

# The Social Transformation of a Street Child in Naga City: A Case Study of Lived Experiences

Ansherina M. Briosio

*ansherinabriosio1992@gmail.com*

*Master of Science in Criminal Justice with specialization in Criminology*

*University of the Cordilleras, Gov. Pack Rd, Baguio, Benguet*

## Abstract

Street life is a challenge for survival, even for adults, and is yet more difficult for children. They live within the city but are unable to take advantage of the comforts of urban life. It is suggested that extreme poverty was the primary cause for the increasing numbers of street children. Lack of awareness among illiterate parents regarding educational opportunities kept most children away from school attendance. Factors such as lack of an educational ambience at home made it difficult for the children to work on their lessons outside the premises of the institution.

This study focused on the drivers and success story of the life and work of street children specifically in Naga City, Camarines Sur. By living and working in the street, these children face the highest level of risk. Street children more often suffer from different health infections, inadequate nutrition, mental disorders, and drug abuse. They are more often victims of abuse, sexual exploitation, and trafficking. Further, this study also aimed to assess the effectiveness in the role of social work interventions in ensuring the rights of street children.

The enormous problems faced by the street children in the last several years are widely dispersed, but for several years they were not in societies' projects and programs. They are excluded from economic, social, and political processes. However, only a few institutions are involved in helping them to sustain their livelihood. Although exposure to harsh reality at an early age had resulted in a premature loss of innocence in most, making them sometimes difficult to work with, the government organizations were striving to ensure child participation and the growth of individual identity.

*Keyword: Intervention Program, Social Transformation, Street Children*

The United Nations estimates there are up to 150 million street children in the world. UNICEF (2001) defined a street child as any boy or girl who has not reached adulthood, for whom the street has become his or her habitual abode and/ or sources of livelihood, one who is inadequately protected, supervised, or directed by responsible adults. Street children are one of the most hidden and invisible populations in the world. In 2022, there were more than 246,000 total number of street children served by the programs of the Department of Social Welfare and Development. It represents only the visible tip of the iceberg as still large number of young people are exploited in industries and on farms, labor in mines, spend long hours for little or no pay while some kinds of works are more hazardous affecting the child's physical well-being. (Deweese, A., & Klees, S. J., 1995).

Childhope Asisa (1992) has identified three categories of street children, namely: 1) Children on the streets who spend a considerable amount of time in the streets without the close supervision of a parent or responsible adult, partly or fully to earn a living. They still go to school and return to their homes at the end of the day; 2) Children of the streets are those who lived and work in the streets. They see streets as their home and as a source of living. These children are generally those who have lost contact with their families. They adopted the streets as their home and lastly 3) Completely abandoned children are said to be the "hard core" street children. These children have been conditioned even at an early age to live by themselves, making it difficult to elicit their cooperation and conformity to an organized activity. They lack sense of personal, self-care and resist a structured way of life and thus usually escape from the institutional care of shelters and/or centers.

The paradigm always shifts unevenly and has become broader on the global recognition of a "street children problem"

(James & Prout, 1990). One thing certain about street children is that they increased annually even in the past years due to various factors such as poverty, family structure, migration. As one of the world's most marginalized population groups, street children are almost completely excluded from the data that is used by policy makers, donors, and practitioners to make decisions and plan interventions. One problem is that no one knows, even roughly, how many street children are there in the world. This is because governments mainly collected information through censuses or household surveys typically do not include children who do not live in traditional households.

Naga City as an independent component city centrally located in the province of Camarines Sur, nestled at the foot of Mt. Isarog with a total land area of 8, 448 hectares has a total of 27 barangays all classified as an urban community which comprises of poor families, slum dwellers, squatters, and children. The increasing population growth is attributed to heavy in-migration from neighboring areas flocked to the city in search of better opportunities. Anchored on the belief that the urban poor is a vital sector in Naga's quest for total development, the city empowered and mainstreamed back in society a fair, credible and effective mechanism to solved issues in urban poor sector. However, the continuous migration of residents in the city resulted in limited access to basic services, labor opportunities and to possibilities for social development to deserving residents of the city, which also included children.

The 2015 census by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) puts Naga's population at 209,170. This is an increase of 21,072 inhabitants over the 2010 total of 174, 931, making Naga the fastest growing city in Bicol in terms of population. Between 2010 and 2020, Naga's population grew by 17.04% or an average of 2.41% compound annually. Naga is a city of young people. Children and youth (those aged 24 and below) comprise more than half (54%) of the total population.

