

**HOME ENVIRONMENT FACTORS AND STREET CHILDREN IN KABALE  
MUNICIPALITY-KABALE DISTRICT**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL  
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## **ABSTRACT**

This research was a case study of Kabale Municipality, Kabale District. It was on home environment factors and street children in Kabale Municipality. The study was conducted along the following study objectives: To investigate child abuse on street children in Kabale Municipality, to investigate house hold poverty on street children in Kabale Municipality, and to assess child neglect on street children in Kabale Municipality. Data was collected using self-administered questionnaire, observation and focus group discussion from 136 respondents. Descriptive research design was the methodology used to gather systematic factual information for descriptive purposes and enhanced the researchers understanding of the Phenomenon being studied through observation. Descriptive design permitted the researcher not only to collect the facts for description but also to understand how street children operate in their real-life situation through observation. Respondents were composed of mainly street children in street children's organizations and street children living mainly on the street and found around garbage collection centers and super markets. Data was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively using tables, and percentages. The researcher found out that the family, which is supposed to be the bedrock of children's welfare and protection, is today becoming a major cause of the problem of street children. Parents are directly and indirectly sending their children into the streets to beg, steal or engage in petty trade, children are leaving their homes to escape household poverty, physical abuse and child neglect because of the breaking up of family structures. The implications of the problem if not addressed means that children who are supposed to be the future leaders would continue to get wasted by engaging in unproductive and dangerous activities and habits that lead to destruction of life thus having a negative impact on the generations to come. The researcher further contends that not enough is being done to address the problem and that indeed the problem of street children remains an ignored tragedy that is set to have a devastating impact on the development of African countries and the people. This research indicates that the response to the problem has at best been muted and remains sidelined by the government and the general public.

## DECLARATION

I KWIKIRIZA MARTIN, hereby that this is my original work, is not plagiarized and has not been submitted by any other institution for any award

KWIKIRIZA MARTIN

SIGN

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive 'M' followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

DATE

20 / 08 / 2025

**DEDICATION**

This research project is dedicated to my dear wife Gloria Kwikiriza for the encouragement, emotional and financial support and prayers she accorded to me during this study period.

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I thank and acknowledge the Almighty God for the opportunity of pursuing a Master's Degree from Uganda Christian University-Bishop Barham University College.

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## APPROVAL

This is to certify that this dissertation report title “Home environment factors and street children in Kabale Municipality-Kabale District” is prepared under my supervision and is approved for submission to the faculty of social sciences Bishop Barham University College.

Signature



Date

22/8/2025

MR. MBALEMA APOLLO

UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>ANPPCAN:</b>	African Network for the Prevention and Protection against child Abuse and Neglect
<b>NGOS:</b>	Non-governmental Organizations
<b>SC:</b>	Street children
<b>UNICEF:</b>	United Nations Children’s Fund
<b>HIV/AIDS:</b>	Human immunodeficiency Virus
<b>CBOS:</b>	Community Based Organizations
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>MGLSD:</b>	Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development
<b>W.H.O:</b>	World Health Organization
<b>VAC</b>	Violence against Children
<b>UN:</b>	United Nations
<b>PTSD:</b>	Post -traumatic stress disorder
<b>CRC:</b>	Convention on Rights of Child
<b>VCO:</b>	Volunteer Children Officer
<b>CFPU</b>	Child and Family Protection Unit

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

This chapter covers the background of the study, problem statement, study's goals, research questions, scope of the study, why the study is important, the significance of the study, conceptual frame work, and how the study is organized.

### 1.1 Background to the study

#### 1.1.1 Historical Background

UNICEF defines “street children as children in difficult circumstances”, a population that has been under-represented in health research. Street children are divided into two groups: those with no family contact and rarely return home, and those who spend the day on the street but often sleep at home.

The street children phenomenon is a growing global problem, representing a significant issue in Child Welfare (waghid, 2004) . These children often lead unhealthy and dangerous lives, lacking protection, guidance and supervision, and are exposed to exploitation and abuse. The street children problem has drawn attention since the industrial revolution in many European countries. It is asocial issue that requires immediate action for any nation's future prosperity (Schwab, 2018).

Street children are a major “social problem in some countries, and it is important to acknowledge this issue” (De britto, 2014). To improve the global situation of street children, the problem must first be recognized. UNICEF (De britto, 2014) states that “there are tens of millions of street children worldwide”.

It is a worldwide problem seen in most parts of the world. For example, Germany faces this problem in different forms (Stodulka, 2015). Children are still visible on streets of urban industrial areas in many European countries. Many of these children are involved in drug use and gangs (Howell, 2018).

It is estimated that over 10 million children worldwide live without proper homes (UNICEF, 2007). Street children are a problem in different parts of the world. UNICEF estimates up to 40 million are in Latin America. In Aracaju, Brazil, there were an estimated 14,560 street children. India has about 18 million, and 40 million (Luka, 2006). In Pakistan in 2009, it was estimated to have “7,000 in Lahore, 5,000 in Peshawar, 3,000 in Rawalpindi, and 2,500 in Quetta. Most of these children survive on the streets during the day and go home at night”, (Rana HR, 2008).

In most developing countries, street children are a result of socio-economic issues. “For example, in India, about 80 % of street children are boys aged 8-10 years old” (Khalid, 2015) . “These children sometimes migrate with their parents, but the need to survive forces them to work on the streets, parents or guardians are sometimes too old to support their families, so children end up on the streets, increasing the number of street children” (Sheridan Bartlett, 2016) .

In Africa, countries like Nigeria have “a large number of children living on the streets”, (Odekumwe, 2018). Street youth can often be found living under bridges, in markets, and in buildings under construction (Abari et al, 2013). The presence of street children in African society was not observed before interaction with Europeans. This is because African societies practiced an extended family life style where children could live with any family member within the society. Therefore, a parent’s

death, poverty, or family problems would not affect a child's future. They could easily move to another family member's home, like an aunt, or grandparent, and receive the necessary care. Due to this extended family structure, "children had no reason to go to urban areas, so there were no street children", (MEINCK F. et al., 2015).

In Ethiopia, a report by the ministry of Labor and Social Affairs stated that "Addis Ababa had around 24,000 homeless people in 2018; approximately 10,500 street children and 13,500 homeless adults" (Affairs, 2018). "Street children in Ethiopia may be seen during school hours, collecting garbage and working in small shops to earn money for themselves and their families" (Dewo, 2015) .

In Cairo and Alexandria, a rapid assessment estimated around 3,000,000 children on the streets. "This rapid increase in street children in Egypt is believed to be a result of the political instability in recent years" (Nada, 2010).

East Africa also reports a large number of street children. In Rwanda in 2016, "there were 102,000 street children" (UNICEF, 2015). Tanzania had "437,500 street children" (Joe. et al 2013), and Kenya was estimated to have "over 300,000 street children" (Awor, 2007) .

Uganda has one of the largest young populations globally, with over 70% of its 42 plus million people under 18 years, and more than 52% under 15 years. With focus on children by the Child and Family Protection Unit, the population of children living on the street is increasing. However, the general total of these children is not known ( Human Rights Watch, 2020).

Unattended children are often seen on the streets of many Ugandan cities like Kampala, Masaka, Mbarara, Ntungamo, Kisoro, and Kabale. These children fend for themselves to survive. They are considered street children (SC) because “they spend most of their time on the streets without supervision” (Slesnick.N, 2004) ,living on the streets deprives them of essential rights like education, health care, proper care, and protection from adults.

### **1.1.2 Theoretical perspective**

This Chapter’s theoretical frame work is based on the attachment Theory, developed by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth (1973). This theory suggests that a child needs to form an emotional and physical connection with someone to feel stable and secure enough to take risks. This promotes personality growth and development (Stubbs, 2018). Bowlby initially developed the theory in the context of child development, which depends on a strong relationship with an adult or primary care giver, like a parent. This relationship provides the foundation for a child’s emotional development (Merchant, 2018). Children need to grow up under the care of parents or guardians. Children under the care of parents, experience love, happiness, care, and a sense of worth. It is essential to provide care for children rather than letting them live alone (Rameshni, 2017).

Ainsworth and colleagues (1978) expanded Bowlby’s (1973) definition of “attachment and identified and categorized different types of behavioral attachment styles”. These attachment styles are: 1) secure attachment, 2) insecure-avoidant attachment, 3) insecure-ambivalent attachment, and 4) disorganized-disoriented attachment (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Main & Solomon, 1986; 1990).

In a secure relationship, the parent or care giver pays attention to the child's needs. According to Tarabulsky and colleagues (Tarabulsky et al, attachment - based intervention for maltreating families, 2008, p. 323) , “a secure child who has received consistent, sensitive, and attentive care is able to balance exploring their environment and being dependent” (p. 323).

In insecure-avoidant relationships, the child avoids the parent or caregiver and does not rely on them for comfort. In insecure-ambivalent attachment, the child shows resistance and conflict with the parent or acts immature to get the care giver's attention. (Tarabulsky et al, attachment - based intervention for maltreating families, 2008, p. 323). The fourth attachment style, disorganized-disoriented, includes children who cannot rely on the parent or care giver for comfort and protection. The parent or care giver of disorganized-disoriented child acts strangely when near the child. disorganized-disoriented, includes children who cannot depend on the parent or caregiver for comfort and protection. The parent or caregiver of a” disorganized-disoriented child demonstrates atypical responses to infant signals and behaves in a frightening manner when near a child”. (Tarabulsky et al, 2008). Researchers have found that “physically abused or neglected children are more likely to have insecure attachment than children who have not experienced abuse or neglect” (Carlson et al, 1989). Several researchers have also shown that disorganized attachment is most common among children who have been mistreated (Barnett, Carlson et al., & Cicchetti).

