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JOURNAL PURPOSE

The purpose of the *Ngenani - Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University Journal of Community Engagement and Societal Transformation Review and Advancement* is to provide a forum for community engagement and outreach.

CONTRIBUTION AND READERSHIP

Sociologists, demographers, psychologists, development experts, planners, social workers, social engineers, and economists, among others whose focus is on community development.

JOURNAL SPECIFICATIONS

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SCOPE AND FOCUS

The journal is a forum for the discussion of ideas, scholarly opinions and case studies of community outreach and engagement. Communities are both defined in terms of people found in a given locale and defined cohorts, like the children, the youth, the elderly and those living with a disability. The strongest view is that getting to know each community or sub-community is a function of their deliberate participation in matters affecting them by the community itself. The journal is produced bi-annually.

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Articles must be original contributions, not previously published and should not be under consideration for publishing elsewhere.

Manuscript Submission: Articles submitted to the *Ngenani - Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University Journal of Community Engagement and Societal Transformation* are reviewed using the double-blind peer review system. The author's name(s) must not be included in the main text or running heads and footers.

A total number of words: 5000-7000 words and set in 12-point font size width with 1.5 line spacing.

Language: British/UK English

Title: must capture the gist and scope of the article

Names of authors: beginning with the first name and ending with the surname

Affiliation of authors: must be footnoted, showing the department and institution or organisation.

Abstract: must be 200 words

Keywords: must be five or six containing words that are not in the title

Body: Where the authors are more than three, use *et al.*,

Italicise *et al.*, *ibid.*, words that are not English, not names of people or organisations, etc. When you use several authors confirming the same point, state the point and bracket them in one bracket and ascending order of dates and alphabetically separated by semi-colon e.g. (Falkenmark, 1989, 1990; Reddy, 2002; Dagdeviren and Robertson, 2011; Jacobsen *et al.*, 2012).

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BEGGING AS A LIVELIHOOD STRATEGY: A CASE OF STREET CHILDREN OF THE HARARE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT IN ZIMBABWE

TANATSWA CATCH AND WITNESS CHIKOKO¹

Abstract

There is a dearth of academic studies on begging as a livelihood strategy among street children in the context of austerities. The article problematises begging as one of the livelihood strategies of street children of the Harare Central Business District (CBD) in the face of adversities, induced partly by austerity measures. A qualitative research methodology was adopted to generate data for this study. Resilience theory was adopted to analyse the realities of these children. Research findings suggest that the street children of the Harare Central Business District through begging. The article argues that younger children were more involved in begging as a livelihood strategy as compared to the older ones. The article concludes by lobbying and advocating for full implementation of child rights laws, policies and programmes to reduce risks associated with begging among these children.

Keywords: *austerity, poverty, income, policy, urban sustainability, management*

INTRODUCTION

Children in street situations face many adversities. To cope with some of their daily challenges, street children engage in begging (Bourdillon 1994; Dube 1997,1999; Vameghi *et al.*, 2014; Kushtiwala and Iqbal, 2023). Begging is one of the survival strategies employed by many people during times of distress. The lack of basic necessities is the major driver of begging. It is a common practice that has historical roots. Even during traditional societies and biblical times, begging was a common practice.

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These children often lack access to necessities such as food, shelter and education, and resort to begging as a way to survive on the streets. In Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, begging is very common and here are varied reasons for begging among the street children of Addis Ababa (Abebe 2009). Some of them include childhood poverty, abuse and neglect by parents, disintegration of families and limited access to social services among others (*ibid.*).

Begging also reflects broader societal and economic challenges, including urbanisation, poverty, and inequality (Gobina and Samson, 2018). As cities grow and become more crowded, the number of street children also increases, and begging becomes more visible as a form of livelihood strategy. In Nigeria, children's street begging was caused by parental destitution and their inability to provide for their children's basic needs, and a lack of social support (Olapegba *et al.*, 2020). The authors pointed out that many parents were unable to meet their children's basic requirements, including food and education and, as a result, children were left to rely on begging on the streets to survive. They emphasized the fact that many street-connected children lacked access to healthcare and education, making them more susceptible to exploitation and abuse (*ibid.*).

