approach the problem from different angles but they aim for the same goal – to improve the children’s lives.

Help organizations work with different methods and programmes to support street children. In the report Social Protection In Eastern and Southern Africa: A framework and strategy for UNICEF (UNICEF, 2008), an example is given of a prevention programme in Tanzania which recommends psychosocial training by the society in order to support vulnerable children. Street-based programmes provide these children with for example food, night shelters and medical care (Dybicz, 2005). Others focus on removing children from the street with various institutional programmes, such as residential care with drug rehabilitation. These programmes help children to become stronger, regain faith in their own abilities, and to gain control over their lives. Related to Dybicz’s (2005) review of different researches, empowerment is one of the most commonly used methods in social work aimed at street children. Life on the street has a major impact to these children’s wellbeing; mentally, physically and socially. According to Oyeniyi Aransiola, Bamiwuye, Ibukun Akinyemi and Olusegun Ikuteyijo (2009), brutality and sexual abuse by the police towards this category of children occurs on a daily basis. Drug abuse is another major risk factor that increases when living on the street (Käime-Atterhög & Ahlberg, 2008). The programmes and methods mentioned above are important parts to successfully help the street children with problems like these.

There are other factors that affect organizations potential to operate well, for example lack of money and the children’s own decisions. The money issue could cause restraints in the residential care, as interventions like this are very cost-intensive (Dybicz, 2005). The continuity in the working methods could be disturbed as many street children make their own decisions on which shelter to turn to. A study from Turnbull, Hernández and Reyes (2009) shows that children’s criteria for choosing a specific shelter are few rules and a high sense of freedom. When the rules are changed in an attempt to create depth and continuity in the work, the street children often end up looking elsewhere where the criteria are best met from the children’s point of view. The lack of money and children’s autonomy is therefore some of the important factors to be aware of when you plan and implement a programme.

It is important for organizations to identify challenges and possibilities in a programme to be able to improve (Molund & Schill, 2004). There are manuals that show how to evaluate the work. Sida for example, has produced a manual that indicates that evaluation should compare results with goals, plans and expectations (Molund & Schill, 2004). WHO (2002) also developed one to evaluate projects with street children. The manual identifies some benefits of evaluation, for example to keep up and develop the work and not have to make the same mistakes twice. By conducting evaluation, the organizations increase their potential to realize long-term goals.

The Present Study
Street children are an exposed group and their lives often depend on other people’s courtesy. As it is common that policemen and other authorities assault these children (Oyeniyi Aransiola et al., 2009), they only have themselves and the NGOs to rely on. This is why it is
important for organizations to function properly, in order to meet the children’s needs. There is a body of research trying to explain the reasons why children end up on the street and also what their needs are, but how successfully activities and components should be executed are to our knowledge relatively unknown. The NGOs’ aim is to prevent children from ending up on the street and support those who already are. Unfortunately some children do not accept help from organizations because they feel controlled (Turnbull, Hernández & Reyes, 2009). We can also see a lack of research concerning which challenges and possibilities NGOs face in the work with these children. NGOs working with street children are a relatively new occurrence and problems within the organizations are still to be detected (Ansell, 2005).

The present study will examine which challenges and possibilities there may be in the Orphan and Vulnerable Children programme (OVC-program) in the organization Iringa Development of Youth, Disabled and Children care (IDYDC) in Iringa, Tanzania. IDYDC is a NGO that works to increase vulnerable children’s living conditions. The OVC-program aims to reduce the number of street children and to support them in the process towards autonomy (IDYDC, 2012). One further goal with the study is to contribute to developing NGO’s work with street children by raising awareness about which challenges organizations may face and an idea how to address them.

The aim with this study is to examine and explore which challenges the OVC-program face when working with street children, and how these challenges are addressed in their daily work. The following questions are posed: a) What assignment does the OVC-program have in the work with street children? b) What are the main methods and important factors in their work? c) What challenges and possibilities does the programme face in order to fulfil the assignment? d) Which result has the project accomplished, how do they measure the result, and do the result match the assignment?

Tanzania

Tanzania is located in Central East Africa and consists of mainland Tanzania and the Zanzibar islands. With approximately 41.9 million people, it is the second largest country in East Africa (World Bank, 2009). About 44 percent of the population are under 14 years and the average age of life expectancy are 51 (Winks, 2009). The people are divided in two major religions; Christianity and Islam, and several minor living without any tension between each other. Religion is very important to people in Tanzania. It is not simply something to believe in, but something that defines how to live. Another significant factor in the life of the Tanzanians is the family (Fitzpatrick, 2008). According to Winks (2009) the children in Tanzania are valuable and loved. At a young age they learn to take responsibility and they are taught to respect the elders and to help their family and community with small chores. Approximately a quarter of the population can not read or write. The school in Tanzania is voluntary, which means that not all children attend school. Figures indicate that 85 percent of the children go to primary school, 65 percent of them graduates and only five percent are graduated from secondary school. Winks (2009) states that schools have an important function to fill since education could lead to a better life with more financial capacity. Tanzania is one of the most affected countries by poverty (SIDA, 2010). According to World Bank (2010) at least one third of the population is considered to be poor. Poverty is associated with HIV and AIDS, as it among other things is harder to spread information in a poor country (Röda korset, 2010). UNICEF (2010) estimates that 6,2 percent of the Tanzanian population suffers from HIV or AIDS. Approximately 1,1 million children are orphaned in Tanzania due to AIDS (UNAIDS, 2010) and a number of those children becomes street children (UNICEF, 2011).
Street Children

Tanzania is divided into 26 regions and the Iringa region is placed in the central parts of the country (Winks, 2009). The population is estimated to approximately 170,000 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2011). The amount of street children in the region are approximately 8,000 (Masanja, 2012). UNICEF (2006) makes distinguish between children on the street and children of the street. Children on the street are not living on the street as they have a home to return to. The reason that they stay on the street is to earn money. Children of the street are those, who with or without connection to their family, view the street as their home. There are several reasons why children are on the street. Poverty in families living in Iringa is widespread. It could lead to that the children are unable to finish their education in order to spend their days on the street. There they are working or begging to earn money for themselves or to contribute to the family economy. Generally, the girls are working in households, which make it hard for organizations to find and help them. Children of the street in Iringa region could for example be orphans since their parents have died in diseases like AIDS, while other are abandoned or has chosen to run away from their homes because of neglect. The lack of care and love could be a result of parents’ abuse of alcohol and other drugs. Other reasons are parents’ or step-parents’ physical or mental abuse. These children often end up living in peer-groups, where they share their money and are an emotional support to each other in order to manage their life on the street. Both children on the street and children of the street are vulnerable groups, and need support to change their situation. In this study the terms “children on the street” and “street children” are used for both these groups.

Culture and Collectivism

To understand collected data in the Tanzanian context, a cultural perspective must be adopted. Reflections about how the cultural differences affect the study are important. Through this, biases are made visible and thereby become possible to eliminate. There are a variety of definitions of culture. A culture can be explained as a group of people who share the same origin, values and traditions (Lidskog & Deniz, 2009). In order to understand cultural differences a comparison can be done between systems (Triandis, 1980 cited in Erez & Earley, 1993). These systems consist of ecology, subsistence, sociocultural, individual and interindividual. The ecological system can be described as the environment where the people appear to be in. The subsistence system refers to humans’ survival through resources such as hunting and industry. The third system is the sociocultural, which refers to norms and values. The individual system aims to the individuals’ learning and motivation, and the human behaviour in social contexts are connected to the interindividual system. An understanding for the cultures influence on the individual can be achieved through knowledge regarding these systems. Lidskog and Deniz (2009) point out that the own culture affects the way of thinking about phenomenon in other cultures. This is why it is important to be aware of the difference, since Swedish culture differs from Tanzanian. The awareness allows the issue to be seen from a proper perspective (Allwood, 2000). This is cultural relativism, which assumes that every culture is unique and equal essential. Obtaining cultural competence about Tanzania, leads to an understanding of peoples values, way of life and how they work with street children. This includes body language and norms among others, in order to prevent misinterpretations in the interaction between the interviewer and respondent. Since norms of interaction vary in different cultures, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) state the importance of gaining cultural competence.