During the State of the City's Children report in 2022, Naga City gets a seal of child-friendly local governance from the Council for the Welfare of Children and the Department of Interior and Local Government for being a five-year straight of child-friendly local programs, activities and services that provide priorities to children in their various rights in survival, development, protection and participation. The children's population aged zero to 17 years old, reached to over 62,000 (30%), making the sector as the third largest percentage of the total Nagueños population.

Conversely, not all children who can be described as 'street children' are necessarily homeless. The participation of street children would not be possible if policy makers do not have reliable and updated information on street children. To a casual observer, children who beg on the street appear to all intents and purposes as delinquents, risky and gone "outside childhood" (Connolly and Ennew, 1996). In other instances, they might be regarded as helpless and vulnerable victims or separated from their families, orphaned, or abandoned (Patter-Brick, 2000). By living outside the home and performing adult-related roles, children on the streets contradict the ideals of "proper childhoods" locally and core ideologies of what (Boyden, 1998) call as "global models", namely that of childhood dependence, domesticity and adult care and supervision.

Our community plays an increasingly greater role in the development of a child. It is the local social world of the child and the smallest unit of society that presents an integrated pattern of reality to which children must become adjusted. Many urban streets and public spaces have become inhospitable to children although parents continue to value outdoor play and access to nature as it is important to their children's development. Childhood is to be understood as a social construction. Children's relationships and cultures are worthy of recognition in their own right and not just in respect to their social construction by adults. Children should be an active participant in the construction and determination of their own social lives, other people's lives, and the society in which they live (Claire O'Kane, 2003). It creates space for children's own experiences, perceptions, and concerns as a central component of child-focused development work. Failure to reflect on their experiences, articulate their views, and advocate for their own rights may arise children to advocate for their own rights due to disparities in power and differing perceptions among stakeholders (e.g., parents, police, non-government organizations).

In Naga City, the number of street children in City Children's home has amplified due to the number of children being rescued from the operations initiated by the Naga City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO). With the aim to continuously provide a better quality of services to children's beneficiaries, the CSWDO strengthen the monitoring and implementation of programs such as early education, reproductive health intervention and malnutrition. While there is no doubt that there are common reasons that push children into the street to do different activities, understanding their own backstory and identity is the main key to comprehending their situation.

Mondal (2013) holds the firm view that “Children are the source of hope and inspiration for the society.” He further insists: “That is why they have the right to be brought up in a positive environment”. This perspective is crucial, but it is completely contrasting when one tries to arrive at a conceivable definition of street children. There exist many definitions on the grounds that different countries construe them in several ways. Reza and Henly (2018) believe that the street environment is often filled with illness, violence and poverty and these children rely on each other for survival. Consortium for Street Children (CSC) notes that many people use the terms “street children” and “homeless children” interchangeably but there are some differences.

Thus, this study is beneficial to further strengthen preventive measures for children allowing the different sectors: private, government, or non-government organizations to address the challenges of the increased number of street children nationwide. Moreover, this study would allow the children to express themselves and viewpoints towards their experiences as their voices should be included in any laws, policies, or decisions that will impact their lives and serve as a medium to measure the effectivity of developed programs and projects intended for them.

This study aims to determine the perception of street children specifically at Naga City, Camarines Sur: Also, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of street children in Naga City, Camarines Sur, and;
2. What is the impact of the intervention programs and projects provided by the LGU-City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO), the LGU – Children’s Council, and Bantay Pamilia attended by the victim?

### **Review of Related Literature:**

De Brito (2014) describes street children as a major social problem in some countries and the importance to acknowledge the issue. To change global development of the problems with street children, the problem must first be highlighted. In 1989, UNICEF estimated 100 million children were growing up on urban streets around the world (Campos et al, 1994) and recently: *“The exact number of street children is impossible to quantify but the figure almost certainly runs into tens of millions across the world. It is likely that the numbers are increasing as the global population grown and as urbanization continues apace”* (UNICEF, 2005:40-41). There is no clear definition of street children. It cannot be assumed that all children on the streets are homeless. The great majority-well over of the children on the streets in various developing countries have work on the streets but live at home and are working to earn money for their families (Ennew, 1986; Myers, 1989). The difference reflects the change that came about by excluding working children.