In Bangladesh, street children faced numerous challenges, including lack of access to education and healthcare, these contributing to their involvement in begging in the first place. This shows that issues of begging around the globe involve lack of basic commodities (Uddin, Islam and Rahman, 2022). Begging then becomes an automatic solution in a bid to address issues of lacking basic commodities. As a result, this lack is instrumental in driving child onto the street to beg for their livelihoods.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Resilience Rheory is also known as positive psychology (van Breda, 2018). The theory is about the ability of individuals to bounce back in the face of adversities (Hlungwani and van Breda, 2020). Cunningham *et al.* (2017:701) define resilience as, "a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity." Resilience is influenced by both the child and his or her community

and the capacities of children's complex social ecology to provide resources (Liberio and Ungar, 2010).

Among vulnerable children are many factors that promote resilience. Some vulnerable children develop positive psychology or adaptations to adversities because of participating in sporting activities (Morgan, 2010). Through participating in sporting activities, the vulnerable children enhance their mental health, self-esteem and forge new social relationships beyond care, among others (*ibid.*). Family resilience is also associated with protective factors (Benzies and Mychasiuk, 2009). Some of the protective factors modify or transform responses to adverse events so that families avoid positive negative outcomes (*ibid.*).

Liberio and Ungar (2010) have identified seven factors that promote or enhance resilience among children and youths. These include social justice, social cohesion, cultural adherence, identity, power and control access to material resources among others (Liberio and Ungar, 2010).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Street children in Bangladesh, raise money for survival through begging (Kaiser and Sinanan, 2020). Through begging, the street girls of Bangladesh were able to raise money for buying basic needs such as food and clothes (*ibid.*). The street children of Pakistan raise money for survival through various forms such as rag picking, commercial sex work and begging (Kushtiwala and Iqbal, 2023). Begging has also been common among street children in many Latin American cities in the context of austerities.

Begging is one of the survival livelihood strategies in many cities in Africa (Abebe, 2008; Kassah, 2008; Mtonga 2011). For example, begging is a vibrant survival strategy in cities in Ghana (Kassah, 2008). It is also a popular survival strategy among street children of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and sometimes practised at church entrances (Abebe, 2008).

In the case of Accra, Ghana, begging is common on streets, especially at traffic intersections (Kassah, 2008). Kassah (*ibid.*) observes that the beggars include able-bodied persons, those with disabilities and refugees from neighbouring countries among many. Begging is also

considered as devaluing, thus stigmatising in Ghana (*ibid.*). Despite the fact that begging is unlawful and punishable under the 1996 National Liberation Decree 392, begging for survival still takes place (*ibid.*).

In Addis Ababa, street children engage in begging as a result of limited alternative income-generating strategies, abuse and neglect in families, limited access to social protection, failure of rural livelihoods (displacement because of war, famine, drought) (Abebe, 2008 and 2009). In South African cities, street begging has been associated with limited access to employment opportunities, poor educational levels, family dysfunctionality, among other reasons (Stones, 2013). Harmful traditional practices also drive children into begging in Addis Ababa (Abebe, 2008). The street children demonstrate their agency through converting their poor status into viable livelihood strategies (*ibid.*). Begging among street children of Addis Ababa, demonstrates agency, entrepreneurial skills and the ability to use their financial resources they get (*ibid.*). Among the street children of Lusaka, Zambia, begging to raise money illustrates agency (Mtonga, 2011).

Similarly, some persons with disabilities, in Accra engage in begging because of various reasons (Kassah, 2008). Some of the reasons include limited employment opportunities, embarrassment at school, thus withdrawal from school, harassment at work places, etc. In such circumstances, they resort to street begging as one of survival options (*ibid.*).

