A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON CHILDREN LIVING IN

STREET SITUATIONS IN BANGLADESH 2024

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

Funded by
the European Union

unicef
সকল শিশুর জন্য

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Amran Khan, Deputy Project Director, CSPB, and other office staff of CSPB.

Table of Contents

Minister
Ministry of Social Welfare
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Message

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Department of Social Services (DSS) for spearheading the commissioning of the Qualitative Study on Children Living in Street Situations in Bangladesh The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, particularly in article 28 (4), unequivocally guarantees the rights of all citizens, with a particular emphasis on providing special provisions for women and children from marginalized backgrounds.

Under the guidance of our Honorable Prime Minister, there has been a directive to formulate policies and plans aimed at safeguarding the rights of children living on the streets. The government has initiated various programmes which are aligned with the Constitution of Bangladesh, the Children Act 2013, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The findings from The Qualitative Study on Children Living in Street Situations in Bangladesh will serve as a crucial foundation for shaping policies and implementing programmes that accurately reflect the realities faced by these children. Moreover, it will contribute significantly to the realization of our national objectives and the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Director General and the dedicated teams at DSS for their unwavering commitment to the success of this study. Additionally, I extend my gratitude to our longstanding partner, UNICEF Bangladesh, whose invaluable technical support has been instrumental at every stage of the study. It is my firm belief that the insights gleaned from this report will prove invaluable for all stakeholders involved in the formulation of policies aimed at enhancing the well- being of children in Bangladesh.

Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabanghu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

March 2024

Dr. Dipu Moni, MP

State Minister
Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Message

I congratulate the Department of Social Services, Ministry of Social Welfare, on conducting the study on children living on the streets in Bangladesh. I am delighted that the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs is part of this incredible, long-awaited piece of work. Bangladesh has made tremendous progress in advancing the rights of women and children. Under the leadership of the Honorable Prime Minister Sheik Hasina, the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs has adopted a number of progressive laws and policies to ensure the rights of children and women in the country.

In line with the Prime Minister's instructions, we have undertaken several programs for all children, including the most vulnerable, such as those living in street situations. The Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MoWCA) has rapidly established a safety net for millions of vulnerable children through more than 1,600 Child Protection Community Hubs (CPCH) under the Accelerating Protection for Children (APC) project. Within a short timeframe, MoWCA has also established 22 CPCHs across the country, supporting over 660 children living on the streets or around brothels with necessities like daily food, clothing, and hygiene facilities, ensuring the children's physical well-being. These CPCHs go beyond immediate needs, transforming lives and making a deeper impact. Community sessions are conducted that empower them to understand and fight against violence and abuse. They also learn how to report and stand up against child marriage and child labor.

UNICEF and MoWCA, through the APC project, are breaking the cycle of disadvantage by reintegrating these children into education. Additionally, the project is working to ensure birth registration for all children, granting them a vital form of identification and laying the foundation for claiming their rights. This swift action by MoWCA isn't just about addressing present needs; it's about empowering children, fostering hope, and building a stronger future for Bangladesh.

The findings of this qualitative study will provide insightful thoughts on how to review our programs and undertake policies to protect these children and secure a brighter future. I appreciate the concerned departments and officials who were involved in the study. I thank UNICEF for their technical support in the report. I hope the report will help policymakers and planners adopt appropriate policies.

March 2024

সিমিন হোসেন

Ms. Simeen Hussain (Rimi), MP

Secretary
Ministry of Social Welfare
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

FOREWORD

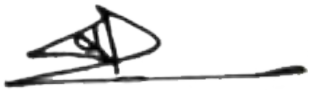
Bangladesh has made significant progress in social development indicators, including poverty alleviation, child survival and development, and women's advancement. Under the auspicious leadership of Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, we have set a vision to become a developed country by 2041. To achieve this vision, the Ministry of Social Welfare has adopted evidence-based and equitable policies, strategies, and programs.

I am happy that the Department of Social Services (DSS) has commissioned a qualitative study on children living on the streets to understand their lives and the complex challenges they face, including accessing services, abuse, exploitation, and returning home. This study aims not only to comprehend their day-to-day experiences and challenges but also to gather their perspectives on how to best provide protection and high-quality services tailored to their needs.

This initiative demonstrates our commitment to addressing the complex issue of the most vulnerable segment of the population, such as street-connected children in Bangladesh and addressing equity. By directly gaining insights from the children and incorporating their views into our program design and implementation, we aim to develop interventions that are not only effective but also respectful of the children's rights and dignity.

Moving forward, this study will play a critical role in informing our policies and programs, ensuring they are grounded in the realities of those they are meant to serve. It represents a step towards realizing our broader goals of social development and equality, aligning with our vision and objectives.

I would like to express my gratitude to UNICEF Bangladesh for providing technical support to make this study successful. My sincere thanks also go to Dr. Abu Saleh Md Mostafa Kamal, Director General of the Department and his team for taking the initiative.



Mr. Md. Khairul Alam Shiekh

March 2024

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UNICEF Representative
to Bangladesh

Message

UNICEF is proud to support "Children in Street Situations in Bangladesh 2024," a qualitative study that elevates the voices of children living and working on the streets. These children are among the most underserved and hard-to-reach populations in Bangladesh. The Government of Bangladesh has made great strides in crafting policies and initiatives that benefit this population. However, we must take a more targeted and focused approach to ensure all children have an opportunity to reach their full potential.

Following the quantitative report "Survey on Street Children 2022," this study dives deeper into the hotspots where children living or working on the streets usually gather and work. Over 400 children spanning all districts willingly participated, sharing stories of home and family life, struggles, and aspirations. Their tales are heartbreaking, shocking and yet also inspiring. Family members, street brokers, government and non-governmental service providers and others also took part in the report. Honest and poignant, this rich tapestry of voices portrays the daily realities and multi-faceted issues impacting this vulnerable population. Children in street situations in Bangladesh continue to be left behind, with neither adequate protective services nor social services, necessary to uphold their rights and prepare them to become productive citizens of the country.

Yet as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that Bangladesh ratified in 1990, every child has the inherent right to protection, to grow, to learn, to play, and flourish with dignity. Children living and working on the streets are no exception. As the escalating challenges of environmental degradation and rapid urbanization are posing novel threats to their rights, our actions must also accelerate. These children deserve quality healthcare, education, nutrition, and protection. This reality is possible, only when Bangladesh benefits from a robust and effective child protection system-- one that not only nurtures children's well-being but also supports their parents and communities. With partners, UNICEF is ready to support the Ministry of Social Welfare, specifically the Department of Social Services, in realizing this shared vision for every child.

This report, uplifted by the voices of children in street situations, provides us with a unique opportunity to bring about long-lasting change in their lives. We hope that it will inspire all of us to move forward with intention and a renewed commitment to deliver the care and protection to which they have a right.

March 2024

Mr. Sheldon Yett

Director General
Department of Social Services
Ministry of Social Welfare
Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is with great pleasure that I announce the successful conclusion of the qualitative study on children in street situations and the report under the Department of Social Services (DSS). This report goes beyond numbers to illuminate the harsh realities experienced by street-connected children, offering a poignant glimpse into their lives and the underlying factors propelling them towards the streets. It brings to light the obstacles hindering family reunification, the pervasive presence of violence, abuse, and exploitation, as well as the involvement of these children in perilous labor and criminal activities. Furthermore, it delineates the needs and priorities of these vulnerable children, providing invaluable insights for policymakers and practitioners at governmental and non-governmental levels in Bangladesh to bolster the support network for street-involved children.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all who contributed to the successful culmination of this study. My sincere appreciation goes to S. M. Lablur Rahman, Joint Secretary and former Project Director of Child Sensitive Social Protection in Bangladesh (CSSPB) II, and the dedicated team at the Department of Social Services for their facilitation and unwavering support throughout the study. I would also like to extend special thanks to UNICEF Bangladesh for their invaluable technical and financial assistance in commissioning the study. I am deeply grateful to Natalie McCauley, Chief of Child Protection, and her team at UNICEF Bangladesh Child Protection Section for their invaluable guidance and oversight. A heartfelt acknowledgment is due to the team of researchers led by Dr. Hasan Reza, Professor at Indiana State University, US, and Mitra & Associates for their tireless dedication in managing, data collection, conducting interviews, and transcribing information.

I also extend my gratitude to the members of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for their insightful feedback throughout the study and during the finalization of the report. Furthermore, I appreciate the leadership and guidance of the team from the Ministry of Social Welfare (MoSW) for their invaluable insights and perspectives.

The collaborative efforts of all the concern as mentioned above underscore the significance of a unified approach in addressing the challenges faced by street children. I fervently hope that this report will serve as a cornerstone for the formulation of a robust policy framework aimed at safeguarding these vulnerable children in all facets of their lives.

March 2024

Dr. Abu Saleh Mostafa Kamal


KUNGFU

Executive Summary

"I just want to go home, but what is that? Where is that? Can someone care for me?"

Ahmed[1], Age 11

The escalating phenomenon of street-connected children[2] is a stark reflection of broader socio-economic trends that affect vulnerable populations worldwide. In Bangladesh, the intersection of rapid population growth and accelerated urban migration, including the effects of climate change, has thrust the plight of street-connected children into the spotlight, marking it as an issue of international concern.

UNICEF / BBS estimates that more than 6.8% of children in Bangladesh are involved in child labor[3], with the International Labor Organization (ILO) providing a sobering estimate, revealing that over a million children in the country are ensnared in hazardous child labor[4], many of whom are intricately linked to the streets[5]. For children living in street situations, there are many estimates, although more recently, a high court case indicated that more than 3.4 million children[6] were in need of birth certificates who lived without parents on the street. Therefore, it can be assumed from this high court case that 3.4 million children is the lower range of the actual number of children currently living in street situations in Bangladesh without parental care.

These children, primarily found in bustling urban areas, navigate a precarious existence, often forced into dangerous and exploitative work conditions that belie their tender years. This alarming situation underscores not only the urgent need for comprehensive interventions but also the critical importance of addressing the systemic issues that perpetuate the cycle of vulnerability and exploitation for street-connected children in Bangladesh.

This qualitative study on street-connected children or children living in street situations[7] in Bangladesh offers a comprehensive exploration into the lived experiences, challenges, and resilience of this vulnerable population. Drawing from extensive interviews, observations, and participatory workshops, the research sheds light on the multifaceted realities that street children face, including issues related to safety, health, access to education, and their daily struggles for survival. This study situates itself within the broader context of urban poverty and child rights, providing a nuanced understanding of the socio-economic and cultural factors that contribute to the phenomenon of children living in street situations in Bangladesh.

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[1]All names in this document have been changed to protect the child. All quotes are directly taken from the conversations with children on the street.

[2]While there is no singular definition of a street-connected child, the Office of the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights (OHCHR) defines a "Street-connected Child" as "a child for whom the street is a central reference point—one which plays a significant role in his/her everyday life and identity."

[3]Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS) 2019: BBS & UNICEF

[4]Bangladesh National Child Labour Survey 2022: BBS & ILO

[5]Child labourers are defined as children involved in economic activities or in household chores above the age-specific thresholds. While the concept of child labour includes exposure to hazardous working conditions, and this is collected in MICS and was previously included in the reported indicator, the present definition, which is also used for SDG reporting, does not include children who are working under hazardous conditions.

[6]Office of Registrar General (ORG) submission number of children without parents living on the street needing Birth Certificates to the High Court, November 27th 2022. The government submitted a report to the High Court, saying that a total — children were given birth certificates without their parents' birth registration information from July 22 to November 21, 2022. The Daily Star. November 28, 2022.

[7]There are several terms and definitions in use, including 'children working and/or living on the street,' 'children in street situations', and 'children with street connections,' each having the potential to offer distinctive insights. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has adopted the term 'children in street situations,' recognizing that children engage in numerous activities on the street and that if there is a 'problem,', it is not the child but rather the situations in which she/he finds her/himself. See the literature review section for further details.

Most street-connected children face poverty, hunger, deprivation, disease, abuse, and severe social stigma. Many current interventions—shelters, drop-in-centers, hubs, residential care, and open-air programs—can ameliorate, to some degree, the harm of living on the streets. This qualitative assessment was undertaken to assess the conditions of children living and working on the street, exploring the root causes of their disconnection from "home" and ways to serve them. This study is expected to lead to evidence-based interventions and the eventual amelioration of the issue.

The study utilized a qualitative approach to delve into the complex phenomenon of street-connected children's life experiences and service needs. Eight (8) existing administrative divisions[8] of the country and all city corporations[9] were included; however, a priority focus was on the city of Dhaka, the hub of most street-connected children in the country. Nine groups of stakeholders, including street-connected children, children's friends and survival groups, families of street-connected children, street families, successfully and unsuccessfully reintegrated children, street brokers, government officials, and nongovernment organizations, were included in the study.

Based on the stakeholders, nine sets of qualitative questionnaires were developed corresponding to the study objectives. A professional research agency was hired to collect data. The ethical approval of the study was obtained from the Institute of Health Economics (IHE) under Dhaka University. With the active support of the Department of Social Services (DSS), the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and UNICEF, Bangladesh participants were recruited and interviewed by the data collection agency, Mitra & Associates. A nonprobability sampling based on the principle of data saturation[10] was used to collect data from the major cities of the country. Data was transcribed verbatim. A coding scheme was used to code the data. Themes or categories grounded in the data were the unit of analysis, whether expressed in phrase or paragraph.

Central to the findings is the impact of socio-economic disparities, family breakdown, climate change and internal displacement, and urbanization on the lives of these children. Further to this the lack of child protection systems to the village level to prevent the impact of these concerns was noteworthy. The study highlights how poverty, lack of access to education, lack of protection systems and services and familial instability, including violence, drive children towards street life, where they encounter various forms of exploitation and abuse.

Despite these adversities, the research uncovers the resilience and agency of street-connected children, who develop survival strategies and form peer networks for mutual support. The insights into these coping mechanisms underscore the children's capacity to navigate their challenging environments, albeit within the constraints of their vulnerable position in society.

"I have my friends. They are my family here. We work together and stay together. When I came here they were here and they still are."

Salma, Age 9

[8]Barishal, Chattogram, Dhaka, Khulna, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Mymensingh, Sylhet. See methodologies for details.

[9]Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC), Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), Chattogram City Corporation (CCC), Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC), Khulna City Corporation (KCC), Sylhet City Corporation (SCC), Barisal City Corporation (BCC), Cumilla City Corporation (COCC), Rangpur City Corporation (RACC), Gazipur City Corporation (GCC), Mymensing City Corporation (MCC), Narayanganj City Corporation (NCC)

[10]Nonprobability sampling based on the principle of data saturation is a qualitative research technique where the selection of participants isn't randomized, but rather chosen based on specific criteria relevant to the study until no new information is obtained from new subjects, at which point data collection is considered to have reached "saturation." This approach is commonly used in studies where understanding depth, nuances, and diversity of perspectives or experiences is more important than generalizing findings to a larger population. Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. R. (2014). Research methods for social work (Eighth edition.). Cengage Learning.

Findings showed that intergenerational poverty, often across three or more generations, shapes the families of children who live and/or work on the street. Cyclical poverty[11] leaves them vulnerable to the effects of shocks like parental death and illness or loss of income. There are virtually no pathways into economic stability for those living in subsistence poverty, and this impacts every aspect of family life, including physical and mental health, nutrition, shelter, and education.

Children leaving home and ending up on the streets can be because of reasons that come from different levels of their lives: big-picture issues, family problems, and personal reasons. Big-picture issues include things like poverty passed down through families, natural disasters, moving from place to place, and problems with getting a good education. Family problems can be things like violence and abuse at home, losing a parent or dealing with their illness, or issues like parents splitting up, getting remarried, or using drugs. On a personal level, some kids might leave out of curiosity, because they got lost, they're looking for an adventure, or they're facing trouble with school.

Participants in the study talked about different kinds of relationships with their families, based on a few main ideas. Some felt they had a good connection with their family and did their part as a child. Others wanted to be with their families but couldn't, for reasons like their parents splitting up or getting remarried, facing violence and abuse at home, or needing to make money to help their family. Some had very little contact with their families, which could be because a parent died, there were big changes at home, or they thought life on the streets was better than their home life. Then, there were children who had no relationship with their families at all, often because they were kicked out or didn't know how to get in touch with them anymore.

"My father married twice since my mom's death. He abandoned me. He has not looked after me since his marriage. He drove me from home, he even does not acknowledge me as his son."

Alamin, age 12

"My father died. My mom got married again. My stepfather did not accept me. He used to beat me. He used to say, "bring me 100 takas daily, I will let you stay here, otherwise you won't be allowed to live here. You can go wherever the hell you want." He used to beat me if I could not earn the exact amount."

Badol, age 12

"I do not know anything about my family. All I remember was I had my father and mother… I live on the station."

Moni, age 7

All participants engaged in income-generating activities (IGAs), either through aid from the public or through laboring in the bottom tier of the urban informal economy[12]. Their IGAs can be categorized into

[11]Cyclical poverty refers to a pattern where poverty is experienced by individuals and families over multiple generations. It is characterized by a vicious cycle where the consequences of poverty—such as limited access to quality education, inadequate healthcare, substandard living conditions, and diminished employment opportunities—become the root causes for its perpetuation. Children born into poverty are at a higher risk of remaining in poverty throughout their lives, and without significant intervention, are likely to pass on similar conditions to their offspring. https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/128211/57Moore.pdf

[12]Laboring in the bottom tier of the urban informal economy refers to working in the most precarious and low-paying jobs that are not officially recognized or regulated by the government. These jobs often lack job security, benefits like health insurance, and safe working conditions. Workers in this part of the informal economy might include street vendors, waste pickers, domestic workers, and day laborers. They typically earn very little money and have little to no protection against exploitation or job loss. This type of work is common in cities where formal employment opportunities are scarce, forcing many to find whatever work they can to survive. https://www.wiego.org/sites/default/files/migrated/publications/files/Chen_WIEGO_WP1.pdf

seeking help, informal jobs, independent jobs, and illegal survival activities. Children found IGAs through self-initiation, employers or contractors approaching them, social networks, or family initiation.

Participants often demonstrated remarkable innovation in finding new IGAs. They scouted exhaustively to find potential sources available in a specific location and tended to find something that others could not see. Even though this might be attributed in part to children's low status in the informal labor market and their desperation to earn an income, it also demonstrates their resolve and creativity. Because they have so little power, children's IGAs were ad-hoc, hazardous, and exploitative, often exposing them to environmental and social risks and long work hours. They often faced abuse from employers or service-seekers or from older adults in the work environment. The labor of street-connected children falls along strict gender lines, with girls facing more barriers in finding and carrying out IGAs, including sexual harassment and stigma.

Most participants supported their families financially, either regularly (almost daily) or irregularly. Some provided no support, usually because they had no contact with family. Many regular supporters gave all of their income to their families.

"The money is not for me. I have a sister and brother. I send to my mum."

Mohammed, Age 12

Street-connected children frequently suffer from accidental injuries, sicknesses, and traumas. The source of these injuries and sicknesses can be attributed to three major factors: the perilous physical and social environment in which they live, dangers from income-generating activities (IGAs), and their own risk-taking behaviour. Almost all participants shared their experiences with disease and accidental injuries incurred while on the street, including minor, major, and traumatic injuries and sicknesses.

Though the current study did not explore mental health, street-connected children are highly susceptible to mental health-related disorders due to the long list of chronic deprivations and the continuous stream of stressors to which they are exposed. Based on the participants' accounts, it is plausible to argue that some of them struggle with self-stigma, anxiety disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Many children we encountered exhibited behaviors including – withdrawal from social interactions, low self-esteem, reluctance to seek help, demonstrating physical signs of anxiety such as restlessness, rapid heartbeat, sweating, trembling, or complaints of feeling dizzy or nauseous without a clear medical cause, flashbacks, nightmares, or intrusive thoughts about past traumatic experiences common among street children (such as violence, abuse, or severe neglect), constantly appearing on edge, easily startled, or showing exaggerated response to noises or surprises, indicative of a heightened state of anxiety, and exhibiting feelings of detachment or estrangement from others, persistent negative beliefs about oneself or the world, and difficulty experiencing positive emotions. This supports the mental health analysis above.

Participants coped with daily challenges through innovation, resourcefulness, and motivation. Their coping mechanisms can be divided into three broad processes: Social Networks, Resistance and Avoidance Coping, and Being Street Smart. These coping mechanisms distinctly affect participants' ability to survive and meet their needs in the street environment. Social networks are the primary mechanism of street survival and coping with hazards. The social support participants received from peer networks is extensive and reported to cover almost every domain of their survival struggle, such as exchanging of information, finances, meal support, emotional support, income generation, crisis care, and instrumental support.

Being street smart can be characterized as a child's ability to adapt to harsh environments, successfully navigate the culture of street economies and status hierarchies, build relationships with peers and adults, connect with resources, and, most importantly, frequently adjust to the changing environment. Strategic resistance is the process of self-protection in which participants attempt to resist perpetrators by exploiting the social environment, such as by crying out for help while being attacked by an adult. Avoidance coping refers to a dangerous or harmful event that participants intentionally avoid or disengage from for fear of being harmed.

Participants' street-based activities are driven by their survival needs. These needs are what they identify as the minimum requirements for their survival on the street; they are neither the exhaustive resources required for the normative growth and development of children nor are they what the children desire to have. Physiological needs, including food, shelter, clothing, and healthcare, were generally funded through children's own income. Peer networks as well as NGOs and some government services, also offered support for children as they worked to meet these basic needs. For many participants, finding food and meeting other physiological needs was a daily struggle. Safety needs were one of the most pressing problems participants encountered in their daily lives.