Today, most people see childhood as a process of becoming an adult. Childhood includes a content of social and structural positions in different communities depending on where a child is growing up. Nowadays, it is no longer a universal social construction; it depends on the experiences a child gets in society. Sociology has left the functional perspective of childhood and has begun to see children as active participants in constructing their own lives in society. Giddens (2014) writes that the life of a street child is a life of constantly trying to survive on the street. In other words, street children’s active participants in the construction of their lives.

According to Cosgrove, there are two dimensions to define street children: the degree of family involvement and the amount of deviant behavior. He assumes a great deal of cultural consistency, but deviance and “family substitutes” are greatly embedded in cultural particulars. Moreover, societies are judged by the way they treat their children. This treatment can include the way that societies label or categorize children, an aspect that is particularly salient in relation to children who live on the streets (Panter-Brick, 2003:152; Ribeiro, 2008:90). The power of the spoken word has the potential to stigmatize, dehumanize and demean such children if they are referred to in a negative manner. (Deacon, 2006:419).

Many street children come from structurally disadvantaged homes with poor living conditions. Parental loss through deaths or shortages of housing force children onto the streets to survive. According to Le Roux (2017) street life is an adaptive response to stress experienced by families living in poor conditions. The move onto the streets can represent a desire to take control and displace old values and habits with new ones. Lusk (1992) developed four categories of children found in the street. Each group has its own psychological characteristics. First, there are poor working children returning to their families at night. They are likely to attend school and not be delinquent. Second, there are independent street workers. Their family ties are beginning to break down, their school attendance is decreasing, and their delinquency is increasing. Third, there are children of street families who live and work with their families in the street. Their conditions are related to poverty. Finally, there are the children who have broken off contact with their families. They are residing in the streets full time and are the "real" street children. Street children are a consequence of poverty, low education, abuse, and lack of parenthood. Ward and Seager (2010) emphasize the factors such as situations of abuse, domestic violence or poor family relationships are common among street children. It can go as far as their situation within the home becomes unbearable and they choose to live on the street. Also, he mentioned that preventative work reduces the number of children living on the street, it is therefore important that organizations put in significant effort at an early stage as a measurable instrument of the work and methods that are practiced by social workers. According to Ward and Seger (2010) there is a lack of knowledge and information about how to change street children's situation for the better especially concerning methods and strategies of how to deal with these children. It further describes the lack of support from the government which puts pressure on the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private sectors to handle the issues.

In the Philippines, children are regarded as gifts from God, blessings, a source of joy as well as happiness, and economic as well as practical assets of the family. On the contrary, quite a good number of children could now be seen not only staying most of the time on the streets but eventually living on the streets. Many of these children already consider the streets as not only a place to secure money and/or means needed for day-to-day survival but also as their homes and an area where they can enjoy the company of their friends and peers; this, amidst varying forms of hazards that they may face resulting from living or if not staying most of the time in the streets (Lamberte, 1994).

Around the world today, all are confronted with an uncomfortable but undeniable truth: Millions of children's lives are blighted, for no other reason than the country, the community, the gender, or the circumstances into which they are born (UNICEF, 2016)

The model in **Table 1** illustrates the relationship between the three major parts of the research paradigm namely the input, process, and output. The input shows the data gathered that will be used to provide answers to specific objectives of the study. The input box contains the demographic profile of the respondents and the statement of the problem. The process involves the use of interview and thematic analysis to come up with the results.

| INPUT   | PROCESS  | OUTPUT   |
|---|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the lived experiences of street children in Naga City, Camarines Sur and;</li> <li>2. What is the impact of the intervention programs and projects provided by the LGU-City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO), LGU – Children's Council, and Bantay Pamilia attended by the victim?</li> </ol> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data gathering through an informal interview to the street child.</li> <li>• Coordination to the concerned LGU office who handles street children cases/child cases.</li> <li>• Interpretation of gathered data\</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address the problems encountered by street child and his social transformation</li> <li>• Recommendations</li> <li>• Measure the effectiveness of the intervention program provided by the local government unit – Naga City</li> </ul> |

To exhibit the lived experiences of street children, a qualitative research design was adopted as a useful approach specifically for its nature which is exploratory. These characteristics of experiences are difficult to quantify using numerical interpretation. Also, Creswell, (2014) asserted that these designs would enable researchers to have in-depth data about those who partake in the study about their perspectives and experiences regarding a matter. Specifically, phenomenological research is utilized since it explores what people experience and focuses on their experience.