Studies suggest that begging is a common practice in cities around Zimbabwe. Street begging is not only confined to children but also persons with disabilities and other vulnerable members of society such as those with chronic illnesses (Bourdillon 1994; Dube, 1997 and 1999). Some of the street children of Bulawayo and Harare, Zimbabwe, survive through begging (Wakatama 2007; Ruparanganda, 2008; Mhizha, 2010; Mella, 2012; Ndlovu 2015). Mhizha (2010) noted that, there were dynamics associated with begging among the street children of Harare. Some of the dynamics include younger girls being more comfortable with street begging as compared to those at the stage of adolescence.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research methodology, punctuated by street ethnography was used to generate data for the article. Through purposive sampling, a total of twelve (12) street children, made up of six (6) boys and six (6) girls, participated as primary participants for the study. The research participants' age range was from 10 to 18 years.

Data were drawn through in-depth interviews, informal conversations and participant observation methods. Similarly, Chikoko (2014 and 2017) used street ethnography when studying substance abuse among street children in the Harare Central Business District.

Some street vendors, City of Harare officials and social workers employed by the Department of Social Development under the Ministry of Public Services, Labour and Social Welfare, were part of the team of key informants for the study. The key informants, such as officials from the Government of Zimbabwe, have been engaged when studying the lives of street children in Harare (Bourdillon 1994; Dube 1997 AND 1999; Rurevo and Bourdillon 2003a & b; Wakatama 2007; Ruparanganda, 2008; Mhizha, 2010; Mella 2012; 2014 and 2015). The target group of the study were street children dotted around the streets of the Harare CBD. Most of the street children were involved in begging at intersections of roads, entrances to shopping malls, supermarkets and restaurants.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

SUPPLEMENTING FOOD

The study findings established that, begging contributes to the livelihood of street-connected children as it increases food provision. It is noted that most children engage in begging because of poverty. In this case, begging cushions issues of food shortages. Most of the money received from a day's work is used to buy food. Food is bought from street food vendors (*musika*) that usually sell an almost decent meal that varies according to the amount one is to part with. This takes care of hunger issues. This notion was derived in an informal conversation with one of the child beggars.

Participant CB 5

"My mother said that I should join her in her trade in the CBD so that I raise money and help her fend for the family, Life on the street is hard. Some days people just ignore you, so that means if you don't manage to evoke pity in someone, then business is slow. On a good day, I earn US\$7,, the primary currency here that we then use for subsistence. Since then, we have been able to make sure that every day, the family manages to eat a close-to-decent meal from the proceeds from begging. On days that I come alone to work, I make sure that I go and buy myself a kaylite of sadza by the street. This meal should suffice for the whole day until I get back home where I get the second meal for the day."

Another participant had this to say:

Sister, where we stay, there's nothing else we can do but beg in the CBD and to at least spend the day in town seeing how other children are making ends meet. Just look at Epworth where I come from, everyone in the area is just vending or gaining from whatever means that can help, so the least I can do is just to move away and go get exposed to a new environment, so this environment encourages me to beg. At the end of the day, you will realise that begging helps us to survive because I get food.

The findings established that apart from buying their own food from the money received from begging, these child beggars also receive food donations from well-wishers. An example is an initiative by well-wishers from a private institution called the Street Kitchen. The aim of the kitchen is to provide food for the street beggars, thereby aiding survival of the child beggars as they can now feed themselves from the proceeds.

Participant CB 9 had to say:

Apart from raising our own money for food, begging ensures that we get food from well-wishers. Of late we have getting food from an organisation that hands out food to us on a certain day on a weekly basis. This initiative helps us in instances when business is low and we cannot manage to cater for our own food. Usually, the food provided by this organisation is really good food and well-balanced. Despite the fact that the portions of the food are little and sometimes do not satisfy the hunger levels, the street has taught me to be grateful – half a loaf is better than nothing.