Due to the lack of protection, the risk of violence, abuse, and exploitation is omnipresent in children's lives. Children reported frequent abuse by police officials, particularly in restricted public places like train and launch stations. Street-connected children, and street-living children in particular, are highly disadvantaged in terms of receiving love and care. Many migrated toward street life because they were deprived of love and care within the home but struggled to find warm and secure relationships on the street.

The class hierarchy system and social stigma that equates street life with criminality also isolates street-connected children on a social scale. An overwhelming majority of participants identify dehumanization as the most critical barrier to their survival, manifesting through neglect, abuse, violence, and punitive treatment towards children. Both groups of participants are subject to dehumanization, though street-living participants are victims of more intense experiences.

Most participants spoke highly of services provided by NGOs. Children had mixed experiences with government services and hospitals, with some children reporting positive and warm experiences and others reporting mistreatment and abuse. Government service centers (e.g., Shishu Poribar, Sheikh Russel Training and Rehabilitation Center) are sources of allegedly negative service experiences, such as abuse, exploitation, and inedible food.

Street-connected children reported facing common barriers in attempting to access services, including institutional, familial, and individual barriers. Institutional barriers included inadequate service provision, limited breadth and scope of services, a focus on symptoms rather than causes of abuse of street-connected children, and a lack of professionalism and quality in service interactions. The fear of family separation and the awareness that services would not provide support to the rest of the child's family also prevented some children from accessing services.

Individual barriers include those service obstacles which derive from individual decisions. Children, either by their own will or influenced by environmental factors, ignore, or become disinterested in services and programs, mainly because of the restriction of freedom that comes with joining a service or program.

Participants' opinions of government help are mixed. The majority of participants expressed that the government has done nothing for them. However, a minority of children interviewed did hold a positive

view of the government. These participants reported that the government had supported them and their families in the past. Most participants stated that they would happily accept the government's help if offers were made. Myths of bodily harm, trafficking, organ harvesting, blood collection, and human sacrifice discouraged some participants from seeking services from anyone, including service agencies. Most myths were spread as rumors, with individuals and groups hearing them through the grapevine.

Children's accounts suggested that no problem, in particular, is less severe than the others they experience on the street. They endured multifarious, interconnected problems that had a cascade of negative effects on their lives. Children irrespective of their age, gender, and disability status focused on food, a good place to live and sleep, clothing, education, and a reasonable source of income.

Food was the most highly valued and most frequently identified need for street-connected children and their families. All families asserted that their income was not enough to raise their children even modestly. Since participants' survival mostly depends on their ability to garner resources through work, the demand for a decent, safe job or continuous source of economic support was a top priority among participants.

Other stakeholders agreed with participants' and their families' insistence on the importance of accessing better jobs but suggested that the focus needs to be on family members' employment rather than children's. Other needs identified as gateways to better lives for street-connected children and their families included access to healthcare, education, sports and recreation, love and care, tranquility and sleep, childcare (for families), and small business capital or other economic supports.

Every stakeholder who participated in the study concurred that street-connected children are one of the most disadvantaged groups, and more needs to be done to integrate them into society. Stakeholders made suggestions for the improvement of programs and policies that were grouped into the 3 Ps Model [13]of Intervention for Street-connected Children. The 3 Ps included the provision of policies and programs, protection at home and on the street, and children's, families', and communities' participation in program and policy development and implementation.

Street-living children's reintegration into families and kin depends on many factors, such as children's intentions to return home, family members' acceptance, risks of abuse, family poverty, locating parents, and a plan for the family and children for their future. Participants shared several ways to convince children to return home, including counseling, engaging with parents and kin, and financial incentives.

Participants presented their hopes and aspirations for the future with considerable clarity and specificity, with an awareness of their current realities and educational trajectories. On the whole, their descriptions exemplify the extraordinary resilience of children as they are able to adjust their hopes and dreams considering their reality. Survival expectations were a dominant theme in the accounts of street-connected children, including stable access to food, shelter, health care, and other necessities of life.

Though participants could be grouped into those who aspired to professional careers and those who aspired to informal jobs or self-employment, there were underlying commonalities across groups. All participants dreamed of the stability and security that employment can provide. Most participants also hoped to reconnect with their families or caregivers, to overcome the stigma associated with street-connected children, and/or to serve greater communities and society. Participants also expressed their desire to work hard for their anticipated success, such as through education.

[13] The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) required three core principles – Provisions, Protection, and Participation – in designing any intervention framework for children. See details on Convention on the Rights of the Child text | UNICEF

Participants' aspirations were shaped by the gendered nature of societal roles and expectations, and the unique challenges that boys and girls encountered.

Almost all street-connected children, their families, former street-connected children, and street brokers reached a unanimous consensus that the government can change the fate of children and families. They advanced the idea that the government has the power, resources, and distribution structure to support them.

The study concludes with a call for a multifaceted policy response that addresses the root causes of children living on the streets and provides a pathway for their reintegration into society. It emphasizes the need for collaborative efforts between government, non-governmental organizations, and community groups to create sustainable solutions that prioritize the welfare and rights of street children. By focusing on preventive measures, social welfare services, child protection systems, education, healthcare, and social protection, the study advocates for a holistic approach that not only alleviates the immediate hardships faced by street children but also offers them opportunities for a better future. This research contributes significantly to the understanding of street children in Bangladesh and lays the groundwork for informed interventions and policies aimed at addressing this complex social issue.

Key Recommendations from Participants of the Study –

1. Amend and strengthen Sections III, IX, and X of the Children's Act and rules
2. Develop policies to eliminate youth and family homelessness
3. Enhance the focus on preventing streetward migration by understanding protective factors during the pre-migration phase
4. Increase funding for programs providing basic needs to street-connected children to expand services
5. Expand and strengthen government child protection systems to prevent and respond to children and families affected by violence, abuse, and exploitation including outreach for those on the street
6. Adopt harm reduction approaches[14] for children using substances, recognizing this as coping behavior
7. Leverage street-based social networks to improve service delivery and incorporate education and skill development programs
8. Initiate skills-development programs aligned with children's career interests, ensuring their basic needs and safe housing first
9. Base reintegration efforts on understanding root causes, tailored services, and participatory planning
10. Design programs and policies considering systemic factors like economic trends and climate impacts
11. Launch public awareness campaigns to educate on the challenges faced by street-connected children and promote sensitivity towards them

[14]Harm reduction for street-involved children focuses on minimizing risks through accessible healthcare, education, safe spaces, psychosocial support, legal aid, family reintegration, life skills training, basic needs provision, and community involvement. It respects children's dignity and autonomy, acknowledging their resilience amidst challenging circumstances.

12. Include education on sexual abuse for children and adults in regular interaction with them
13. Implement measures to reduce violence and abuse by police and officials towards street-connected children, including rights-based training
14. Support entire families through programs and services, not just children
15. Strengthen collaboration between the government, NGOs, and civil society to develop a comprehensive child protection system using a child rights approach
16. Respect children's rights to self-determination to enhance program effectiveness and child wellbeing
17. Improve poverty measurements to include individual-level data for a clearer picture of resource distribution within households

Across the globe, countless children find themselves navigating life far from the sanctuary of home, a

pressing issue that nations worldwide grapple with. In the absence of a nurturing environment, these young souls are left to confront a harsh reality, a situation all too common in places like Bangladesh, where the harsh hands of poverty and inequality shape the destiny of its youngest citizens. Despite the country's commitment to international child rights conventions and the establishment of laws aimed at protecting the vulnerable, a staggering number of Bangladeshi children still find themselves stripped of their fundamental rights. Among the most affected are the street-connected children, who represent a profoundly marginalized community fighting for survival and recognition in a world that often overlooks them.

"I don't think people see us. They bump into us. Brush past us. Yell at us. Abuse us. We are an irritation, like a bug. We are not seen."

Fatema, Age 16

The term "street children" broadly refers to children who spend a significant portion of their lives living and working on the streets. Definitions that simplify the diverse experiences of this group of children have been subject to critical discussion[15]. The assumption that street children are isolated and entirely homeless is insufficient. In the cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad in Pakistan, street-connected children are primarily "children on the street," spending time regularly with family.

Through the lens of social constructionism, "street children can better be understood as young people considered by the public to be 'out of place'"[16]. Understanding street children in this way generates different questions about the needs of this group. If social hegemony plays a major role in defining these children as 'out of place' or deviant, then improving their lives will require not only changes to the children's immediate situations but also changes to social hegemony. Because the term "street children" may inaccurately suggest that streetism[17] is an inherent quality of this demographic, this study will instead employ the term "street-connected children." An in-depth literature review on street-connected children – definitions, population size, demographics, migration patterns, experiences of violence, and social networks – is included in Annex I.

Around the world, tens of millions of children fall within the broad category of street-connected children[18]. Academics, advocates, and journalists regularly refer to the existence of 100 million 'street children' worldwide, but this is an inaccurate and outdated estimate[19]. The precise number of children who live, work, or spend most of their time on the streets across the globe is unknown. Throughout South Asia,

[15]de Benitez, S. T. (2011). State of the World's Street Children: Research (Street Children Series, Issue. https://www.streetchildren.org/resources/state-of-the-worlds-street-children-research/

[16]de Benitez, S. T. (2007). State of the World's Street Children: Violence, Page 8 (Street Children Series, Issue. https://www.streetchildren.org/resources/state-of-the-worlds-street-children-violence/

[17]Streetism refers to the phenomenon of individuals, particularly children and adolescents, living and/or working on the streets. This term encompasses a wide range of experiences and conditions, from children who spend the majority of their time on the streets to earn a living or beg, to those who may have some familial ties but rely on the street for their survival and socialization. Streetism is often the result of complex socio-economic factors, including poverty, family breakdown, abuse, and urban migration. Children affected by streetism face numerous challenges, including exposure to violence, exploitation, health problems, and limited access to education and social services. The term highlights not just the physical reality of living on the streets but also the broader social and economic exclusion these individuals experience. https://elibrary.ru/item.asp?id=26533182

[18] Seidel, S., Muciimi, J., Chang, J., Gitari, S., Keiser, P., & Goodman, M. L. (2018). Community perceptions of home environments that lead children & youth to the street in semi-rural Kenya. Child Abuse & Neglect, 82, 34-44.

[19]de Benitez, S. T. (2011). State of the World's Street Children: Research (Street Children Series, Issue. https://www.streetchildren.org/resources/state-of-the-worlds-street-children-research/

migration into cities has increased overall as individuals and families seek higher living standards. This has ultimately resulted in increasing numbers of street-connected children, including in Indian cities[20]. With a rising general population (169 million as of December 2022) and increased migration into metropolitan areas of the country, the conditions of street-connected children in Bangladesh have become a significant concern[21].

The global discussion on the prevalence of street-connected children is also active in Bangladesh. Social indicators (e.g., population growth, child abuse) suggest that the number of street-connected children is increasing. In one account, this population has continued to steadily rise[22]. Despite this, while no official statistics on street-connected children are available in the country, practitioners and policy makers can estimate based on agreed data and case load.

BBS/UNICEF estimates that more than 6.8% of children in Bangladesh are involved in child labor[23], with the International Labor Organization (ILO) providing a sobering estimate, revealing that over a million children in the country are ensnared in hazardous child labor[24], many of whom are intricately linked to the streets[25]. For children living in street situations, there are many estimates, although more recently, a high court case indicated that more than 3.4 million children[26] were in need of birth certificates who lived without parents on the street. So, we can assume from this high court case that more than 3.4 million children are currently living in street situations in Bangladesh without parental care.

Additionally, to this quantitative data, a growing body of literature, primarily by individual researchers, articulates plights of street-connected children including insecure access to basic needs, physical and sexual abuse by adults in their immediate communities, violence and harassment by law enforcement agencies, inadequate access to educational institutions and healthcare facilities, and lack of humane employment opportunities. With the revelation of new facts and figures on the prevalence and plights of street-connected children, it is plausible to argue that their lives have become increasingly traumatic in recent decades.

There are some efforts by the government of Bangladesh and non-government organizations (NGOs) to address the problems street-connected children encounter. The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) and the Ministry of Social Welfare (MoSW) have initiated programs for providing services to children living on the streets.

MoWCA has established two shelter homes in Dhaka, including two community spaces, to identify children in need and refer them to shelter homes. Besides this, under the Child Protection program focusing on the Prevention of Harmful Practices and Violence Against Children and Women (VACW), MoWCA has established 22 Child Protection Community Hubs (CPCH) for children living on the street and around brothels. These hubs offer food, clothes, WASH facilities, and psychosocial support, along

[20]Dutta, N. (2018). Street Children in INDIA: A Study on their Access to Health and Education. International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies, 9(1), 69-82.

[21]Mia, M., & Islam, M. (2021). Legal Protection of Street Children in Bangladesh: with References to International and National Laws. 7, 34-49.

[22]Atkinson-Sheppard, S. (2019). The gangs of Bangladesh : Mastaans, street gangs and 'illicit child labourers' in Dhaka. Palgrave Macmillan; Wazed, S. (2010). Migration and Street Children in Bangladesh. OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development, 2(1), 35-42

[23]Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS) 2019: BBS & UNICEF

[24]Bangladesh National Child Labour Survey 2022: BBS & ILO

[25]Child labourers are defined as children involved in economic activities or in household chores above the age-specific thresholds. While the concept of child labour includes exposure to hazardous working conditions, and this is collected in MICS and was previously included in the reported indicator, the present definition, which is also used for SDG reporting, does not include children who are working under hazardous conditions.

[26]Office of Registrar General (ORG) submission number of children without parents living on the street needing Birth Certificates to the High Court, November 27th 2022. The government submitted a report to the High Court, saying that a total of 3,456,757 street children were given birth certificates without their parents' birth registration information from July 22 to November 21 2022.

with awareness sessions on the prevention of violence, harmful practices, prevention of HIV, referrals to Social Workers and other specialized services. Bangladesh Shishu Academy is operating one shelter home for street-connected children in Keraniganj.

MoSW/DSS has established five tent-based child protection services hubs in crowded locations like bus and launch terminals, and railway stations that provide basic services, including shelter support, psychosocial counselling, case management and family reintegration and referrals. Further, MoSW/DSS has established 13 shelter homes named Sheikh Rassel Child Development and Rehabilitation Center for vulnerable children and for 'vagrants.' Apart from this there are baby homes for destitute children. Some non-government agencies (NGOs) are providing similar services to children living on the streets. International organizations have also provided support to the government and NGOs.

Progress[27] has been made to establish legal protections and supports for street-connected children. The enactment of the Children Act 2013 designated children living on the street as disadvantaged group. The Act included special provisions[28] on interventions for street-connected children. It delegated significant authority to probation officers and social workers in identifying, reintegrating, and rehabilitating street-connected children, and outlined specific roles and responsibilities for Child Affairs Police Officers (CAPOs). The law also authorized the establishment of Child Welfare Boards across the country at National, District and Upazilla level to monitor and coordinate child-welfare related activities specifically for the disadvantaged children who need special care and protection. (The Children Act, 2013).

An examination of the Initiatives undertaken by the government, United Nations organizations, and non-governmental organizations paints a rather disheartening picture regarding the reach, capability, inclusivity, and success of current interventions aimed at assisting street-connected children. For instance, numerous shelters, despite housing hundreds of children, find themselves stretched beyond their limits, falling short of adequately addressing the needs of those in their care. Moreover, efforts to shield these children from the daily abuses they face on the streets are notably insufficient.

The challenge of street-connected children is intricate and layered, with its roots deeply embedded in the very place that should offer safety – the home. Factors at various levels – from broad societal issues to individual circumstances – play a role in driving children to the streets and keeping them there. A thorough exploration and understanding of these children's living conditions and the fundamental reasons behind their estrangement from home are critical. Such an approach can pave the way for developing targeted, evidence-based interventions that could significantly mitigate this pressing issue.

[27]Section 89 of the Children Act 2013 has a list of Disadvantaged Children where street children are also listed. https://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/sites/unicef.org.bangladesh/files/2018-07/Children%20Act%202013%20English.pdf

[28]There are specific provisions of alternative measures and alternative care provisions for children in contact with the law and disadvantaged children, which, among others, provide for family and community-based reintegration, foster care and other rehabilitation services to be determined through case management.

Study Objectives

The overarching objective of the study is to explore lives, livelihoods, abuses, and needs of children living and working on the street in order to facilitate a long-term national policy and strategy aimed at promoting, protecting, and fulfilling their rights. The specific objectives include:

1. To identify the push and pull factors that facilitate children's migration to the streets for work or livelihood
2. To understand experiences, views, needs and priorities of children living in street situations. These include children's street migration, livelihood strategies and challenges, peer dynamics, street relationships, contact with parents or relatives, contact with social services, and future hope and aspiration
3. To understand views and barriers in children's return to their home, challenges their caretakers face, patterns of cooperation and assistance in rehabilitation and reintegration, reasons for successful and unsuccessful reintegration, and alternative care options
4. To explore the types and intensity of violence, abuse, and exploitation children encounter as well as their engagement in hazardous and worst forms of child labor and criminal activities
5. To describe and analyze the policy measures and strategies of the government and the governmental and non-governmental services provided for children and families living on the street
6. To assess the adequacy, quality, and satisfaction of social protection, child protection, and services available to children living on the street from the perspective of those children, their families/caretakers, service providers, and other stakeholders
7. To explore the trends and ways of interacting with children on the street and their families, both from the perspective of service provision as well as from surrounding communities
8. To identify children and stakeholders' views on what interventions work and do not work for improving the lives of children living on the streets and helping these vulnerable groups transition off the street

Methodology

This section outlines a summarized version of the methodology. A more in-depth description of the full methodology is included in Annex II for review and repetition.

Study Design

The study utilized a qualitative approach to delve into the complex phenomenon of street-connected children's life experiences and service needs. Since the study requires insights and experiences of multiple stakeholders with the goal of developing policies and programs, the qualitative approach best suited this study.

Geographic Coverage

Eight existing administrative divisions of the country and all city corporations were included; however, a priority focus was on the city of Dhaka, the hub of most street-connected children in the country.

Sample Categories and Definitions

Nine groups of stakeholders comprised the sample. Some variations across certain stakeholder categories were also included. The following definitions were used as inclusion and exclusion criteria for the sample.

Street-connected Children: Children and adolescents who are 5- 17 years old spend considerable amounts of time on the street, use the street or similar public spaces for livelihoods and may or may not go to adults' care at night. A total of 174 children were part of this group.

Friends and Survival Groups (Children): Apart from the regular group of street-connected children, a diverse group of street-working and street-living children — including children with disabilities, children who use drugs and/or alcohol, and children in conflict with the law — were part of this group. Fifty-two friends and survival groups, each comprising at least 3 children, participated in the study.

Families of Street-connected Children: Both biological and stepparents, relatives, and caregivers of street-connected children. Families with children who do not have a permanent residence and primarily live on the pavement of the street or public places in makeshift shelters were also included. A total of 96 parents (75 mothers and 21 fathers) participated in the study.

Former Street-connected Children: Adults between 18- 25 years of age who previously lived and/or worked on the street. They were divided into two groups. Children who were successfully reunited with the family or placed into institutional care were considered as successfully reintegrated children. Those who returned to the family, caregivers, or institution for a brief period of time and returned to the street upon unsuccessful integration were considered as unsuccessfully reintegrated children. A total of 32 youth participated in the study.

Street Brokers: Street brokers are adults who actively influence children's lives through social contact, employing children in businesses or other economic activities, and engaging them in legal or illegal activities. The study recruited and interviewed 34 street brokers.

Government Officials: Employees of the Government of Bangladesh who are currently or potentially engaged in developing, implementing, and evaluating policies and programs for street-connected children. A total of 99 government officials were interviewed for the study.

UN Organizations: Members of the UN agencies who are currently or potentially engaged in developing, implementing, and evaluating policies and programs for street-connected children. A total of 3 representatives of UN organizations participated in the study.

NGO Partners: Members of nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) who are engaged in developing, implementing, evaluating, and advocating for policies and programs for street-connected children. Eleven NGO partners participated in the study.

Sample Identification and Recruitment

Children and adolescents 5-17 years of age living and/or working on the streets as well as caregivers of children 0-4 years of age living and/or working on the streets were recruited through NGOs (street outreach programs/shelters), DSS (Child Protection Service Hubs), and DWAs (drop-in centers). The methodology for the key informant interviewee identification was purposive, with the intent to collect data from officials and providers that had policy-level and on-the-ground service provider viewpoints.

Data Analysis

Applied thematic analysis was used to identify significant themes. To this end, the researcher reviewed each transcript initially. Conversations and responses from participants were grouped together in a word document. Topics that re-occurred in and across cases were identified. Each of these topics was then grouped and assigned a code or a label. Next, the researchers looked for the relationships among the codes and grouped them into more prominent themes or categories. Relevant translated participant responses were included in writing the findings and interpreting the results. Excerpted sections of relevant text are included to illustrate study findings. These excerpts were translated into English by the technical expert a native Bangla speaker. Cultural subtleties, meaning of expressions, and contexts of conversations were considered in the translation process.

Ethical Considerations

The project was approved by the research ethics board of Institute of Health Economics, Dhaka University. The research team adhered to ethical guidelines in every step of the research. Participants were given information about the objectives, procedures, risks, and benefits of the study during information sessions. Data collectors were trained with various trainings (i.e., interviewing vulnerable children, security and safety awareness, vicarious trauma). A verbal consent form was read to each participant during every new interview. Participants were financially compensated for their time.