With or without compensation, participants in this study were free to participate in the research project. For the sake of privacy, no information about the participants' backgrounds or profiles was shared and all information about them was handled with great care. The consent of the participants was asked prior of the scheduled interview and was translated into a language they could understand, which served as proof that they had agreed to participate in the study. Unfortunately, due to ethical considerations and concerns about protecting the children, interview to the participants is conducted in Naga City Children's Home (NCCH), a facility intended for children with the presence of the City Social Welfare and Development Officer. As a result, the researcher is not obligated to force participants to have audio or video recordings made. To maintain the study's rigor and credibility, the researcher ignores his or her own feelings and opinions in favor of the findings.

The researcher analyzed the gathered data from the survey and presented a descriptive representation of the data. A technique called thematic analysis was employed in this study. It is a method for analyzing qualitative data that involves reading through a set of data and looking for patterns in the meaning of the data to find themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is an active process of reflexivity in which the researcher's subjective experience is at the center of making sense of the data. First, the researchers carefully organized the downloaded transcript of all the responses of the participants. The analysis of the raw data provided the initial identification of the relevant codes. These relevant codes were then transferred in a separate file. The researchers continuously evaluated these codes, noting their similarities and differences to eventually group them. Based on the groups of similar codes, the categories were developed and structured to answer the central questions of this research.

**Table 1: Background information about the Street Child**

| Interviewee  | Age at the time of being a street child | Status in the family | Agency referred                            | Status in the Intervention Program |
|--------------|---|----------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Respondent 1 | 10 years old                            | Living with parents  | City Social Welfare and Development Office | Graduated                          |

Themes were identified from within each of the questions; thus, how these themes are categorized is based on each individual question. During the scheduled interview, concerned agencies and barangay officials were asked to provide some information on the status of street children in Naga City, Camarines Sur. Also, they were asked on the intervention programs and projects provided by the local government units (LGU-Naga) to street children. In addition, the respondent was living before with his family before he became a street child. The respondent was asked about the reasons or drivers why he chose the life of becoming a street child and how does he transform into a better individual of the society.

**Table 2: Life situations of the Respondent**

|              |  |                |
|--------------|--|----------------|
| Respondent 1 | <i>"I was living with my parents and never had the chance to go to school...seeing my friends happy and earning in the street,</i> | SELF- INTEREST |
|--------------|--|----------------|

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  | <i>somehow influenced me engaged myself to live on the street”</i> |  |
|--|--|--|

**Self-interest.** Children who want to maintain good relations with others must learn how to effectively distribute resources across a wide range of contexts (Chernyak & Sobel, 2016). To date, research on how children make fair distributions based on equality has involved distributions of items that vary in quantity alone. This preference emerges as early as 2 years of age, and it becomes robust during the preschool years (e.g., Geraci and Surian, 2011, McAuliffe et al., 2017, McAuliffe et al., 2015, Olson and Spelke, 2008, Rochat et al., 2009, Schmidt and Sommerville, 2011, Sigelman and Waitzman, 1991, Sloane et al., 2012). When given the opportunity to make their own distribution decisions, preschool-aged children generally divide resources evenly (e.g., Damon, 1977, Hook and Cook, 1979, Olson and Spelke, 2008, Rochat et al., 2009, Sigelman and Waitzman, 1991). Between 6 and 8 years of age, children are even willing to throw away something of value to avoid making an unequal distribution (Shaw & Olson, 2012), and this preference for equal distributions continues to develop well into adolescence (see Rochat et al., 2009). There is also a large body of research suggesting that self-interest can affect children’s decisions about whether to apply a norm of equality. Although there has been less research on children’s distributions in relation to resource quality, the studies that have been conducted suggest that it does have an impact (Blake and Rand, 2010, Chernyak and Kushnir, 2013, Schmidt and Sommerville, 2011, Shaw and Olson, 2013). For example, Rizzo et al. (2016) found that the extent to which children prioritized merit versus concern for the welfare of others depended on whether they were distributing items that were needed versus simply enjoyable to have. In addition, Chernyak and Sobel (2016) found that children shared more valuable stickers with preferred puppets even though they made even numerical splits.