Disgruntlement with little portions was also expressed by many of the participants. Most of the organisations working to help child beggars are concerned mostly with fulfilling their goals of feeding numbers of street children than providing a better service to a few, thus compromising the quality of service by focusing on numbers and not the quality of service.

The participants also added that, despite the contribution made by begging in aiding food provision, its contribution should not be over emphasized. This sentiment was explained in the sense that begging provides food for the child beggars but, owing to the nature of the livelihood strategy, food is not always guaranteed. The participants said that food provision is not always definite because the livelihood strategy is static, its success is dependent on the willingness of givers. If people do not feel like giving food or money, then food provision is a futility. The inconsistency of the donations shows how this livelihood strategy is sometimes not reliable, thereby making the child beggars vulnerable to various risks as they will be desperate to make a living.

This is evidenced in the extract from Participant CB 6:

Sadly, our work does not always guarantee automatic food income. Some days people just ignore you, so on days like, that we spend the day on empty stomachs. It all becomes a matter of luck. If you are lucky enough, then you will get food but if you are not, then you are going to starve for the day and hope for a better day.

In a key informant interview this view was expressed thus, by Participant CWPS 1:

Inasmuch as begging does contribute to food income, one can observe that begging is a chancy and uncertain livelihood strategy, meaning to say that the proceeds from begging have no defined pattern of provision. On some days, the children manage to get food and, on some days, food is an illusion. Automatically this impedes its success on supplementing food income.

Owing to the inconsistency in food provision, the study also revealed that some of the food handed out to the child beggars is contaminated or decayed food. This has a ripple effect on the health of the children as consuming such food causes illness. This serious case described by the key informant depicts a dire situation where the child beggars vulnerable to issues of ill health as they consume contaminated food. held Beggars, in some instances, eat the food anyway, because of the levels of desperation.

Key informant CT 2:

I have had many cases of the child beggars who abscond school to beg, complaining about issues of stomach problems. They get in class and sit whilst placing their heads over their desks trying to get a comfortable posture as they will be in pain. In the conversations that I have had with them, most of the children always pinpoint a case related to food poisoning or eating decayed food that would have been offered by people in the streets. This places the children at great risk of developing greater health related issues that are even extreme and lead to death in extreme cases.

During an informal conversation with the participants, one openly expressed that:

Some of the food that we get are rejects, food that people do not want for themselves, So, most days we have stomach problems because of the food, but we are getting used to the pain, it's better to have something to fill up your stomach with.

PROVISION OF CLOTHING

The findings also established that the contribution of begging as a livelihood strategy for street-connected children includes provision of clothing. Through begging in churches, these children get assistance, contributing to them staying afloat amidst different circumstances. It can be commented that clothing is also an essential aspect in the welfare of children. From the churches, the children sometimes get aid in the form of cash, educational benefit and even shelter as many churches aim to help the vulnerable groups in Zimbabwe. SW 2, a key informant, revealed that:

These child beggars are very tactical. They have studied the patterns of gaining within the street., So, through begging, they have managed to establish that begging can improve their wellbeing through the aid given by social assistance in the form of donations or through aid from non – governmental organisations and institutions. However, this has been very powerful in effect because through begging in churches, these children manage to get clothes from well-wishers within churches.

On the same issue, Participant CB 2 also shared the same sentiments and said:

Our begging job sometimes is cushioned by the aid we receive from churches. Every Sunday we make sure that we go to church, obviously we will get something from there, either food or clothes. Apart from those benefits, the church stretches warm hands towards us because we are beggars, so they feel mandated to help us. As a result, our church attendance makes us develop trust in God, so we never give up.