The attachment figure is usually the responsible adult, who does not have to be the child's parent. This care giver must be a responsible adult who is sensitive and responsive to the child's social interactions. The role of the parent evolves to meet the specific needs of the attached child. This role is directly linked to the attachment and

provides consistent support during the early years. It continues as the child grows, even when they interact with the outside world (Johnson et al, 2015).

Children who are closely supervised by adults develop a sense of responsibility for the future. To children on the street, it is a different experience because they miss the love of responsible care givers and guardians in their lives. They often lack important guidance and support during their childhood (Cassidy et al, 2016).

Parents and guardians play an important part in shaping their children's behavior patterns. This development is supported by adults who provide for the child's growth. This growth must be guided, as children learn through development. "The lack of close supervision or support from parents or guardians often leads to children living on the streets" (Stubbs, 2018)

Street children find themselves working under un-bearable conditions in order to earn money to survive, for example, by begging or carrying luggage. They miss school. This violates the rights outlined in Ugandan Constitution. (*Everyone has the right to education and should be able to access it*). This right is hard to achieve when a child is not watched by adults (Asante et al, 2014)

This theory is important to this study because it acknowledges that care givers help children grow and develop. It says parents or guardians must provide for children's needs to ensure they develop well. However, street children struggle on their own to earn a living. These children, according to the theory, require good parenting and in situations where parents become neglectful of their children, they end up making reckless decisions due to lack a responsible care giver that can become their source of security and refuge.

### **1.1.3 Conceptual Background**

Home environment factors are political, economic and social elements within and outside a home that impact negatively or positively the well-being of an individual. In this study, home factors like household poverty, child abuse by care givers, and child neglect contribute to children ending up on the streets. When children believe the streets offer a better life, they are drawn to them, which creates difficult conditions and many problems. Children in poverty face daily challenges like hunger, illness, and insecurity. They are also more likely to struggle with school and behavior (Maholmes, 2012).

This study highlights the negative experiences of street children. These experiences can be dangerous if not addressed by government authorities. Providing guidance, counseling, and support in rehabilitation centers and remand homes is crucial.

When children on the street are rehabilitated, guided and counseled accordingly, some of the children can become resourceful and important people in future and act as role models to the hopeless children globally. This can be done through providing them with education in primary and secondary schools, tertiary institutions such as colleges, and universities as well as vocation and technical institutions.

This study brings out the information on home environment factors that influenced children's decision to come to the street in Kabale municipality, their life experiences, and the recommendations given by the researcher to enlighten the different beneficiaries on the urgency to stop the street children problem not only in the area of study but also globally.

#### 1.1.4 Contextual Background

(Abari et al, 2013) explained that “the issue of street children in African society was not seen before interaction with Europeans, African societies used to practice extended family life”, where children could live with any family member. If a parent died, or if there was poverty or abuse in the family, a child could easily move to another family member, like an uncle, aunt, or grandparent. They would receive everything they needed. Because of this, children did not need to desert their homes in search of survival on the street (MEINCK F. et al., 2015).

The exposure of Africans to European culture diluted African societies that began to adopt the western way of only minding about themselves yet there are many vulnerable people in need of a shoulder to lean on. Consequently, the African tradition of the extended family started to decline. This change has contributed to “the presence of unattended children on urban streets, who are left to find ways to survive” (Crittenden, 2017).

The issue of street children requires special attention due to growing socio-economic challenges. In “South Africa, especially Johannesburg, providing education to street children is limited due to increased migration from rural areas to cities” (Nkomo, 2015)

East Africa also faces a significant population of Street children. the consortium of non-government organizations in Uganda suggests that, “the population of street children has increased to 10,000 recently represented by 70% increment. According to UNICEF report on street children, (UNICEF, 2016), “In Rwanda, there were 102,000

street children in 2016 and 437.500 street children in Tanzania”, (Joel et al, 2013) stated that “Kenya was estimated to host more than 300.000 of street children”.

In Uganda, an estimated 8,000 street children were present, with 4,000 in Kampala, 800 in Mbale, and 500 in Jinja, with the rest in other urban areas. Uganda provides little support for these children, and few organizations exist to help them, leaving many abandoned. (Mwebaze, 2007) noted that “Street children in Uganda are like sheep without shepherds”. Despite a lack of recent research on street children in Uganda, literature suggests that “poverty, hunger, insecurity, child abuse, domestic violence, the death of a parent (or both), the need for income, inability to attend school, a few children’s willful deviance, parental un employment, illiteracy and housing problems lead children to the streets” (Oloko et al., 1999). This impacts negatively not only on the children’s growth and development but also to the entire nation socially, politically and economically.

A report by (Retrack, 2018) noted that “street children are commonly found on Kampala Road, at constitutional square, at traffic lights in Wandegaya, near Shoprite supermarket, near Sheraton hotel where they beg from passersby and also practice pick pocketing”. Unattended children live on the streets of many Ugandan Cities and Towns like Kampala, Masaka, Mbarara, Ntungamo, Kabale, and Kisoro and they must fend for themselves to survive. The presence of un attended children on the streets of major cities and towns in Uganda is proof that the problem of children leaving homeless in Uganda exists and requires urgent attention from all stake holders to provide remedy to the problem. Reluctance by all stakeholders in addressing this issue of concern possess a threat not only to the family unit but to the stability of not only a country but to the entire world.

In Kabale, street children mainly loom streets, market centers, and outside supermarkets where they expect people to donate either money or food stuffs to them through begging.

The number of children increases every year. This problem needs a serious solution to either end it completely or reduce it, because children are essential for a nation's development when they are well catered for and have the necessary skills to do productive work. However, they may struggle if they are left without proper care.

A recent study in Kabale District showed that Kabale has a significant number of street children. Approximately 300 children out of 15000 street children in Uganda are in Kabale (Wilfred Arinda Nsheeka, 6 July 2019), with the rest in other urban areas.

The study found that street children increase security threats, with 23 suspects charged with various offences. These offences included disorderly conduct, possession of opium, drug miss- use, and criminal trespass, in an operation led by the police commander, (Watchdog Uganda, 2018). Therefore, there is a need to help these children become productive citizens. Several Organizations in Kabale, like Community Based Organizations, claim to assist street children. However, an assessment of these efforts shows that most focus on the symptoms rather than the root causes of the problem (SFRP Draft, 2005).

Even with these efforts, street children are still seen in Kabale town. This prompted the researcher to investigate whether home environment factors contribute to the street children problem in Kabale Municipality.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

According to (UBOS, 2024) ,census data indicates that 22.2 million out of 45.9 million people are children. Uganda has a very young population, with 50.5 % of the population being children under 17 years, (UNFPA Uganda, 2024). Monica Muhumuza, senior Kabale district probation officer confirmed that Kabale is one of the districts with high street children's numbers in Kigezi region. She was quick to high light that the district has a population of over 40,000 vulnerable children. In Kabale, street children can be found around supermarkets begging for money, around garbage collection centers in search of food left overs and loitering around town. This problem poses a big threat not only to the community but to the street children themselves. The family, which is supposed to be the bedrock of children's welfare and protection, is today becoming a major cause of the problem of street children. Parents are directly and indirectly sending their children into the streets to beg, steal or engage in petty trade, children are leaving their homes to escape household poverty, physical abuse and child neglect because of the breaking up of family structures.

Despite Governments efforts, like establishing remand homes such as Kabale Remand Home, the work of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), such as children's rescue centers like the Shepherd Center Kabale, Grace Villa, and Amasiko Street Children Project in Kabale, the problem of street children continues. This issue requires solutions from the Government, NGOs, and the community, who must create effective strategies to address the problem. Therefore, this study was done to investigate how child abuse, household poverty and child neglect lead children to the street in Kabale town.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

To investigate how child abuse, household poverty and child neglect lead children to the street in Kabale Municipality.

### **1.4 objective of the study**

1. To investigate child abuse on street children in Kabale Municipality.
2. To investigate household poverty on street children in Kabale Municipality.
3. To assess child neglect on street children in Kabale Municipality.

### **1.5 Research Questions.**

1. How does child abuse lead to street children in Kabale Municipality?
2. How does household poverty lead to street children in Kabale Municipality?
3. How does child neglect lead to street children in Kabale Municipality?

### **1.6 Justification of the study.**

Based on the increasing number of street children worldwide, particularly in Uganda, where they are considered a security risk. Addressing this issue is crucial not only for the individual child but also for the entire nation. Street children often face immediate consequences, and the results can vary. Therefore, this study focused on how home environment factors led to street children in Kabale Municipality. This understanding is crucial for planning support for these children and getting more good Samaritans on board to help street children become useful people not only to their lives but to the community in general.

### **1.7 Significance of the study.**

The study's findings highlight specific reasons that lead to street children in Kabale Municipality. The results may help scholars by providing evidence for their research. The study could also encourage further research on topics about children.

Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development and other Organizations may use research findings to create policies, strategies, programs, projects, and assessment tools to address the issues contributing to street children problem in Uganda. Organizations that provide funding to disadvantaged people may make good use of research findings to plan on how they can provide charity services to the intended recipients after getting adequate information on street children.