**Table 3: Relationship with the Family and Community**

|              |  |                       |
|--------------|--|-----------------------|
| Respondent 1 | <i>“I grew up in a broken family. The street within our community becomes my home during my childhood days...It was a happy and safe community for me”</i> | LACK OF COMMUNICATION |
|--------------|--|-----------------------|

**Lack of Communication.** Communication is fundamental and vital to transmit information and making oneself understood by another or others, Sanchez & Guo (2005). Good communication skills are very important to one’s success, Yate (2009) which affect both personal and professional effectiveness, Brun (2010); Summers (2010). The success is essential to produce a successful collaboration and understanding between other people and on the other hand, ineffective and poor communication leads to undesirable consequences. The family plays a very important role in the forming of a young personality and is one of the decisive factors in the development of the child. It represents the primary social environment in which most children spend their childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood. The family is the first social group to which the child belongs, in which it acquires the first experiences, develops its potentials and forms attitudes. Relationships in the family influence the forming of personality traits such as: emotional stability, individual maturity, personal integrity development, preparedness to accept social roles. For this reason, the positive development of children depends largely on the environment created within the family (Vilotijevic, 2002). The extensive theoretical and empirical literature testifies that different aspects of relationships and communication within the family can contribute to the development of behavior problems, including lack of intimacy and warmth, failure to respond to the needs of the child, expression of negative emotions, inadequate supervision of the child, strict punishment, setting unclear rules, poor attachment to the parents and others (Carlson et al., 1999; Matthys & Lochman, 2010; McMahon et al., 2006).

**Table 4: Lived experiences as a Street Child**



|              |  |         |
|--------------|--|---------|
| Respondent 1 | <i>"Well, being a street child is a very difficult situation. I do have some regrets for leaving our house and lived on the street."</i> | REMORSE |
|--------------|--|---------|

**Remorse.** Cosgrove (1990) has used two dimensions to define street children: the degree of family involvement and the amount of deviant behavior. According to Cosgrove, a street child is "any individual under the age of majority whose behavior is predominantly at variance with community norms, and whose primary support for his/ her development needs is not a family or family substitute" (p. 192). This definition (Cosgrove, 1990) provides additional information regarding the status of street children, but as Aptekar (1994) points out, "It assumes a great deal of cultural consistency, but deviance and family substitutes are greatly embedded in cultural particulars." Its addition to my definition is that it mentions street children as "individuals under the majority," which the above definitions do not explicitly state. However, in supporting Aptekar's statement, *"I believe that deviance from community or societal norms is not a mandatory criterion for street children, for even in my research; deviance was not necessarily exhibited by the participants"*. Similarly, support from the family might or might not exist, depending upon the situation and again, although, most of the participants had dysfunctional family relationships, there did exist a few for whom this claim would not hold true. As street children experience and cope with grief in response to the loss in all its totality – including its physical, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and spiritual manifestations – and as a natural and normal reaction to loss (Hall, 2011). The psychological-emotional experience following a loss of any kind, such as a relationship, status, job, house, game, income, etc. (Meek, 2012) is always connected with the change in relationship status, sense of safety or order, resources, etc. (Community Bereavement Resource Directory).

**Table 5: Government intervention program**

|              |   |                        |
|--------------|---|------------------------|
| Respondent 1 | <i>"Even though I started studying late at the age of 10, I was able to finish my primary education through the assistance of CSWDO".</i> | LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES |
|--------------|---|------------------------|

**Learning Opportunities.** The Philippines is a young nation. Of the million Filipinos, children constitute more than half the total price. Living in a rapidly changing world, today's Filipino children are faced with many challenges. They are beset with complex problems and pressures ranging from poverty to a lack of access to education and employment, to difficulties arising from the changing family and community structures and the breaking down of traditional family and community support. The families of the children who are most exposed to these problems and pressures belong to the disadvantaged sector. In addition, children who are living or working visibly on the streets are the tip of an iceberg of an unknown part of a bigger social problem. Children of poor families are vulnerable to poverty, abuse in the home and influences of peers that may attract them into street life. In line with, Al-Dien (2009, p. 39) also argues that "the Convention on the Rights of the Child is clear: every child has the right to quality education that is relevant to his or her individual life and personal development". Based on the above, it can be implied that education plays significant role in life. Street children need affection and are willing to have a decent education. They want to be like other children. Kisirkoi (2016) comments that their needs are the same as those who grow up with a lot of care, love, affection, and protection from their parents. Moreover, Omiyinka (2009, p.89) affirms "the solution to the problem of street children relies on the various societal structures and responsibilities (that is the family, community, policy, research, government, education and the street children)."