Limitations

Purposive sampling helped select a varied group of street-connected children for their unique experiences. However, the sample's lack of representativeness limits the findings' applicability beyond this specific

group, not capturing the full spectrum of experiences among street-connected children nationwide. Despite aiming for data saturation, we acknowledge missing potential diverse narratives not represented in our study.

Additionally, the younger participants' age sometimes hindered deep discussions on topics like family and street life, leading to incomplete or unverified accounts. While we excluded dubious data, comprehensive verification of all information was challenging.

Also, the trauma associated with street life might have influenced participants to embellish or withhold parts of their stories. We accepted their accounts without probing, deliberately avoiding mental health inquiries to prevent re-traumatization.

Findings

> The future of Bangladesh rests on how we protect, educate, and uplift the lives of street children, who are often the most marginalized and overlooked in society.

CHAPTER 1

Family Life

Chapter 1.1: Family Characteristics of Street Connected Children

Street-connected children tend to belong to families that are socially excluded and marginalized. Economic, social, family, and physical vulnerabilities are dominant features of these families.

Street-connected children primarily belong to nuclear families comprised of siblings and parents. The family size ranges from five to twelve members including parent(s), with the size of the family depending on whether the father married more than once. Female-led families were prevalent among participants. Grandparents or other family members' roles in children's lives are limited, although grandparents occasionally take on caregiving roles in the absence of parent(s).

Intergenerational poverty shapes the families of children who live and/or work on the street. Children and their parents' accounts offer evidence that these families have been victims of poverty for at least three generations. Parents often came from marginalized backgrounds characterized by low income and limited or no assets and skills that are not valued in the job market. Some parents were born into poverty or became poor due to natural or socio-economic disasters. Thus, some parents of participants were born and raised without a permanent home. Regardless of where they were born, parents of participants rarely had a steady income or a stable home.

Children's families are victims of extreme poverty. Even though intergenerational poverty is the gateway to this condition, prolonged and subsistence poverty stemmed from and were exacerbated by two major factors—parents' subsistence income and an absence of savings or assets. Parents' lack of formally marketable skills and lack of opportunity often force them into the informal labor market, characterized by uncertainty, low-wage, and high-risk jobs. Parents' employment tended to be gendered — men were commonly engaged as day laborers, construction workers, and rickshaw pullers, while women primarily served as domestic aids. Underemployment and unemployment were also common among the breadwinners of many families. Data showed that participants' families could barely meet their everyday needs. Without tangible assets, they could not stave off economic and social shocks such as loss of income, parental illnesses and death. Moreover, income uncertainty forced some families to borrow from informal sources resulting in family debts. Thus, poverty-related stress is a normative feature of the families of street-connected children.

Early parental death and illness often disrupted children's lives. Parental death could be attributed to a myriad of factors, but the most common was lack of adequate medical treatment. Children and their parents' accounts revealed that some parents could neither afford nor continue necessary treatments due to overwhelming poverty. Left untreated, their medical conditions resulted in early death or disabilities. A greater number of fathers than mothers experienced early death and severe illness.

Disabilities among parents are another common feature. Disabilities may include physical incapacity or mental illness. Parents, particularly fathers, worked high-risk informal jobs (e.g., construction work) and frequently succumbed to accidents and injuries. Accidental injuries led to permanent physical disabilities for some fathers. Mental health conditions among some mothers remained untreated and thus impeded the functioning of a family.

Multiple marriages were also a practice found among some fathers of participants. Male parents of some participants got married several times. Several mothers also abandoned their families and got married with other men.

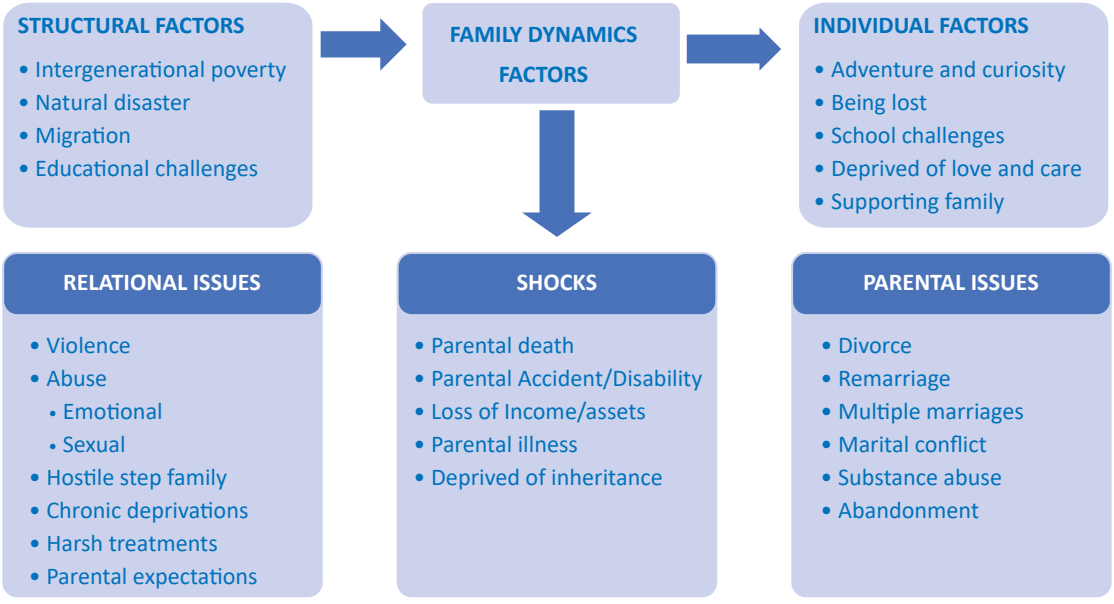
Family conflict and harsh disciplining often dominated street children's family life. Conflict among siblings — older siblings bullying younger ones — is a repeated theme among participants. Other family members, especially parents, resort to harsh discipline regularly. Physical and emotional abuse, food deprivation, and threatening to drive children out of the home were regularly used as disciplining tools.

Family practices around childrearing, schooling, and treatment towards children were somewhat unconventional. Both parent and child participants shared that while parents left home for work, young children were either left in the care of a neighbor or sibling or left on their own, which led to unsafe conditions for some children. In addition, a relatively complex scenario emerged regarding schooling and education. While parents valued education in general, the high costs and duration of schooling seemed to compromise families' ability to continue their children's education. Children tended to drop out of school prior to completion of elementary school and parents lost interest in sending them back. For instance, out of ninety street-working children who participated in the individual interview, twenty-eight never attended any school and fifty did not complete elementary school. Similarly, out of eighty-four participating street-living children, thirty-four never attended any school and another forty-seven did not complete elementary school. Some parents sent their children to religious boarding schools that were tuition-free, but harsh rules and regular abuse dissuaded children from continuing their education.

Children's economic contribution seemed an integral part of family expectations and survival mechanism. There was explicit and implicit pressure on children to economically support their families. From the data, it appeared that such expectations are instilled in children at an early age (as early as five) and lasts for as long as the family can retain control over their children's income. However, how early they start also depends on the family's survival capacity. For homeless or single-parent families, children's IGAs generally begin earlier when children-accompanied parents seek help on the street.

Chapter 1.2: Why Children Leave Home and Work on the Street

Children's streetward migration and departure from home can be attributed to three groups of factors derived from macro-, mezzo-, and micro components of their social environments, which are structural factors, family dynamics, and individual factors.



Structural factors are macro causes that create conditions in which children and their families make major and life-altering decisions. Structural factors sometimes directly contribute to children's street migration and economic engagements. It appeared that persistent inter-generational poverty affected families' ability to meet basic needs. Some parents of the participants explained how poverty affected their lives and how it is impacting their children's lives. Natural disasters, such as loss of a home or crops, added stress and hopelessness, worsening the family's ability to manage poverty. Responding to these conditions, parents' families migrated to urban areas for better opportunities and found shelter in streets or informal settlements. Families were marginalized or excluded from the urban economy, hardly having the skills or income to meet the families' needs.

A key informant said, *"We see a growing trend of poor families migrating from coastal regions. Part of it is due to climate change, especially due to the increased salinity of arable land and frequent disasters. Families come to the city for survival."* Some parents also intentionally exploit children as economic tools for survival. While responding to the question of childcare, a homeless mother who seeks support from the public said, *"...People become more sympathetic and donate more when they see I have young children."*

Participants and their families also suggested education was not a viable option for the family. Children did not pass classes and parents could not afford additional school expenses (i.e., school supplies, tutor fees). Some families' apathy for education was also reinforced by the parental belief that education is beyond the reach of poor families. As one father said, *"How far my children will study? Education is for the rich, not for the poor like us."*

Such perceptions, alongside poverty, encourage families to engage children in economic activities outside the home which eventually leads to the breakdown of family ties. Apart from economic stress, the lack of an educational success story at home or within their communities encouraged children and parents to discontinue it.

Family-related factors had direct roles in children's street migration and economic engagements. Three trends emerged from participants' accounts.

The first group of factors covers economic and social shocks, including parental death, disability, long-term illness, and loss of income and assets. One or more of these shocks destabilized the foundation of some families. Data showed a significant number of children had lost at least one of their parents, particularly fathers. The death of these parent(s) led to a cascade of negative events that children or their families could not manage. For example, most families relied on the fathers' subsistence income. A loss of income relegated families to further economic uncertainties. Families responded to such crises by selling meagre assets or establishing inheritance rights.

Obtaining possession of their assets was a challenge for some female-headed families. Families also considered other options. Mothers often assumed the breadwinner role and left home for work. In such cases, children were often left to remain at home alone during the mother's time at work. Without parental supervision, some children could not find their way back venturing out of their home, with several street-living children sharing that they were lost and could not locate their families since wandering away.

Moreover, some mothers engaged children in begging or informal jobs (e.g., selling flowers). Such arrangements exposed children to the outside world. While working outside, several participants reportedly made street friends, got used to street life, developed survival skills, and eventually stopped

returning home. Some parents asked their children to return home, to no avail. A parent shared, *"I lost my son after sending him to work outside. He visits us but if I tell him to stay with us, he refuses. He has become wild."*

Children's accounts also revealed that the loss of parents also forced some children to assume parental responsibilities or fend for themselves. For example, a participant shared, *"We are having a challenging time after my father's death. We could not eat regularly…My mom became emotionally unstable. Me and my brother work to run our family."* Moreover, the death of any parent creates implicit and explicit pressure on the remaining parent to remarry. Parental remarriage forced children into further vulnerable circumstances, with children from the broken family barely having a place in their father or mother's new marriage.

Some participants shared detailed stories on how their parental remarriage affected their lives. Their accounts showed that they were subjected to regular physical assaults, emotional abuse, food deprivation, and asked to either earn money or leave home. Death of a parent also led to the abandonment of family, where a parent simply disappeared or disregarded parental responsibility. Though evidence shows abandonment by both mothers and fathers, male parents did so more frequently.

The second group of family factors are parental issues including divorce, remarriage, multiple marriages, marital conflict, and family abandonment. Moreover, some participants shared that their fathers' substance abuse and gambling habits contributed to suffering and harm within the family system. Data showed that each of these issues could individually or collectively affect children and force them out. For instance, a father gambling or becoming addicted to substances created conflict in the family, as mothers were forced to take on unmanageable levels of additional household duties.

Constant conflicts between parents over money, substance abuse, and other issues deteriorated ties among family members and ultimately pushed children out of the home. The conflict also facilitated some mothers' separation or divorce from their husband and put children without parental care. Children also shared that addicted fathers were violent towards family members, with the children being targeted. This led to the children fleeing home to escape parental violence. Some fathers' practice of multiple marriages was evident in some of the children's lives. Two trends emerged from the data.

In the first scenario, some fathers who migrated to the city alone who were unable to bring their family over to the city practiced this. In this case, the father is likely to hide any information from his previous family. Once married, he would gradually decrease support for the first family or abandon it all together. Learning of the incident may trigger an initiation of divorce from his first wife. In some instances, the wife accepts the husband's new marriage and lives separately with the children. The father's meagre income could barely afford two families, exacerbating poverty and deprivation. Participants shared that this practice has implications for children in terms of meeting basic needs, maintaining a two-parent home and ultimately children's sense of belonging to the family.

For example, a participant whose father abandoned the family stated, *"We used to live in Fulpur [a rural town] …my father came to Dhaka first and then stopped. When we came searching for him, we learned he got married…He doesn't support us."* In the second scenario, fathers living in urban areas tend to marry in other parts of the city. They become absent from their first family and eventually the first family learns of the event. In both cases, mothers become helpless and engage children in work.

On some occasions, both parents simply abandoned their children by telling them that they needed to find their own way. Some were thrown out of the home and were not allowed to return. Sometimes

grandparents or other close kin took care of children in the absence of parents, but economic expectations forced children to migrate and work outside the home. For example, a participant lost his parents and was placed in their maternal grandparents' care, with the grandparents being dependent on the participant. The participant's uncle asked him to bring two hundred takas daily, with him kicking out the participant when he could not meet this demand.

A breakdown in relations among family members was another major reason children left home. Relational breakdown occurs due to violence, abuse, deprivation, and hostility toward children. Not meeting parental expectations could also lead to relational breakdown. Depending on the family dynamics, relational breakdown could be a linear process. For example, some participants who were unable to meet their families' economic expectations felt their parents only wanted money from them and kept pressing them for more. Parents would hardly listen to their struggles of making money. Unable to convince their parents, some decided to leave home. Some participants waited to leave until the parental ultimatum to provide more or face physical, emotional abuse and deprivations. Some parents even threw them out of the home suggesting that they must not return.

Participants' inability to meet parental economic expectations is a major reason behind why some children left home or were forced out of home. Intergenerational poverty creates parental expectations that children must work to support the family. Parents convey it in their conversations, demand it, threaten the child, or sometimes physically assault them for not working. For instance, a participant shared that if he is unable to make a certain amount of money *"My mother would beat me with an umbrella shaft."* Children's accounts showed that once children started contributing to the family, economic contributions became expected, with the expectations only growing over time. Deviations such as children becoming unable to provide a steady income or expected amount created tension and would often trigger family members to react with abuse that intensified over time.

Some parents expressed their awareness that once children become older, they are unlikely to contribute to their family. As one parent said, *"When he grows up, he will not look after us. If he does not work now, when will he?"* The cut-off age when children stop contributing to the family varies, although it was derived from street-connected children's data that the age is between 14 and 15. Regardless, it appeared from the data that there is a turning point in maturity or experience where the child realizes they can survive without their parents or family and that risk of street life is worth taking compared to how challenging their home life is.

Findings also showed that relational breakdown often accompanied increasing levels of violence towards children. Parental violence was the most frequent experience for children, though violence by siblings was also reported. Being beaten was a common experience for both street-living and street-working children, though street-living children more frequently endured such experiences in their pre-departure life. Parental disciplining often crossed the boundary of discipline into humiliation and violence. For example, a child was tied, slapped, and degraded because he defied parental orders. When the child again defied the order, he was severely beaten, forcing the child to flee home.

Children's accounts showed that those living with stepparents were subjected to more frequent violence. Stepparents would beat up the child in response to alleged misconduct and would instigate the bio parent to be violent towards the child. Distinctions can be made between bioparents and stepparents in terms of the duration and intensity of abuse and exploitation. Bioparents abuse their children for many reasons and frequently, yet the abuse is not as intense as stepparents. Children's accounts showed that stepparents were abusive upon arrival in the family and continued such abuse until children were forced out.

Stepparents questioned whether the children belonged to the family, deprived them of meals, regularly degraded them, and asked them to leave.

For instance, a participant whose mother remarried after his biofather died shared that his stepfather was so violent that he was forced to left home. He would visit his mother when his stepfather was not present. In one incident, his stepfather returned home early and found him with his mother. Both the mother and the child were physically assaulted, and the child sustained serious injury. Boys were more frequently subjected to physical violence than girls; however, girls were verbally degraded and sometimes sexually abused by a few stepfathers.

Individual factors included those instances where children's decisions resulted in eventual departure to the street. Due to various reasons including poverty related stress and social and economic shocks, many participants could not succeed in their studies. Some children were abused at school by teachers for not completing the lessons or managing to get passing grades. Participants who were unsuccessful dropped out of school of their own accord or at their parents' behest. Out of school children were employed outside the home or asked by the family to earn money. Some children were placed in religious boarding schools where they were subjected to harsh disciplining and other forms of abuse.

Several participants shared that physical and emotional abuse were regular and unbearable and that appealing to their parents to remove them from these schools was ignored. Several participants laid out more serious accusations of sexual abuse. They did not explicitly reveal whether they were the victims of such crimes but used coded language as such — *"Hujur [teacher] tried to do bad things with me." "There were other problems…"* Presumably, such an expression is indicative of sexual abuse.

Children who fled religious boarding schools could not return home as their parents would force them to return to those institutions. Apart from the unsuccessful educational journey for being the reason of working or living on the street, some children who lived close to the city were curious and came to visit the city without parental permission. Some of them got lost and could not find their way back home. Once a child overcame the initial hurdles of street survival, they often expressed a lack of desire to return home. In some instances, being lost led to other events, including police arrest and staying in 'correction centers,' eroding any chance for the child to return home.

Moreover, parental death and economic shocks forced children to take the family responsibilities on their shoulder. Many participants shared their stories of family circumstances and subsequent events that led them to engage in income generating activities. Seeing their families' suffering, many participants sought any chance to earn money and accepted hazardous income generating activities. The final individual cause of leaving home and working outside is feelings of their family did not care about them.

Some participants whose life circumstances changed suddenly due to sudden crises (i.e., parent's death, remarriage, illness) appeared to suffer from trauma. When more adverse events added to their trauma, they felt disconnected and decided to leave home. For example, a participant who had a happy family with love and care was traumatized by the death of his mother, with the father remarrying when he was still grieving. Although his stepmother did not abuse him, he felt for his mom and could not stay home. He shared, *"While I was staying home, I dreamt of my lost mother and cried for her every day. My stepmother ridiculed me for crying. I felt empty and left home."*

Chapter 1.3: Family Relationships and Rethinking Typologies

Several themes emerged while children described their current relationships with their families. These include relationships with parents, other caregivers' family members, and sibling relationships.

"I stay with family": This group of participants are relatively strongly connected with their family members. They feel they are part of the family and play their roles, primarily set by their biological parents. Their roles revolve around one or more of the following: meeting the economic needs of the family, providing childcare in the absence of parent(s), and assuming other responsibilities as needed (e.g., helping sick or disabled parents). They tend to have relatively warm relationships with their parents and siblings. They express love for their younger siblings and mostly receive similar warmth from siblings. They tend to accept their fate of working for the family and being unable to attend school. They also show interest in their siblings' education and want them to pursue education to pursue a career. Street-working children living in their respective families dominated this group, but some street-living children also fit this category.

"I want to be with family but can't": This group of participants show their interest in family life but given their current and family circumstances, they are unable to return. Prior to streetward migration, they stayed in a relatively stable home with their biological parents or extended kin and had good memories of warm relationships with their parents, especially with mothers and siblings. They tend to yearn for their lost childhood.

Three subgroups comprise this category.

1. The first subgroup is those who lost their biological family life due to parental divorce or remarriage
2. The second subgroup is the victims of parental violence and abuse
3. The third subgroup are those who had to meet families' economic expectations and are forced to work outside of the home

Since their migration to the street, they had reached out to their immediate kin, including parent(s) or siblings and visited them but did not find a welcoming home. Many kept in contact with their family members through occasional visits. Their visit depends on many factors, including their ability to buy gifts for siblings or other past caregivers. When they are treated harshly by family members, they still try to connect with the ones they love. For instance, if the stepfather had forced the child out of home, he or she may occasionally visit the biomother and/or siblings in the absence of the stepfather. However, the child is unlikely to return due to the prevailing abusive conditions. Street-living children dominate this group's makeup, but some street-working children fit this category as well.

"No, I don't go": This group of participants barely have any relationship with their parent(s) and siblings and do not visit them. Two groups of participants comprise this group. The first subgroup comprises those who left home due to a traumatic event that they could not overcome. For example, some participants who suddenly lost their parents, especially mothers, felt prolonged grief and left home. These children do not want to return to a home without their loved one. For some, the loss of a parent changed the family structure (e.g., parental remarriage, no immediate caregivers) in such a way that the child no longer felt they had a role in the family. The other subgroup is comprised of those who love the freedom and friendship they can access through street life and rarely demonstrate sentiment for their remaining

families. To them, their current life is better than what they experienced, and they thus embrace it. Most street-living children belong to this category and some street-working children do as well.

"Where to go?": This group of children do not have any relationship with their families. Either they are outcasts by their families or do not know where their families are. Street-living girls who are forced to engage in survival sex primarily constitute this group. Some shared that their family refused them due to the stigma that they stayed in the street. The other group of participants who were lost or abandoned by parents at an early age also fit in this group. Some of the lost children tried to locate their parents but could not trace them.

Chapter 1.4: Financial Support to Family Members

Children who engage in street-based labor work in the informal economy are confronted with daily abuse, exploitation, and income uncertainty. Despite the difficulties they endure, most participants support their families financially. Their sense of family responsibility, amount contributed, and perceptions of their contributions can be grouped into the following categories:

Regular Supporters

Regular supporters are participants who support their families or members of the families almost daily.