It is also possible to compare cultures by using collectivism and individualism. It is important to keep in mind that there are no societies that are entirely individualistic or collectivistic, since influences of them both are to be seen in all societies. A collectivistic
society though, is characterized by the importance of the associated group, often the family. Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2011) name the group as “big family” or “extended family”. The extended family contents of parents, children, grandparents and other relatives (Li, 1978 cited in Erez & Earley, 1993). Their relationships are in general closer and more caring, which lead to that the individuals are more dependent of each other (Erez & Earley, 1993). The individual based family usually contents of parents and children and in an individualistic society the persons are more dependent on the society when it comes to for example children’s day care and institutional elder care. In a collective community the individual goal is the same as the collective’s. Focus is on what is best interest of the family, as the individual differences are not important (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2011). Goals that differ from the collective and goes against their interests are viewed as morally wrong (Erez & Earley, 1993). In the individual society though, the personal needs and development are significant. Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2011) found that East Africa is one of the 25 most collectivistic regions of 76 included in their study. In contrast, Sweden is one of the most individual ones. According to this the differences between Tanzania and Sweden are big when talking about collectivism and individualism.

Regulations Concerning Vulnerable Children

In connection with the World War one, that ended 1918, children’s vulnerability started to be noticed. As a result, people in Sweden and Great Britain began to work for the rights of the child and they stated that the society should be responsible for implementing this (Regeringskansliet, 2006). It was not until the 20th of November 1989, that the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations. In 2005, 192 governments had ratified CRC and today Somalia and the United States are the only countries who still have not ratified the convention. CRC regulates the human rights of the child and provides a universal definition that includes every child. By ratifying the convention, a country takes part in a legally binding agreement. This agreement includes an international collaboration between the countries and a commitment of the national governments to ensure that the rights of the child are respected and followed.

CRC consists of 54 articles, which all are equally important. Regeringskansliet (2006) states that in order to facilitate the interpretation of CRC there are four guiding principles, which can be seen as central in issues regarding the child. These principles are; article two, three, six and twelve. Article two states all children’s equal rights and equal value, despite the child’s, parents’ or another guardian’s differences. This means that the rights of the child include all children regardless of for example gender, skin color, religion, political opinion or disability. It is the obligation of the government to ensure that there is no such discrimination against the child. According to article three children should be considered in all decisions concerning them. The child should be in primary consideration, regardless of what decision that is going to be made. It is the government’s responsibility to ensure that this is met through legislation and administrative measures. The third principle consists of article six and states the child’s right to life, survival and development. In accordance to the last of the four guiding principles, article twelve, all children have the rights to express their own opinions in issues concerning them. The article states that the opinion of the child should be respected and be taken into consideration, however, the codetermination depends on the child’s age and maturity. Another article that will be discussed in this study is article 27, which comprises the child’s standard of living (Regeringskansliet, 2006). According to the article all children have the right to a positive physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. The main responsibility to meet this right lies at the parents. In cases where assistance is needed the State parties shall contribute with material such as clothing, food and shelter. All articles in the CRC aim to protect the rights of the child and aim to the best interests of the child.
Tanzania ratified CRC in 1991, but the children’s rights were not regulated in the laws until 2009. The Law of the Child Act 2009 (21/09) intents to ensure every child’s welfare and to give conventions like CRC relevance. The law determines who is included in the term child and who is in need of care and protection. The definition of a child is every person beneath 18 years old, and according to paragraph 16 those in need for care and protection are for example children who are poor, orphaned, neglected or mistreated by their caretaker. In paragraph 8:1 the law states the responsibility of the parents or the child’s caretaker. They are obligated to provide with for example food, shelter, cloths and education. The law recognizes the child’s right to have and express own opinions and that no child should be discriminated of any reason. Just as the CRC, the law states that the child’s best interest should always be primary in decisions involving them.

**From Freedom to Control to Freedom Again – Challenges and Possibilities when Working with Street Children**

The following section will present previous research and theoretical framework. The previous research consists of; Alienation and culture of the street, Limitations of street children’s freedom, Street children’s participation in decisions regarding their own lives, and Components of successful interventions. Empowerment will be used as theoretical framework. The process from autonomy on the street to be controlled of various help organizations and ultimately accomplish autonomy in the life off the street will be highlighted in this section. This will later be used in order to analyse the collected data.

**Alienation and Culture of the Street**

In order to be a part of the society individuals need to be seen as fully members. Otherwise they get alienated, which can be explained as what Sernhede (2011) names as social exclusion; The individuals distance themselves from others and the society distances from them. Society’s views of the street children are negative and there is a lack of respect towards them as individuals (Visano, 1990, cited in Dybicz, 2005). According to a study on street children in Kenya, the children often get harassed by the police and it is not unusual that they get arrested and placed in custody (Kaime-Atterhög & Ahlberg, 2008). This is also confirmed by Lugalla and Mbwambo’s (1999) study conducted in Tanzania, which indicate the government’s negative attitude whereupon street children are viewed as hooligans, thieves and vagabonds. The tough life on the street, however, gives the children a strong sense of independency and thereby autonomy over their own lives (Visano, 1990, cited in Dybicz, 2005). This leads to that the children organize themselves in different groups. These groups are sometimes referred to as the child’s “new family” (Lugalla & Mbwambo, 1999). Beazley’s (2003) study, describes the process of socialisation that occurs when a new child arrives on the street. This includes for example to inform the newcomer about survival skills. The children support each other emotionally and financially in addition to the collective identity that life on the street brings. This collective identity arises as a response to the child’s alienation and creates a society within the society.

The life on the street is, as previously stated rough. In order to afford basic needs such as food, a majority of the children on the street are involved in illegal activities (Dybicz, 2005). Others afford this by beg or sell sexual services (Curley, Ssewamala & Han, 2009). Living at the street make the children more vulnerable since it involves risks for their health, such as physical, mental or sexual abuse. This kind of life also increases the risk of a continued life in poverty as it often excludes the possibility of education (Lugalla & Mbwambo, 1999). Studies indicate that it is quite common that children on the street use...
drugs (Dybicz, 2005). Kaime-Atterhög and Ahlberg (2008) mentions various reasons for children’s use of drugs. For example, is it used to ease hunger and to cope with feelings such as fear and depression, which are a result of their alienation from the society.

**Limitations of Street Children’s Freedom**

There are some factors that complicate the work with street children. In Turnbull, Hernández and Reyes’ (2009) study the aim is to explore why street children do not want to co-operate with helpers, leading to that they stay or go back to the street. One major issue seems to be organizations’ control over children, which is used in terms of official and unofficial rules. According to the study, many programmes start with few rules which are gradually tightened. Welfare institutions for children are often described as bureaucratic with hierarchical relations where influences from clients are low. Studies show that street children disapprove the strictness that comes as a result of the rules in rehabilitation shelters and some children even compares it with prison. The control these institutions have over the children leads to dissatisfaction and that the children return to the street.

A similar but more severe situation is showed in Lam and Cheng’s (2008) study, which describes the situation on the only institution in Shanghai working with street children, and what the children think about it. Once a child gets to the institution he or she is not allowed to leave as the shelter is responsible for the child’s wellbeing and safety. Because of fear of being accused of not taking care of the children properly the personnel use a number of preventive rules. Example of such rules is that it is not allowed to roam in the shelter. The children are locked in the different rooms where they have their activities. In order to prevent escapes there are iron bars on the windows and doors. The study shows the children’s distinct repulsion towards the strict limitations on the institution. Several children want to and try to escape because of too rigorous rules and their limited freedom.

**Street Children’s Participation in Decisions Regarding their Own Lives**

Interventions that include voluntary participation seem to be successful (Dybicz, 2005). Despite this, there are studies that indicate that several organizations exclusively are based on the personnel’s view of children’s needs (Kaime-Atterhög & Ahlberg, 2008). The risk of interventions failure increases when children are not included in defining their own needs (Lugalla & Mbwambo, 1999; Turnbull, Hernández & Reyes, 2009). Shelters where children’s influence is low are also not appealing, because it is viewed as strict with too much rules. According to Turnbull, Hernández and Reyes (2009), this strictness could lead to that children run away from the shelters and stay on the street. This indicates that, in order to help street children, their own involvement is necessary. Rajani and Kudrati (1996, cited in Lugalla & Mbwambo, 1999) believe that a bottom-up approach is required in order to implement this. This means that children’s thoughts and experiences should be taken into account, as they should be seen as experts of their own situation and needs. According to Lugalla and Mbwambo (1999) it is also important for children to be a part in the planning of official policies that aims to help and get them off the street. For policies to work in practice, the involvement is essential. Karabanow’s (2004) study also support that children’s participation in interventions towards themselves is useful. This is exemplified by showing how street children in Montreal are involved in the planning of a youth shelter. These children’s participation resulted in a team spirit, which included feelings of acceptance and of being valuable. Turnbull, Hernández and Reyes (2009) mean that involvement also can contribute to knowledge and a more positive view of themselves. Baron (2000, cited in Kaime-Atterhög & Ahlberg, 2008) states that participation could lead to that the children feel like a part of the community, instead of being alienated as they are on the street.
Components of Successful Interventions

One prerequisite to be able to help a street child to get off the street is that the environment encourages to stay or to come back depending on what kind of support is offered. Kaime-Atterhög and Ahlberg (2008) suggest that it is important to see the street children as subjects instead of objects. Their study shows that the place to which the children went back to was characterized by components as respect and friendliness. It also shows that it is essential that they feel they are being seen as humans. This means that by establish a dialog a greater understanding for the child’s life will occur and that feelings of alienation can be prevented. When it comes to rules this approach is also essential. If a child breaks them, the friendliness needs to maintain anyway, and a reprimand should be soft and gentle in a corrective way. To break rules should result in a friendly discussion about the benefits of keeping them and why they are important. No other punishment is needed. If personnel use this type of friendly approach towards the children, it could lead to a positive relationship that in turn could lead to that the children stay or come back to a helping shelter (Kaime-Atterhög & Ahlberg, 2008).