Finally, this research gives the researcher knowledge and experience in conducting reliable research which certifies that one has satisfactorily full filled the requirement for him/her to be awarded a certificate in any field of higher learning.

### **1.8 Scope of the study**

#### **1.8.1 Content Scope**

This research investigates home environment factors and street children in Kabale Municipality, Kabale District. It focuses on how child abuse, household poverty, and child neglect lead children to the street.

#### **1.8.2 Geographical scope**

The study area is Kabale Municipality in south western part of Uganda. It is an administrative sub-region within Kabale District. Kabale is primarily inhabited by the Bakiga, Banyankole and Banyarwanda, with smaller populations from tribes like the Baganda, Acholi, Luo, and Bafumbira. The most common languages are Rukiga-Runyankole, with

some English spoken especially by educated individuals, as well as Rufumbira and Luganda to a lesser degree. The Municipality is divided into three divisions: Northern, Southern, and Central. Residents of Kabale Municipality are involved in activities such as trade and farming on the surrounding hills, and some work as public servants. The municipality is 2,000 meters (6,600ft) above sea level. The coordinates are: Latitude 1°15'45.9" S (-1.2627400) and Longitude 29 ° 59'17.2" E (29.9881200).

### **1.8.3 Time Scope**

This study utilized information from 2015 - 2022 (seven years) to gather current information on how environment factors affect the number of children on the streets of Kabale municipality

### **1.9 operational definitions of terms**

For this study, the following terms will have these meanings:

**Factor:** Oxford Dictionary, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition (2008) defines a factor as “something that influences other things negatively or positively.

**Influence:** Oxford Dictionary, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition (2008) defines influence as “the power to make other people agree with an idea”. In this study, influence is what makes someone change the way or the stand he /she previously had on something or an idea to something else.

**Home:** A home is a place where a person can live comfortably, rest and keep their belongings for the time a person wishes to stay there.

**Home environment.** This refers to the physical and psychological factors that affect a person’s living conditions.

**Street Children.** This refers to individual's male or female who decide to find refuge on the street due to different reasons known to them.

**A child on the street.** This refers to a child who spends time on the street but returns home at night to sleep but can also spend nights on the street due to poverty, child abuse at home and being overcrowded at home.

**Family.** Refers to a social unit that has someone heading it and with members related by blood or united by marriage and where children are born and brought up.

**Family Violence:** this refers to any form of abuse inflicted on one of the family members in form of inappropriate beatings, forcing a partner into sex intercourse and harassment with an intention to cause pain or harm the victim physically or psychologically which is socially unacceptable.

**Child:** This refers to any person under the age regarded as maturity according to the laws of a given country.

**Child abuse:** This refers to treating the child unfairly through inappropriate punishments, intimidation and harassment and with coercive force to weaken the child and render him/her helpless.

**Child neglect:** This refers to reluctance by the primary care giver of the child to offer him/her the basic needs of life.

**Poverty:** poverty refers to a condition where someone has no reliable source of income to enable him/her access the basic needs required for decent living.

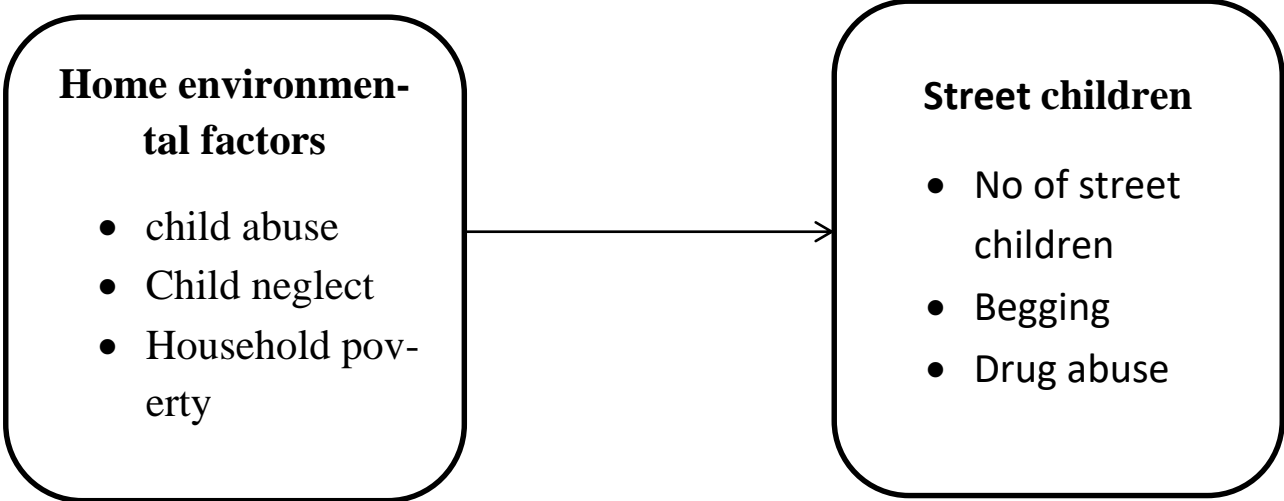
**Urban area:** Refers to an area that is geographically regarded to as a town or city

**1.10 Conceptual frame work model**

A conceptual frame work is a model designed to help the researcher develop and present the context for studying the research problem. It acts as a map for understanding the relationship between the study variables and to communicate the relationship (Kombo,K.D.and Tromp, 2006). The frame work is summarized in a diagram that shows the variables and their possible relationships. It shows the relationship of the variables being studied and helps to keep the research focused on the study’s goals.

**Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework**  
Independent variables (I.V)

Dependent variable (D.V)



**Based on Attachment theory (1973) and modified by the researcher, 2024**

According to Fig 1.1, the conceptual frame work demonstrates how the independent variables such as child abuse, child neglect and household poverty pave way for children to live on the street, beg from people and abuse drugs. A researcher argues that children are pushed to streets because of the Unfavorable home environment. More children are attracted to the streets if they anticipate better life on the streets than

at home. This anticipation and rational calculation results into many children observed onto the streets, begging, and engaging in drug abuse. It is very unfortunate that while children decide to make the street their home, they resort to sniffing glue, smoking marijuana, engaging in other behaviors like prostitution, stealing, being used by other gangs to commit murder on people suspected of having money especially at night. All these crimes do not better their lives but rather exposes them to self-destruction, something that would have been avoided had their care givers and parents taken positive measures to have them retained in their homes.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

A review of literature from journal articles, newspapers about home environment factors and street children aided the study. This chapter covers both theoretical and practical information. The review focused on three objectives: to investigate child abuse. Household poverty, and child neglect among street children in Kabale town. A research gap, based on the literature review, was also presented.

#### 2.1.0 Theoretical scope

The theoretical scope of this study is based on the attachment theory.

#### 2.1.1 Attachment theory.

The researcher explains the theory which underpins the study to analyze the research problem. The study was guided by attachment theory developed by John Bowlby (1969), as a psychological model that explains the importance of early bonds between children as infants and their parents/care givers, and how these bonds help the children to shape their future relations. It posits that when children are consistently attached to their responsible care givers, children enjoy social emotional development that is healthy while child-caregiver relationships that are not secure can lead to difficulties in later relationships. Biologically, attachment is a means of survival. It is the proximity seeking behavior to a caregiver by a child when he or she experiences discomfort like fear, pain, is hungry or feels cold and therefore runs to the care giver for comfort and security. Once a child is attached securely to their caregivers, they are able to use their caregivers as secure base for their safety. (Howe, David, 2005)

Attachment styles best explain how care givers nurture or push away their children to the street. The styles describe how individuals form and maintain close relationships.

Secure attachment; children with a secure attachment style feel comfortable with intimacy and autonomy. They tend to have positive views of themselves and others, and they are able to form healthy, and trusting relationships.

Insecure attachment styles; these include anxious-preoccupied, dismissive-avoidant, and fearful-avoidant.

Anxious -preoccupied; individuals with this style crave intimacy and closeness but fear abandonment. They may be overly reliant on others for validation and struggle with anxiety in relationships.

Dismissive -avoidant: people with this style value independence and may suppress their emotions. They tend to downplay the importance of close relationships and may have difficulty with intimacy.

Fearful-avoidant (Disorganized): this style is characterized by a mix of wanting closeness and fearing rejection. Individuals with this style may have negative view of themselves and others and may experience confusion and inconsistency in their relationships. Understanding attachment styles can help individuals become more self-aware and build healthier relationships, while early attachment experiences can have a lasting impact, it is also possible to develop more secure attachment patterns through self-awareness and conscious effort. (Ashley Davis, PhD, January 14, 2021)

The researcher asserts that attachment theory provides a position for looking into the attachment patterns of street children, such as secure, insecure-avoidant, insecure-

ambivalent, or disorganized. For street children, who may have experienced household poverty, neglect, and child abuse from caregivers, attachment theory aids researchers and social work practitioners understand how early life experiences contribute to their current challenges.

## **2.2 Child abuse.**

Child abuse includes physical abuse, emotional/psychological abuse, and sexual abuse. These types of abuse by a parent or Caregiver harm the child as explained below;

**Physical Abuse.** In Texas, physical abuse is defined as “a physical injury that causes significant harm to a child”. It also includes threatening to harm a child (Fam.Code & 261.001, 2005). signs of physical abuse can include multiple bruises at different stages of healing, unexplained injuries that do not match the child’s age (like scrapes on newborn’s knees), and injuries on areas of the body usually covered by clothing (like the thighs and chest) (Saisan, Smith, & Segal, 2011). Other things to consider are the child’s age, where the injury is located, the pattern of the injury, and the reasons given for the injuries.