The findings established that the contributions made by churches are a crucial aspect of begging. Street-connected children have a deep religious faith and firmly believe that God will one day improve their lives and make their current struggles manageable. They rely on their faith to find comfort, solace and hope when confronted with the harsh realities of street life. Faith in God can give meaning and a sense of worth. This shows that in issues of begging are viewed as an obligation of fulfilling Christian duty. However, the children become a charity case and the church becomes a haven where the children run to for assistance. All these contributions manage to enhance the livelihood strategy as in some instances, the children are then able to get aid that is essential for their livelihood.

This is what participant CB 7 had to say:

One time I visited this church here in the CBD, I had no intentions of going to the church because I had come to work but business was slow. I was not feeling quite well on the day so I was just sitting around. There. I just decided to go into this church near Kwame Nkrumah Avenue and Leopold Takawira. Upon arrival, I was welcomed by the ushers who then asked about my story, I clearly remember that they asked me not to leave after church and so I didn't. After church, I was attended to by the pastor and another man. This man then offered to bring me clothes if I returned to the church the following week. I did just that. There he was waiting for me with the clothes a promised. -I was so happy

Apart from getting the clothes from well-wishers and other organisations, the child beggars also use the money from begging to purchase their own clothes. The findings revealed that the child beggars now have well established areas that they know they can buy clothes that are within their means. Participant CB8 said:

Begging has been able to provide a lot of things for me. The money that I get from the job I sometimes go to buy clothes at Mbare. You will be shocked to see that US\$1 in Mbare will fetch me about four t-shirts. When I am begging these days, I have also started to clean windscreens for cars at robots, this helps to get a quick buck.

RAISING MONEY FOR SCHOOL FEES

The findings also noted that begging helps to raise money for school fees. During the in-depth interviews, most children revealed that they got into begging when they considered that the trade brought some benefits such as quick money and leisure in the sense that no one tells you whether you have worked enough for a day's wage, so one can continue to anytime work and still manage to gain more. Indirectly, one works as their own boss and no one tell one what, how and when to do things. The flexibility of the livelihood strategy enhances the street-connected children as they manage to raise their school fees.

In an informal conversation Participant CB9 had this to say:

Sister, begging has its own challenges and benefits. I started begging because I saw the benefits of making quick money. Given my situation, I had to beg to raise money for my school fees and daily needs. Begging is less strenuous than street vending, and I can even do it while sitting down, which allows me to go to school before or after. I make good money through begging, which is better than vending in town. People are often willing to help if you can persuade them to feel pity. I come to work, make some money, and hurry to school on some days because of the hot seating system.

Such an account reveals that begging allows some of the child beggars to pursue their at the same time. The findings showed that the contribution made by begging is powerful as it sustains essential and crucial aspects of the livelihood of children. During the key informant interviews, one of the former outreach officers of CWPS confirmed that:

Some of the street children joined the bandwagon of street begging after failed attempts of other means of earning money, like selling small items. To them begging has proven to be the most flexible livelihood strategy that one can engage in order to meet their basic needs. Its flexibility allows them to also focus on other things that help them to develop, in this instance pursuing education.

Key informant CWPS 1:

Most of these children have ventured into begging because they have tried various methods of earning money, which could have proved to have failed, thus begging provided the closure that they had been looking for. The next resort for livelihood left would then be begging as it gives financial aid. The money received is then used to buy the other essentials needed in their academic journey.

This excerpt reveals that the contribution made by begging as a livelihood strategy closes the gap left behind by social assistance programmes like the Basic Educational Assistance Module (BEAM), that seek to pay fees for these children. The findings showed the gap for BEAM is that, in some instances, it fails to provide other necessities needed for the education of the children, like books. In another instance, late payment of fees for the children prevents them from going to school as some of the schools deny unpaid students' entry into school premises, hence the contribution of begging. In an informal conversation, one of the participants said:

The money that I get from begging I use it to buy some of the things that I need for school like stationery as BEAM does not provide all these other things, so this helps me to be able to attain my education.