In Turnbull, Hernández and Reyes (2009) also states the importance of approach when working with street children. The essential of seeing street children as humans and treat them with respect. Karbanow (2004) discusses that to succeed in the work an anti-oppressive framework should be used. This includes for example recognizing individual strengths and structural constraints. It also includes raising consciousness, where the child gets to explore their own situation in comparison with others, and where they get a chance of letting the self-blame go by critical reflections about the society’s role. By using this approach together with interventions based on empowerment the children learn to respect themselves and others as well as gain control over their lives. This brought together indicates that less control and a higher level of children’s autonomy are essential in order to obtain successfully interventions.

In Turnbull, Hernández and Reyes’ (2009) study they raise awareness about components that makes cooperation between street children and their helpers complex. One of these factors is transparency of what is expected of the child and what the helper can offer. The study problematises children’s attempt to satisfy the helper’s wishes, in order to get something desirable. If the helper wishes a child to come to a shelter, no hidden agenda should arise afterwards, as the study shows the risk of that the children go back to the street if something is not what expected.

Empowerment

Empowerment is a wide concept used both as a theory and a method aiming to free individuals and groups from oppression and to gain control over their lives. Paulo Freire is one major inspiration for empowerment as a theory. He is known for his work in Brazil with poor and oppressed farmers and to change their situation, he stated that awareness about the social, economical and political oppression was necessary (Freire, 1979). In order to influence the individuals’ and groups’ own situation, an increased critical consciousness regarding the relationship between them and the environment are required (Freire, 1979). They are oppressed by the environment and by themselves since they have incorporated the society’s view of them. Liberation from this oppression can be achieved by the use of the present situation as a foundation for dialog. The relationship between the oppressed and the dialog partner needs to be balanced and equal to make it possible to create changes and actions together. Freire (1979) calls this consciousness-raising and mean that the individual are being aware about the own situation. This tradition is based on a historical and societal process, which implies that the individual’s possession of power can be changed to a greater level (Askheim, 2007).

As one step in the process of reaching a higher level of power, a discussion about attitudes towards oppressed individuals or groups are required. A positive attitude can
contribute to emotional energy for the oppressed, specifically feelings of being a part of something good (Starrin, 2007). This can lead to, for example self trust and ability to act, which are required to create changes. As a contrast, negative attitudes could lead to downhearted and shameful feelings and to low self-confidence, that counteract the ability of own thinking and of initiating changes. Language is one part of this attitude perspective; how to use it can make a big difference on what the responses will be. Starrin (2007) states that the “connecting language” (sammanbindande språket) is a way of using empowerment. This language should be encouraging, sympathetic and confirmatory to attain its purpose. To be seen, heard, listened to and shown respect to, through the language is encouraging for people with low self-confidence, contributes to the feeling of being able to make a difference.

Tengqvist (2007) recites a study conducted at ten different projects established as successful in their work with empowerment. Common for the clients are for example low status in society and alienation. Both personnel and clients were asked to name what factors they consider as most essential for empowerment. First, in an empowerment perspective, everyone got their own strengths if they are given the chance to use them. To trust someone with a specific task is to show believe in that he or she can do it, which leads to a personal development. Although it is important to be aware of that there are limitations; it should not be a goal to achieve what is impossible, but to strive for the reachable (Tengqvist, 2007). Second, it is significant to focus on every individual’s equal importance and equal rights. Everyone is different and it is possible to use these differences and take advantage of every unique experiences. Third, the study shows the weight of power used in a positive manner. Both clients and personnel should be aware of the structures of power, in order to change them for the client’s benefit. Clients often feel powerless and one of empowerment’s most essential components is that people should get the possibility that is needed to recover power over their lives. In order to do that, clients have to be given the opportunity to take charge and make decisions regarding themselves (Tengqvist, 2007). According to the study, these three factors are necessary for empowerment to succeed. Through this the individual reaches a higher degree of autonomy.

Method

The method chosen for this study is based on the aim and research questions. As the aim is to examine and explore what challenges the Orphan and Vulnerable Children programme (OVC) face when working with street children, and how these challenges are addressed in their daily work, a qualitative approach was chosen. The qualitative method allows the researchers to explain the respondent’s view of a phenomenon (Patel & Davidsson, 2003) and create a detailed picture with that information (Bryman, 2008). Both interviews and observations are made to achieve additional depth compared to using only one. By using these methods, this study shows a comprehensive picture of the challenges the OVC-program face and how these are addressed.

Literature

The literature for this study is mainly found in Örebro University library’s databases. Summon, Social services abstracts, Sociological abstracts, LIBRIS and Google scholar were used. In an attempt to match the study’s aim, the keywords are related to the most important words in the research questions. The search has been made with both English and Swedish keywords. Words such as street children, street, children, vulnerable, street life, NGO, methods, programme, treatment, interventions, services, orphan, childhood, youth, homeless, empowerment, institution, shelter, centre, poverty, Tanzania, assignment participation, challenges, possibilities and evaluation were used in several combinations in both languages.
The search resulted in various articles that were read and graded as “important” and “not important” before use.

Data Collection Instruments

Micro-Ethnography
Ethnography is a way of collecting data, including behavioural observation and collecting useful documents. The researchers get an insight into an organization or group to obtain a deeper understanding. Micro-ethnography is a version of ethnography that is not as extensive as the original model and focus lies on a specific topic (Bryman, 2008). The topic of this study is to observe the personnel’s daily work with street children. In order to do so we will study the work the way Bryman (2008) suggests, by observing behaviour, asking questions about the observations, and listening to what is said. This way the result will not depend on the respondent’s memories, as it would if only interviews were conducted, but on the researcher’s ability to capture the information that represents the reality (Patel & Davidsson, 2003). The micro-ethnography is based on a schedule used to define the focus of the observation (Appendix A). The schedule is divided into different themes which include work tasks, relationship between personnel and children, peer influence, children’s activities and quality of life. Each theme has various focus points related to them. By using the micro-ethnography method to gather information, it results in a thorough overview of the organization’s work.

Qualitative Interview
Qualitative semi-structured interviews are focused on the respondent’s point of view; in what way the individual experiences a certain phenomenon (Bryman, 2008). The interviews are based on an interview guide with open questions (Appendix B). The guide is divided, as Bryman (2008) suggests, in different themes with questions related to each of them. Themes as; personal information, planning, children’s participation, governmental involvement and evaluation were used in this study. The guide starts with neutral questions in order to make the respondent comfortable. Following questions are more specific since they are related to the different themes of the study in order to get a deeper understanding and to answer the research questions. The guide is based on the research questions and the topic areas in the study. Bryman (2008) believes this is necessary in order to achieve the aim of a study. The advantage with semi-structured interviews is that the questions can vary in sequence, and that they are general and flexible allowing supplementary questions to be asked (Bryman, 2008). By using the qualitative interview as method, the study gets a profound insight into the personnel’s experiences regarding their work with street children.

Sampling
In this study, a purposive sample was used to spot the respondents that possess most knowledge about the daily work at the OVC-program. The programme’s officer selected three personnel that she thought was best able to answer the questions due to their willingness to participate and to the length of their employment. There were no other criteria for the respondents except that they were working at the OVC-program. In addition to the three respondents there were a fourth respondent, Lige James Masanja, the programme officer herself, who also became a key informant. A key informant is a person more important to the study than others (Bryman, 2008). This person assists the researcher with practical concerns as well as answering all kind of questions that are raised throughout the study. The advantage of this type of sampling is that it will most likely result in respondents who are able to answer the questions with depth due to their knowledge about the study’s topics. The disadvantage
however, is that it is not possible to generalize the result of a study to a population which is based on this sampling method. The aim with this type of sampling is to find people who are relevant to the study.