One subgroup of these participants stays with their parents or family members and gives their income to their parents or caregivers willingly. This subgroup of participants considers their financial contribution important for their families' well-being. They do not retain any of their income and the parents are largely happy with their efforts. One participant shared, *"Whatever income I make, I give to my mother. Five hundred, one thousand, fifteen hundred, whatever."* Some of these participants spend part of their daily income on meals and incidentals and offer the remaining funds to their family.

The second subgroup of participants are forced to give their incomes to parents or caregivers. They tend to be controlled by their parents or caregivers and obliged to bring their income home. This subgroup is subject to abuse and violence if they are not able to meet parental expectations for income. One participant shared, *"Yes, I give them [money] every day… If I can't make any that day, they beat me and tell me not to come back home."* Apart from the daily givers, there are also some participants who provide support to their families on a regular, non-daily basis. Most street-working children regularly support their families, yet some street-living children also fall within this category.

Irregular Supporters

Irregular supporters include participants who occasionally support their families and caregivers. They can also be divided into two subgroups.

The first subgroup of participants primarily stays in the street or are in the process of transitioning from home to the street. Their home visits are irregular, and while visiting home they sometimes bring money or gifts for their family members. Commonly in this group are children who fled or were driven out of home by their stepparents yet remained connected with their biomother or siblings. As one participant who met his biomother and siblings in the absence of his stepfather suggested, *"…when I go [to my family], I take my savings to my mom and gifts to my siblings…"*

Also, included in this group are irregular supporters whose parents or caregivers do not ask for a regular contribution. In some instances, older children resist parental pressure to contribute regularly, although such defiance often results in punitive or harsh treatments.

Retainers/Non-supporters

Retainers or non-supporters did not provide financial support for their families. Several subgroups of retainers emerged from the data.

The first subgroup includes participants who were lost or were abandoned by their parents and had been staying on the street for a long time, often with limited or no contact with family members. From this group, a common response was *"... I don't have anyone to give [money to in my family]."*

Other participants who had been abused and neglected by their parents or caregivers can also be merged into this group. They might have supported their families in the past but have specific reasons for the discontinuation of their support. One participant explained this, *"... For [the father] who does not think of me, I do not want to understand his needs... I used to give him 200 takas daily."*

The final subgroup includes children who intend to support their families but are unable to due to lack of money. Relatively younger participants, girls, and children with disabilities made up this group. According to them, *"I make so little money, I can't survive myself..."*

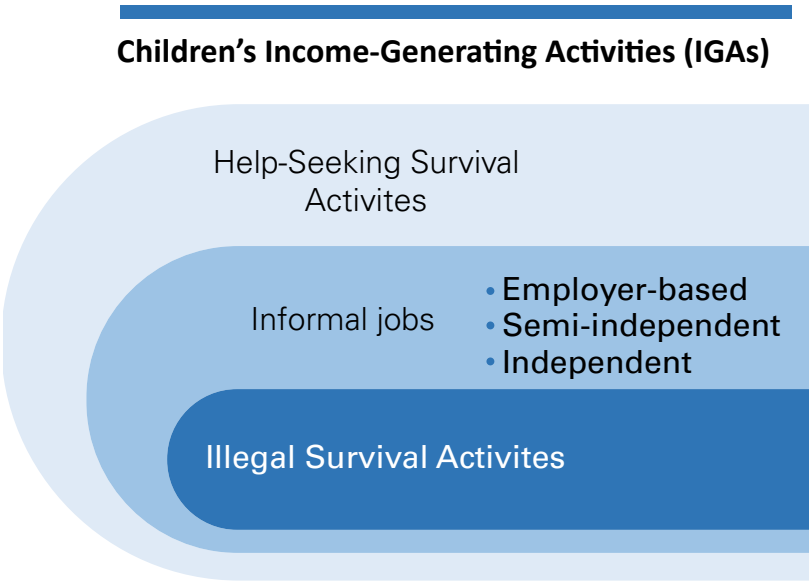
CHAPTER 2

Income Generating and Survival Activities

Both groups of participants—street-living and street-working—earn income either through the mercy of the public or work in the bottom tier of the urban informal economy. In the context of Bangladesh, an informal economy includes myriad ways of making a living outside the formal economy. Many of these activities take place under informal arrangements and may be legal, quasi-legal or illegal depending on the nature of the work, the medium of economic exchange, and the location in which they are practiced. Sometimes, income-generating activities (IGAs) fall within the scope of the informal illicit economy. Regardless, children's economic engagements are ad-hoc, hazardous, and exploitative.

2.1 Nature of Income-generating Activities

Participants reported having an array of IGAs. Based on the child's age and nature of their engagements, these can primarily be grouped into three categories, as described in the following chart:



Help-seeking survival activities include activities where children draw people's attention to seek money or meal support. They tend to tell stories about their or their families' crises and request help. Participants may also use their disability or younger sibling to draw people's attention and mercy. Younger children ranging from 5 to 9 years old from both street-working and street-living groups tend to adopt this survival activity. In some instances, parent(s), especially single mothers, who are working on the street, ask their young children to be involved in such activities. Sometimes people are viewed by children as *"kind enough to give [them] money..." and sometimes "... people do not donate even if [they] beg..."* as shared by two participants.

Informal jobs include services or labor children offer in exchange for money. In some instances, children barter with their labor for a meal or other benefits.

Participants reported having many different IGAs within the informal economy. Their work experiences can be grouped into three broad job categories: employer-based jobs, semi-independent jobs, and independent jobs. Employer-based jobs are those in which children are hired through a verbal arrangement with an informal employer. Some examples of these jobs include being a shopkeeper's assistant, an apprentice in a street-side mechanic store, or an assistant in a roadside restaurant.

These jobs are relatively long-term, require a daily presence, and potentially require workplace residency. Semi-independent or contractual jobs retain a dependency on an adult or peer employer, but children have relative freedom to make decisions about whether to undertake this work and negotiate tasks daily. These jobs tend to be short-term, ranging from hours to days in duration. They are usually labor-intensive. Some examples of these jobs include hawking and construction jobs. Some of these activities (e.g., selling newspapers on a profit-sharing basis) require daily or weekly commitment. Finally, independent jobs are those in which street-connected children have control over their labor and negotiate each job as it becomes available. Some examples of these jobs include waste collection, vending, and selling items on public transport.

Illegal survival activities (ISAs) include income generating activities that are against the law or social norms. Such survival activities may include sex work, pickpocketing, selling adulterated products, and gang membership. In some cases, illegal survival activities are primarily conducted by criminal gangs, with children being recruited through incentive or coercion. Once they are involved in illegal activities, they are trapped and forced to continue. ISAs tend to be gendered, with girls mainly being forced into the sex trade while boys performing other types of activities including pickpocketing and selling adulterated water.

2.2 IGA Typologies and Engagement Rules: Dirty, Dangerous, and Difficult

Types of IGAs		Brief Title of IGA
Seeking Help		Begging for money, storytelling
Informal Jobs	Employer Based	ice-cream factory worker, tinder store worker, snack factory worker, motorbike mechanic shop apprentice, truck/bus helper, restaurant cook's assistant, tailor shop assistant, ferry crew assistant, toy-store assistant, tire repair shop assistant, plant nursery assistant, butcher at a chicken store, dish cleaner, domestic aid, busser
	Semi-Independent	day laborer, cargo loader, fish loader, selling snacks, selling books, selling fruit, selling newspapers, selling ice cream, selling tea to roadside customers, human hauler assistant, home painter's assistant, roadside pann (betel leaf) shop assistant, street sweeper's assistant, part-time domestic aid, pushing a rickshaw van, cleaning, sweeping, construction worker, informal rail yard worker, motor vehicles cleaner and washer
	Independent	Selling flowers in traffic jams, selling candy, selling water, selling face masks, selling power banks/headphones, selling lemonade, selling cigarettes and betel leaf, selling discarded vegetables, selling balloons, human hauler driver, laborer, pushing a rickshaw on a steep road/bridge, carrying shopper's bags, informal porter, scrap collector
Illegal Survival Activity		Selling unfiltered bottled water as filtered, occupying train seats and selling to passengers, removing posters/notices and selling as scrap paper, pickpocketing, stealing fruits or vegetables from wholesale market, stealing cell phones, survival sex

The table demonstrates most types of IGAs in which children are engaged. Several themes emerge regarding children's economic engagements. A common trend among participants is multiple streams of income, with participants rarely engaged in solely one IGA. One participant shared, *"I load/unload trucks, collect recyclables, sell fruits or other items… whatever [work] I find."* With rare exceptions, most participants echoed this view.

Economic uncertainty or lack of a consistent income forces participants to undertake any short-term assignment, even though most of them are dirty, dangerous, and difficult (the 'three Ds'). The three Ds also force participants to adopt 'job hopping'—a survival mechanism that requires a constant search for a secure IGA. Often such effort yields little reward, prompting participants to loop back to their known IGAs. One participant shared, *"Everything is hard…I tried many things but got back to this job [scrap collection]".* If nothing works, some participants opt to switch to help-seeking activities.

The second related theme is that the types of IGAs in which children are engaged largely depend on their locations of stay. For instance, children working in the train station or port are likely to serve as informal porters or sell snacks or other items to potential customers. Participants in the market area are likely to run errands for shopkeepers and shoppers or collect thrown-away veggies to sell to low-income customers.

Participants also often demonstrate remarkable innovativeness in finding new IGAs. They scout exhaustively to find potential sources available in a specific location and tend to find something that others do not see. Even though this might be attributed in part to children's lowest status in the informal labor market and their desperation to earn an income out of anything, it also demonstrates their resolve.

A participant from the train station shared, *"I sweep [part of] the station, help the train mechanic, help clean the train, serve as a porter… collect plastic bottles from the station… [and] help clean the railway canteen".* Moreover, their economic engagements may change according to the seasons and market demand. A participant shared his business strategy, *"I sell popcorn, fried nuts, hog plums, guavas, boiled eggs… whichever is the most in demand and profitable."*

The final theme of children's income generation is that they work unusually long hours. Most importantly, they are forced to be docile and flexible. The working hours depend on the types of IGAs they are engaged in. Help-seekers may work the whole day and struggle to secure an amount necessary to satisfy their or their family's needs. Occasionally they may receive an unexpected amount from a passerby, which may facilitate an early end to their effort. If a family appoints their children for help seeking, they tend to continue until the family allows them to end the help-seeking activity. Participants working in informal jobs, whether as employees or contractually, are required to follow a rigid schedule and tasks.

Employers require participants to *"…come in the morning and stay until [the establishment] is closed…,"* as shared by one participant. Such requirements may aggregate into a total of twelve hours or more for a shift. For contractual jobs, most contractors want their employees to work as long as possible. If children are lucky enough to sell satisfactory amounts of goods or items, the shift can end within several hours. If not, it can stretch into a day-long assignment. Independent jobs allow children some freedom to determine the timing and duration of their work, yet more often than not the work continues for long hours or until they earn enough for a meal.

Participants living with family tend to work longer since they must meet the expectations of the family. Participants who are engaged in illegal survival activities are divided into two groups: 1) Those who are

selling counterfeit or adulterated food items must work as hard as any other regular group, often working for more than eight hours. 2) Those who are active in other forms (i.e., survival sex, pickpocketing) must wait for the occasional opportunity to earn any income.

2.3 Finding the IGAs

Participants' IGA trajectories are versatile and encompass multiple engagements in the informal economy. Four themes emerged in participants' paths toward finding their preferred economic niches.

The first one is **self-initiation**, a process by which participants explore and acquire skills for an IGA. Participants independently learn the rules of an activity and acquire the relevant skills. Street-living participants relatively frequently resort to this process compared to other groups. A participant shared, *"I learned from observing people, from other children that do these [IGAs]..."*.

Employers or contractors approaching is also an important source for participants' multiple engagements. Some contractors regularly visit hubs (e.g., trains, bus terminal, market areas) to recruit participants. Employers may hire them for specific assignments on a daily or long-term basis. One participant shared, *"...while I was collecting waste, a mechanic shop owner approached me and told me to work for him."*

Participants' social networks are the most dominant source of multiple engagements. Friends and other network members (i.e., older youth, brokers, or adults from surroundings) provide participants with information, connect them with employers or contractors, train them for the tasks and share the workload. A participant selling various items during different times shared, *"...my friends brought me here. They showed me how to sell newspapers. Other friends sell snacks and water, and I learned from them as well".*

The final source of multiple engagements is **family-initiated engagements**. Children may be assigned to do certain economic activities either with the family or at the family's behest. Family members may give specific information or instructions on how to engage in IGAs. Kin, especially older brothers and uncles, tend to play an important role in this regard by providing information or connecting them with the job.

2.4 Sources of Risk in IGAs

Analysis of participants' income generating activities demonstrated the extent to which they were exploited and at risk for injury and abuse. Three sources were identified that increased their exposure to risk factors. These were: hazardous IGAs; abuse and exploitation from employers and service seekers; and abuse and exploitation from older adults in the work environment and surroundings. The following table summarizes some of the lived experiences of participants:

Types of IGAs	Sub-types	Title of IGA	Child's Account of IGA
Seeking Help		Begging for money, storytelling	*"I walk the whole day… feel dizzy, thirsty, my legs hurt…got into an accident yesterday."* *"Some slap, push, yell, and beat me. Do bad things…"*
Informal Jobs	Employer-based	Prepared ice cream	*"My palms used to burn from chemicals…"*
		Truck/bus helper	*"[We] started in the early morning and finished at midnight… my body couldn't take it…"*
		Dish cleaner	*"I could not finish washing dishes… they kept coming."*
		Snack factory worker	*"…Hot oil vapor would burn my face…the owner won't let me move from the frying pan…"*
		Busser	*"I worked standing up the whole day. Customers were yelling at me, so did the owner."*
		Dressing chicken in the market	*"When I dressed chicken, it smelt foul… when I went outside for fresh air, the owner would yell at me to get back."*
		Tire repair shop assistant	*"Moving big tires was exhausting„ Ustad [the trainer] yelled at me constantly. He would say, didn't you eat?"*
		Tailor shop assistant	***"Whole day work and only work, the owner would always find something for me."***
	Semi-independent	Push rickshaw van	*"It is extremely tiring on a hot day [to pull a rickshaw van]. Loading by hand is very difficult. People won't pay me. I am young, some people beat me if I ask the fare."*
		Street sweeper's assistant	*"After burning on the sun, the whole day I sweep the road at night. It is hard at night, I felt dizzy… People mistreat me."*
		Street bookseller	*"Carrying so many books is difficult…I am scared of busses and trucks. They could hit me any day."*
		Home painter's assistant	*"…[I] scrap the wall the whole day…have trouble breathing at night. Sometimes, he [contractor] pays me less…"*
		Construction worker	*"When I lift something heavy, I need to use all my strength, my body gets tired quickly. Then others say I am lazy."*
		Selling tea to roadside customers	*"Sometimes people do not pay me. If I ask they blame me for bad tea. If I insist on the payment, they have yelled at me, pushed me, slapped me several times."*

Types of IGAs	Sub-types	Title of IGA	Child's Account of IGA
	Independent	Selling balloons, candy, flowers	*"This job requires burning in the sun. Many people yell at me… one day I went to a shop to sell balloons, and he chained and forced me to work for him… he threatened me to work for him, or he would keep me in the chain and beat me."*
		Selling bottled water	*"My hands get extremely tired holding so many bottles… if I load on my head my neck hurts… I always fear being under a vehicle."*
		Informal porter	*"…Sometimes people accuse me of theft, they lie and blame me… some says I am a drug addict… real addicts snatch money from me. I am tiny and young, can't say anything."*
		Scrap collector	*"Bending over and over [to collect bottles] makes my body ache. It bleeds when I got pricked… people say here goes the thief… collectors con me out of money and yell at me if I protest…"*
		Human hauler assistant	*"My throat hurts from calling out passengers constantly… Passengers mistreat me."*
		Laborer	*"Out of all the work that I have done, this is the most difficult… Even if I am hungry, I can't eat… [adult] coworkers and contractors yell at me for taking any break. At the end of the day my pay is the lowest because I am the youngest."*
		Collecting discarded vegetables	*"If I do not steal anything, shopkeepers accuse me of theft, then beat me."*
Illegal Activity		Survival sex	*"The most painful thing is having sex [for money]."*
		Sell unfiltered bottled water as filtered	*"If police catch me… they beat me almost to death."*
		Remove posters/notices and sell as scrap paper	*"Older youth drive and beat me up if I ever get caught."*
		Pickpocketing	*"When I got caught, everyone beat us… it was severe, a near death experience."*

Hazardous IGAs

Regarding the first source of risk factors, most IGAs participants engage in are age-inappropriate, arduous, and inherently risky. Some full-time employer-based jobs (e.g., restaurant worker, shop keeper's assistant, bus/truck helper) involve unusually long shifts that sometimes last over twelve hours. A day laborer—cleaning, moving earth, handling construction materials—might only have an 8-hour shift but are expected to perform as well as adults.

As one participant shared, *"Among all the things I do, working as a laborer is the hardest and most painful."* In a profit-sharing contractual job (e.g., selling snacks or newspapers) participants have to work long hours until a reasonable profit is made. Such arrangements push children to aggressively court customers, which often results in adverse reactions. A child who loads and unloads heavy items stated, *"...my neck pains when I carry a heavy load, but I can't put it down or say [to the contractor] 'I can't carry it'..."*

Each IGA has its unique risk. For instance, selling balloons is a common IGA for both boys and girls. Participants must pump the balloon by mouth which often causes *"...pain in the mouth."* Upon inflating the balloons, participants must pursue passersby to purchase it. Their repeated requests irritate people and often result in verbal threats and physical assault. Similarly, selling bottled water in a traffic jam leads participants to carry heavy loads of bottles while weaving through narrow spaces between vehicles. The risk of accident and injury is high, with vehicles often starting with no warning.

Similarly, children who work as informal porters on trains or launch terminals take considerable risks as they leap onto incoming trains or launch before they stop. Expressing his fear, an informal porter in the launch terminal said, *"I am always scared of tipping into the river because I do not know how to swim".* Thus, on a given day, the participants' odds of accident and injury multiplies with each new engagement in an IGA.

Employers or Service Seekers' Practices of Exploitation of Children

Participants who work for employers spoke of being abused and/or exploited. These children must negotiate with their employers regarding assignments, payment, and other conditions, but they reported that employers rarely adhere to the terms of these arrangements. Rather, children are deprived of their wages and forced to work more than the agreed upon hours, all while enduring abuse and exploitation.

During the recruitment, employers are likely to deceive participants by suggesting that the *"job is light, and you could do it..." or "...you could leave early..."* but in practice those commitments are often ignored. Employers use their status as employer to sidestep any of the concerns participants have. Some employers also penalize them by withholding their wages or profits. One participant shared that he had only received *"...money for meals" and was told that his "...share of profit would be with him [the contractor] for safekeeping„"* In the participants' experience, those payments were rarely made.

Similarly, a scrap collector may pay participants a portion of the real price of the collection, claiming that the product is low quality. Participants' accounts show that they cope with such practices by either quitting the job or settling for a part-time opportunity.

In addition to losing wages, children indicate high levels of abuse, particularly verbal abuse, in the informal economy. This is more common in settings where there is direct adult supervision. Employers and service seekers were described as expecting a child to have the same physical strength as the adult workers. Children said they dared not protest and that the pressure to conform to unrealistic adult standards is constant. One older participant who is contracted out by older porters to load a cargo train shared that he is mocked by adult porters if he *"can't keep pace with them".* The inability to perform at an expected level set by the employers or contractors can result in the child being fired without pay.

Threats from Other Adults in the Work Environment and Surroundings

The physical and social environments where participants work and interact with the public additionally threatens the children's physical and psychological well-being. The extent of insult, abuse, and violence that participants endure often stigmatizes them, resulting in self-loathing and self-blaming for their circumstances. Recurrent incidents of being yelled at, pushed, and beaten instill a sense of fear among participants, forcing them to avoid interactions with the wider public unless forced to do so. One participant who sells flowers and snack items in a traffic stop lamented, *"...The sun burns me, if I ask for water from people, they deny me it and yell at me...many beat us...many utter nasty words about me and my parents...I don't want to do this..."*

Participants who work independently (e.g., as an informal porter or scrap collector, rickshaw puller, or snack seller) often try to access areas that are restricted by police, security, and adult workers. For instance, respondents reported that police and security force them out of train stations or market areas at key times and even beat them in the process.

In train stations, the effort is intensified when certain inter-city trains depart or arrive. One participant who sells bottled water in trains said, *"...an official threw my bottles, blaming me for selling adulterated water... the police beat me as well..."* Even if children manage to enter a protected space, they reported often facing resistance from adult workers who try to push out the competition. When such efforts are unsuccessful, in some instances, they force some children to hand over a portion of their earnings—using extortion when necessary.

Some respondents face threats, intimidation, and physical abuse from adult workers who go so far as to take all of a child's wages. Substance abusers, some of whom could be found in public places, try to extort money from both street-living and street-working children. Any resistance could result in the child, *"being threatened, beaten up or extorted..."* Girls reported being particularly vulnerable to abuse by the public. Adolescent girls are shamed for selling items in public and are often advised to find work as domestic aids. Girls are often advised that working as a domestic aid would protect their modesty and save them from unwanted public attention and harassment.

Some adult bystanders are also abusive to street-working children. Participants who worked as scrap collectors shared that people often address them with abusive language and degrading names. One participant lamented that… *"...if I go anywhere close to a house or people... they say, 'here goes tokai [collector/dumpster diver] or kangali [poor]...get away from here."* Added to this is the inherent risk of physical injury for participants; searching in a pile of garbage can cause bodily harm and infection from sharp and rusted metals.