ENSURING ACCESS TO MEDICAL FACILITIES AND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

The study established that begging provides money for medical assistance and medical treatment. The study unearthed how proceeds from begging were used to access medical care. The child beggars manage to buy medicine, be they traditional or modern treatment. Evidently, with money from begging, the child beggars can utilise medical facilities. This contributes to the livelihood of the children as the moment they can receive medical attention they continue to contribute meaningfully to their wellbeing.

This is what one girl child beggar had to say:

Sister, as for me, I get stomach problems very often, so that means I need to be getting medicine from time to time when I feel the pains. So for me to be able to buy these medicines. I use the money I received from begging. Sometimes, instead of just using the money. I can also approach a person and ask them to just buy me the medicine that I need, but however, the first option of just buying my medicine myself works better because now people are in the habit of refusing to buy us medicines because they fear we will use the medicines for suicide – which is understandable because that is a common issue here. Also, in some instances, the pharmacists also refuse to give us the medicines because we are too young. So just going to a clinic works better than anything else or just buying traditional medicines from the street vendors who sell some medicines in the CBD.

The findings from a key informant suggested that the Department of Social Welfare has taken a stance to try and provide medical assistance to the street-connected child beggars in the form of Assisted Medical Treatment Orders (AMTO). This initiative was put in place in a bid to ensure that the vulnerable populations get assistance from medical facilities. However, owing to the bad state of the economy in the country, the availability of medicines needed by some of the children cannot be provided by the AMTO waiver, so street children countered this gap by the proceeds from begging. This theme was echoed by participant SW 2, who said:

Efforts to provide medical aid for street children have been rendered futile by the economic status in the country. This has made the street-connected children to rely on begging as a source of income, a source that provides a better livelihood. Consequently, the children have managed to ensure that their access to medical services is not limited owing to the economic downturn, so they now visit clinics themselves and pay for their treatment. An example is that of Edith Opperman Clinic in Mbare, where street-connected children go to for their maternity issues and other health related treatments.

This utterance then suggests that the loophole within the system of AMTO's is compounded by the fact that the child beggars now provide for themselves. Their ability to manoeuvre through and use the money from begging to buy medicines promotes good health.

PROVISION OF SHELTER AND PROTECTION

The findings also proved that begging contributes to provision of shelter and protection for the street-connected children. One of the most important aspects of the lives of street child beggars is caring for one another, thereby substituting child protection. Because they

frequently depend on one another for survival and assistance, these children develop strong bonds based on common situations and experiences. The study showed that despite facing several difficulties and dangers, children living on the streets may also be able to rely on one another for care and protection, thus the provision and contribution of begging. Through interviews with the participants, the study showed that the interactions and support among street children significantly affect both their survival and well-being. This is because the livelihood strategy ensures that the children watch over one another and all depended on each other for them to thrive. Street children's interactions and care also contribute to their sense of belonging and the development of their identities.

These sentiments are also shared by participant CB 7;

Sister, life in the streets is hard, so you need someone whom you know that has your back here and watches after you, so automatically that person becomes your family. You work together and you stick together, so when we work together, we then become able to provide for ourselves because the joint effort bears much greater yield than working alone. The moment we work together, we able to attain our daily needed provisions to survive. Here I live my life with no fear because I know that whatever I am doing, my mate has my back, either good or bad we stick together.

The findings also suggested the older child beggars form gangs with leaders that dominate and direct the daily running of the group. All this is seen as a form of care for one another as each gang member from the bases is held responsible for the welfare of another, bearing good results for the gangs as they act as social protection for each other.

Participant CB 6 intoned:

I used to be part of a gang here in the street, so we would work together and make sure that at the end of the day where everyone should present what we worked for, everyone would have an amount or just something cash or kind to show the groups and it would be distributed amongst us. The only problem that arises with a setup like this would be issues of selfish tendencies by other members but overall, the care managed to help us sail through every obstacle.