Procedure
To be able to answer the research questions both qualitative interviews and observations were made. Four individual interviews were conducted where one of us moderated and the other took notes. Before the start of the interview, the respondents were informed about the ethical framework within which the study lies. For further information about the ethical framework see the section “Ethical Discussion”. The interviews were conducted in an office at the shelter, calm and shielded from the children’s curiosity and their daily activities. Because of language barriers since one of the respondents only talk Swahili, an interpreter was used for that interview. The remaining part of the respondents understood English. Masanja, the key person, assisted when questions aroused, when remaining respondents were about to be chosen and when an interpreter was needed. During the study a dictaphone was used to record the interviews. According to Bryman (2008) a researcher should analyze both what the respondents say and in what way they express it during an interview. In order to manage these things along with focus on ask questions and to take notes the interview should preferably be recorded. A recording makes it possible to focus only on the most important parts during the interviews and take notes later. Other advantages are that the data easily can be transcribed and be listened to a number of times.

Four days of observations were made one of which were on the street in order to see the children’s situation. Two of three days of observation at the shelter where conducted during lunch hours and one in the afternoon. The observations were based on the observation schedule in order to get an insight into the daily work at the OVC-program. Notes were taken, compared and discussed and put together as one material.

Coding
Bryman (2008) suggests coding as one possible tool in the analytic process of qualitative research. He recommends certain steps, which are important in the coding process. The first step is to transcribe the recording and get an overview of the collected data by reading the transcription, the observations notes and other documents. Next, coding the data by reading it again and make notes about the important and most common topics. The final step is to concentrate and combine the codes into another level of codes so that there are a reasonable number. In this study the codes are related to the aim, research questions, previous research and theoretical framework. However, due to the time limit of this study, a faster version of coding is necessary. Bryman (2008) advises to listen to the recording closely to spot the information that is relevant to the study. When spotted, only the relevant information needs to be transcribed, as a lot of the recorded data will be useless. In this manner the transcription will be less time-consuming.

Reliability, Validity and Generalization
High reliability is reached if the same result can be achieved in a similar study conducted by other researchers or at another time. The reliability is for example depending on the researchers; how the interviews, transcription and analysis are conducted. How the questions are asked can play a big role of what kind of answers you get and if you will get the same answers when asking again. If the questions are leading the risk of biased answers increase. In this study this has been taken into consideration, why open questions were used during the interviews. In qualitative research the reliability can be measured by external and internal reliability (Bryman, 2008). A high external reliability makes it possible for the researcher in a
replication to compare the result with the original study. To increase the external reliability this study’s interview guide and observation schedule was organized to be clear in order for others to understand them. As the interview guide was semi-structured supplementary questions were asked, which can compromise the possibility to do the same interviews again and thereby the reliability decreases. Internal reliability can be increased if more than one researcher sees the same phenomenon in the same way (Bryman, 2008). The interviews in this study were recorded and listened to several times by both of us in order to make sure that no misunderstandings were to be done. Both also participated during the interviews and throughout the whole data processing in order to avoid subjective judgments and to increase this study’s reliability.

High validity ensures that the study addresses what it intends to (Bryman, 2009). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) state the importance of high validity throughout the whole process of a research, and not only the final product. One of the steps to accomplish this is when the interview guide and observations schedule are constructed, where it is essential that the questions can be traced back to the theoretical framework and the research questions. To increase the validity in this study, the interview guide was carefully prepared with questions that made it possible to answer the research questions. A pilot interview was conducted to further strengthen the validity. Another issue to discuss when it comes to validity is the researcher’s objectivity. The knowledge that comes from the study needs to be examined and controlled, and prejudice thinking should be raised to awareness (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). As mentioned before, the interviews were recorded, listened to and noted by the two of us. With this it is harder to have own interpretations and easier to make biases visible with an increased validity as a result.

Generalization often means that it is possible to transfer the result of a study to a whole population (Bryman, 2008). This type of generalization can not be made from studies with a qualitative approach since the respondents not are selected through a probability procedure. However, Danermark, Ekström, Jakobsen and Karlsson (2003) state that all science should aim to generalize the result since there are different ways. The purpose with a qualitative study is not to generalize to a population, but to gain an understanding and knowledge about a specific context in relation to theoretical concepts (Bryman, 2008). This is consistent with the present study as the aim is not to generalize the result to larger population but to get a deeper understanding for the specific programme’s challenges in their work with street children, and how these challenges are addressed in their daily work.

**Ethical Discussion**

There are several ethical aspects to consider when conducting a research. Vetenskapsrådet (2010) has developed ethical principles that guide the researcher in approaching the respondent. The researcher needs to inform about the aim of the study and that it is voluntary to participate, which leads to that the respondent may end the interview whenever without any sanctions. In this study, the respondents were informed about this before the interview began. They were also informed about the secrecy both interviewer and interpreters are bound to and the confidentiality regarding collected data. Personal information is to be confidential and the data in this study is not going to be used for other purposes as the requirements of Vetenskapsrådet (2010) specifies. Who will gain access to the interviews is also an important issue to raise, so that the respondents get the opportunity to regret their participation. By consider these it is ensured that this study will not harm individuals that otherwise could be affected.

In an ethical discussion, the confidentiality is important to emphasize. It is not possible to promise anonymity within the organization in this study. The respondents form a large proportion of the personnel at the Orphan and Vulnerable Children programme (OVC),
which can lead to that others can figure out who they are. This might result in untruth answers, not because of malevolence but because of for example unconscious wish to give answers that someone else wants or the fear of thinking too different from the others. As it was the programme officer that chose the respondents this could also cause bias because of fear of getting sanctions. If there is a risk of hurting a respondent, researcher have to consider this when deciding whether to use the sensitive data or not (Vetenskapsrådet, 2010). Taken this into consideration all information was used since we believe there would not be any sanctions. These difficulties regarding confidentiality were discussed with the respondents before the interview, which consists with what Ames and Diepstra (2010) states; that it is an important issue to raise.

**Limitations**

To examine the OVC-programme’s work with street children, it is important to apply a cultural perspective as there are big cultural differences between Tanzania and Sweden. Reflections about how the differences affect the study are important. Through this, biases are made visible and thereby become possible to eliminate (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In this study the differences between the countries could result in misinterpretation when we look at occurrences with a Swedish raster. It can be incidents that in Sweden mean one thing and in Tanzania mean another. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) states the importance of gaining cultural competence that includes for example body language and norms, in order to prevent misinterpretations in the interaction between the interviewer and respondents and throughout the observation. Since this study were limited to a short period of time, a thorough cultural competence was impossible to gain. Therefore the interactions could also be a source of misinterpretations.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) state the importance of using a professional interpreter who knows the cultural-specific expressions. If a friend or a family member is used, it could be easier to create a trusted relationship between respondents and researchers. However, it is harder to ensure the accuracy of the answers and the risk that the interpreter has an own agenda and manipulates the answers because of this is higher. In this study the programme officer was used as an interpreter in one interview, which could have resulted in answers influenced by her position. It is also possible that she could have manipulated the answers to make the programme look better. This risk however, was addressed with a discussion with the programme officer to clarify the role of an interpreter. The choice of three respondents who did not need an interpreter and one who did also reduces the risk of manipulated data over all. The three interviews without an interpreter could on the other hand also be a source of bias. The language barriers were sometimes obvious as it was clear that the respondent answered something that we did not ask. We chose not to use the information we got when it was uncertain if the respondents misunderstood the question or if we understood the given information correctly.

One other limitation of the study is the few days of observations. They were conducted for a total of four days, one of which was at the street. During the three days of observation at the shelter there were no ordinary activities because of the Easter holiday. This might have influenced the result since we did not have the chance to see how a regular day looks like for the children.

**Results and Analysis**

The following section starts with a review of the programme in which this study is conducted. It includes for example their mission and vision, an ordinary day and a brief presentation of the work team in which the four respondents belong to. This is followed by the interviews and observations, presented in three themes; The child’s situation on the street, The child’s
participation, and Attitudes towards the child. These themes aroused when transcribing the collected data. Each paragraph starts with an overview of the given situation, proceeds with a quotation and observation, resulting in an analysis using the study’s theoretical framework and previous research. In order to make it easier to read, the observations are marked with indentation and italicised text and the quotations are marked with indentation and smaller text. The quotations are also marked with “Interview A”, “Interview B”, “Interview C” or “Interview D” which represent each respondent. The observations were conducted during four days, three of which were at the shelter and one at the street.