**Table 6: Life situation after of the Respondent**

|              |  |             |
|--------------|--|-------------|
| Respondent 1 | <i>"Yes, the program of education of LGU-Naga through coordination with CSWDO, help us to become a better child"... although at some point I was upset that the support of monitoring for us after we graduated in their facility was never continued.</i> | UNCERTAINTY |
|--------------|--|-------------|

**Uncertainty.** Although the street children were enrolled in formal schooling, which the NGOs supplemented with in-house informal education by helping with home assignments and providing tutoring, once the children were out of school and away from the interventionists, they tended to forget about the training they had been receiving. Often, the children wanted to return to the centers instead of returning back to their family and pursue the life that they have. This kind of behavior was common since children already realized the difference between the life that they have with their family and the life when they are in the facility. However, the children are not to be blamed for such behavior, which arose because the parents nor the streets did not support their education or their well-being. "Parents are often unavailable to assist their children with schoolwork and the chore of completing homework is often unrealistic" for the child (Epstein, 1996, p. 291). The streets did not provide the ambience that might enable these children to make a better choice for themselves. In an interview, one of the toiling interventionists exclaimed, "It seems easy to handle these children, but in actuality, it is very difficult."

The reason for the difficulty for interventionists found the reason for these children because children tended to develop their own ideas, which they expected at least the interventionists to acknowledge and respect. Such behavioral patterns are common among children who have been orphaned at a young age and have been struggling to survive on their own, taking their own responsibility and growing up without any adult supervision. They seem markedly more mature and self-sufficient than their peers. Also, children who are on the street may be there due to some specific reason, such as difficulty accepting a new parent following a remarriage, or even sexual abuse by family members. Such events may compel the children to spend more time with the interventionists than within their families.

Overall, the data suggests that while it is not easy to quantify them, Oppong et al. (2014) hold the firm view that this is a global phenomenon and perhaps millions of children inhabit the streets. Mokoena (2021) also believes that this is a growing social problem. As defined, Mondal (2013) holds the firm view that "Children are the source of hope and inspiration for the society and that is why they have the right to be brought up in a positive environment". Convincingly, children who are described as street children are not necessarily homeless. They work, play, and spend time on the street, but return to their family or parents. The street is their home and they do just about everything for survival. In this manner, they become vulnerable (Kwaku, 2019). They become socially susceptible and vulnerable to their environment, both as causes and victims. Dabir (2014) notes that unsupervised minors who constantly dwell on the streets and make it a source of livelihood could be considered as street children. Irawati et al. (2021) think that street children work on the streets and unsuitable places such as under bridges and vacant land. They also hold no support from family and are unsupervised. They are vulnerable to all types of exploitation, abuse and sickness. They are also deprived, neglected and denied of their rights; especially those of their childhood. Sanjay et al. (2019) also claims that without proper guidance, these children may look forward to a very uncertain and productive future. The preceding paragraphs demonstrate the complexity to arrive at a factual definition of street children. The following segment demonstrates the difficulty to quantify them.'

It is instructive to mention that the lifestyle of these children is dynamic for the simple reason that they constantly change locations or move from one area to another. However, they commonly live in public spaces like markets, parks, buses, or train stations to name a few. Most of these spots have no access to the basics: food, water, and clothing (Brenda et al., 2020). Consequently, it is difficult to ascertain the exact population. There are many factors that contribute to the increase of street children (Atwar and Engkus, 2020). The significance of this study aimed to assess the role of social work



interventions in ensuring the rights of the street children especially on health and education. The interventionists therefore focused on developing a rights-based approach, rather than a charitable one.

### Conclusions:

Below are the conclusions based on the findings of the study:

1. The status of all street children being unheard and unaccompanied becomes a practiced. At present, they were still deprived of the opportunity to have access to have a better life.
2. The data collection and measurement for progress mechanism of the Government such as household surveys and censuses are not effective to capture the exact number of street children annually including the migrants from other neighboring localities.
3. The referral-by-referral system of the Local Government Units in solving the intervention (major cases) and diversion program (minor cases) is weak. Mostly, after the child graduated from the program, it continuously goes back from their old ways of being in the street.
4. The family/parents being as an indicator of the main problem of the child's behavior and thinking is unresolved. Thus, it remains to become the problem in every household.