**Sexual Abuse.** Texas law defines sexual abuse as “sexual conduct harmful to a child’s mental, emotional, or physical well-being, including offenses like continuous sexual abuse of a young child, indecency with a child, sexual assault, or aggravated assault”. (Fam.Code & 261.001, 2005) the definition also includes “failing to prevent sexual conduct that harms a child, encouraging a child to engage in sexual acts like trafficking or prostitution and child pornography” (Fam.Code & 261.001, 2005).

Signs of sexual abuse can be “physical and behavioral, such as acting out sexually, having trouble walking or sitting, and pregnancy” (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2013).

**Emotional Abuse.** Texas law defines emotional abuse as “mental or emotional harm to a child that results in a noticeable and significant problem in the child’s growth, development, or mental health (Fam.Code & 261.001, 2005) . It also includes allowing a child to be in a situation where they experience emotional abuse. Humiliating a child in public, constantly threatening a child, or ignoring physical contact with a child are all forms of emotional abuse (Saisan et al., 2011). The effects of emotional abuse can be harmful and last a long time (Spertus, Yehuda, Wong, Halligan, & Seremetis, 2003). (Lau, Kruse, & Morse, 2009) noted that it is difficult to know children who are emotionally abused and as a result, emotional abuse cases are not reported. children who are emotionally abused have inferiority complex, suffer depression, make attempts to kill themselves and do not concentrate in all things they do and they prefer to remain reserved. These signs might be different for “boys and girls”. “Girls who are experiencing emotional abuse may be more withdrawn” while boys “may act out with aggressive behavior” (Lau et al., 2009).

Some children die on the street due to the violence inflicted on them but end up not being discovered because some violence is done in silence. The worst thing is that some children when abused, find it hard reporting their abusers due to fear that those reported would retaliate on them. This has made children in some families enslaved in violence and abuse for fear of being chased from their homes.

Child victims might feel ashamed, thinking they deserved the violence. Because of fear, threats from abusers and unsupportive environment, children often would not talk about it.

Estimates from a survey done by (ANPPCAN, 2013) indicates that 10,000 children increased on the street representing a 70% increment since 1993. Approximately, 16 new children move to the streets of Kampala on a daily basis (UNICEF, 2015).

The researcher noticed abuse was often reported. Children shared their abuse experiences during the interviews, providing valuable insights into abuse by biological parents, step-parents, and guardians.

### **2.3 Household Poverty**

Poverty is a major reason for children living on the streets. Africa is currently a continent with extreme poverty. This poverty forces children to work on the streets to survive. Low household incomes are a catalyst to family instability and rural urban migration. Young people desert their villages to urban areas and cities hoping for a better future (Kopoka, April 19th 2000)

Poverty means one's inability to afford food, housing, medical treatment, clothes to put on, as well as inability to fund one's education. According to the study done by (Forastleri, 1997) , he stresses that lack of adequate income, efforts by Government to develop the living conditions and housing structures of people cause child abuse. He pointed out that a parent without money, lacks capacity to provide his children with food, clothes, shelter, school supplies, or health care. Consequently, children leave home to find safety, protection, help, and away to survive on the streets. This

informed the reasons for investigating how family poverty aids children to the street in Ugandan urban centers.

Children living in poverty face many challenges and problems every day. They perform poorly in class and their behaviors are not to the standard, ( Maholmes, 2012). Increased stress is known factor through which poverty affects development. Studies done by (Rand D. Conger et al., 2010) show that poverty increases parent's stress and hurts their parenting skills.

According to the study done by (Nikulina et al., 2011) poverty and child neglect have a close relationship. This is because children with life experiences about poverty tend to always experience the stress disorders from the trauma, they underwent under unfavorable living conditions. A study done by (Nikulina et al., 2011) , the academic performance of children from poor family backgrounds tend to lead to low outcomes. When this problem is severe, frequent, or lasts a long time, children can experience toxic stress. This is stress that lasts too long and can disrupt the brain's development and emotional systems. It can also harm their thinking, social skills, and emotional growth (NSCDC, 2005/2014).

#### **2.4 Child neglect**

Child neglect is the most common violation of children's rights in Uganda. Neglect happens when a parent does not do what they should for a child. Denying children their basic needs render them helpless and desperate and this exposes them to anything that can corrupt their minds and thinking. Child abandonment by parents at any level violates the rights of a child. Some parents reach an extent of encouraging their own children to strive for survival without thinking twice on how and where their children can find survival at an early stage. Children whose parents have separated suffer

at the expense of their parent's ignorance, this is because some elders make decisions to deny mothers the right to take care and nurse their children at an early age and due to lack of information of the law, some mothers remain silent not knowing that they have the right to be with their young children to at least after a certain period of time as different laws from different countries may stipulate. They are often abused by step mothers. Mothers always do not know that the court can grant them custody of their children (ANPPCN, 2019). In Uganda, being mature used to mean being able to do certain things and having a mindset defined by the adults and parents in the community (Kelly 2012, Ndegemo et al. 2018). What it meant to be a child or an adult was how others in the community saw you, rather than your age (Evans 2012, Seruwagi 201)

According to the researcher, no child would wish to stay away from a home when life is good under favorable living environment. Children resort to living on the street as a result of conditions at home unfavorable to bear. Abuse of children's rights such as being neglected by their care givers, lack of food to eat, dismissal from school due to inability to pay school fees, harsh and corporal punishments coupled with harassment and humiliation propel children to become homeless on the street. However, if children on the street are rehabilitated and re-shaped by right people, they have the potential to exploit their abilities to become responsible and resourceful citizens.

#### **2.4 Research gap**

The following research gaps have been identified from the already existing literature. Most of the researches done on street children focused mainly on the general causes of street children not specifically on home environment factors something that in-

formed my decision to come up with the given research topic. This is because the stability or instability of the home determines human behavior in the social environment. The researcher is not convinced that studies by different scholars looked deeply at how home environment factors influence children to leave home and stay on the street but rather put emphasis on other general factors that push children to the street.

This research addresses a gap in knowledge by looking at home environment factors that lead to street children in Kabale Municipality.

### **2.5 criticisms of the literature review.**

The researcher looked at the literature and analyzed it to find its strengths and weaknesses. This is important because not all published research is reliable or scientifically sound. Argument and interpretation of data can be biased. One possible strength is that children's choices are influenced by the situation. Factors like their feelings, social setting, environment, and how choices are presented can lead them to the street.

One criticism is that some research does not consider actions that are not self-serving, like helping others when there is no benefit to the individual. For example, they do not think about how ethics and values might affect children's decisions to go to the street.

The researcher put too much blame on parents and guardians for not caring about their children's needs yet Some children from wealthy families also end up on the street due to other factors, such as pressure from peers, disobedience, and dropping out of school, regardless of the care provided to them by their care givers and parents.

Another criticism is that children being on the street was looked at only with negative lenses yet some children out of the financial challenges faced at home decide to go to the street to look for some gainful employment to take care of their siblings in situations where they are orphans and return back to their homes in the evening after earning some money.

## **2.6 Summary of the literature review.**

In conclusion therefore, the sensitivity of children deserting their homes to the street remains one of the issues of great concern to the society, country and the world at large. In this view, there is need to always see them as important people who can become great and useful professionals in the future when well taken good care of by the responsible people and it is noted that future research should make free education to reach out to vulnerable and disadvantaged children at all levels so that they are able to compete favorably with other children.

Children on the street do not like and enjoy the life and the problems they face out there, it is due to unavoidable circumstances that children find themselves on the street. Parents and guardians should always engage their children and be friendly to their children so that those children can freely open up to them on issues happening in their lives and good parenting practices should be emphasized by the parents. Children are the future of tomorrow and therefore, how they are brought up determines what the future shall provide. It is therefore incumbent on the primary care givers, parents and guardians to groom their children with good morals and good discipline, also religious institutions and government should play a big role in counseling those in turbulent waters and government coming up with good policies on children rights to provide equity to all.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter briefly introduces the research methodology adopted to find out about home environment factors and street children in Kabale Municipality. This chapter discusses the research design, the study population, sample size determination, sampling methods, methods of data collection, the research tools, and the strategies used to ensure validity and reliability of the data, and ethical considerations.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The study chose a descriptive research design to describe the population accurately. It aimed at understanding the “what”, Where, how and when” of the problem under study. This design helped to gather factual information for describing the situation. It also helped the researcher understand the subject being studied by observing it. It involved the integration of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches that allowed the researcher to explore the life experiences of children on the street through in-depth interviews, observation and focus group discussion giving the researcher knowledge on understanding the factors that lead children to the street in Kabale Municipality, while quantitative approach would aid in generation of statistical data.

#### **3.2 Target population.**

This is the entire group of street children that the researcher aimed at drawing his findings to represent the larger population of street children in Kabale Municipality.

The study population included street children in Kabale Municipality, both those living on the street and those under the care of street children’s organizations. Participants

were sampled using snow ball sampling technique where initial participants helped in referring others which helped in mobilizing others to participate in the study which would be difficult applying traditional sampling techniques since marginalized groups are difficult to reach. Purposive sampling technique was used to sample participants to participate in the study from street children’s organizations since they were already known.