**The Orphan and Vulnerable Children Programme**

The Orphan and Vulnerable Children programme (OVC) aims to support vulnerable children so that they get a possibility to a better life. This programme is one part of the non-governmental organization Iringa Development of Youth, Disabled & Children Care (IDYDC). The organization’s overall mission is as quoted:

> IDYDC wants to see health, economically and socially develop society where human rights are respected. (IDYDC, 2012)

And their overall vision is:

> IDYDC exist to improve the living standard of disadvantaged youth in Iringa region through training planned programmes. (IDYDC, 2012)

To achieve the vision, the OVC-program provides vulnerable children with basic needs such as shelter, food, education and medical care. The OVC-program’s goal is to reduce the number of street children between 6-18 years that originally come from Iringa region (IDYDC, 2011). The most important part in the work towards this goal is to reunify the child with his or her parents or extended family. Masanja (2012) states that the programme’s criteria are that the children do not have parents or other relatives who take care of them or that the caretaker does not have the knowledge or financial capacity to care for them in an adequate way.

To be able to ensure that the children at the OVC-program get their basic needs met in a long-term it is important to have a stable economical situation. For that reason the economics of the programme is a constant concern. One goal is to be self-financed and new sources of incomes are developed continuously. For example they have a bakery in which they sell bread, and a rental hall that people can rent for weddings and other activities. It is a constant work to find new donors and apply for grants. There is one long-term financier, IOGT-NTO, and otherwise they depend on private donors. IOGT-NTO (2008) is, in turn financed by Forum Syd, Sweden, who developed anti-corruption policies and regulations for all their partners and employees to follow. Among others, cooperation with IOGT-NTO implies that strategies, plans, reports and financial concerns should be transparent. In order to see if the anti-corruption policy are implemented an evaluation has to be done every year. Partners of IOGT-NTO (2010) have to report their results regular, five times a year. The reports include for example if it has occurred any challenges and how they were addressed, if there are any changes to be made and if the goals were reached or not. This means that documentation of the organization’s routines is important. The programme’s personnel monthly document their activities and the related costs (IDYDC, 2012). The programme has not been found in the present condition for even a year, why it is hard to tell whether the result match the assignment or not. However, documentation shows that there have already
been some successful reunifications. In the end of 2012 IDYDC hope to fulfil the programme’s goal (IDYDC, 2011).

To get in contact with street children in the first place the personnel work on the street trying to find children that roam the city. When they find a child they offer him or her to come to the shelter to discuss their situation. If the child agrees, they meet at the shelter, Upendo, and talk about how the personnel can help and what the child’s needs are. The personnel inform about the rules and what they expect from the child. One goal of the programme is to reunify the child with the parents or extended family. If the child agrees to this, the reunification process begins shortly after. The personnel counsel the child, and try to find out why he or she was on the street. They talk about their home situation again, and ask for permission to contact the parents or extended family if the parents are dead or if the child refuses to go back to them. The process continues by a visit to the family, discussions about their situation and if they need any specific support. If both the child and the family agree to it, the reunification can be carried out. The goal is to reunify every child within six months.

Another goal is to prepare the child with the conditions required to be self-sufficient. In order to reach this goal, every child goes to school. The OVC-program has a school for those who can not read and write, where the children are divided into groups of those who are illiterate and those who just learned how to read and write. There is also a vocational training where older children can learn either tailoring, carpentry or brickwork. It is a practical school where they get to learn the skill, get knowledge about how to run a business and, when the school is done they get a toolkit in order to make them equipped and ready for the future. Primary school and secondary school are also available, a short walk from the shelter.

Except the school and vocational training, the OVC-program also includes the shelter where the children live. There are three dormitories; one for 30 boys in one hall (which is under construction to make smaller rooms), one for 30 boys in smaller rooms and one for 30 girls in smaller rooms. At the same time when the study were conducted there were 89 children staying at the shelter. There is also a kitchen where it is cooked three meals a day and offices for the personnel.

When living at the shelter the children get a daily routine. They wake up at 5 am., do their given household chores and then get ready for school. Before leaving the shelter they have breakfast and the personnel check that everyone is clean and proper for school. At 2 pm. the children get back, eat lunch and then rest until 4 pm. During this time they play football, skip rope, draw or something else of their own choice. At 4 pm. it is time for work out, for example running or taking a walk together. At 6 pm. dinner is served and the personnel check that everyone is present. At 6.30 pm. the children go to their rooms for homework and to end their day.

The personnel at the OVC-program’s shelter consist of two caretakers, called the matron and the patron. They live at the shelter and are available every day. Two social workers work during the weekdays and their task is first and foremost to counsel the children. A number of teachers are also included in the work team in the weekdays and one cook that serves food all week. The interviews for this study were conducted with three personnel at the OVC-program who each have several years of experience in the work. The fourth respondent is the OVC-program’s officer, Masanja, who is overall responsible and who also became this study’s key person.

The Child’s Situation on the Street

According to the respondents, no child wants to be on the street. Various factors contribute to their stay there, such as poverty, sickness and death of parents. The situation for children on the street is hard and their basic needs are not met. They lack basics such as food and a place to stay. They also lack protection, which increases the risk of being raped and exposed to
violence, and the use of alcohol and marijuana increases as well. The challenges that life on the street cause can be clarified by this quote:

In the street they [street children] have no permanent place to stay, and also there is no food. So they have to seek for food, because of that they steal to find food. When they steal there are no relatives to take care of the child, which make it easier for people to beat them. Sometimes when they are beaten by the people, they sometimes take the child to the police station and at the police station the child are being kept at the station, like in prison. Because there are no relatives to ask for them, they have to stay there for a long time, no one is there to take them out. (Interview C)

In order to afford food some children work or beg, and some children even steal. Stealing could cause them to get caught and arrested by the police. Since no one is there to help them they can be arrested for a long time, sometimes up to a month before they get released, when the charges are dropped. Through our observations in the street we saw that one child seemed to be afraid of the police:

The personnel approached a child and asked if they could talk about his situation on the street. He agreed, on the condition that they moved to another place, a park area not as exposed as the street. He was afraid that the police would come.

One possible explanation for this fear could be associated with what Kaime-Atterhög and Ahlberg (2008) found, that it was quite common for street children in Kenya to be harassed by police officers and even to be placed in custody. A study conducted in Tanzania (Lugalla & Mbwambo, 1999) describes the negative attitude from the government whereupon street children are described as thieves, hooligans and vagabonds. This could be another reason for the child’s response.

The personnel visit the street frequently, and by doing this they get an increased understanding for the children and their everyday life. To obtain a comprehensive picture of the child, the personnel try to find answers concerning for example how the child ended up on the street, what the current situation is, what the child’s needs are and what kind of help are requested. Conversations with the child could help to fill in those questions, as the following quotation will show:

When the children are on the street the personnel ask them about their needs and what they want... Love, good care, many children want education. (Interview D)

In order to meet the children’s needs this kind of information form the base for coming interventions. The OVC-program’s interventions towards the children are based on The Law of the Child Act, 2009 (21/09:16) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The law states that a child who, for example is orphaned or abandoned by relatives, who do not have accommodation or who beg or receive charity is in need of care and protection. With this in mind, the personnel try to establish contact with the children on the street. Children’s rights can not only be declared by their own definitions of their need, but also by article 27, CRC, which states that the standard of living shall meet the child’s mental, physical, spiritual, moral and social development. Consistent with this, the personnel at the programme work towards a reunification between the child and their parents or the extended family. Both
the law and CRC fill an important function in the personnel’s daily work with the children, since they both aim for children to be seen as fully members of society.