### Recommendations:

Below are the recommendations based on the findings of the study:

1. The government/policy makers should listen to the voices of children, incorporating them with the decision-making process, protection system and other intervention projects and programs.
2. The Local Government Units (LGU) should strengthen the monitoring system and classify the number of street children on every municipality/city to provide continuous and comprehensive support for every child even in the community.
3. Education and access to healthcare should be accessible to all children, including those children living from coastal areas to cater them better opportunities and healthy lifestyle.
4. The government through partnerships with private sectors and non-government organizations, should create more employment and occupational trainings for parents of street children who are not capable to provide the needs of their family.
5. At the barangay level, barangay officers responsible for child protection and family affairs should work together to resolve minor and major cases of children.

Consequently, street life is a challenge for survival, even for adults, and is yet more difficult for children. They live within the city but are unable to take advantage of the comforts of urban life. This study shows that extreme poverty was the primary cause for the increasing numbers of street children. Lack of awareness among illiterate parents regarding educational opportunities kept most children away from school attendance. Factors such as lack of an educational ambience at home made it difficult for the children to work on their lessons outside the premises of the institution. It was evident that those living with their parents had better access to health care facilities than did those living on their own; however, some non-governmental organizations made significant efforts to redress this imbalance. Although exposure to harsh reality at an early age had resulted in a premature loss of innocence in most, making them sometimes difficult to work with, the non-governmental organizations were striving to ensure child participation and the growth of individual identity.

### Acknowledgements

The researcher would like to express her deepest and warmest gratitude to the following people who in one way or another reinforced the researchers' enthusiasm in finishing this study, for without their help, this study would not have been possible. To Mr. Robino Cawi, for his support and approval which makes the study possible. To my adviser, Ms. Leah M. Donato who have been very patient, in teaching and guiding the researcher to fulfill the study and for the words of wisdom to boost the researchers' enthusiasm in conducting the study. To the beloved parents and family of the researcher, for their unconditional support during the course of this study. For their consideration and understanding, for their

financial and spiritual support, and encouragement which are in great help of lifting the researchers' hope to the success of the study. To their friends and classmates, for their words of inspiration and uplifting statements which is a great help for the researchers especially during times of discomfort. To the respondents, for their patience and active participation during the interview conducted by the researchers.

## References

- Akande A (2009). Comparing Social Behavior Across Culture and Nations: The 'What' and 'Why' Questions. *Social Indicators Research* (page 92)
- Aptekar L, Stoecklin D (2014). Children in Street Situations: Street Children and Homeless Youth. In: *Street Children and Homeless Youth*. Springer, Dordrecht.
- Aptekar L, Stoecklin D (2014). Street children and homeless children: A cross-cultural perspective. New York, NY: Springer.
- Beazley H (2000). Home Sweet Home? Street Children's Sites of Belonging. In S. L. Holloway and G. Valentine (editors) *Children's Geographies: Playing, Living, and Learning*.
- Convention on the Rights of the Child, United Nations Children Funds, September 2, 1990 ratified by the necessary 20 states and adopted by UN General Assembly. P3~5, 26, 28~29 and 40.
- Cosgrove, J. (1990). Towards a working definition of street children. *International Social Work*, 33, 185-192.
- De Moura SL (2002). The social construction of street children: Configuration and implications. *The British Journal of Social Work*.
- Dladla J, Ogina TA (2018). Teachers' perceptions of learners who are street children: A South African case study. *South African Journal of Education* 38(1).
- Darragh L (2019). Street children: everything about this global humanitarian crisis.
- Embleton L, Lee H, Gunn J, Ayuku D, Braitstein P (2016). Causes of Child and Youth Homelessness in Developed and Developing Countries: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis.
- Ehsan N, Nauman H, Tahir H (2017). Parental Acceptance-Rejection, Self Esteem and Self Control Among Street Children in FWU Journal of Social Sciences 11(2).
- Ilan J (2016). Understanding Street Culture: Poverty, Crime, Youth and Cool.
- Javier Perez de Cuellar, UN Secretary-General, in message to international meeting on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Lignano, Italy, September 1987
- Makofane M (2014). A conceptual analysis of the label street children: Challenges for the helping professions. *Social Work* 50(1):134-146.
- Reza MH, Bromfield NF (2019). Poverty, Vulnerability and Everyday Resilience: How Bangladeshi Street Children Manage Economic Challenges through Financial Transactions on the Streets, *The British Journal of Social Work* 49(5):1105-1123.
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2015). *The State of the World's Children 2015: Reimagine the future*. 2015; New York, NY
- UNICEF (2012). *State of the World's Children 2012: Children in An Urban World*. UNICEF; New York, NY, USA