The sexual objectification of girls occurs often, especially if girls are over 14 years old. Girls are often labeled as 'bad girls' and are perceived to be and treated as sex workers by most people.

2.5 Stigma and Gendered Work

Even though children are forced to work on the street for mere survival, their labor falls along strict gender lines. Compared to boys, girls have a much more difficult time finding and working in IGAs, resulting in a different trajectory for boys and girls, and a different trajectory for street-working girls in comparison to street-living girls. For street-working girls, this resembles a three-step loop that ultimately ends in dependence on male relatives (husbands or otherwise).

Both groups start by seeking help for money or food. It tends to begin when they are relatively young, between 5 to 8 years of age. They may share accounts of their own or their families' helplessness while seeking strangers' empathy and financial support. As they grow older, between 8-12 years, sympathy for them tends to dwindle, resulting in less income. People rebuke or physically assault them for seeking help. Such treatment forces girls to seek independent IGAs such as collecting recyclables, selling candy, flowers, or selling other merchandise in the public square.

Once girls reach adolescence, the trajectories for street-working and street-living girls tend to differ significantly. Street-working girls, especially those with families, may end up in jobs in domestic settings, working in the garment industry, or getting married. For example, Reshma, a street-working participant who sells newspapers was facing growing pressure from her mother not to sell newspapers anymore because according to her mom, she has grown up and *"the street is not safe."* Reshma is also *"ashamed"* of asking people to buy newspapers.

Khadija, a former street-working child, shared her life trajectory saying that her parents withdrew her from street work, made her work as a domestic aid, and eventually arranged a marriage for her. Her husband was an addict and violent toward her but would not let her work. Eventually, she returned to her parents' place. Street-living girls continue to live with abuse due to the limited alternatives available to them. As time goes on, gender norms restrict girls' access to fewer and fewer IGAs, which forces some to eventually adopt illegal IGAs such as survival sex. For some who engage in survival sex, their path toward sex work begins when they are raped in their adolescence.

Girls also share an increased level of stigma compared to boys. For example, if a girl sells a flower at a traffic jam and requests a customer to buy a rose or bouquet of flowers, she might be asked to leave the customer alone or receive a volley of unwarranted lectures on why she should be doing something else instead of selling flowers. Customers often say things like, *"...don't you have any shame that a big girl like you is doing this? Stay at home."*

When a child receives these diatribes daily, she develops guilt that she is doing something shameful or wrong. As time goes on, this stigma is internalized and is often reflected in low self-esteem. Participants repeatedly shared, *"...people insult me," "swear at us," and "throw insults at my parents."* Such stigma also forces children to blame themselves for their victimhood.

For example, a 15-year-old street-living participant who was a victim of rape and forced to accept sex work. From her work, she became pregnant against her will and terminated her pregnancy because of social stigma She stated, *"...I live on the street, if people see I am pregnant or have a baby they would say this is an illegal baby. I am not married yet. Five people will blame me in five ways. I thought, contemplated... and decided to abort the child."*

CHAPTER 3

Street Life: Crises, Trauma, and Coping

3.1: Physical and Social Environment Risk Factors

The interviews and focus group discussions revealed that street children frequently suffer from accidental injuries, sicknesses, and traumas. The source of these injuries and sicknesses can be attributed to three major factors: the perilous physical and social environment in which they live, dangers from income generating activities (IGAs), and their own risk-taking behavior.

Physical and Social Environment and Risk Factors

Participants depicted several types of traumas and injuries they had experienced as well as their sources. Pertinent examples include the perilous physical and social environments where participants spend most of their time, the existence of criminal elements in their surroundings, and their interactions within this environment. These factors all led to an increase in the participants' traumas, serious physical injuries, and sicknesses.

The first source of trauma and injury stems from the risk of abduction. Several participants explained that attempts had been made to abduct them or their friends. Participants did not know why they were abducted but assumed that they might be abducted for trafficking or organ harvesting. Criminal gangs reportedly abducted participants at night, especially those who slept in a quiet area. Describing his horrific experiences a participant explained, *"…This scar is from a stabbing, the abductors stabbed me…They put me into a bag, then fled leaving me behind. A dog scratched the bag and tried to bite me. I had a blade in my pocket, which I used to cut myself free…".* Another participant's friend was abducted while they were asleep. When the participant tried to rescue his friend, the abductors hit him with a stick causing a serious head injury.

The second source of trauma and injury originated from sexual perpetrators. Even though street-living girls are the most frequent victims of rape and sexual assault, street-working girls are also subjected to sexual harassment and assault. For the street-living girls who spend nights outside shelters or protected spaces, every night is a nightmare. Fearing her everyday trauma, a girl shared, *"…the most fearsome thing is night… someone will drag me into the dark… if I do not want to go, they will beat me, threaten me, drag me and then you know…".* Some participants shared that they were frequently approached by people with "indecent proposals" and that denying them resulted in verbal assault and threats of abduction.

From participants' accounts, the third source of trauma and injury came from two main types of criminal entities, who are both active in many of the public places where participants congregate either for IGAs or to stay overnight. The first group are regular criminal gangs who forcibly try to recruit participants for criminal activities such as stealing, pickpocketing, and similar illicit acts. The gang does not abduct participants or traffic them but coerces them to work for them.

The second group are substance abusers who force participants to take or traffic drugs on their behalf. Presumably, substance abusers force children to use drug on the idea that children will share the cost of the drugs. Refusing to be involved in any type of gang activity resulted in physical assault, threats, or extortion. A participant shared, *"…if the extortionists catch me, they take everything from me and then beat me… the substance abusers ask for money, if I do not give in, they use blades and snatch my money…the night is the worst time."*

Other than gang members, older youth and substance abusers reportedly snatch money from

participants. Losing their savings when they sleep was a common experience for street-living participants. According to participants, known drug abusers in the area would search for sleeping street-living children and steal their daily savings. Any protest by the victim is likely to end in violent assault. Older youth and substance abusers tended to use razor blades to extort money, with many participants reporting injuries from blade attacks.

The fourth source of trauma and injury stems from members of law-enforcement agencies. Police and other security forces deployed in public places reportedly used excessive force, intimidation, and extortion on participants. In some instances, participants were arrested and sent to either courts or 'correction centers'. Though street-living participants were relatively more frequent victims of these aggressive and often illegal actions, street-working children were subjected to such treatment as well.

Current and former street-connected children's accounts summarized that many members of law enforcement agencies (e.g., police, railway security) often disregard the law when dealing with these children. For instance, if a child is accused of wrongdoing, some police members may listen to the child's story, punish him on the spot, and let the child go free. Participants shared many such examples. Frequent complaints against the police were that police *"beat us", "kick us while a sleep", "arrest us on any excuse", and "drag us to the police station". Sometimes police "drive us from the place where I sell items",* which has led to traffic accidents for several participants.

One participant shared that *"police arrest us instead of real culprits"* and *"beat us in a room"* while alleging that they had stolen something. A specific allegation against railway police was that they physically beat participants *"when we sleep at the train station."* In brief, police are considered the *"most fearsome"* entity among street-connected children due to arresting adolescents on shaky grounds, severely beating them for an alleged crime, and physically assaulting them for their mere presence in public places.

Data showed that experiencing and hearing about traumatic events repeatedly from physical and social environments in the participants' and their friends' lives induced first- and second-hand trauma. Several participants witnessed murders or severe violence. Several others witnessed friends or acquaintances' accidents which resulted in death or loss of a limb.

Both street-living and street working participants also expressed their fear of mob attacks. Often, other offenders committed crimes and then accused participants of wrongdoing to avoid blame, even going so far as beating the innocent participant. As one participant who was blamed for stealing a cell phone shared, *"I saw he [an adult] stole it but he blamed me, and then people started to beat me. Then police took me to the jail..."* Street-living girls witnessed their friends and acquaintances being abducted for sex work, leading to one participant sharing that she would often stay up and alert at night so that she could shout if someone tries to abduct her.

Other than trauma-induced events, regular interactions in harsh physical and social environments create many adverse effects on the health of participants. A careful review of participants' accounts reveals that these effects happen from the morning until they return home or fall asleep on the street. Summarizing some of these experiences led to the conclusion that participants, especially street-living ones, can barely sleep during night due to *"...mosquito bites...", "...extreme heat...", "rain", "...fear of being snatched or abduction...", "...sexual molestation..." or "...abuse by police or security personnel...". For many of the participants, days would start and end "...without a meal...".*

There is barely any guarantee for an income, and the jobs and IGAs typically are very hazardous. While on the street, they could be *"...snatched and sent to the correctional centers..."* or arrested by the police any time. *People "beat", "slap", "push", "yell", and "drive [them] out" due to the participants' mere presence. In essence, "there is no safety in my life..."*- echoed by almost all participants.

Risk Factors Inherent to IGAs

Participants' job assignments and working conditions were another source of traumas, injuries, and sickness. The detailed risk factors of most IGAs have been explained in the previous chapter, with each IGA also having its own risk factors (e.g., abuse, exploitation). In addition, the physical environment where participants work adds an additional burden of trauma, sickness, and injury. Since most participants worked on the streets amid noise, pollution, fumes, and chaos, a perfect synchronization of body and mind is required to avoid any harm. Participants tended to lose the ability to keep themselves safe due to sensory overload from prolonged hours in extreme heat, resulting in serious injuries. For instance, one participant shared that while he was collecting recyclable items on tsahe train track, the train appeared from *"nowhere"* and blasted its horn behind him. He felt dizzy and lied down on the track and the train passed over him. He survived with minor injuries.

Participants' Own Risk-taking Behavior

Regarding the children's own risk-taking behavior, data revealed that they often engaged in activities that could easily lead to physical injuries. Physical environments and their status as social outcasts forced them to adopt certain practices that increased the chances of trauma and injury–whether it was weaving through oncoming vehicles while crossing a road, riding on the roof of trains, dangling from the back of a city bus or playing on roads and train tracks. For example, a participant who *"...rode on the roof of the bus for fun..." got a "...head injury upon hitting a branch that resulted in seven stitches..."* and hospitalization.

3.2 Accidents and Injuries: Normative Outcomes of Street Life

Almost all participants shared their experiences about whether they suffered from any diseases or accidental injuries while on the street. Despite reports of frequent sicknesses and injuries, it was difficult to compile how often and what types of sicknesses participants suffered most. Some reported that they could not recount the frequency of minor sicknesses (such as fevers, minor cuts, and flu), and some reported *"yes"* or *"often happened"* but did not elaborate the extent of their sickness or injury. Thus, some of their sickness and injuries are likely to be underreported.

Participants' experiences could be grouped into three broad areas: minor, major, and traumatic injuries or serious sickness, based on the graveness of the sicknesses and injuries and intervention sought out. Minor ailments refer to those conditions which participants were somewhat able to tolerate and were primarily resolved on their own or with minimal pharmaceutical interventions.

For instance, a participant shared, *"I had fever, a cough, and flu. When I stayed out in the sun for long, I got diarrhea...and body aches. My legs and arms hurt a lot."* Other minor ailments participants suffered from included minor bruises, cuts, wounds, skin rashes, skin lumps, dizziness, head bumps, sunburns, nosebleeds, toothaches, and minor electric shocks. Major accidents or injuries refer to

those events where a participant had one or more episodes of sustained injury or trauma and required pharmaceutical interventions but not hospitalization or a doctor's visit.

Sustained injuries appeared to slow down participants' daily activities yet did not stop them altogether. Most often participants, their friends, acquaintances, or family members managed the care. In most cases, participants bought medicine or got the wound dressed at a local drugstore. A participant shared an example in which a van carrying glass sheets hit him from behind. The broken glasses hit him, and his arms were injured. However, the van driver paid for his treatment from a nearby drugstore.

Other major accidents and injuries included twisted ankles or losing toe nails from walking, running, or play, being knocked unconscious from hitting poles, walls, running vehicles or falling from bus and train roofs, bleeding due to cuts from sharp or abrasive objects, head or face wounds from play, fighting or being beaten up, foot injury/sprain from being hit by rickshaws or other slow-moving vehicles, bruises or cuts, being hit by a rock and cuts or sprain from motorbike hits.

Finally, traumatic injuries or serious sicknesses refer to those incidents that cause prolonged suffering, physical disfigurement, loss or impairment of any body parts, or even death. These conditions generally require medical interventions for immediate and long-term cure. Data showed that many participants were subjected to grave dangers, sometimes multiple times.

One participant shared, *"While crossing the road I signaled the vehicle to stop, it did not and ran over my leg„I got admitted to the hospital".* This participant had another accident when he slipped from a running train and got seriously injured. Participants' experiences showed that getting hit by different vehicles (e.g., motorbikes, human haulers, three-wheeler autos, cars, buses, and trucks) while walking or crossing the road was the most frequent cause of a serious accident. Other serious sicknesses included jaundice, chicken pox, infection, acute diarrhea, skin diseases, and high fever. Treatments for such conditions required hospital care, with most participants either received treatment from the outpatient service or were admitted to the government hospital.

There appears to be slight difference between boys and girls in terms of frequency and graveness of accidents. While boys and girls suffered from minor ailments or accidents at a somewhat equal rate, the prevalence of serious injuries and sickness was higher among boys than girls. This might be because boys travel more frequently, and for longer distances than girls. Desperation among boys and their own risk-taking behavior may contribute as well. Girls engaged in survival sex might suffer from other diseases such as STIs, as one participant shared that she was suffering from *"women's disease"* and recently spent a considerable amount of money for diagnosis. Boys did not report any STI or similar diseases.

3.3. Anxiety, Hopelessness, and Helplessness: Emotional Pains of Street Life

Though the current study did not explore any mental health issues on ethical grounds, street-connected children are highly susceptible to mental-health related disorders due to the long list of chronic deprivations and continuous stream of stressors. Based on the participants' accounts, it is plausible to argue that some of them were struggling with self-stigma, anxiety disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Participants who were subjected to severe injuries, violent victimization, and sexual trauma were more likely to suffer from mental health disorders. In some cases, participants explicitly cited those events. For instance, one participant shared, *"...I lost several of my friends... it happened before my eyes.*

One lost his leg, one died, and another was cut into two pieces when they fell under train…I cannot forget…". Acute helplessness was palpable among some participants who shared how helpless they felt that despite their efforts to live a clean life they became constant victims of people's wrath and hate. Lamenting his helplessness a participant shared, *"…some people spit on us…I do not say anything, but I feel like crying„"*

3.4 Coping and Protective Factors in Street Life

In the face of volleys of abuse, frequent trauma, and relentless exploitation, street-connected participants demonstrated remarkable resilience. New challenges emerged daily while compounding existing ones, yet participants coped with them through innovation, resourcefulness, and motivation. Their coping mechanisms can be divided into three broad processes:

Social Networks, Resistance and Avoidance Coping, and Being Street Smart. Though these three coping mechanisms overlap and reinforce each other, yet they distinctly affect participants' ability of street survival.

Social Networks

Both current and former street-connected children's accounts offered ample evidence that social networks are the primary mechanism of street survival and coping with hazards. Two types of social networks developed from children's interactions in their surroundings: horizontal and vertical. Horizontal networks were primarily comprised of friends and slightly older youths. They had similar socio-economic backgrounds, lived together or in the same area (i.e., a marketplace or train station) or remained close to each other due to IGAs. On the other hand, vertical networks were comprised of adults with whom children either live, regularly meet or interact with frequently. Generally, they are powerful adults who had major influence in the participants' lives. Family members, employers, adult workers, vendors, outreach workers, and in some instances, police are all part of vertical networks. Horizontal or peer networks tended to be relatively large, averaging more than nine peers for boys and eight peers for girls. For some participants, the horizontal networks were extended to include more than twenty peers and older youth. Other than family members, the number of adults in vertical networks are relatively fewer – from several to none in rare instances.

The importance of horizontal networks in everyday survival was validated by every participant regardless of gender, location, or age. Sharing the extent of interactions and camaraderie, one participant shared, *"My friends are the best. We stay together all the time. If something happens to me, they become sad and vice versa…".* The social support participants received from peer networks is extensive and reported to cover almost every domain of their survival struggle, such as exchanging of information, finances, meal-support, emotional support, income generation, crisis care, and instrumental support.

Participants' accounts provided evidence that peer networks serve as important sources of information that help them find subsistence jobs in the informal economic sector. Network members trained friends and peers for IGAs, worked together, and taught how to manage challenges in IGAs. For instance, some participants shared that they work as a group, divide the income, and protect each other while working. Peer networks are also the source of informal job referrals who often advocate that informal employers hire their friends and acquaintances. Sharing this some participants echoed that *"…if others raise hands towards me my friends come forward [to protest and rescue] and I do the same…".* Current and former street-connected children also illustrated examples of how friends supported them in finding new IGAs with informal employers.

Data also showed that peers provided emotional and instrumental support in the form of counseling, positive reinforcement, socializing, and gifts of food and petty cash; all important means for street to overcome the hazards of informal jobs and life on the street. Summarizing how friends play a critical role in survival, a street-living participant shared his extensive exchanges, simultaneously summarizing most participants' experiences: *"…when I do not have money, they give me some, they buy meal for me. I did not have a blanket [in winter], they shared theirs. When I cry remembering my mom [who recently passed away], they console me, play with me… they are my everything".* Participants repeatedly shared that meals and petty cash are the most critical support frequently exchanged among friends or even among acquaintances.

Findings also demonstrated that participants experienced frequent accidental injuries and repeated episodes of sickness. Social network members, especially other youth, helped devise treatment plans, accompanied them to treatment centers, bought medicine and sometimes nursed sick youth. Youth network members tend to bear some of the costs of treatment, food and other expenses and barely expect an immediate repayment. For street-living participants who do not have a family, friends are the only source of care while they are sick. For street-working participants, if a serious injury or accident required medical attention, friends would take the injured to the hospital and inform the caregivers.

Peer networks also protect participants from abuse and exploitation. Protection comes from sharing information about dangers and abusive adults in the surroundings. Participants' networks diffused information regarding certain officials or law-enforcement members who are abusive to children in public places. Participants intentionally avoided crossing paths with them. Network members also would resist a perpetrator in groups or *"…punish him back for the offense"* if he or she is from the same age group. If an adult attacks a participant, network members would protest together against the adult and would publicly shame him or her for the abuse. Some members of the girls' networks protested men's sexual advances toward their friend.

Participants also suggested that members of the vertical networks support participants, though such support is limited and sporadic. For example, a vendor may sell a meal to the participants on credit. A police official may demonstrate kindness towards participants by not being abusive and in some instances protecting them from serious abuse if the participant appeals for help and the police official is nearby. Similarly, some adults might support participants finding an IGA, offer a free meal, or protect the participant from violence. Service providers offer services and connect participants with resources. Collectively, these sporadic acts of kindness and supports tend to be necessary in a harsh and violent environment.

Being Street Smart

A second effective tool in combatting numerous street hazards is to be street smart. Being street smart can be characterized as a child's extraordinary ability to adapt in the harshest environment, successfully navigate through the culture of street economies and status hierarchy, craft relationships with peers and adults, connect with resources, and most importantly frequently adjusting to the changing environment.

How an individual participant becomes street-smart depends on many processes, migration trajectories, and experiences that they go through. Upon migration, an immediate challenge for children is to secure a source of livelihood. Participants learn basic skills by trying different IGAs (i.e., selling flowers, balloons, candy, help-seeking).

For instance, a successful sale of a product in a traffic stop requires tremendous multi-tasking skills: selecting potential customers from hundreds of busy pedestrians or vehicles, successfully approaching them asking to purchase their products, appealing for a bit more price than the customers' bargain, and concurrently keeping eyes on the incoming traffic. This would be an overwhelming task even for an adult. Through keen observation, dedication, and hard work participants eventually learn these survival skills and become street smart. For participants who migrated with family, the learning curve is likely to be slightly different than those who migrate alone.

Family members might provide some support or protection from immediate abuse. The journey tended to be different for those that migrated by themselves. A participant who arrived in the city alone shared that he observed what was around, located his contemporaries, appealed for help from them, accepted their mentorship, shadowed them, learned the crafts of IGAs, and eventually became self-dependent. Although IGAs might be the first step into the journey of being street smart, there are many more skills participants must learn. Assessing the environment for hazards and opportunities, learning about the power structure of the place, learning dos and don'ts, screening individuals to craft relationship, managing individuals and groups, and scouting for resources are some other processes that every participant must learn. Participants' remarkable resiliency, motivation, intelligence, interpersonal skills, and positive attitudes contributed to their efforts to be street smart.

Strategic Resistance and Avoidance Coping

Strategic resistance and avoidance coping are two tools that participants widely used for overcoming dangers on the street. Strategic resistance is the process of self-protection in which participants try to resist perpetrators by exploiting the social environment. For example, if adult perpetrators intend to harm street-connected children, they may cry for help or on some occasions, pursue and engage relatively powerful adults to protect them. In case an offence has already taken place, participants may refer to this incident at a later time seeking remedy. Their protest may end up punishing the perpetrators. A participant shared, *"say I am sleeping. If any perpetrator wants to touch me, I protest, throw rocks at him, cry for help, and bring my senior brothers to punish him".* Each hazardous incident requires a new response and often participants' accounts showed that they demonstrate unique survival abilities to figure out something for their protection. In rare instances, participants might opt to take revenge. For instance, a participant was allegedly beaten by a police constable for selling water bottles in a train. To avenge this alleged abuse, he threw a rock at the police constable which caused a head injury. To avoid arrest, the participant boarded a running train and never returned to the station.