The street children in Iringa can be described as excluded from the society. According to the respondents, the members of the community generally do not care about the street children and some people use them for labour. They do not see them as their problem to deal with and they believe it is the government’s and the non-governmental organization’s (NGO’s) assignment. One of the respondents declares this in the following way:

This is a problem because the community don’t think that it is their problem, they thinks it is the government’s problem. (Interview B)

According to community members the responsibility for street children lies at the government, but there are different opinions about whether they take responsibility or not. The view of governmental interventions towards street children divides the respondents. The OVC-program collaborates with, among others, the social welfare office and the police. The social welfare office support families with economic constraints and sometimes the local government help the personnel at the OVC-program to find children. One of the respondents’ experiences is that the governmental support is nonexistent when it comes to helping the children out from the street. If so, there is no one to help and protect the children on the street. According to the respondents, children on the street support and take care of each other. Previous research indicates this kind of occurrence in peer-groups, which according to Beazley (2003) could be an outcome of the alienation from the society. Beazley’s (2003) study shows that they support each other both emotionally and financially. These constellations of groups are by Lugalla and Mbwambo (1999) called the children’s “new family”. The respondents believe that these peer-groups have a strong impact on each individual child, and that it can make it more difficult for the child to leave the street. A possible explanation for this can be given by Kaime-Atterhög and Ahlberg (2008), which states that unprotected children like these more often create a collective identity and a high degree of solidarity among themselves.

This solidarity is one element that keeps the child on the street. Other, even more important elements that children find attractive when living on the street are mentioned in the interviews. The respondents indicate that the most significant ones are freedom and money:

They think that money is most important and they have it more on the street than at home. They want to feel free and connect freedom with money. (Interview D)

...in the shelter we make rules, the children follows. So, in the street the children make their own rules. (Interview B)

Despite the feeling of freedom that money and life on the street can bring, the street life is as previously stated, tough. The children are in a vulnerable position as they are alienated. One major part of the personnel’s work is to re-integrate the child to the society. According to Tengqvist (2007) interventions that include empowerment are highly efficient towards individuals with low status in the society. All respondents agree on that it is essential to take the child’s own view in account and to establish a good contact with them. This could be connected with what Kaime-Atterhög and Ahlberg (2008) says is a successful way of prevent feelings of alienation, whereby establishment of a dialog between partners are fundamental to obtain an understanding for the child’s life.
Children’s Participation

The children at the Orphan and Vulnerable Children programme’s (OVC) shelter are not forced to be there and everyone is there by their own will. The personnel often have to approach a child on the street multiple times before he or she follows them to the shelter. This requires that a relationship between the child and the personnel is established. The respondents claim the importance of information. The child should know what he or she agrees to; the rules and the aim to reunify the child with the parents or the extended family. The personnel also inform about the risks of being on the street. Following observation was made on the street when one personnel approached a street child:

The personnel tried to convince the child to come to Upendo shelter. The child agreed to come the next day to have a talk about his situation and about the shelter. The personnel later told us that it is no guarantee that he will show up as he can change his mind during the night, or that he said it without intending to in the first place.

Turnbull, Hernández and Reyes (2009) state that street children should know what requirements and rights they face to increase the chances of a successful intervention. Through informing the children about the shelter’s rules the personnel at the OVC-program creates the possibility for the child to make a conscious decision. To make own decisions is according to Tengqvist (2007) one important factor in the process of obtain a higher level of empowerment. As the children decide for their own if they want to go to the shelter or not, the personnel’s interventions can be resemble as empowerment based.

The children at the OVC-program also seem to participate in decisions concerning themselves and their daily activities. The children are involved when the timetable is changed and they decide for themselves what to do on their non-supervised time, such as playing football or skipping rope. They also choose their own leaders for their activities, for example for playtime and environment cleaning. The leaders ensure that the timetable for activities are followed and act as a link between the children and the personnel. In case a child is troubled he or she can tell the leader who in turn discusses it with the personnel. The importance of participation can be exemplified from following quotations:

We involve them, maybe in the making of the timetable. We call them and ask, what do you want us to make. At this time what should we do? In order for them to feel that they are free and they are not in prison. (Interview C)

You have to allow them in the planning. Is there anything you plan to do you should ask them. To get ideas from them. Better if they are allowed to participate, to benefit themselves... It is a good thing to involve the children. (Interview A)

The program shows that they trust the children by giving them the responsibility to take part in decisions concerning them and by choosing leaders of their own. This trust can be compared with what in empowerment are referred to as the positive attitudes that are necessary for a change to be possible. These positive attitudes can lead to an increased self-confidence that strengthens a person’s ability to act on his own (Starrin, 2007).

All respondents agree upon on that participation have a positive effect on the child. The personnel at the programme work towards the interest of the child. They do not set any short or long-term goals for each child to achieve, instead, they let the children decide their own goals which the personnel try to support. An example of such goal could be to become a
teacher and to fulfil the goal the child gets to choose what vocation to learn. The quotation shows why:

They choose for themselves because they have the rights to. (Interview C)

This respondent refers to that the children have the right to decide over their own lives, to express their own opinion and to be heard. The personnel ask the children about their needs when they first meet on the street. At the OVC-program both the child’s view and the professional view with support from the Law of the Child Act, 2009 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) are taken into consideration. Based on the respondents’ answer this can be discerned:

The idea comes from the matron or the patron and the teachers, and then they are talking to the children to decide how to change them. Which should be put in what ways or which should be exchanged with what. So they just involve them [the children], but the first ideas come from teachers. (Interview D)

I want to identify the problem to be able to assist them as a social worker. (Interview A)

That the children at the OVC-program get to define their own needs differs from several other organizations. According to Kaime-Atterhög and Ahlberg (2008) many organizations base the children’s need only from the professional point of view. Rajani and Kudrati (1996, cited in Lugalla & Mbwambo, 1999) state that children are experts over their own situation whereby their views should be considered. By not take their views into account is also a violation of CRC, in which article three and twelve state that the child’s best interest always should be first priority and that they have the right to express their opinion in issues involving themselves (Regeringskansliet, 2006). Several studies state that it is important to allow children to participate and express their own needs in order to succeed with a programme (Lugalla & Mbwambo, 1999; Turnbull, Hernández & Reyes, 2009). This difference between the OVC-program and other organizations therefore indicates that the OVC-program is successful in the work regarding children’s participation. Participation could result in advantages such as feelings of belonging (Karabanow, 2004). According to Turnbull, Hernández and Reyes (2009) it could also lead to an increased self-confidence and Baron (2000, cited in Kaime-Atterhög & Ahlberg, 2008) adds feelings of being a part of the community. This together means that the children in the OVC-program get higher self-confidence and a feeling of being a part of something good, since they get to define their own needs.

Despite the children’s involvement some of them skip classes and run away from the shelter. The following quotations illustrate some of the reasons that make the children go back to the street:

...some are running away from school… ...because, the rules in the school. So the children are running away. (Interview B)

They want some money… Another thing is freedom. There is much freedom on the street. They can do whatever they want, they can go wherever they want. There is no time limitation. This time we are going here to come back after two hours, there is no that. That is the big thing, I think. But especially it is money. (Interview D)
Normally, children like to be free. They can decide what they want, anything they want. (Interview D)

One of the respondents says that escapes are unusual and that few children run back to the street. Commonly, it happens in the beginning of their stay at the shelter since it can be hard for a child to become acclimatized because of the new environment and rules that they have to follow. In such cases, most children return to the shelter on their own initiative. Studies (Turnbull, Hernández & Reyes, 2009; Lugalla & Mbwambo, 1999) indicate that shelters for street children appear to be too strict since they contain several rules with minimal influence from the children. Some children even compare it to be in prison. The rules at the OVC-program’s shelter could therefore be one reason that some children do go back to the street. The newcomers are not used to rules and for that reason feel restricted and want to go back to their autonomy on the street.

**Attitudes Towards the Children**

There is a warm, happy feeling at the shelter. The personnel seem to care about the children in a thoughtful way. This was observed several times, once during play time:

> The personnel smile while chatting with the children. Puts a friendly hand on a child’s shoulder. The door to the office is open, though the personnel are outside, interacting with the children by playing football and playing games.

When they give children instructions it is done in a friendly manner. The personnel’s attitude towards the children is essential and one respondent puts words to it:

> You should respect them first of all, and then listen to them, and then play with them. Be a friend to them. (Interview A)

That the personnel show respect for the children can be compared to what Tengqvist (2007) writes, that everyone are equal important. Thus, it is important to show the children respect in the same way as anyone else. It can also be seen as an anti-oppressive perspective, that Karabanow (2004) states are a prerequisite to succeed in the work with street children. Freire’s (1979) conviction that an equal relationship is necessary for changes to appear, can also be associated with this. To create a balanced relationship the two partners need to be on the same level which requires a mutual respect.

It looks like this relationship is obtained at the shelter. The children often seek close contact to the personnel by sitting down next to them and wanting their attention, and the personnel seem to meet that. One afternoon at the shelter this was observed:

> Three younger children, maybe eight years old, get home from school. One personnel greets them with a high five and a request to show what they have done during the day. They pick up their school books and seems eager to show their work.