A target population of 320 individuals from Kabale Municipality aged 10 -20 years old comprised of children living on the street and children living in street children rehabilitation centers formed the basis of study.

**Table 3:1 Sampling Methods**

<b>Target Population</b>	<b>Sampling Methods</b>
Children living on the street	Snow ball sampling
Shepherd Center Kabale	Purposive sampling
Alongside Africa	Purposive sampling
Grace Villa sanctually for girls	Purposive sampling

In table 3:1, non-probability sampling techniques were used to sample individuals staying within street children centers and individuals staying on the street respectively. snow ball sampling was used to determine the sample from individuals living on the street where initial individuals helped in recruiting and mobilizing fellow individuals to participate in the study, this technique was useful since street children being one of the marginalized groups of people would make it difficult applying traditional techniques to trace them to participate in the study since they always shift from location to another , and purposive sampling method was used to sample individuals from

street children organizations to participate in the study. This technique was found viable since children in street children’s organizations are already known by their characteristics such as their age, gender, and education.

### 3.3 sample size determination and selection.

Study population was 320 individuals. This number was chosen to represent entire street children population in Kabale Municipality basing on those in street children’s organizations and those living on the street. The researcher used krejcie and morgan 1970 sample size formula to calculate sample size of participants to participate in the actual study which gave sample size of 175 individuals from which my study was based. Sample size of 175 individuals was found viable due to its cost efficiency, time saving due to short time allocated for completion of the study and its practicality.

The population of street children was reached at by stratifying the number of children according to their locations and application of krejcie and morgan 1970 sample size calculation formula to determine the sample size, dividing the respective sample numbers by the total sample size to get the percentage of sampled individuals per location to participate in the actual study.

**Table 3.2: Population by location and sample size table -Kabale Municipality**

Location	Population	Sample size	Percentage of sampled individuals per location
Kabale municipality streets	24	24	14
Shepherd center Kabale	51	30	17
Grace villa	215	95	54
Alongside Africa, Kabale	30	26	15
TOTAL	320	175	100%

**Source: Field data, 2023.**

According to data in table 3.2, individuals living under the care of street children organizations formed the biggest number of respondents since they were easily mobilized, supervised and under some rules and regulations for easy management, while participants living on the street formed the smallest number. This was because, being a marginalized group of individuals without any management and direction, it is difficult to find all of them in one location, they keep on moving from one location to another in search of survival and loiter around the towns major super markets begging for handouts like food and money and also around garbage collection and dumping centers for food left overs.

**Table 3.3 study sample by gender**

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	67	49	49	49
Female	69	51	51	100
Total	136	100.0	100.0	

**Source: Primary Data, 2023**

According to table 3.3, the researcher looked at the gender categories of individuals who participated in the actual study from the selected locations where street children are more pronounced. This would help in providing more insight and information to the researcher on the gender category of individuals that is more pronounced among

children living on the street and children living under the care of street children organizations.

### **3.4 Data Collection Methods and Instruments.**

#### **3.4.1 Method.**

Information was gathered qualitatively to understand in depth the life experiences of children living on the street and how they perceive different things in life. Focus group discussion to gather detailed information from the respondents themselves through discussion and observation of the respondent's behaviors naturally without having any interference on them were used.

#### **3.4.2 Research instruments**

Research instruments identified for this study were recognized to successfully gather the data necessary to address the research objectives. The primary instruments selected included questionnaire and focus group discussion.

##### **(a) Questionnaire**

The collection of information from children living in street children's organizations was done using a self-administered questionnaire with closed ended questions requiring a yes or no response which was submitted to respective street children's organizations to be administered to individual respondents of which they would be collected after being responded to. This was chosen since most of the individuals attain education in primary, secondary, tertiary, technical institutions and university with support from NGO's and therefore, conversant with the questionnaire.

### **(b) Focus groups discussion.**

Key informant guide; a discussion was carried out with children living on the streets of Kabale town in a group of 24 individuals with the help of a moderator where they responded to the questions asked and gave their opinions and experiences related to the study.

Under this data collection technique which is qualitative, children on the street were mobilized by their leader using snow ball sampling method, and children were gathered in one place and interviewed in two groups of 12 individuals to respond to the researcher's given topic in depth. This technique served to get more insights and useful information on street children's life on the street through the sharing of their experiences. Due to the complexity of street children and their experiences, this technique helped in revealing to the researcher useful information that would not be gathered without the involvement of respondents providing answers to the questions asked and answered to, willingly and at ease.

### **(c) Observation**

This instrument helped the researcher in digging deep into the respondents' attitude towards the surroundings by carefully, observing their conduct and behavior without any interference. The researcher observed the respondents' actions on the sidelines by being non-participant in order for them not to understand what he was up to

## **3.5 Data Collection procedures**

The researcher acquired the necessary permission from Bishop Barham University College inform of well written authentic letter to submit to relevant authorities and

leaders to allow him conduct research in the study area. The researcher secured permission from local authorities in pursuit of his academic research.

The research traveled to different locations where he intended to collect data from to get their consent and authorization for the same cause.

In order to increase trust and be in position to collect data more confidently, the respondents were briefed on the reasons behind the activity of data collection to avoid mistrust and bias and the researcher assured respondents that he would ensure confidentiality of the information collected from them for only study purposes.

The researcher with the help of other colleagues carried out the process of interviewing, administering questionnaires, and organizing focus group discussion meetings.

### **3.6 Validity and Reliability of Questionnaire**

(Amin, M.E., 2005) defines validity as the level to which the instrument ascertains its intended purpose. The study used objective questions in the questionnaire. All tools like the self-administered questionnaire and focus group discussion were tested to find inappropriate questions. This improved the accuracy of the data collected.

Reliability Measures how consistently research instruments produce results (Mugenda, A., & Mugenda, O., 2003). Pre-testing was used to check the reliability of the research tools, including the wording, structure, and order of the questions. (Kothari, C.R., 2009) , stated that reliability is the consistency of measurement; a more reliable an instrument leads to more consistent results.

This pre-testing involved 10 respondents from the group under study. The respondents were chosen because it was appropriate. The aim was to improve the research tools so that the respondents targeted would have no trouble answering the questions.

### **3.7 Data analysis and presentation**

The analysis of data was done to discover meaningful insights and inform conclusions. Data was analyzed to explain the facts gathered, using themes from the goals of the study. The researcher could also quote the respondent's answers. In this study, data was analyzed using descriptive statistical method in order to summarize and interpret demographic and categorical data collected from surveys. This included calculation of percentages and frequencies to describe the characteristics of the sample and distribution of key variables.

The researcher sorted the information, developed categories, described data and summarized results in form of text and tables.

On the Qualitative part, participant's responses were edited to prevent any possibility of data loss, misinformation, and to ensure that data collected was uniform, consistent and easy to understand.

Quantitative data was organized, and statistical descriptions, like tables showing frequencies, were created for better presentation and reliability.

### **3.8 Limitations of the study**

During the process of conducting this research, the researcher experienced some limitations. The researcher met financial challenges for transport, airtime, stationary, typing and printing costs, power cut off, failure to meet respondents on agreed time and some respondents had already sniffed glue and not sober and therefore hide some

information. Since child abuse, poverty and child neglect are sensitive issues, the researcher met hiccups in getting accurate information. There was also a weather challenge where too much rain hindered movements of some respondents in the field.

### **3.9 Ethical Consideration**

The researcher upheld research ethics throughout the entire process of conducting research. This included securing clearance letter from the University which identified the researcher and his intended purpose.

The letter enabled the researcher to introduce himself to the relevant people and made it possible for him to gain cooperation during the study.

Ethical considerations included obtaining approval and ensuring voluntary participation. The researcher provided respondents with enough information about the intention of research, how the data collected would be used, and the level of participation required throughout the entire activity.

The researcher gave assurance to participants that their information and identities would be kept confidential without being exposed to other people. This would help in providing confidence to the respondents in the process of data collection without any doubts on the secrecy of their information provided to the researcher.

The researcher also ensured that respondents provided information without any coercion, bias, disrespect or force but rather voluntarily because coercing them would lead to providing un reliable information which would not lead to better research outcome.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

#### 4.0 Introduction

Analysis of findings under this chapter was collected from data gathered by interviewing different respondents about home environment factors and children on the street in Kabale Municipality. The topic of study guided the analysis organized into three sections: section one covered the social demographic characteristics of the respondents, section two covered the respondent's response rate, and section three tested the research objectives.

Analysis and presentation were guided by the research questions, which were based on research goals.

#### 4.1 Section one: social demographic characteristics of respondents.

Analyzing the respondents background information helps the researcher understand the study's concepts from the respondent's perspective (Kasekende, 2014).

The respondents came from rehabilitation centers and streets in Kabale Municipality. 151 respondents were from rehabilitation centers, and 24 were from the streets within Kabale town. The researcher analyzed the respondent's demographic characteristics, focusing on gender, age, Location, and education.

##### 4.1.1 Age of the respondents

The study explored distribution of children responses by age, and the results as shown below.

**Table 4.4: Age of Respondents**

<b>AGE OF RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>MALES</b>	<b>FEMALES</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>%</b>
1 - 12	20	24	44	32.4
12 -16	33	34	67	49.2
16 -20	14	11	25	18.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Data, 2023**

As indicated in table 4.4, from children interviewed about their age with respective age categories, 44 respondents represented by (32.4%) were aged between (1-12) and only 24 of them were females while 20 were males. These were the youngest. 67 (49.2%) were in the age bracket of (12-16) and 34 of these were females while 33 were males; 25 (18.4%) were in the age bracket of (16-20) and 11 of them were females while 14 were males. In all cases, female respondents dominated relatively compared to male respondents.