As such the extract of participant CB6 emphasizes that street children's interactions and care can also contribute to their sense of belonging and the development of their identities. These connections can give them a sense of support, hence the contribution of begging as a livelihood strategy as it proffers protection for the children. In greater

extents of the contribution of begging as a livelihood strategy, CWPS 2 had this to say:

Surely caring for one another through begging does contribute to the livelihood of the street connected children. I clearly remember a group of young boys who used to strategically position themselves along Samora Machel and beg. This group thrived so well that they managed to get themselves a room to rent instead of inhabiting the street. The gang got a room to rent in Epworth where they then began to develop themselves there. Since then, they have become a strong family that works together to get whatever that they want together.

DISCUSSION

It is suggested here that begging promotes resilience of street children of the Harare Central Business District, Zimbabwe, in the face of adversities. The street children of the Harare CBD are faced with multilayered vulnerabilities. Some of the vulnerabilities are limited access to foods, shelter, violence (emotional, physical and sexual nature), stigma and discrimination, and social exclusion from social protection systems.

Utilising the resilience theory, begging enhanced the capacities of the street children to adapt in the face of adversities (van Breda, 2018). Begging promoted the resilience of street children of the Harare Central Business District in many ways, some of which are accessing medical assistance, provision of food and clothing, raising money for school fees, access to shelter and protection.

Begging promoted the resilience of these children through raising money for school fees. The research findings collaborate the study conducted in Ghana, where begging enhanced the children in financing their education, thus making begging a means to academic advancement (Amenyah, 2018). Begging can teach children business skills, financial independence and humility, making it a gateway to these valuable qualities (Adomako and Agyeiwaa, 2018).

As highlighted above, begging increased access to food among the street children of the Harare Central Business District. In other words, through begging, the street children of were able to raise money for food. Similarly, begging brought many benefits of children in Dagbon of Northern Ghana (Fuseini and Daniel, 2018). Through begging, the children were able to supplement family incomes, raise money for

examination fees, buying mobile phones, and DVDs for movies, among others (*ibid.*). Begging has been a survival strategy for street children in Latin America, who often lack access to basic necessities such as food, shelter and healthcare (De Vos and Tarzi, 2016).

In India, begging is also interpreted as a fulfilment of religious mandates. Apart from the major factor of poverty as a very important contributing cause for the continuing institution of begging, there is a religious angle to it (Thirumalai 2004). In certain ways, it could be said that when religions promote alms-giving, they also, either directly or indirectly, promote begging as a source of income.

Thirumalai (*ibid.*) cites the Islamic Book of Life, which in a way supports begging. The rights of the beggar and the impoverished existed in their property, according to Quran 51:19. The Quran supports alms-giving as part of begging. Similarly, most of the world's major religions support alms-giving as a way of cushioning the debilitating impact of poverty among the vulnerable members of society.

CONCLUSION

As discussed, begging is one of the survival strategies of the street children of the Harare Central Business District, Zimbabwe, in the face of adversities. Some of the adversities the street children of the Harare CBD face are varied. There are multiple vulnerabilities of the street children in the context of violence (sexual, physical, emotional), limited access to social protection programmes, social exclusion, stigma and discrimination, among many. Therefore, through begging, the street children are able to meet their basic needs. Some of the needs include accessing medical assistance, provisions of food and clothing, raising money for school fees, access to shelter and protection.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The article proffers a number of suggestions to reduce vulnerabilities associated with begging among the street children of the Harare Central Business District. These include:

- The Government of Zimbabwe and other duty bearers should provide social protection programmes such as child

supplementary feeding for street children of the Harare Central Business District;

- There is need to establish functional drop-in centres dotted around the streets of the Harare Central Business District. These should be child-friendly to increase their accessibilities by street children;
- There is urgent need to implement a family-tracing and re-unification programme targeting the street children of the Harare Central Business District; and
- There is need for full implementation of Child Rights legislation in Zimbabwe targeting children in street situations.

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