The encouragement can also be illustrated by this quotation:

> …my dream has come true; therefore, my main goal is that to make even those children too, to reach their dreams. (Interview C)
The personnel help the children reach their dreams and goals by supporting their choice of vocation, by controlling their development in school and by counselling them when it is needed. Their efforts seem to be effective. One personnel says:

It makes a difference. Because their lives are changed and they have a future. Their future has been discovered. Maybe sometimes they loose hope, say that everything is vanished. So sometimes we encourage them, than they cope. So we think that they are good. (Interview D)

Encouragement and confirmation are two of the components in the “connecting language” (sammanbindande språket) that Starrin (2007) states as important to create the best conditions for empowerment and change. As the personnel wants the children to reach their dreams they support them in their goals and encourage them to go on forward. Kaime-Atterhög and Ahlberg (2008) also writes about attitudes; that a subjective view of a child is primary when trying to establish a relationship that allows the child to feel safe and secure. By the personnel’s relaxed approach and by their commitment to the children they increase the chances of a good relationship. Their attitudes also prevent a negative response to the interventions, as Turnbull, Hernández and Reyes (2009), and Karabanow (2004) states the importance of that the children feel seen and treated as humans.

The personnel’s attitude towards the children is also reflected in their work with rules. The children are not allowed to use bad language or to fight. They are also not allowed to skip classes or leave the shelter without permission. Those rules are told to the children before they decide to come to the shelter. If a child breaks a rule anyway, the respondents are consistent in how to handle it. Examples of quotations are:

They get counselling, and we talking friendly about why they do not follow the rules. No physical punishment. If someone chooses not to do their tasks, we talk to them in order to understand why. Not hitting them. (Interview B)

It is not common that they run away, and when they go, they just go and come back… If they go for many times we are still counselling them. Say that they have to follow the routine; they have to stay here, even the timetable. We explain to them that you have to do this and this. If you go there, maybe you could get this effect. So we are trying to counsel them. (Interview D)

To counsel the children instead of physically punish them is thereby fundamental in their work. However, other punishments are used, like water the garden and other chores. As the last quotation indicates, the personnel raise awareness about the consequences of breaking the rules before the child gets punished. Kaime-Atterhög and Ahlberg’s (2008) study addresses the benefits of friendly discussions as an alternative to punishment. The children become a subject and not an object by treating them as humans instead of something worthless that is allowed to abuse. The OVC-program has this view of children as subjects, given that they never use physical punishments and that the children get the preconditions for what happens if they break the rules. By informing the children about the rules at the shelter, they get a chance to make their own decision on what is best for them; to break the rules and get punished or to follow the rules, which could be associated with what Freire (1979) names as consciousness-raising. He implies that in empowerment based work, people need to be aware of the situation to be able to make decisions in order for changes to be created.

Another example of consciousness-raising is that the OVC-program teaches the children both their rights, but also their responsibilities. The following quotation shows some of them:
To respect the parents, the elders. To take some small works... Your responsibility is to help the parents. The small responsibilities like those ones. Because even in the law of the child of Tanzania there is a child responsibility. So we have to teach them their responsibility. Because sometimes they think that; I am a child, I am not supposed to do anything. I need to play, I need to rest, I need to go to school... So that is their responsibility. (Interview D)

The Law of the Child Act, 2009 states, as the respondent said, not only the children’s rights but also their responsibilities. That the OVC-program informs the children about this could be said that it is a way to prepare them for reality. Tengqvist (2007) states the importance to be aware of limitations which otherwise could affect people in a vulnerable group negatively. When the personnel at the OVC-program teach the children their responsibility they raise awareness about what is to be expected. They do not present a dream world that turn out to be a disappointment that could be hard to handle, but realistically what they can expect.

As components in the work, the children are assigned individual chores that they are required to do, in order to maintain the realistic view of life. Examples of those are washing clothes, cleaning windows and gardening. Some of the children are also selected as leaders for different activities such as football, school and food. The function of the leaders is explained by two respondents:

For example, they have to choose a leader for maybe sports, or food. Who make sure that the timetable is followed, that this time you are supposed to eat. And another one for education who will deal with the matters of classroom and other things, like the timetable... So if something goes wrong at this thing we have to ask that leader what happened. (Interview D)

If someone gets beaten they tell the leader and the leader tells an adult. (Interview A)

To succeed with empowerment this kind of responsibilities are necessary. Tengqvist (2007) argues that to trust someone to handle a given task ultimately can result in a personal development for the trusted person.

**Discussion**

In sum, the study shows that the personnel at the Orphan and Vulnerable Children programme (OVC) work towards the best interest of the child – both from the child’s own perspective and from a professional perspective. This is found as all respondents explained that the children get to define their own needs and as one respondent expressed the wish to use the professional knowledge in order to help the children. With this knowledge the respondents consider a family as an important factor, why reunification with the parents or with the extended family is one goal when working with street children. The life on the street is rough for the children since they only have themselves to depend on as they are alienated from the society. One other main goal is to support the child in the process of becoming self-sufficient to be able to be a part of the society. The observations show that school is the major method to reach this goal in order for the children to get a job as an adult and support themselves. The result further indicates that striving towards increased autonomy is an important aspect when working with street children, as the chance of a successful intervention increases. The personnel at the OVC-program are working with autonomy by for example never force a street child to come to the shelter. They also include the children in various decisions concerning themselves and the daily work at the shelter. To further empower the children and
to strengthen them in their development, they are given responsibilities at the shelter. These are for example to choose leaders among themselves and to be responsible for individual chores. When living at the shelter the street children not only has the rights to be a part of decisions and having responsibilities to strengthen them, they also have rules and an everyday schedule to follow. This includes for example school, workout, environment cleaning and non-supervised activities of own choice such as football, skipping rope and reading. These scheduled activities form a framework for the children to comply. At the shelter some children miss the freedom that life on street brings and therefore run away which creates a problem in the intervention. Another finding is that the personnel do not express the daily activities as explicit tools in the process of reaching the program’s goals. However the observations indicate that some activities are used in a way that aims to succeed with the intervention. For example, as mentioned before, the school is a possibility for the children to start their process of becoming an independent adult which are one of the goals of the programme. In order to evaluate their assignments they use statistics and annual reports. This gives them invaluable data which are used to search for sponsors and plan the future work. The program makes continuously progress, but since it is relatively new it is too early to say if the result matches the assignment.

Trough the observations, interviews and according to the knowledge gained from the researches that has been reviewed, children’s participation can be seen as one important component in the personnel’s daily work. This is important already when the personnel approach the child on the street as the child decides for their own if they want to follow to the shelter or not. At the shelter the children are involved in decisions concerning themselves, for example the older children decide what vocation to learn. This can be compared to what Dybicz (2005) states about the importance of children’s participation in order to obtain a successful intervention towards street children. The personnel’s choice to let the children participate in decisions is also supported by The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (Regeringskansliet, 2006). Although the personnel do not identify empowerment as a method in their work, it may be seen as one main method. The children are seen as humans and their participation are essential. At the shelter the establishment of a good relationship and the dialog between the children and the personnel are vital. In empowerment an equal dialog is required in order for changes to occur (Freire, 1979). Other, spoken components or factors are to our knowledge non-existing. However, it is possible to see relations between the activities at the shelter and the goals that aim to get the children independent and self-sustain. In order to reach these goals, education is used. All children at the shelter attend education; school or vocational training, and the aim is to prepare them for future employment. This is consistent with what Winks (2009) states, that education gives the children an opportunity to a life without poverty. Another part towards these goals is counselling. The aim is for example to process incidents if a child violates the rules. In such cases this is the focus instead of punishments, and through this the child learns to take responsibilities for their actions. Other preparations for a future independent life and to reach autonomy can be seen in their daily activities, such as environment cleaning, sports and that the personnel make sure that the children know how to look presentable. Awareness about what works in interventions towards street children could be valuable for the OVC-program to explore and to implement in their work in order to successfully help as many as possible.