According to the researcher, female respondents dominated male respondents because female respondents are easy and flexible to deal with by organizations in an effort to support them due to their loyalty and respect to their superiors compared to male respondents who tend to defy rules set by their superiors and resilience to withstand different pressures.

#### 4.1.2 Education of Respondents

The level of education was very vital because of many reasons: in the first case, it gives a highlight between levels of understanding as reflected in the given responses. In most cases, educated peoples responses are more sensible compared to responses from illiterate respondents.

For instance, educated respondents interviewed by the researcher from street children's organizations who are in schools responded freely and with respect compared to respondents from the street especially those that were from garbage collection centers and supermarkets.

The education level of respondents was analyzed and findings demonstrated.

**Table 4.5: Education Level of children**

Education	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Primary	55	40	40	40
Secondary	40	30	30	70
Technical	3	2	2	72
Vocational	9	7	7	79
University	5	4	4	83
None	24	17	17	100
Total	136	100	100	

**Source: Field Data, 2023**

Research shows that 40 % of children are in primary level of education, 24 % are out of school, 30 % are in secondary level of education, 10 % are in technical institutions,

7 % are in vocational institutions while 4% are in universities. The findings imply that more of the responses were from young children in Primary. According to the researcher, young children are easily managed and controlled thus respecting and listening to their care givers /parents’ advice compared to older children especially the adolescents who tend to always defy the rules and do things as they wish.

#### 4.1.3 Distribution of respondents by location

Respondents found in the three organizations selected within Kabale Municipality formed the basis of study. Respondents were therefore drawn from all the four locations as demonstrated below.

**Table 4.6: Distribution of respondents by location and actual participants responses.**

Location	Targeted per location	Actual participants responses
Shepherd center	30	28
Alongside Africa	26	24
Grace villa	95	60
street	24	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>136</b>

**Source: field data July 2023.**

There were 28 respondents chosen from shepherd center out of 30 targeted, 24 respondents chosen from alongside Africa out of 26 targeted, 60 respondents chosen from Grace Villa out of 95 targeted and 24 respondents chosen from the street out of 24 targeted. Respondents from street children organization were chosen using purposive sampling approach while respondents living on the street were chosen using snow

ball sampling to choose individuals with capacity of providing valuable insights and information relevant to the study.

The researcher noticed that rehabilitation centers obtained most of the children because of services they provide to the children such as free education, medical care, talent development, shelter and clothes which are difficult for one to access while on the street.

#### 4.1.4 Distribution of respondents by Gender

Both Male and Female respondents were chosen during data collection. This is because the researcher wanted to ascertain whether the street children phenomenon involves both sexes.

**Table 4.7 Gender of Respondents**

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	67	49	49	49
Female	69	51	51	100
Total	136	100.0	100.0	

**Source: Primary Data, 2023**

With reference to table 4.7, the researcher indicates that female responses represented by 51% outnumbered male responses represented by 49%. 28 Male individuals

from shepherded center organization, 15 male individuals from Alongside Africa organization and 24 male individuals from the street totaling to 67 male individuals participated in the study, self-administered questionnaires were used on male individuals living in street children organizations, and focus group discussion and observation methods were used on male individuals living on the street while 60 female individuals from Grace villa sanctually and 9 female individuals from Alongside Africa totaling to 69 individuals participated in responding to the questions asked to them using self-administered questionnaires. The number of female respondents being taken care of by street children’s organizations was more than the number of male respondents. According to the researcher, street children organizations prefer taking care of females compared to males due to females’ ability and flexibility to conform to the rules and regulations set by organizations for easy management and administration.

#### 4.2 Section two: Response Rate

Determination of response rate was done to get the actual response rate on the self-administered questionnaires that were delivered to street children centers in order for children under their care to respond to the questionnaire.

**Table 4.8 Response Rate**

Categories of respondents	Participants expected responses	male	female	Actual participant responses	Actual participants responses
Shepherd center	30	28	0	28	20%
Alongside Africa	26	15	9	24	18 %
Grace villa	95	0	60	60	44%
Street	24	24		24	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>78%</b>

**Source: Field Data July, 2023**

As indicated by table 4.8, a total of 151 self-administered questionnaires were delivered to only individuals in street children centers and 112 questionnaires were returned answered represented, while all the questions asked to individuals living on the street through focus group discussion were responded to. This gives 78% response rate which is suitable and acceptable for the study.

### **4.3 Section three: Testing of research objectives**

#### **4.3.1 Child abuse.**

During the study, children were asked questions on indicators of child abuse and 20% attributed it to being denied food by guardians, 28 % attributed it to torture at home, 14% attributed it to being called abusive names by parents, 15% attributed it to intimidation and bullying by parents at home and lastly 23% attributed it to being denied education due to poverty.

**Table 4.9: Table showing indicators attributed to child abuse by respondents**

<b>Child abuse indicators</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Being denied food	28	20%
Torture at home	38	28%
Calling of abusive names by parents	19	14%
Intimidation and bullying by parents	20	15%
Denial of education	31	23%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field data, 2023**

Researcher findings indicate most of the respondents attributed torture at home as the leading indicator of being on the street, followed by denial of food and denial of education thus leading them to look for what to eat on the street, intimidation and bullying putting their lives at risk by abusive parents and therefore forcing them to look for friendly environments and peers outside their home environments and lastly calling of abusive names by parents and guardians who are supposed to provide them with a sense of well-being and security rather than setting up un favorable living conditions at home.

#### 4.3.2 Household poverty

Focus group discussion was conducted on children in one group to respond to questions regarding the meals they received at home to ascertain whether low or no incomes contributed to children being on the street in Kabale Municipality. Children were requested to respond to how often they received meals, 53% reported receiving only one meal daily, 16% reported receiving two meals, 21% reported receiving no meals (forcing them to seek help from friends and well-wishers), and only 10% reported receiving three meals.

**Table 4.10: Number of meals taken in a day**

<b>Number of meals</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
No meal	28	21%
One meal	72	53%
Two meals	22	16%
Three meals	14	10%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field data, 2023**

Questions were asked to respondents about the clothes they owned before coming to the street. The results indicate that 63 % of respondents owned at least a pair of clothes, 28 % of respondents owned two pairs of clothes, and 9 % of respondents owned three pairs.

Observation by the researcher indicates that most of the children owned only one pair of clothes most of which were dirty and torn. Many of the clothes were second -hand, tattered or oversized, and dirty suggesting they were donated to them. They said, “their clothes were dirty because washing them would wear them out quickly and could not easily replace their clothes due to poverty, and lack of soap to wash them”. The researcher, noted and observed that although the children left home to be on the street, life on the street was not any better for them.

**Table 4.11: Clothes owned by Children**

Pairs of clothes	Frequency	Percentage
One pair	85	63%
Two pairs	39	28%
Three pairs	12	9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field data, 2023**

### **4.3.3 Child neglect**

Respondents were asked about different indicators of child neglect that led them to the street and 14% of the respondents attributed it to lack of provision of medical attention by parents to children, 12% of the respondents attributed it to material deprivation by parents, 31% of the respondents attributed it to child abandonment, 28% of

the respondents attributed it to not being enrolled in school and 16% of the respondents attributed it to parents not paying attention to their concerns and personal needs. The researcher noted that most of the children were not enrolled in school as represented by 27% and this left them redundant and paved way for them to be on the street

**Table 4.12: child neglect indicators attributed to street children by respondents**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Medical attention by parents to children	19	14%
Material deprivation by parents	16	12%
Child abandonment	42	31%
Enrollment in school	37	27%
Paying attention to children concerns and needs	22	16%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field data, 2023**

#### **4.4 Summary**

Under this chapter, work presented covers introduction and demographic data. Unfavorable living conditions at home coupled with child abuse and neglect and house hold poverty orchestrated by parents/ primary care givers and guardians pushed children to the street yet had the care givers forged away forward to provide good parenting to their children, they would comfortably live in their homes and enjoy the care that reasonable parents provide to their children. For instance, respondents attributed child abuse as the main factor that led them to the street, 20% attributed it to being denied food, 26% to being tortured through corporal punishments, 16% to being called

abusive names, 18% to being intimidated and 20% to being denied access to education. All these violate the rights of children and every sane person should advocate for children who suffer all these injustices to find justice by all means.

Children are the leaders of tomorrow and should therefore be parented well in order for them to provide good results and emerge as the best products to guarantee safe communities and responsible citizens.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

This field research aimed to investigate home environment factors that force children to the street. The information collected shows that families deprived children of their rights. The researcher observed a similarity among factors at home that force children to the street in Kabale Municipality. Basing on the observations from information gathered, families, parents, and guardians who are supposed to provide good parenting and security have not done enough in Kabale regarding the street children menace. The researcher concludes that “everyone is on his own to the extent that some people have enough food to waste and dispose to garbage bins instead of providing it to the needy”. This explains why street children always loiter around garbage collection centers in search of left-over foods to feed on.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses home environment factors and street children in Kabale Municipality. It discussed and summarized child abuse, household poverty, and child neglect and collaborated the study findings with findings by earlier scholars.