Avoidance coping is another tool that participants often use. This strategy refers to a danger or harmful event that participants intentionally avoid or disengage for the fear of being harmed. Participants' accounts showed that they actively assess stressful situations, threats, places, individuals, and groups and intentionally avoid them due to their vulnerabilities or asymmetric power relationships. For instance, many participants shared that they *"start running from drug addicts because they [the addicts] snatch money from them". If they see a potential perpetrator following them, they may "hang on the back of a rickshaw or bus"* and leave. If high officials visit the train station, participants intentionally avoid the train station.

CHAPTER 4

Meeting Survival Needs on the Street

Based on participants' accounts, this chapter identifies daily survival needs of street-connected children, sources of support, and how they manage those needs. Participants' street-based activities are driven by their survival needs. These needs are what they identify as the minimum requirements for their survival on the street; they are neither the exhaustive resources required for the normative growth and development of children nor are they what the children desire to have. Survival needs can be grouped into three broad categories: physiological needs of participants, social and emotional needs of participants, and financial needs of participants' families.

4.1 Needs Covered (Physiological, Social and Emotional, and Familial)

Physiological Needs

Physiological needs comprise the essentials to sustain children's lives on the street. These include food, shelter, clothing, and healthcare during illness and after serious accidents. The data demonstrates that participants overwhelmingly rely on their own income to meet these basic needs, including food and treatment costs. From their accounts, it appears that it is a daily struggle for many participants to find food. One participant shared, *"...if I didn't struggle finding food, I would worry less..."*

All participants report spending a significant amount of time either earning money for meals or searching for free meals. The inability to earn an adequate amount of income or locate alternative sources of meals resulted in different outcomes for street-living and street-working participants. For street-living participants, lack of food results in asking people nearby for food or ultimately staying hungry until they find their next meal. Street-working participants, in contrast, are more likely to consume a smaller meal to save money for their family. Some are ostracized by their caregivers if they are unable to earn or save money, especially if the caregivers are stepparents. In some instances, participants are told to *"...leave home for not bringing any money,"* or told that *"...[they] wouldn't get any meals from home."* However, those with biological parents tended to receive meals at home.

Aside from the participants' own money, a relatively reliable source of meals are the temporary shelters or hubs, run by the Department of Social Services (DSS). Even though some participants rely on the hub for meal support and a place to rest, the program appears not to cover many participants' needs, especially those living outside the city. Reaching out for any support is challenging for those who work far from the hub, as many participants report not knowing about such support. Although several other nonprofit organizations offer meal support for program participants, many children could not attend because they were busy earning money for their next meal.

Another relatively reliable meal source for the participants is peer networks. Meal support from peer networks is more predominant among street-living participants compared to their street-working counterparts. This type of support appears to be available in times of crisis or economic hardship. How network members exchange support is elaborated on in 4.3. Importantly, accepting meal support from their peers requires participants to reciprocate, with refusal to return the favor resulting in ostracism by other group members. It was also reported that some street-living children can count on adults' help for an emergency meal if they are able to craft strong ties with the adult. For instance, a participant who bonded with a porter union leader shared that the leader *"cared for him"* and sometimes offered him a meal if he was hungry. Street-living girls reported having male friends who tended to offer meal support.

Apart from these sources, participants also receive meal support from irregular sources. Some individual donors donate meals to low-income groups, with some participants reporting that they received the

meals if they are nearby. However, participants can be screened out of such donations if they do not fit the donor's eligibility criteria. For instance, a young participant shared that her friend was often left out because *"[they] do not give to younger ones."* Moreover, such support is only available in some select places (i.e., train stations) in Dhaka city. Participants from other cities reported receiving fewer meal donations than their counterparts in Dhaka.

Managing regular meals posed a challenge for some participants, with street-living participants being more likely to struggle with this than street-working children. Street-living participants must live by the day's income. If they cannot afford a meal and are unable to access a meal from other sources, they tend to go hungry. Participants reported spending their daily income before nightfall for fear of being robbed. Data shows that they were often robbed or stolen from while sleeping. Describing this, a participant shared, *"Say I earned 100 taka and kept half of it for tomorrow's meals... they [thugs and drug-addicts] take it from me... then I go hungry. After several times, I do not keep money with me anymore. I spend it instead."* Such experiences describe one of several reasons why street-living participants struggle to save money over time.

Clothing is another important physical need. This is typically addressed by participants or their caregivers, although some other entities might offer occasional help. Street-living participants reported purchasing or receiving them as donations. For street-working participants, clothes are obtained through their caregivers and sporadic donations while working on the street. The odds of receiving clothing donations increase during religious festivals. According to a girl staying in a station, *"...people come to donate clothes during Eid. I got a set last year... and I look forward to getting another set this year."* In addition, both street-living and street-working participants who attend programs run by service agencies may receive clothing if they request it.

For ***treatment services*** two trends emerge. In case of a serious accident, both groups of participants use hospital care. In fact, out of 196 individual interviewees, 136 used hospital services in the past, which demonstrates the frequency of hospital use as well as the frequency of accidents among street-connected children. In most cases, participants are brought to the hospital by friends or bystanders after an accident or injury. It was reported that they were treated in the hospital for free in most cases. In cases where the hospital does not cover all of the expenses, street-living participants or their friends bear some of their treatment expenses. Sometimes, individuals help them out with a one-time financial gift after witnessing the extent of injury or the child's limited resources. For street-working children, caregivers report taking care of other expenses including meals and treatment costs after handling the initial hospital expenses.

Social and Emotional Needs

Social and emotional needs are those non-material aspects of life which are required for the healthy development of children, including the need for **safety, love,** and **recognition as children.** Data shows participants struggle to meet each of these needs due to their life circumstances.

The **need for safety** includes physical security, protection, and freedom from fear and abuse. Due to the lack of safety and protection, the risk of violence, abuse, and exploitation is omnipresent in children's lives. The extent of risk, environmental hazards and their subsequent consequences have been elaborated on elsewhere (see chapter 4.3). Safety needs are one of the most pressing problems participants encounter in their daily lives.

Even though the lack of safety and victimhood are ***fait accompli*** for street-connected children, participants identify three sources that offer limited protection on the street. The first source comes from institutions, with different service agencies in major cities providing some forms of protection. Service agencies that run street-based programs offer a safe place for participants. Some outreach workers are available in locations where street-connected children congregate. Individual children may share their predicaments with outreach workers who are likely to have a remedy for the situation. However, the most important institution which is mandated to protect children—the police—often becomes one of the leading oppressors, according to the children interviewed.

Data also shows that police abuse is intense in restricted public places such as train and launch stations. Participants from a focus group shared, *"...if a passenger's items got lost, police would apprehend, force or beat us to confess..."* Police officials suggest that this treatment may stem from the fact that some children are engaged in illegal activities. A police official said, *"Many drug traffickers use children to peddle drugs. I found drugs wrapped around a kids' thigh. Police must intervene to prevent it."* Some individual police constables and higher-ranking officials report acting differently (i.e. in line with their duties of ensuring safety), by protecting participants from violence or abuse. For example, one street-living girl who was stalked by an adult male was able to have the male arrested upon her complaint to a police official. Sometimes, higher police officials treat participants humanely. As one of the participants shared, *"...if I go to the Boro sir [higher officer], he helps. Sir gave me 100 takas."* However, such protection is random and depends on participants' luck.

Love and care are crucial developmental needs for children. Although love and care for children should be embedded in the fabric of society, the lives of street-connected children show the opposite. Data shows that street-connected children are the most disadvantaged in terms of receiving love and care in their life, with the deprivation from love and care being more severe among street-living children. Many of them were driven or forced out of the home because of the absence of parental love. It was noted earlier that intergenerational poverty breaks down bonds among family members. As hardships intensify or new shocks consume the family, parents or caregivers tend to become less nurturing and harsher with punishment. This indicates that many street-connected children, especially ones who were driven out of the home, lacked love or care in their earlier lives. Other factors preventing street children from getting the care they need stem from the class hierarchy system and social stigma that often equate street life with criminality.

Bereft of love and care from home and society at large, some participants find love and care in unique ways. For street-connected children who live with biological parents and have warm relationships with their families, family bonds and their commitment to the family are major sources of love and care. Some of them feel deeply connected to their parents and siblings, deciding to step in to alleviate the financial pain after being moved by the families' economic struggle. They share that their parents appreciate contributions and would often express care for them. For instance, one participant who switched to a more difficult, higher paying job shared, *"...Ma [mom] told me 'baba [son], you do not have to do it, you will be sick...whatever you earn will be enough for us.'"*

Several participants appreciated that their parents allowed them to attend school. Interestingly, though this group of children were subjected to the cruelty of the street like other children, relying on their families for warmth seemed to assuage their daily pain. Sometimes they sought family members' support to thwart any abuse by bystanders or older youths. Another source of love and care for children comes from street-based peers. For both street-living and street-working children, peers are everything: love, care, sympathy, and

sources of consolation. Participants shared that company and camaraderie are key to survive on the street, on top of economic and crisis support. One participant articulated, *"...I lost my parents, nobody else is there for me, [I] only have [my] friends." Another shared that "...if friends were not there, no one would look after me."*

Some outreach workers also offer love and support to participants. Even though they are not always available, participants consider that outreach workers' professional behavior demonstrates sympathy and care. They appreciate that they can share their stories with the workers without being judged. The final source of love and care came from occasional bystanders. Due to their IGAs and staying outside of their homes, participants interact with numerous people every day. Some of them show sympathy and care verbally or by donating money. One participant who sells flowers said, *"sometimes customers speak to me sympathetically and give me more money than I bargained. This makes me happy."*

Participants also reported *'earning'* love and care from certain adults in their social environments. Any participant who stays in a place longer, stays clean, and remains obliged to adults who dominate the place might earn protection and care from them. Sharing his story, a participant said, *"I have been here [train station] for several years. I know boro bhai [older youth], vendors, and shopkeepers. They like me because they know I do not mingle with addicts. They come in my support when I am in trouble."*

Recognition as a Child and Human Being

An overwhelming majority of participants identify dehumanization as the most critical barrier to their survival. The dehumanization process is the combination of negative societal stereotypes that demean children and the negative consequences of these stereotypes in children's lives. Often dehumanization manifests through neglect, abuse, violence, and punitive treatment towards children. Both groups of participants are subject to dehumanization, though street-living participants are victims of more intense experiences. The experiences of children engaged in sexual exploitation are particularly painful. As one shared, *"people hate us... whatever I do or wherever I go, I am subjected to people's wrath. It is hard to bear."*

Apart from parents, outreach workers, and peer groups, occasional bystanders might offer help saving the child from dehumanization. For instance, a police constable beat a young child in the train station because he was sleeping next to the ticket counter in the daytime. Witnessing this horrific event during this study, the data collector confronted the police officer and protected the child from further abuse and humiliation. Though this happens rarely, several participants shared stories about how influential bystanders (e.g., storeowners, officials) supported them in crises. Some participants also shared that if they are being assaulted and cried out for help, police may come to rescue them.

Some participants identify two groups of people who are generally kind to them: adult students and Borolok [affluent people]. Adult students, especially university students, are reported to demonstrate care for them. Some of them volunteer to teach participants and participants express their satisfaction over how they are treated. Affluent individuals, especially those that ride in cars, also show kindness to the children and help them in various ways. For example, a participant shared that while he was collecting plastic bottles a car stopped by and a young lady came out to talk with her and offer her a large sum of money. However, it cannot be generalized that every student or affluent individual is kind to street-connected children. Moreover, such experiences are mostly limited to street-connected children in major cities, especially in Dhaka.

Financial Assistance

Data shows that participants earn money to meet their survival needs as well as to support their families. On many occasions, they prioritize family needs over their own needs, which happens either of their own accord or due to family pressure. Though street-working children who regularly return to their families are more often burdened with such expectations, some street-living children also embrace this as an important undertaking. Thus, searching for money is a constant drive for many street-connected children. How they earn and manage money has been discussed elsewhere (see chapter 3.4).

Other than engagement in IGAs, street-connected children often rely on financial assistance from two sources: individual and institutional. Seeking help from kind individuals is a common practice for young children and adolescents. Sometimes, desperation drives them to ask individuals whom they tend to avoid. One boy shared, *"Once I approached a kind police officer seeking help to find a job. But he gave me money only."* In some cases, strangers offer money to children if the children happen to be in the right place at the right time.

A participant shared, *"when I wait by the roadside, kind people driving cars may stop by and offer money... maybe 100 or 200 takas. I got it several times."* The second source of financial assistance comes from institutions. NGOs or outreach workers might offer children emergency cash if they are in particularly difficult situations. The government offered financial support during the pandemic and many participants noted this; however, most children do not distinguish between the government and police as a source of aid, as in many places governmental pandemic assistance was distributed by police. Children also report that some students, wealthy, and religious people sporadically offer them financial assistance, whether spontaneously or in response to participants' requests for money.

4.2 Institutional Service Experiences

An analysis of participants' institutional service experiences was conducted. Institutional services refer to support provisions planned, organized, and implemented by both nongovernmental and governmental organizations. Participants' experiences can be grouped into three major categories: **Positive Experiences** (NGOs, UNICEF), **Mixed Experiences** (e.g., hospitals, police), and **Negative Experiences** (social service shelters, correction centers).

Positive service experiences are those in which participants mostly felt respected, safe, and free from abuse. Nongovernmental organizations such as NGOs, UNICEF, and churches (participants used UNICEF and NGO interchangeably) topped the list. NGOs treated participants relatively humanely either in their outreach efforts or service centers.

Most participants spoke highly of services provided by NGOs. Describing the list of items he received from an NGO, a participant stated, *"only NGOs help us."* Some participants cited shelters or drop-in-centers as an item since they could sleep, stay there, and play undisturbed while receiving food, love, and care. Most children who received new clothes during the Eid festival were excited about it.

Girls appreciated NGO services more since they were relatively more disadvantaged than boys in terms of managing basic needs. Since girls were subjected to negative stereotypes, the warmth of the NGO services was a much needed relief for them. As one girl shared, *"they [NGOs] treated us with love and gave us things... They were barely ever upset with us."*

It appeared from participants' accounts that building initial trust between children and service providers was key to running a successful program. While describing their experience, a participant shared, *"we used to sit on the train track. He [NGO worker] sat with us, counseled us, invited us to the shelter. We trusted him and went there for a look. They gave us food, clothes, oil, and soap. We could take a shower there."*

Mixed service experiences are those in which participants described as somewhat caring and mostly meeting their needs and expectations; however, aspects of the service or some individuals involved in the service delivery system were not satisfactory. For example, participants expressed their satisfaction with how they were treated by doctors in government hospitals. Some doctors waived fees, gave children money, and bought them medicine upon learning of their vulnerability as street-connected children. Though both male and female doctors treated them well, several participants were so surprised by the caregiving of female doctors that it evoked happy memories. As one participant shared, *"she [the doctor] was so nice, as if she was my mom". Another participant who lost his mom shared that he was treated so well by the doctor that she reminded him of "[his] mom's love."* He expressed that the meeting with the doctor was so touching that he cried for his mom several times after the treatment.

However, not everyone in the hospital system treated participants well. There are some instances where certain staff of the hospital, typically those who were not part of the core service team, allegedly mistreated some participants. For example, when a participant went to purchase a ticket for the hospital service, the counter clerk addressed the participant as *"tokai"* [derogatory term] and tried to shoo him away. Reacting to such a behavior, the participant shared, *"if I hear this word, my head explodes in anger."* Such treatment sometimes discouraged participants from seeking hospital care. Other than hospital clerks or guards, on some occasions participants felt that nurses did not treat them well. One participant shared, *"One day a nurse slapped me... hearing this the doctor scolded the nurse... and she treated me well thereafter."* However, most participants were happy about their hospital experiences.

Negative Service Experiences refers to those experiences which did not meet participants' needs or expectations and that prevented participants from feeling respected or safe. In some instances, participants were abused. Participants either left the service either of their own will or fled from the service due to unbearable conditions. Government service centers (e.g., ***Shishu Poribar,*** Sheikh Russel Training and Rehabilitation Center) are allegedly sources of negative service experiences. For instance, one participant stayed in a ***Shishu Paribar*** in a district town for six years. According to him, he was picked up by the police and sent there. He did not like the place because he felt abused and exploited there. While there, he did not mind completing his chores, but his living arrangements were very poor. The quality of the food was substandard and difficult to consume. He complained that *"the food was very bad... spoiled rice, heavily diluted lentil soup, curry without salt and occasional rotten fish were the most common items on the menu."* He also suffered from skin diseases and had several permanent scars due to skin infections. Other participants shared that the workers in the rehabilitation centers abused them. As one participant who stayed in a government run shelter shared, *"Saiful sir used to beat us. He beat me once. But he beat another boy severely. He put his head under the table [half bent] and beat him up. This was because he [the resident] could not complete his studies. There were bruises all over his body."*

Even though many participants shared their negative service experiences in government centers, government officials denied such treatment. They suggested that some participants did not like to stay

in the center because they were held accountable for violating institutional policies. Some participants willingly left or fled the centers, citing their negative experiences as motivation for leaving.

4.3 Barriers to Service

Analyzing participants' as well as stakeholders' opinions and suggestions highlighted common barriers street-connected children face when attempting to access services. Relevant barriers can be grouped into three major groups: ***institutional barriers, family barriers,*** and ***individual barriers.***

Institutional barriers refer to those which primarily derive from limitations of service institutions. These barriers can be related to program and policy design or implementation.

The first barrier is inadequate service provision. It appears from service providers and service recipients that current programs are limited to three areas: street outreach, family reintegration, and institutionalization. Street outreach programs are primarily limited to street education and meal support. These programs are not inclusive and are designed to meet only some needs of certain groups of children. For instance, almost no programs exist that support young substance abusers or gang members. In addition, stigma, stereotypes, and societal backlash further isolate substance abusers from mainstream society. When these children who abuse substances are found to violate the law, they are generally processed within the legal system. Initially, the child is taken into police custody and brought to the corrections system if the court rules such. A high police official shared that if such a suspect is brought to the police station on an alleged crime, *"...the police do not have the resources to deal with such cases because they [children abusing substances] often suffer from withdrawal symptoms and beg the police for more drugs." The official continues, "How can we [the police] deal with these circumstances?"* According to the official, the police are happy to work with programs designed to address such unique needs. A similar view was echoed by children engaged in the sex trade. They shared that they were ashamed of their survival activity [survival sex] yet could not find a way out of the industry.

The second barrier stems from the fact that the breadth and the scope of these services are also extremely limited. Most participants opined that timely and regular meals are their most pressing concern as they work to survive on the street. However, organizations—especially nonprofits—only provide meal support to children participating in their programs.

The third institutional barrier is that most street-level interventions only focus on the symptoms of abuse, rather than tackling the causes. Programs scarcely address the social environment that causes great harm to children. For instance, participants staying in public places are often abused by bystanders, adults, officials, and older youths. Often, programs that attempt to address the issue of violence against street children do not address the abusers.

The final institutional barrier is lack of professionalism and quality in service interactions. Service providers, especially in shelter homes, are either unable or reluctant to address the uniqueness of each individual child and address their needs accordingly. For instance, children who act out or are reluctant to follow institutional rules are likely to be disciplined for nonconformity. Often such disciplinary measures cross limits and become abusive. A service provider shared, *"dealing with street-connected children requires professionalism and many of the street-level staff are not trained in such a manner."* It appears that such an observation is equally applicable to child-serving institutions.

A participant shared that although he stayed in a shelter for about two years, the agency did not provide him with any hope for the future. There were cliques among shelter boarders and older ones abused the younger ones. The child ultimately fled the shelter after persistent bullying by older youths. Another participant who stayed in a government shelter for a year and a half shared the following: *"Say, someone tries to escape from the shelter. If he is caught, he will be beaten by the staff. Then we all will be beaten so that we do not attempt to escape... Even if I do not steal anything I—and everyone—will be guilty."*

Family barriers are often derived from participants' family circumstances that directly and indirectly hinder receiving certain services. Street-connected children and their families' accounts highlight two issues, the fear of family separation and children's desire to support their families.

The first issue is the fear of separation from the family. Data showed many participants, especially parents of young children and children raised by single mothers had deep familial bonds. Since many single mothers are separated or divorced and often have traumatic pasts from their marriage, they tend to keep their children around them. As some mothers suggested, *"I don't have anyone other than my child."* Mothers of street families are also worried that their children may get lost when they are at work. Such fear prevents families from sending their children to places where services are located (i.e., train stations or hubs). Sometimes families are not aware of available services. Moreover, in certain cases, especially in the families' help seeking practices, a helpless child with a mother evokes a kinder response from passersby. Strong bonds and love for children also obstruct single mothers from sending their children to residential care facilities.

The second issue is that participants are deeply aware of their family circumstances and to some of them, single parents, mostly mothers, are their only source of love and care. Children feel obligated to help their families as much as they are able. The urgent drive to support families forces children to think about their families' wellbeing as well as their own. For example, some participants shared that they were unable to attend outreach programs because *"they [nonprofit organizations] will feed us but not our parents."* Similarly, a participant who was approached by a rich person to raise him with love and care shared, *"I did not go because my mom is still on the street. I cannot go without her."*

Individual barriers include those service obstacles which derive from individual decisions. Children, either by their own will or influenced by environmental factors, ignore or become disinterested in services and programs. The most influential individual barrier is the restriction of freedom that comes with joining a service or program.