One challenge observed at the shelter is that some children run away. According to Turnbull, Hernández and Reyes (2009) the eager to run away can be caused by the strictness and regulations of an institution. Unlike the shelter, the street offers the children autonomy; that they can make their own decisions and make up their own rules, without anyone else interfering. Lam and Cheng (2008) state that children’s participation is one major factor in the work, and without this, regulations and rules are going to cause frustration and dissatisfaction.
Despite this, rules are needed to create structure and regularity in the work. In the figure below (Figure 1), the goal is to illustrate the process a street child could go through when coming to a shelter. Every street child has its own unique background, whether it is a poor family, an abusive stepmother or dead parents, but the harsh situation on the street is similar to all the children. They are at a higher risk of being abused, exposed to various dangers, and they lack for example food, clothes, shelter and education which are considered as every human’s basic needs. No one wants to take responsibility for the street children and they are seen as “others’ problems”, leaving them alienated from the society. Although this situation seems horrible, not every child wants to leave the street. On the street they are building a solidarity that creates their “new family” within peer-groups which could be hard to leave. The children also possess autonomy on the street in the sense that they take care of themselves and take their own decisions (a¹). If they go home or to a shelter this freedom are restrained by rules and requirements that are placed upon them. By setting too strict rules at the shelters (c), it could cause the risk that the children’s interest in the intervention decreases and that they most likely will end up back on the street (a¹), eager to take charge of their own lives again. On the other hand, if the personnel use empowerment, involve the children in decisions and planning under structured and controlled forms (p, c), and show them trust and respect, this will increase the probability of a successful intervention towards the children’s autonomy (a²).

![Figure 1](image)

Figure 1. A figure illustrating the complexity of working with street children – from an empowerment point of view.

The figure indicates that if street children are controlled they will try to get back to the street, but if they are allowed to be involved and to make their own decisions regarding themselves at the same time as they are controlled by rules and limitations it could help them regain autonomy in every day life. One of the issues that emerge from this model is how the relation between control and autonomy should be regulated to achieve the best outcome of interventions towards street children. This is something that requires thorough research to answer. The figure shows the risk with increased rules and control. It indicates that these factors can make a child go back to the street. At the OVC-program the personnel wish to have a fence around the property. The figure however, indicates that both advantages and disadvantages should be carefully considered before a final decision. That the restriction a fence would bring could create more run away attempts than a fence would prevent.

One other challenge for the program is the economy since the activities have to be adjusted to the budget of the program. The donors have a great impact on this, fortunately the OVC-program has a long-term financier, IOGT-NTO. The personnel at the program continuously document their activities and budget, as well send regular reports to IOGT-NTO.
(2010; IDYDC, 2012). The demands from donors help to ensure that the money goes to the activities of the program and to their work towards fulfilment of the assignment. Though the program is relatively new a complete annual report has not yet been conducted and it is hard to determine a true result so early since for example reunification is a process that takes time to complete. However, according to reviewed evaluation tendencies show that the program makes progress when it comes to reduce the number of street children from Iringa. There are some children who are reunificated with their families, some get their basic needs met at the shelter and they all are provided with education.

The OVC-program’s overall goal is to reduce the number of street children in their region and the collected data shows different short and long-term goals that are used in order to fulfil it. The short-term goals include the basic needs such as shelter, food and clothes and every child at the shelter are provided with this. The long-term goals aim to get the children self-sustained and independent in order to achieve autonomy and a better life. One major component to achieve this is through education which is offered for each child. Another important component in their work to reduce the number of children on the street is the personnel’s work with reunification between children and their families. This could be a problem since some children do not want to go back home, which make it hard to help them. One advantage in this program is that they never force a child to reunification; instead they discuss it together with both the child and the family. Despite this, some children continuously want to stay on the street instead of going back to their families or to a shelter. According to Lugalla and Mbwambo (1999) the living conditions on the street are beneath all criticism. Children living there use public facilities as toilets in order to manage their day, for example to sleep in and to take care of their hygiene. By keeping the facilities clean and well maintained it could support the children’s living conditions while still on the street. The programme’s overall goal is, as earlier stated, to reduce the number of street children from the Iringa region (IDYDC, 2011). This is a big task to manage since there is a large amount of street children in Iringa, and the interviews showed that the respondents do not think that they are able to help every child due to the economical preconditions among other. But, by cooperating with other organizations and authorities that also work with street children they are able to cover the need better. This indicates that they are doing the best out of the given situation.

**Practical Implications**

This study can be used as an eye-opener for organizations working with street children when it comes to the complexity of the relation between participation and control. In the most favourable conditions this relation could lead to a higher level of success when working towards the goal to empower street children so that they ultimately reach autonomy. Considerably more research regarding how these two factors interact with each other is necessary to be able to determine how to use them in best possible way. Further research is also needed in other issues regarding street children. Until today, the research about street children has focused mostly on cause, the needs of the children and the children’s own view of their needs (Dybcz, 2005; Evans, 2004). We believe that activities and other components that works should be the next topics of research to be able to develop a successful strategy of interventions towards street children. Another urgent issue is the girls’ situation. Most of them are not to be found in street although they do not live with their parents and do not attend school, as they are utilized as housekeepers. Respondents in this study raised their concerns about these children, and that other interventions are needed than towards children on the street. There was no possibility to discuss the question in this study due to the limitations of the study. However, this is an important area of further research in order to develop helping program for all vulnerable children.
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Observation Schedule

Work Tasks
Lunch at the OVC-program
Daily routines
Scheduled activities

Relationship Between the Personnel and the Children
Punishment
Acknowledgment
Children’s reaction on reprimands

Peer Influence
Relationship between the children
Peer pressure
How the personnel respond to negative peer pressure

Children’s Activities
Do the daily activities look the same for every child?
  - Age, gender
Non-supervised activities
Individual planned activities
Children’s involvement in decision-making
Positive and negative effects when the children are involved in decision-making

Quality of Life
Are the children’s basic needs being met?
Interview Guide

Personal Information
What is your name?
How long have you worked at the OVC-program?
What made you choose to work in this organization?

Education and Work Experience
What education or experience do you have that is relevant to your work?
What education or experience do the remaining personnel at the OVC-program have?

Children’s Situation on the Street
What challenges do the children face on the street?
What is the general attitude towards street children in the community?
How are street children treated in the meeting with government officials?
  -Example social workers, police and judges

Contact with Street Children
How does the OVC-program get in contact with street children?
How do the children on the street react to your approach?
Do you think that some children want to stay on the street?
  -Why?
Which criteria’s have to be filled for a child to have the opportunity to take part of the OVC-program?

Planning
What are the routines when a child arrives to the programme?
Do you plan individual for each child?
Do you work with goals for each child?
  -Can you give an example of such goals?

Work Tasks
Can you describe a regular day at work?
  -Number of personnel, routines etc.
What tasks do you have?
Do you feel that you make a difference for the children?
  -Please, describe

Children’s Daily Activities
How does a regular day look for the children?
  -Routines, time schedule, activities, non-supervised activities?
  -What is the purpose of this?
Do the daily activities look the same for every child?
  - Age, gender
What possibilities are there for non-supervised activities?

Peer Pressure
Is there any peer pressure among the children?
  -How do you cope with that?
Approach
What are the long and short-term goals in the children’s development?
   - How do you work towards those goals?
What is the main goal in your relationship with the children?
   - For example to be a friend, an extra mother, strictly professional?
   - In what way do you work towards that?
How do you work towards the child’s reunion with the family?
What happens when a child turn 18?

Children’s Participation
What rules are there for the children to follow?
   - What happens if they violate them?
Are the children involved in the planning regarding themselves?
   - Can you describe what planning they are involved in?
   - Activities, schedule, rules
   - How are they involved in the planning?
Do the children choose what vocation to learn?
What effects, both positive and negative, do you see when the children gets involved in decision making? Such as, vocational training and rules?

Governmental Involvement
What laws are there to support children’s rights?
What governmental interventions are there to support street children?
What governmental support is there for the OVC-program?

Cooperation
What is the cooperation between authorities and the OVC-program?
   - For example police, social welfare service and schools
Are there other organizations in Iringa who work with street children?
   - Is there any cooperation between those organizations and the OVC-program?
   - Please, describe

Economics
How are the OVC-program financed?
Do the financiers get anything in return of their financial contribution?
   - What?
   - Why?
How are the costs in the programme accounted for?
How does the programme find new financiers?

Evaluation
Is there any evaluation conducted in the OVC-program?
   - How often?
   - How is evaluation conducted in the OVC-program?
   - Is evaluation conducted within the organization or is it externally done?
   - Please, describe
How does the programme use the evaluation?
Organization and Personnel
How many personnel are working at the OVC-program?
Do you have personnel meetings?
   - How often?
      - What topics are discussed during the meetings?
Do you receive any individual guidance in your work?
Does the OVC-program have a business plan?
   - Please, describe
Is the evaluation used in the business plan?
   - Please, describe

Final Question
Is there anything more you like to add?