#### 5.1 Discussion of findings

##### 5.1.1 Discussion of study findings on child abuse.

Data was collected on the first objective to investigate child abuse as a factor that leads children to the street children in Kabale Municipality. The researcher found that many respondents ended up on the street due to bad living conditions at home, including torture, denial of food, and access to education. 28% of the respondents reported torture, 20% reported being denied food and 23 attributed it to being denied education. These conditions drove children away from their homes to the streets for survival and freedom. Denial of education rendered them redundant and exposed them to peers on the street. Some of the respondents decried abnormal beatings and punishments by their parents for reasons such as not returning very early from fetching water. The researcher was deeply concerned to find that some children had scars from burns inflicted on them by parents and guardians.

For instance, a 16-year-old boy from Karugashe cell-Butobere in central division Kabale municipality said that “whenever, he asked for food from his guardian, he would first be subjected to hard labor on empty stomach and later would be given food late and even very little food”. Secondly, another 18-year-old boy respondent from Burambira in Bubare town council who sells scrap for survival said that “he left home after his parents died and his elder brother started mistreating him by caning him inappropriately, sold the properties the parents had left them with, refused to pay for his

school fees that made him drop out of school and ended up on the street to seek for safe haven and join his peers”. This aligns with a study done by (Forastleri, 1997) which found poverty, inadequate economic growth, and structural adjustment programs as contributors to child abuse.

### **5.1.2 Discussion of study findings on household poverty.**

Objective two of the study was to investigate how household poverty led children to the street in Kabale Municipality. Data was collected from respondents on how poverty led them to the streets. and respondents attributed it to many factors. Respondents attributed it to poor housing conditions, lack of food to eat, inadequate child care, lack of money to fund their education in schools and homelessness. Children were interviewed about the meals they received daily and, 53 % said they received one meal, 16% received two meals, 21% received no meals and only 10% received three meals. Poverty negatively impacted the respondent’s well- being, sometimes leading them to steal food due to hunger and starvation. This drove them to the streets to look for something to feed on. Children were also interviewed about the pairs of clothes they owned. In their response, 63% of the respondents indicated they had one pair of clothes, 28 % of the respondents had two pairs of clothes, and 9% had three pairs.

Most of the respondent’ physical appearance and way of dressing suggested poverty as the cause since most of the clothes worn were very dirty, in tatters and the over-size clothes suggested that friends and well-wishers donated the clothes to them. 17 of the respondents interviewed on education indicated they were out of school, 7 % of

the respondents indicated being in vocational institutions, 2% in Technical, 30 in secondary schools, 40 in primary schools while 4 % of the respondents indicated being in universities. It should be however, noted that those in education institutions are being helped by the organizations taking care of street children in Kabale Municipality like Alongside Africa org, the Shepherd Center Kabale and Grace Villa sanctually for girl's organization. The researcher observed that most of the children in primary level of education are young children aged between 1-12 years since young children are easy to parent, groom and tame as well as respecting their superiors. A study done by (Ratti, 2005) showed that 56% of the Kenyans depended on fifty Kenyan shillings daily and many families could not afford hence causing children to suffer. Some children come to the streets hoping to get enough food by begging and scavenging for leftovers and scrap to sell.

A study by (Gwegweni, 2016) ,noted that some children work on the streets to help their families, support themselves, or take care of their siblings. A 15-year-old Cameroonian boy from a polygamous home ran away after his mother got sick and could no longer work on the farm. He had no one to pay his school fees and they could not afford food, so he left home to find ways to survive.

### **5.1.3 Discussion of study findings on child neglect.**

On this third objective, respondents were asked questions and their responses showed child neglect as one of the factors contributing to street children; 12% of the respondents were deprived of things at home and not being allowed to tamper with anything at home, 14% of the respondents were denied medical attention, 27% of the respondents were not enrolled in school, 31% of the respondents were abandoned and 16% of

the respondents were not paid attention to by parents to address their concerns and needs. A 12-year-old boy from Buranga in Kamungaguzi sub-county ran away from home because whenever he told his father about his desire to go to school, he would be beaten and told to go and look for casual jobs in town and this angered him and prompted him to leave home at an early age. The researcher noted that respondents looked miserable especially the young ones. Most of the respondents were neglected not because they deserved the ill-treatment from the care takers but the needs and concerns of the children. A study done by (ANPPCN, 2019) showed that the rights of children were violated by their caregivers. By gender, females were more affected (53%) than males (46.1%). Generally, boys experienced beatings and physical punishment more often, while girls were more often victims of sexual abuse and educational neglect.

The researcher agrees that child abuse, child neglect, and household poverty significantly create a negative impact on the growth of children, development, hence affecting care giver and child relationship. The findings align with John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth's attachment theory which asserts that, "A child needs to have good relationship with primary care giver that strengthens their bond and creates child's security and stability allowing them to take risks".

The researcher agrees that child abuse, child neglect and house hold poverty affect greatly the growth, development and relationship between the child and his /her primary care giver. The absence of the emotional bond between the child and the parent impacts negatively on the performance, reasoning and stability of the child. This is because the presence of the care giver and good parenting builds the child's confi-

dence and comfort to confide in his/her parent. When children are frightened, threatened, intimidated and harassed, they seek proximity from their primary care giver in order to receive both comfort and care. Children who live close and with their care givers are more likely to survive to adult hood through nurturance and responsiveness as the primary attachment determinants. It is therefore, incumbent on every parent, guardian and responsible human being to ensure that all children are provided with good parenting in order to survive to the next level of growth and development other than subjecting them to all kinds of mistreatment that end up pushing them to the street.

The researcher concludes that, “spare the rod, spoil the child”, meaning that children who live under the care and support of responsible care givers in order to become responsible people in the future have to endure some reasonable punishments, however, punishments should be given according to situations that warrant them. Care givers who administer punishments that are corporal in nature to instill fear in their children and command respect in return should understand that no respect is earned through harassment of the child, instead, children who misbehave should be counselled and told why there is need to be punished. This creates consensus in the family where children will understand that they are punished to be groomed well but not that they are hated by their care givers. An intelligent child will therefore change his/her way and get transformed. Parents should also understand that children need good parenting and should make their children their friends so that children can confide in them and open up about the challenges they face and solutions be worked upon in an honest manner.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.0 Introduction

Under this chapter, the researcher presents suggestions and judgements of the study. This involves analysis and demonstration of data in the earlier chapters. The chapter ends with suggestions for those who will conduct future research.

#### 6.1 conclusions

The researcher interpreted discussions in chapter five in the following ways. Helping children is a very difficult task. It cannot be achieved by simply giving out money or by-passing laws. Material improvements alone will not help either. These efforts might even make things worse unless they include programs that help children develop and change authorities toward street children.

There is no longer a reason for the government to be relaxed about this issue. children are the future, and Africa must invest in them to have responsible citizens. The presence of many vulnerable young people in cities and urban areas can cause instability. The vulnerability of street children paves way for bad elements in the political class whose aim is to cause instability and social un-rest as political tools through which they gain political ground and support. Homeless children become perfect recruits for dangerous missions and activities since they have nothing to lose. Today's street children and youth could become tomorrow's guerrillas and terrorists and trouble makers of all sorts. Therefore, this problem needs urgent attention. If Uganda and Africa want to improve children's well-being, they must focus on the well fare of street children. Currently, neither the government nor the public seems very bothered on the problem of street children.

That's why on the streets in Kampala, the major capital city of Uganda, many children from Northern Uganda are always on the street and no serious efforts have been taken to get them off the street yet it is where most Government officials and legislators that enact laws and make policies pass and stay. These children face starvation, are at the mercy of bad people and the police, and often die from diseases that could be prevented.

Everyone should get concerned about the issue of street children, this is because if nothing significant is done to curb down the problems that propel children to the street, even the wealthy class cannot guarantee its security because, it is these children that turn criminals of all kinds and start terrorizing communities, towns and cities.

It is argued that the well-being of children, especially street children, cannot improve when human development is declining. It is suggested that African governments introduce ways to balance the problems caused by the free market economy. The idea of a welfare state, which protect children and other vulnerable people, is important.

The researcher concludes by pointing out that, it is impossible to improve children's well-being in a place with growing poverty, conflicts, and wars. Children's involvement in determining their future during processes aimed at helping them out should be given first priority. By listening to their views and concerns through their leaders, programs initiated to help them out by Government and NGOs become productive hence achieving the desired goals and outcomes.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

6.2.1 The Government of Uganda should review the existing laws and create a specific child act that aims at safe guarding children's rights and freedoms. Countries globally should ensure that specific laws that safe guard children being one of the most vulnerable groups of people are enacted. In addition, respective governments globally should ensure compulsory training of parents and guardians on child protection issues so that they get to know the consequences of violating child protection guidelines.

6.2.2. At the family level, parents and guardians must enhance and ensure good child and parent relationships by providing a favorable environment free from neglect, physical abuse, and poverty. The unfortunate abuse of children by their parents who should provide support and protection pushes them to the street to look for a new environment conducive and free from abuse experienced while at home. The problem of street children will become less pronounced if care givers of children take the responsibility of providing reasonable parenting to their children.

6.2.3 street children must be listened to and given first priority: it is unlikely we will find a lasting solution without involving street children. We should talk to them before making plans for them. Families, the government, and the community need to reach out to street children and have open conversations. We need to speak and listen to them to understand their problems, what they hope for, and how we can help. This will help us make informed decisions that truly benefit them.