Many participants, especially street-living children, get used to the increased agency that comes with street life, with the ability to make their own decisions about traveling around the country, peer networks, free movement. Their apparent freedom is compromised when they become involved with an institution whether it is a shelter or a regular education program. For those participants who are used to enjoying freedom, any binding regulations become too restrictive.

For example, a participant who was handed to the Government Shelter Home in Mirpur upon being picked up by police shared, *"I did not have anything to do...we used to get three meals and nothing else to do."* Based on some participants' expressions and experiences, it could be inferred that such arrangements where children are kept confined without any purpose other than the intention to *"clean the streets"* is not only counterproductive but also a violation to their free will. Many participants' experiences in the shelter portray the view that shelters or institutions need be tailored to the needs of participants.

The second individual barrier is what participants commonly labelled as *"I do not like it"* or *"I cannot do it."* A deeper look at these expressions showed a complex scenario. Some children, due to various circumstances, breach informal commitments or conditions of receiving support. Once such a breach occurs, they feel guilty about it and tend to avoid any service people. For example, a participant shared that one of his friends was given a tea container to do business as a street vendor. He sold the container and since then avoided any service provider due to his guilt and fear of being reproached.

The third individual barrier is the guilt and stigma that accompany alleged criminal behavior of children. Children who are engaged in maladaptive coping such as drug addiction or survival sex are treated by society as criminals, causing negative feelings to be deeply imprinted in their psyche. Not even their peers offer respite, as their status within the hierarchy of street-connected children is the lowest. Such stereotypes and exclusion force them to avoid any services. A participant lamented, *"...what will I do with this life. I do not have anything left..."* In most cases, service providers also tend to avoid children who are victims of maladaptive coping. A service provider shared that *"they [children who abuse substances] do not come to our program, even if we invite them."*

The final individual barrier to accessing services are employers. Many participants work for certain employers full or part-time who discourage participants from attending any service. It is plausible to argue that some employers use street-connected children's labor as a cheap commodity, and they tend to keep tight control over children for their own benefit. A participant shared, *"Mahajan [employer] does not want me to come here. If he hears I am here [service center] he would be mad at me."*

4.4 Perception of Government Aid

Participants' opinions of government help are mixed. The majority of the participants expressed that the government has done *'nothing'* for them. They do not see any role of government in their life. To them, the government only helps those *"who have everything."* To some of them, the government is the ultimate neglector who has all the power to solve their problems but never pays attention to their cause. Their negative assessment is founded on their interactions with three groups of government employees. The first group is the officials who take children to the shelter or vagrant home. As one participant shared, *"the government took me to the center [shelter] and kept me for years... one of my friends was also locked up there."* Once they are free or escape from the shelter, they experience constant fear of being recaptured by the officials. In some instances, they accuse the government of misleading and confining them. A participant shared, *"officials told me that they would give us food and take our photos. They duped us and sent us to the shelter."*

Explaining another instance of alleged deception, another participant said, *"a government official came to us and took our names and said they would give us a card and food. They never returned."* However, it was not clear from the participants' statements which government agency treated them as such. The second group of government officials were the police. Some participants perceive the police as being against them.

Participants' allegations against police have been explained elsewhere (see Chapter 2.4). The final group of government officials are elected representatives (i.e., chairmen, union ***parishad*** members). They suggested that the chairmen and members promised home and government assistance to them before their street migration, but such commitments did not materialize.

A minority of children interviewed did hold a positive view of the government. These participants reported

that the government had supported them and their families. Their positive perceptions were founded on interactions with three groups of officials, the army, police, and train officials. Some participants received pandemic relief from the army, and they shared their positive experiences of those interactions, saying, for example, *"the army gave us money, oil, lentils, and rice."* They reported receiving grocery items during the Eid festival as well.

Some participants also receive critical and welcoming support from the police. Other than rescuing them from dangerous events, some police officials provided them with meals. Such events were common during religious and social festivals.

As one participant shared, *"they [the police] gave us biriyani… My family got various items—groceries, new clothes, and money from kind policemen."* There are many incidents in which the police intervened to support participants.

Sharing such an event, a participant said, *"I was crying due to hunger. The police officer asked me what happened and when I told him he bought a meal for me. He also gave me money."* It appears from participants' accounts that many had received support from the police. Several participants also shared that their family received a house from the government in the village and several others reported receiving a governmental support card.

One participant gave a list of government services that street-connected children receive. She said, *"We sleep here [train station], this is the government's property. They gave us tap water, we can study in the school, they give us blanket, biriyani…"*

Most participants stated that they would happily accept the government's help if offers were made. Some cautiously questioned the government's intentions and suggested that many of their problems would be solved if the government came forward with a helping attitude. Lamenting the absence of government help, a participant shared, *"If we could get support from the government, we would not have to live on the street. We could live in big buildings. Since the government does not spend anything for us, we are stuck on the street."*

4.5 Myths about Services

Children's accounts revealed that several myths discourage some participants from seeking services from anyone including service agencies. In general, most of these myths are generic but some of them are related to some participants' service experiences. Especially, participants who had some negative service experiences (i.e., shelter experience) appeared to be believers of such myths.

It was hard to conclude whether their pre-conceived ideas influenced their interpretations of service experiences, or these myths were used to justify their decision to quit services. Regardless, these myths are grounded in deep distrust about some individuals and institutions in children's surroundings.

Most myths are spread as rumours, with individuals and groups hearing them through the grapevine. These myths could be grouped into bodily harm, trafficking, organ harvesting, blood collection, and human sacrifice.

Table 3

Categories	Description of Myth	Children's Accounts
Bodily harm	A belief that the real intention of an individual or group is to bodily harm children.	*"There are places where children can stay but they made them blind. They will treat you well initially and then they harm you."* *"Some people take children and make them disabled. They break their legs and arms. They may cut you open."*
Trafficking	A belief that the individual's or group's intention is to traffic children for money.	*"I know a kid whom they [the traffickers] took. We looked for him everywhere but did not find him."* *"Some children think they will be sold or killed by traffickers."* *"Traffickers sell children, they are trafficked to India."* *"...[traffickers] sell girls in bad places and force them to do bad things. Girls can't get out of it."*
Organ Harvesting	Children's belief that the service provider will take them and sell their organs, especially their kidneys. They will die as a result.	*"They [traffickers] take children, take their kidneys and then their severed body is thrown away. I saw a lot of slit-throat cases."* *"They take the kidneys out and the child dies."* *"...they kill the child and sell the skull."*
Blood Collection	A belief that the perpetrator will keep collecting blood until the death of the child.	*"They lure you with sweet words and promises... then they mix sleeping pills with food and take your blood."* *"[they] poison the victim to collect blood."* *"I [a participant staying in a shelter] went to the bathroom and saw his dead body in bathroom. I panicked and called apa [the shelter authority]. Someone took blood while he was sleeping..."*
Human Sacrifice	A belief that human sacrifice is necessary for taming nature and constructing something large (i.e. a bridge, dam). Children feared that they could be trafficked and sacrificed.	*"They take children and sacrifice them. If they can't build a bridge then human sacrifice is needed."* *"My friends told me that several children were sacrificed to construct Padma bridge."*

CHAPTER 5

Identified Needs of Children and Families

While chapter 4 outlines the most rudimentary survival needs of street-connected children, this chapter describes what children, their families, and stakeholders identify as the resources that would allow them to live a better life and potentially leave the street. One participant summarized her needs: *"children like me can avoid street hassles if we get a proper shelter with food and schooling facilities. We will no longer be on the street."*

Though the study intended to rank the needs of participants and their families, children's accounts suggest that no problem is less severe than the others they experience on the street. They endured multifarious, interconnected problems that had a cascade of negative effects on their lives. For example, not having safe shelter caused violent victimization at night.

Homelessness also deprived children of access to water, sanitation, health, hygiene, protection, and regular meals. Such conditions further endangered their survival and sometimes forced them to adopt maladaptive coping. Since they experienced similar difficulties and deprivations, the needs across the group were somewhat similar. Hence, children irrespective of their age, gender, and disability status focused on food, a good place to live and sleep, clothing, education, and a reasonable source of income.

Identified needs encompass those basic requirements of life which street-connected participants, families, and other stakeholders (i.e., former street children, social workers, key informants) designated as required for their: a) immediate survival; and b) potential future mobility. These needs are divided into two broad sections, **service needs** and **program/policy needs.**

5.1 Service Needs

Service needs for children and their families can be divided into two groups, **children's survival needs**, and **needs of the street-connected children's families to provide for children.** Different groups of participants generally had overlapping views on needs.

Food

Most street-connected children suffered from hunger. They were unable to consume three meals a day and reportedly went hungry many times a week. Most participants expressed sorrow about not having sufficient money to purchase food. Therefore, food was the most important and most frequently identified need for street-connected children and their families.

A participant explained, *"I need food first. I will die if I do not get food. I will not have any energy without food and then won't be able to work."* The necessity of providing regular and timely meals was highlighted by every group of stakeholders. A single parent said, *"I cannot feed my children… during Eid, I am unable to provide an improved meal for them, forget about new clothes. It is unbearable for a mother."* Stakeholders also suggested that hunger drives some participants to get involved in delinquent activities. Sharing her experiences, a police officer said, *"when we bring them [children engaged in alleged criminal activities] to the police station and ask why they did it, they say 'peter daye, sir' [because of hunger]."* This was reinforced by a participant who shared, *"…when they [children] cannot manage food, they steal things or engage in bad things. Some sniff glue. Glue-sniffing helps them to suppress hunger."* While identifying meals, rice was their primary choice. Participants also shared that if they could manage a regular meal, they would leave street life. Street-working participants who have family ties shared that they need food assistance for their family as well.

Shelter and Protection

Street-connected children rarely had a permanent place which could be regarded as a safe shelter. Though street-working children return to their family at night, they spend a considerable amount of time on the street. In contrast, street-living children do not have any permanent residence that could house them safely. Some street-living children may visit their family and stay at home for a short period of time, but most of their time is spent on the street.

A limited number of residential care and facilities are available in the country; however, many children expressed their disinterest in using institutional services for various reasons. For most participants, the street and public places are their prime spaces for spending day and night. The lack of shelter is fraught with many other problems. Participants identified limited or no access to water, sanitation, and beds as well as protection from cold, mosquitoes, and environmental risks as some of these pitfalls.

Most participants ranked shelter after food, but some had a different view. Street-living girls in particular expressed their preference for a home due to the risks of street living. As one shared, *"the most pressing issue is to have a place to stay. Apa [sister] we could struggle during the day, but night is the most dangerous... scared of every moment, it is incredibly hard to live like this."* For street families, a secure place is a paramount need.

Every street family prioritized a protected place before any other need. A homeless mother shared, *"My girl is growing up. We need a place to stay. She does not have access to a toilet. There is no limit of suffering."* Some stakeholders—police, social workers, key informants—suggested a *'housing first'* policy and others advocated for *'food first'.* All stakeholders agreed that the housing should not be a mere place to stay but must be a loving home with parental or kin care. A social worker stated, *"From my experience I would tell that they need a home, a home where they will be loved and cared for."*

Cash Assistance and Family Loans

Street-connected children also mentioned cash assistance for two purposes: a) to purchase necessary items such as pants or shirts, shoes, and food; and b) to alleviate their families' suffering. For children's own use, they wanted to purchase shoes and clothing. Most children wore one set of clothes for which some people insulted and drove them away because the overused and unwashed clothes allegedly emitted odor.

One boy said, *"First, I need clothes. See this pair of pants. I have been using it for at least four weeks."* Some girls are barely able to take care of themselves with their scanty income. Apart from other needs, a girl asked for money to have a haircut. She said, *"There are head lice all over my scalp. I can't have a haircut for money."*

All families asserted that their income was not enough to raise their children even modestly. The father of a family said, *"I could not manage 5 thousand takas to pay his school dues. I told him I could sell my van for it. My son did not want, and he skipped the exam... abandoned studying. He left home and lives in the street now. My son does not visit us."*

The appeal for financial assistance was acute among single-parent homeless families as well as families living in the city. The pain of living open on the street and raising children in constant economic crises was repeatedly shared by families and street-connected children. A mother who seeks cash assistance from

bystanders said, *"I feel extremely bad that I ask for money from people the whole day. I do not have any cash nor any assets... my kids' lives have been spoiled in the street."*

Some children were forced to work to pay the family debt. Their parents, for various reasons (i.e., business, medical treatment, hunger) borrowed a relatively large amount of money. The family fell into the trap of debt as their unusually high interest rates caused the borrowed amount to cumulate in a large sum. One participant shared that his family borrowed 400 thousand taka and they have been paying for the last five years. They have only repaid 100 thousand taka. According to him, *"we are dying to pay only the interest."*

Stakeholders agreed that cash assistance or family loans should be a priority for street-connected children and their families. Almost all of them designated economic crisis as one of the root causes of homelessness and street migration. According to them, lack of money is the catalyst for a broken family, and this could be mitigated by offering conditional or unconditional cash. They suggested that many families are not included in the government's safety net and their inclusion could ease the pain.

Education

Almost all children emphasized the need for education. Some believed that education may help them become good human beings. One participant said, *"I want to study. I do not want to be a bad person, rather I want to be a good human being."* Many children expressed that they would be interested in education if they were provided the opportunity. Children also believed that education would change their current lives and would serve as a catalyst for social mobility. A girl said, *"I am an orphan. If I can learn something from school, then I can be self-dependent."* Some children expressed the desire for a good and large school with open space where they could study, have meals, and play with friends. Few children focused on the need for residential technical school which would facilitate their access to job opportunities.

Several street-working students were currently attending school, but they expressed their doubts about continuation. Apart from family needs, they were concerned about the school expenses. A participant said, *"...a school dress costs 800-1,000 takas. How can we manage? My mother told me that she won't send me after this year."* Though most participants expressed their enthusiasm for education, their commitment appeared to be contingent on meeting other needs. Street-living children identified food and shelter as a priority and street-working participants emphasized mitigating their families' needs first.

Families expressed their frustration for not being able to send their children to school and noted that financial crisis was the major reason why they were unable to send their children. A father expressed sorrowness and said, *"My daughter could not continue her education only for money. She lives on the street now."* A street-living mother said, *"when other children go to school, my child begs for money on the street. I feel heartbroken."*

Other stakeholders echoed the children's view that participants should have access to education. However, they advocated for flexibility and skills-driven education. While explaining the importance of flexibility, key informants suggested that many street-connected children are used to street life and might not be interested in studying long hours within a structured school setting. They might need an alternative model of education which would ensure employment in their preferred trade. They suggested that a skills-driven curriculum might keep them in the education system longer.

Decent Job or Income Source

Since participants' survival mostly depends on their ability to garner resources through work, the demand for a decent job or continuous source of economic support was a top priority among participants. Considering the risks and dangers of hazardous jobs, children preferred less risky jobs. They intended to work hard in comfortable jobs to ensure a regular income, avail themselves of the opportunity to work in a safe place, save money, and invest their savings in establishing a future business or trade. They expressed their overwhelming displeasure for working in the heat, sunlight, rainy days, busy traffic, and other hazardous environments.

They were also apprehensive about the possibility that hazardous jobs are a ***fait accompli*** for the rest of their life. A street-living participant suggested that if children keep working here their fate is sealed in these jobs. Another participant commented, *"Does anybody want to do these types of jobs? All of us want to enjoy a good life. But our jobs do not allow us to be good."* Children are interested in decent jobs considering their own future or the wellbeing of family members. But they stated that they received almost no help in seeking better, safer jobs. Participants also lamented that people treat street children as thieves and delinquents and such stigma is a barrier to finding a better job. A street-living girl shared, *"If I ask anyone for a better job, they accuse me of being a nosto meye [sexually promiscuous and socially outcast] and say who will hire me?"*

Some participants, mostly street-working participants, showed willingness to compromise their job prospects for those of their family members. According to them, if their parents or caregivers can manage a better job, that will help free them from hazardous jobs and pursue their aspired trade. Many family members, especially parents of children, suggested this to be a potential solution. A father whose untreated illness forced him to lose his business and ultimately compelled him to begging said, *"If I could find help for my treatment and some capital, I would not send my children to the street."*

Other stakeholders agreed with participants and their families' insistence on the importance of accessing better jobs. However, they suggested that the focus needs to be on adults' employment rather than children's. For children a plan should be formulated considering their legal age of employment. According to them, young children must not work but those adolescents who have crossed the legal age of work should be considered for skill-development jobs which must be developed in a humane and child-friendly environment. They should be placed in formal jobs once they attain their skills.

Access to Healthcare

Children emphasized that they should have easy access to medical services, as many of them are either deprived of or unable to access such opportunities. Several barriers to accessing health care were identified. Though most participants were aware of government hospitals, some newcomers were unaware of available services, or the process involved.

It also appeared that participants visited hospitals only if they succumbed to serious accidents or injuries. They had little awareness of their ability to receive hospital care for other diseases. They also shared that though initial hospital care is free, the subsequent costs of medicine are often unaffordable. For example, with the help of a service provider a participant visited the hospital and received a prescription, but he could not afford the medication. He said, *"The doctor gave me a prescription for my skin. But I can't have regular meals, how can I afford an expensive drug?"* Even if participants are able to afford medication, safekeeping is a challenge for them. One participant purchased an ointment for a skin infection kept it in his pocket and eventually lost it.

Easy access to healthcare is also an acute problem for the families of street-connected children. Besides children, some parents reported suffering from various diseases and being unable to afford treatment. Any serious sickness or disability of parents or caregivers implies serious consequences and often serves as a catalyst for sending children to work. A participant whose husband recently succumbed to his disability because the family could not afford treatment shared the challenges she encountered.

On top of being the family's earner, she is the sole caregiver for their four young children and disabled husband. She said, *"If we could afford his treatment, he would have recovered, and our family would not have suffered this much."* The financial and logistical challenges are also dominant among street-living single parents who find it very difficult to arrange any treatment for their children.

Sports and Recreation

Their overwhelming life circumstances leave children little time to play games and sports peacefully and yet they are children at heart. As such, they look forward to having opportunities to play games and sports such as football and carrom. They asked for a facility where they can play, live, eat, and study. It appeared from children's opinions that they would prefer a spacious place. Justifying his opinion, a participant said, *"you cannot keep children in a confined place. You need to allow them to be kept in an open place. We will stay, move, and eat together."*

Many others echoed the view that confinement in a shelter was a barrier to their freedom of movement, contributing to their apathy for such services. Some emphasized free movement as a means of recreation. It is plausible to argue that freedom of movement is the only aspect of their life over which participants retain control and thus should be considered in developing interventions. Several participants wished to ride motorbikes and have a phone as part of their dreams of recreation. Most children wanted to watch television and go to the movies, as there is limited scope to watch television on the streets. A participant shared, *"We cannot watch TV in the tea stall. We must spend ten to twenty takas there and only then are allowed to watch TV. We cannot watch it for long though as the owner would ask us to leave."*

Love and Care

Participants deeply felt that they were deprived of love and care in a hostile street environment. They frequently experienced violence, abuse, and harsh behavior from almost all people in their surroundings. The magnitude of the abuse and exploitation has been explained in previous chapters. Against such pervasive hostility, participants expressed their desire that people would not dehumanize them and would not treat them lesser than children. They believed if people accepted them as disadvantaged children rather than as a *"bunch of thieves and criminals,"* they would be able to manage a better life.

Expressing this hope, a female participant shared, *"Children miss their mother. They will be happy if the adults here love them as mothers do."* Children also opined that those who are not able to return to their parental home need public sympathy and protection from abuse, especially police abuse. One participant shared, *"When police beat us, everyone thinks we are criminals, so they beat us too."* Several participants who are traumatized knowing that their mothers were involved in survival sex often miss a home and their mothers' love.

Families also expressed sorrow that their children were growing up without their care. A mother said, *"I do not know where he lives. I cry for him."* Street families and single mothers shared similar views.

They stated that when powerful people hurled abusive language at them and their children, they felt powerless to protest. They urged that if they could have a home, they would be able to raise their children with love and care. Stakeholders, especially service providers and key informants, also asserted that street-connected children are victims of a hostile environment. They suggested that the virulent attacks on street-connected children could be slowed down by initiating massive campaigns and instituting public awareness programs.

Tranquility, Sleep, and Other Needs

Many street-living participants yearned for tranquility and peace. It appeared from their experiences that endless stressors in their everyday environment pushed them to move constantly. Participants went through the same cycle of events from morning to night with little or no rest (i.e., search for food, livelihood, bath, and toilet, as well as enduring long walks, abuse, and exploitation). Such a harsh routine exhausted them, but they can sleep little as they are thrown out from everywhere.

A participant shared, *"I wish I could sleep peacefully as I did at home."*

Some street-living participants crave a calm and quiet place where stressors would not haunt them every minute. A girl shared, *"I need a peaceful place where men would not bother me... I want to sleep for long hours."* Other than peaceful sleep, participants also requested showers and clothes. Describing why he needed another pair of pants, a participant said, *"I take showers wearing this pair of pants and it dries on my body."*

Street-living participants also shared their thoughts on how to resolve the toilet and shower facilities. In a focus group discussion participants agreed and shared that *"If public toilets and shower places across the city allow us to use these facilities for free, children would not take showers in the dirty river and ponds."* They also shared that they needed a locker to store their belongings. Lack of safe places is one of the reasons why participants do not keep additional sets of clothes. Participants shared many stories about how their belongings including money, clothes, blankets, and shoes were stolen at night.