### **6.3 Areas recommended for future research**

Further research can be recommended on:

Street children are social problem caused by failures in society. This study only touches on some aspects, mainly focusing on their problems. More research is needed, as described below:

6.3.1, There is need to conduct research on the gaps existing in services offered by NGOs to street children and identify the most pressing issues that need remedy. Children should be given first priority so that they get relieved of the stresses and challenges they faced while in the hands of abusive parents.

6.3.2. There is need to carry out research on community involvement in helping street children in order to discover what stops communities from helping out street children yet if they are well taken care of, they can be good transformers of development not only to themselves but to the communities they hell from. No child should be undermined but rather all children regardless of their backgrounds should be supported to realize their potential. This can be through education in schools and talent development to those whose aspirations are in sports and drama.

6.3.3 Research should be carried out on the effectiveness of the ministry of state for youth and children affairs in curbing down the problem of street children in Uganda, this will inform policy makers on the gaps that exist in providing remedy to the problem, this is because children still loiter on the streets of urban centers, cities and towns under the watch of those mandated to provide solutions to the street children menace in Uganda

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**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A: THE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHILDREN LIVING IN STREET CHILDREN CENTRES.**

The purpose of this research is to investigate the “Home Environment Factors and street children in Kabale Municipality- Kabale district.

All information collected through this questionnaire will solely be used for the development of this study project.

All personal identification views/contributions will be respected and protected for study purposes only and not for commercial gains or any other malicious intent whatsoever.

Now that the consent form has been read and explained and understood, further questions addressed.

I therefore willingly agree to take part in the study.

-----	-----	-----
Study participant Initials	Signature/Thumbprint of participant	Date
-----	-----	-----
-----		
Researcher	Signature	Date

**SECTION A: Background information. (Respondents Bio-data).**

1. Sex

(i) Male

(ii) Female

Nationality

(i) Ugandan

(ii) Others, specify

Age bracket

(i) 1-10 years

(ii) 11-15 years

(iii) 16-20 years

Level of formal education. Indicate the level you left.

(i) Lower primary

(ii) Upper primary

(iii) Secondary

(v) None

Children location

(i) Street

(ii) The shepherd center Kabale

(iii) Alongside Africa

(iv) Grace Villa

## SECTION B: Information on Objectives

### B -1: Child abuse and street children in Kabale Town?

Questions on child physical abuse factors	Options	Yes	No
How does child physical abuse lead to street children in Kabale town	Constant calling of humiliating names		
	Being threatened with physical harm		
	Being involved in adult issues		
	Being battered inappropriately in front of other children		
	Un realistic expectations by parents		

### B-2: Household poverty and street children

Questions on household poverty factors	Options	YES	NO
How does household poverty lead to street children influx in Kabale town	Poor housing conditions		
	Lack of food		
	Inadequate child care		
	Lack of school fees		
	homelessness		

**B-3: Child neglect and street children in Kabale municipality.**

Questions on child neglect factors	Options	YES	NO
How does child neglect lead to street children in Kabale town	Abandonment by parents		
	Persistent material deprivation		
	Not being enrolled in school		
	Not accessing medical care		
	Not paying attention to child needs and concerns		

**APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION FOR CHILDREN LIVING ON THE STREET.**

The purpose of this research is to investigate the “Home Environment Factors and street children in Kabale Municipality- Kabale district.

All information collected through this questionnaire will solely be used for the development of this study project.

All personal identification views/contributions will be respected and protected for study purposes only and not for commercial gains or any other malicious intent whatsoever.

Now that the consent form has been read and explained and understood, further questions addressed.

I therefore willingly agree to take part in the study.

-----	-----	-----
Study participant Initials	Signature/Thumbprint of participant	Date
-----	-----	-----
Researcher Initials	Signature	Date

**Use tick to indicate your opinion on the following indicators of child abuse**

1. Before coming to the street, were you given food? .....YES .....NO

Why.....?

2. Did you experience any forms of torture at home? .....YES .....NO

Why.....?

3. Before coming to the street, were you called abusive names by parents? YES.... NO

Why.....?

4. Did you experience intimidation and bullying by parents at home? .....YES .....NO

Why.....?

5. Did your parents ensure you are given education? .... YES ....NO

Why.....?

**Use tick to indicate your opinion on the following indicators of poverty as a factor that pushed you to the street.**

6. How many meals did you use to take per day? Tick the correct answer

(1) Meal

(2) Meals

(3) Meals

No meal

7. Before coming to the street, were you dressing appropriately on bad weather? ....

YES ....NO

If no,

Why.....?

8. How many pairs of clothes did you have before coming to the street?

(1) Pair

(2) Pairs

(3) Pairs

9. Before coming to the street, were you used to stealing food at home? .... YES ...NO

Why.....?

10. Did your parents afford paying your school fees before coming to the street? ....

YES ....NO

Why.....?

11. Before coming to the street, did your parents provide you with shelter? .....YES

.....NO

Why

.....?

12. Were you having a low-sense of well-being at home? ..... YES .....NO

If yes,

Why.....?

13. Did you experience social deprivation by parents before coming to the street?

.....YES ....NO

Why.....?

14. Before coming to the street, were you attending school regularly? ..... YES .....NO

If no,

Why.....?

**Use tick to indicate your opinion on the following indicators of child neglect as a factor that pushed you to the street.**

15. Before coming to the street, were you given medical attention by parents/guardians? .... YES...NO

If no,

Why.....?

16. Did you experience material deprivation by parents/guardians? .... YES...NO

If yes,

Why.....?

17. Before coming to the street, were you abandoned by parents/guardians? .... YES...NO

If yes,

Why.....?

18. Before coming to the street, were you enrolled in any school by parents? .... YES...NO

If no,

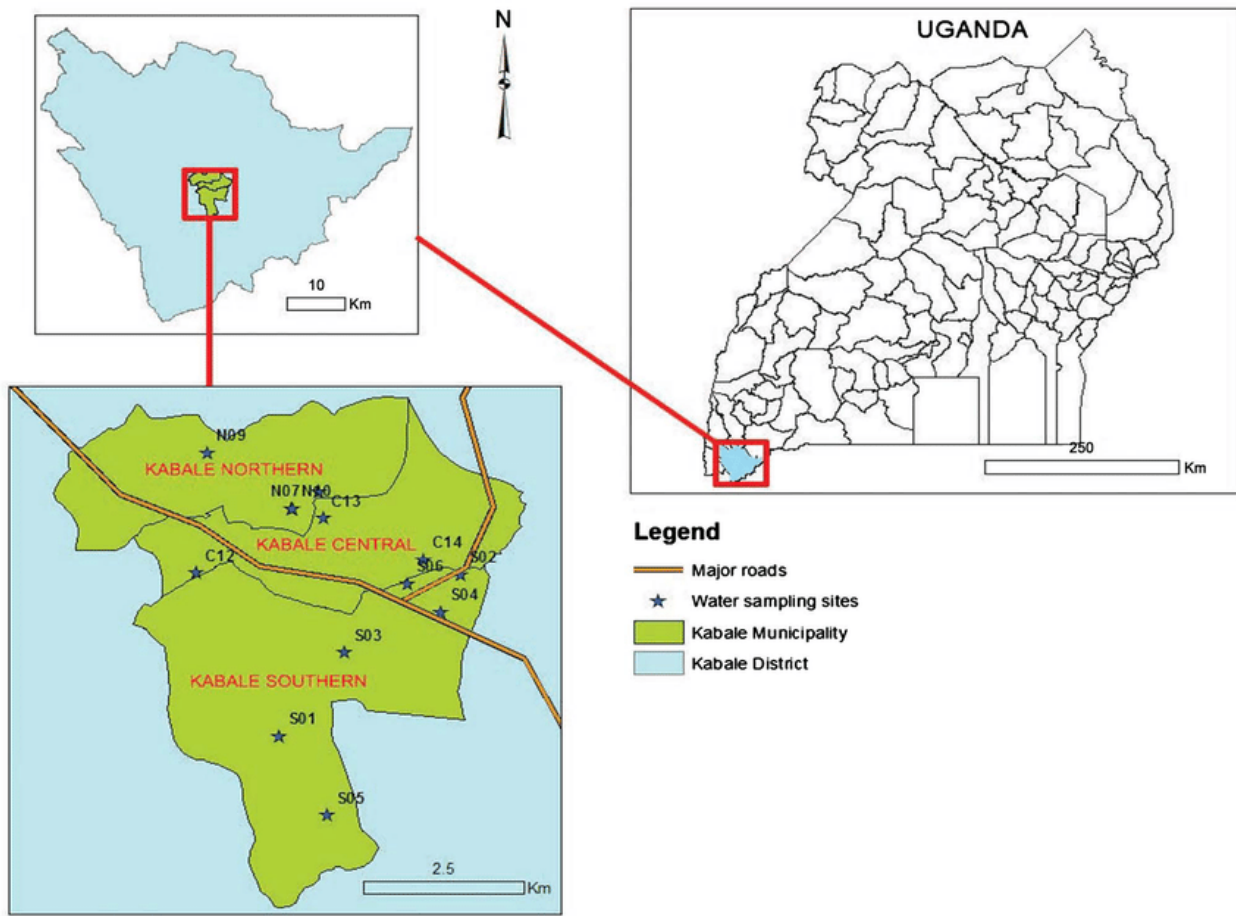
Why.....?

19. Did your parents/guardians pay attention to your concerns and personal needs? .... YES...NO

If no,

Why.....?

### APPENDIX C: Map showing Kabale Municipality



Source: [www.researchgate.net](http://www.researchgate.net)