Childcare Needs for Family

Most mothers supported the idea of childcare for their young children. Most parents, especially single mothers, kept their children in the care of neighbors while at work. For many mothers, constant worry is an inevitable part of their childrearing. They are aware of the risk yet cannot find alternatives. A mother shared that since they were unable to pay their neighbors for childcare, she had to depend on the mercy of neighbors' good will. In some instances, parents shared that their children got into accidents while they were in the care of a neighbor.

A mother said, *"My baby got hurt, but I could not say anything because if they refuse to look after the baby, I will be forced to quit my job."*

Mothers insisted that the childcare must be close to their home or workplace, and they must have unfettered access to their children. Some mothers suggested a tradeoff between childcare and financial assistance. One shared, *"It will be okay if I do not get any financial assistance. If my child stays in a shelter and he is taken care of, I won't worry."*

Mothers were reluctant and, in some cases, strongly opposed the idea of placing their children in long-term institutional care. One mother shared, *"I can't place my children in a shelter. I took so much pain to raise them. How would I survive without them?"* Several mothers floated the idea that they

would be willing to keep their children in shelters or institutional care if that institution takes great care of children, they have a child-friendly environment, and children are able to visit their parents as they wish.

Small Business Capital, IGA Opportunities, and Other Support for Families

Parents of street-connected children offered a list of immediate needs. Along with several other identified needs listed previously, a common need emerged from male parents' accounts which was capital or logistical support for starting new businesses or restarting their lost businesses. A spirit of self-dependency was reflected while male parents shared their stories. Many parents fell into poverty after various shocks (i.e., loss of capital in small business, loss of crops, disability).

Despite their desperate economic and social conditions, most parents suggested that they needed small capital grants or loans to reinvest in their businesses. According to them, they have the skill sets, devotion, and aspirations but they do not have sufficient resources to revive their businesses. Their desired trades included shops, auto vans, groceries, tea stalls and similar small enterprises. Some participants shared that they would not need any other assistance but capital or logistic support to establish themselves. They firmly asserted that through hard work they would be able to provide for their families and bring their children home. Some parents shared that upon reestablishing their old or new businesses, they would regain their status as the family's breadwinner and create opportunities for their children's future. Some shared particular plans to engage their children in businesses.

A father said, *"If I could reestablish my old business, my son would not have left us. A chicken costs 300 taka but my value is less than 3 takas. The day I lost my business I became worthless. My children left me. I know if I can stand on my feet any day, they will happily come back."*

Though male parents mostly asked for business capital, female participants stressed the importance of decent jobs. They asserted that their current informal jobs barely earn them enough to support a family. A mother from a homeless family said, *"what I get by seeking help from people is minuscule, it does not meet the need for food in my family. I do not want to dream big [referring to housing or other assistance]. If I have a decent job that pays me, I will live with my children happily."*

Moreover, parents also requested help for their children's birth registration. Several parents ask to be included in voter registration to have IDs for their family.

5.2 Program and Policy Needs

Every stakeholder who participated in the study concurred that street-connected children are one of the most disadvantaged groups and more needs to be done to integrate them into society. Their suggestions could be grouped into three major areas: ***Policy, Program, and Participation.*** The following chart describes each of these areas.

Table 4

3 Ps Model of Intervention for Street-connected Children			
Provision		Policy/Program Description	Participants' Opinions/ Suggestions
	Policy Provision	• Modify, strengthen, and implement section III, IX, and X of the Children's Act. (i.e., inclusion of elective representative in rural and urban areas) • Initiate new policy for homeless families • Initiate policy to increase access to food for vulnerable families in urban and rural areas	• Most participants agreed to this suggestion. Some participants emphasized the proper implementation of the act. • Participants asserted that homelessness is one of the root causes of street migration. More housing is needed for urban poor especially single parent families. • All stakeholders agreed that poverty and access to food are major issues for poor families and this must be addressed to prevent children's engagement in IGAs.
	Policy Provision	• Initiate policies to address street-connected children's issues (e.g., prevention policy, harm reduction policy, public awareness-raising policy, home/community reintegration policy, street to community transition policy, community care policy).	• Stakeholders stressed the importance of new policies to address the unique circumstances of street-connected children and their families. The role of families (parents or kins) and community was emphasized frequently.
	Program Provision	Programs targeting wellbeing of street-connected children (i.e., free meal voucher, shelter/safe-stay housing, access to health and mental health care, basic-life skills development, career-focused education and training with paid internship, special employment for disadvantaged youth, family) Program targeting transition off the street (i.e., family reintegration, kin/community care for abandoned and parentless children, institutionalization of parentless/kinless children, Rehabilitation Program for Substance Abusers)	-Stakeholders strongly agreed on creating a safety net and employment-focused education/ training programs. According to stakeholders, programs targeting three basic needs (food, shelter of choice, and health care/ counseling) must be prioritized. Reintegration as per the wish of the children. Stakeholders stressed family reintegration and restoring balance between children and their family members. Most stakeholders feared that substance abuse is a serious issue among street-children and new programs must be initiated.

Protection		Policy/Program Description	Participants' Opinions/ Suggestions
	Protection at Home	Create community programs based on provision 70 (Penalty for Cruelty to a Child) of the Children's Act (i.e., awareness of parents on children's rights, awareness of children about their rights, community-based programs to prevent child abuse)	Participants expressed that parents, especially parents from low socio-economic strata, are unlikely to be aware of children's rights. Awareness programs along with legal remedies for child abuse should be institutionalized. Parental awareness on how violence affects children's growth and development should be a priority.
	Protection on the Street	Create community-based violence prevention programs for Street-Connected Children (i.e., violence prevention committee, awareness-raising programs, violence prevention training program for street-connected children)	All participants agreed that violence is omnipresent in street-connected children's life. Children who decide to stay on the street must be protected. Collaboration among service providers, government officials, local influentials, and police are likely to be effective. Stakeholders suggested that community policing must act to protect children from violence and abuse.
Participation		**Policy/Program Description**	**Participants' Opinions/ Suggestions**
	Children's Participation	Children must be actively consulted to include their views, assessments of their own circumstances, services, and interventions. The principle of participation is central to reduce power differential between children and adults.	Stakeholders shared that the sense of freedom is a powerful impetus among street-children. Without including children's voice and opinions, policies and programs are unlikely to be successful.
	Family Participation	Inclusion of immediate family or close kin must be an integral part of any policy or program. Programs such as reintegration of children in the family or placing children in kin care requires active participation from them.	All stakeholders stressed the importance of family or kin care. Family members also expressed their intention to take care of children at home if they are able to manage the crises at home.
	Community Participation	Community participation should be an essential principle in prevention and reintegration of street-connected children. The impact of communities (i.e., spatial or relational) on children's survival and development is vital.	Most stakeholders highlighted the role of community in the protection of children. Increased involvement of different communities (i.e., family, relatives, neighbors, elected officials, rural communities) could reduce harm and offer a healthy environment for children.

5.3 Children's Perception of Reintegration into Family and Kin

Street-living children's reintegration into families and kin depends on many factors, such as children's intentions to return home, family members' acceptance, risks of abuse, family poverty, locating parents, and a plan for the family and children for their future. There was consensus among participants that most children have valid reasons for leaving home. A few might have left home because of their curiosity and desire for adventure. Yet most participants and stakeholders stressed that given the harshness of street life, children generally do not want to live on the street permanently.

A former street-connected child who had successfully reintegrated into society shared, *"Individuals can achieve many things in their life. I wanted a successful and happy life, I made it. Every child on the street wants that. They need to be guided."*

A participant engaged in survival sex shared, *"This life is a curse, ask anyone whether she wants to return home, she will say yes. Only question is whether their parents will accept her."*

Others suggested that if anyone stays on the street for long it might be difficult to adjust to the family or society. Girls are also likely to face societal backlash on their return. Children suggested that their voices and intentions must be taken into consideration for successful reintegration. Otherwise, efforts will not bear any fruit.

Expanding this idea, one participant shared, *"If you give a child fare for his return to home, he will take it and will go somewhere else. The only way he will go is if he is convinced, and his problems are solved."*

Other than street duration, another issue obstructing children's return is addiction. Some suggested that *"those who are addicted, none will take them back."* Participants also shared that *"some children with substance addiction might be in conflict with the law. They are aware that they are social outcasts, and their return anywhere is uncertain."*

Participants shared several ways to convince children to return home. The first one is counseling. If children are counseled and explained about their future street trajectories and alternative possibilities, they are likely to return. Some participants suggested that this process might take long because children find it hard to believe that people want to help them. If a trusting relationship emerges, they are more likely to listen to the individual.

The second method is engaging parents and kin. If parents or relatives show up and ask children to go home, they will be happy to return. Even if parents ask them over the phone, children will oblige. However, participants warned that if children were forced out of home due to stepparents' abuse, this approach will not work. Some participants shared that some children stay home to save money and once savings reach their desired amount, they will return home. However, reaching a desired amount is a challenge for various reasons.

A participant said, *"I would return home if I could save some money. Earlier, I saved some, but I had to spend it for treating my head injury."*

Some of these children opined that if someone offers them some money, they are likely to join their families. Children expressed their skepticism regarding especially those who were lost, and their parents could not be traced. They prescribed that police or service providers could help them identify their family members and help them return home.

A girl who was lost when she was young said, *"I am eager to return home but cannot remember where I came from. If one finds my parents and they are willing to take me back, I will go there."*

One child suggested using social media to trace their parents. He shared that service providers could upload their photo or video to Facebook or YouTube to reach out to their parents. Another participant suggested making a TikTok video of lost children and making it viral. According to them, if the video becomes viral, their parents or relatives might trace their whereabouts.

Participants shared that any return would be contingent on meeting their basic needs, including regular meals, a place to live without fear or anxiety, education, and career opportunities. They also requested a school environment where they could learn at their own pace.

A female participant said, *"parents beat children and kicked them out of home to earn money."* She suggested that if parents are provided with financial resources prior to sending children home, their life is likely to be easier.

Another participant claimed, *"I tried three times but could not stay there [home]. If the government gives my parents something [financial assistance], they will happily welcome my return."* It appeared from children's accounts that some children tried to return home, but their parents did not accept them back.

Street-living children also put forth suggestions for children who are unwilling to reunite with their family. They claimed that these children should be housed in the city and provided with the opportunity to earn money. While participants were reluctant to use current shelters due to rigidity, mismanagement, and abusive treatment, they were open to using a flexible shelter where they have more freedom and fewer rules.

One participant shared, *"there needs to be some rules, but harsh treatment must not be there. Moreover, thieves take our things from there. Those must be protected."*

CHAPTER 6

Aspiration and Hope

Participants were asked to describe their aspirations and hope for the future. Given the overwhelming life circumstances, it is plausible to doubt children's ability to articulate their hopes and aspirations. Contrary to this, participants presented their hopes and aspirations with considerable clarity and specificity. Some participants expressed high hopes and professional aspirations (i.e., to be trained as a doctor or engineer) which might be difficult to achieve given the current realities of their life and educational trajectories. Importantly, participants also offered alternative options in case their high hopes were not realized. These two trends exemplify the extraordinary resilience of children as they are able to adjust their hopes and dreams considering their reality.

6.1 Types of Aspirations and Hopes

Participants' accounts of aspirations and hopes for the future can be grouped into three major themes. These are **survival expectations, informal career aspirations,** and **professional career aspirations.**

Survival Expectations

Participants' survival expectations revolve around fulfilling basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing. Safety and protection, access to education, and health care were also included in their desired list. Their aspirations often focus on securing these necessities on a day-to-day basis, as survival in the streets is extremely challenging. Their survival expectations were grounded in their ability to navigate unpredictable situations and make the most of available resources. How children mitigate survival expectations has been explained in chapter 4. An important distinction between girls and boys is that girls prioritized a safe shelter over any other expectations. In contrast, boys emphasized food and livelihood.

Informal Career Aspirations

Informal career aspirations encompass those ventures in which participants expect to be engaged in the informal economic sector. The nature of their engagements is either finding jobs in the informal sector or establishing their own small businesses. Aspiring to start small entrepreneurial ventures was a common theme. Some children dreamed of establishing their own micro-businesses, such as setting up a small kiosk, vending snacks, or tea, establishing a small grocery store and so forth. Others aspire to find informal jobs in the market.

Professional Career Aspirations

Professional career aspirations encompass traditional professions such as doctors, teachers, engineers, or other roles that are conventionally regarded as respected and stable careers. Many participants dreamt of a formal career despite the significant challenges they experienced. The following chart outlines participants' expressed interests and rationale behind their career choices. This is not an exhaustive list but represents most of the children's aspirations and dreams.

Table 5

Career Type	Description	Children's Accounts	Rationale
Informal Career Aspiration	Flower Shop	*"I will run a flower shop with my younger brothers [friends]"*	• *"I will go to my mom's place in five years. Assume family responsibilities."*
	Tea Stall	*"A stall, a small tea stall… I will need a lot of things to set it up."*	• *"I will earn to feed myself and others."*
	Any Decent Job	*"I want to work in a decent job, any decent job."*	• *"It will take me away from the street life."* • *"I have grown up now. I will get married. None will marry me without a job."*
	Car Mechanic or Construction Engineer	*"I want to work as a construction mechanic."*	• *"I would like to live a decent life without hunger."* • *"I want to live in a good place and have good food."*
	Business	*"I have a dream to be a businessman."*	• *"I would like to live a decent life without hunger."* • *"I want to live in a good place and to have good food."* • *"My mom did not have the ability to support me in education. I want to save some money for her. Then I want to study."* • *"I would like to start a poultry business in my village."*
	Store	*"I would like to open a store, any store."*	• *"To support my mom and young sister."* • *"I used to live in a decent family. I want to take care of my siblings and parents."* • *"I want people to recognize me as a good person."*
	Wood Working	*"Anything but I would like to learn woodwork."*	• *"If my mother is not happy, I do not want to live. She told me to work."*
	Car/Bus/Truck Driver	*"I want to drive a bus"*	• *"I will support my family. There won't be any poverty."*

Career Type	Description	Children's Accounts	Rationale
	Rickshaw Puller	*"I'd like to pull a rickshaw when I grow up."*	- *"I need food and shelter, that's why."*
	Hotel Worker	*"If I start in a hotel now when I learned everything, I will earn 10-12 thousand takas."*	*"I want to be a good human being so that people treat me well. I will help my parents as well."*
	Scrap Picker	*"I will collect scrap and sell bottled water."*	*"I do not have any hope of future."*
	Electrician	*"I want to study and stay in a safe place."*	*"I have learned sewing and electric work. I will find a job if I study more."*
	Garment Worker	*"I will go to the garment as a helper and then learn everything."*	*"I want to support my parents."*
	Doctor	*"I want to be a doctor"*	• *"I will be a famous doctor and earn money for myself."* • *"I want to help poor people."* • *"To help my mom."* • *"…Free treatment for the poor. I will live with my family."*
Professional Career Aspiration	Army	*"Upon completing my studies, I will join the army and go abroad."*	• *"I will fight for my country …save my country."*
	Preacher [Imam]	*"I want to be an Islamic preacher."*	• *"Pray to Allah…"* • *"Visit Mecca for Hajj pilgrimage"*
	Student	*"I will study, and take any job when I finish my studies"*	• *"I did not study before, but I do not want to have a street life anymore."*
	Police/ Rapid Action Battalion (RAB)	*"I want to work in the police."/ "I want to be a police officer."*	• *"I want to move up in the world."* • *"I do not want to stay at the train station anymore. I want to stay with my family."* • *"They protect people."* • *"I won't have to live in poverty. I will help the poor. I will arrest criminals."* • *"I want to be detective police or a RAB officer, and arrest police who take bribes."*
	Engineer	*"I want to grow up and become an engineer."*	• *"I will fix trains…To help people. I will support my mom."*

Career Type	Description	Children's Accounts	Rationale
	Teacher	*"I want to be a teacher."*	• *"I will tell everyone not to turn to the streets."*
	Artist	*"I will record my music and open up a YouTube channel."*	• *"I want to be famous and earn a lot of money. Then I will open a school for children like me."*
	Government Official	*"I will get a job after passing job test."*	• *"I will support my family. I want my brother to study."* • *"My father has passed, and my mother is sick. I want to make her happy."*
	Pilot	*"I wish I could be a pilot."*	• *"My mother wanted me to do something big."*
	Owning property	*"I have promised myself to own ten decimals of land."*	• *"I want to be rich."*
	To be a Good Human Being	*"I do not want to live like this, I want a family life."*	• *"People will respect me. I want to be able to support my parents."*
Other Aspirations	To be a Rich Man	*"I will earn millions of takas and buy a home for myself"*	
	Politics and Any Good Work	*"I will mingle with many high-profile political leaders"*	• *"I would like to visit Mecca and help the poor."*

It appears from the above table that participants who aspired to have informal jobs or become self-employed had relatively low expectations as compared to those who aspired to have professional careers. However, the informal career aspirants may have been more adaptive to local markets and the informal economy. They appeared to be adroit, finding niche opportunities that align with their skills and resources. Interestingly, participants from Dhaka shared more diverse aspirations than children in other cities. This might be because they have been exposed to a larger variety of opportunities and informal careers in Dhaka.

In contrast, participants' aspirations for a professional career stemmed from interactions and experiences in their social environments. Becoming a doctor topped the list of all the professional careers participants expressed interest in. It is plausible to argue that their positive experiences during their hospital visits shaped their interest. In fact, some participants shared ***"serving the poor"*** as the motivation behind their choice of profession. Similarly, many interactions that they have had with police shaped their understanding of what the police can accomplish. The power of the police and using that power to protect vulnerable children was one of the leading motivations for joining the police and similar forces. Moreover, it appeared from participants' rationale that professional jobs provide a regular income and decent working conditions. For instance, several participants were expressing their hope to work in air-conditioned offices or in settings where they would be dignified. They seemed to understand that professional careers offer stability, legal recognition, and a trajectory of social mobility.

Despite the above differences between informal and professional career aspirants there were underlying commonalities in their aspirations and hopes. First, both groups of participants dreamed of stability and security. This included aspirations for a safe living environment, access to decent and regular meals, and

protection from the numerous hazards of street life. Second, most participants aspired to reconnect with their families or caregivers.

They expressed their commitment to the family by undertaking financial and other responsibilities. Interestingly, they envisioned reconnecting upon becoming successful. This means that they would overcome the challenge with little or no help from family but intended to eventually share their prosperity. In the same vein, participants aspired to overcome the stigma associated with street-connected children by demonstrating to society that they are productive members.

Their career goals and expressed intentions were not limited to their own financial stability but also to serving greater communities and society. Thus, integration into the larger social and economic spheres was the third common thread among both groups of participants. Finally, participants also expressed their desire to work hard for their anticipated success. They were aware that education is one of the major pathways for a better future and they were willing to undertake this challenge if some of their basic needs were met.

6.2 Gender Differences in Hopes and Aspirations

Gender differences emerged in participants' hopes and aspirations. Presumably, these differences were due to societal roles, expectations, and unique challenges that boys and girls encountered. It appears that many of the female participants were influenced by traditional gender roles. As a result, their aspirations were limited within the gendered sphere. For instance, when it came to career choice, boys aspired to careers that aligned with traditional male roles, such as jobs in construction, mechanics, and small trades. In contrast, almost no girl expressed her interest in any traditionally male jobs. Girls leaned towards professional careers such as teachers and physicians.

While selecting informal careers, they aspired to work in the garment manufacturing industry or in households as maids. Importantly, many girls expressed their aspiration to be physicians. Since traditional gender roles place priority on boys contributing to the family income, all the boys conformed to this idea. Similar accounts emerged from girls to some extent, yet they were relatively muted compared to boys.

In addition, many girls emphasized marriage, expecting that they would be married in the near future. Many noted their hope to have a happy family with a husband. For example, being asked of what she wanted to achieve within the next five years, a participant responded, *"I am 13 now. In five years, I will go to my future father-in-law's house."* Boys only emphasized marriage in rare instances. Instead, they were focused on stable employment that would provide support to themselves and their caregivers. Since girls are often at higher risk of gender-based violence and sexual violence and exploitation, they aspired to have the safety and security of a home. One child being sexually exploited shared, *"My high hope is to find a place where I can be safe."*

6.3 Supporting Children's Hopes and Dreams

Almost all street-connected children, their families, former street-connected children, and street brokers reached a unanimous consensus that the government can change the fate of children and families. They advanced the idea that the government has the power, resources, and distribution structure to support them. While explaining the power of the government, a parent explained, *"They [the government] control the country, they have money. If they want, they can make the poor solvent."*

This was echoed by several other parents. Often, they associated the government with powerful officials or entities (i.e., the police, officials, elected representatives) and believed that those powerful people can allocate what is required for the improvement of the lives of street-connected children and their families. To this end, some participants referred to the Prime Minister and shared that if the Prime Minister wants, she solely can change everything including the circumstances of their lives.

They asserted that *"the government has money, a lot of money"* to spare for the poor. They cited that the current government has undertaken housing projects for the poor (i.e., the ***Ashrayan*** project) and that they were somehow excluded. In terms of a distribution structure, they discussed the role of local representatives (i.e., elected union chairpersons, councilors, member of the parliament MP) and suggested that *"if MP sir [member of parliament] orders the police and others, they will help us."* Sharing their frustration, some articulated that the government is unwilling to help them or unable to *"figure out who the real needy are."*

Some alleged that elective representatives, especially elected chairman of the local union parishad, embezzled their relief or other resource allocations. Some parents blamed local political leaders for their deprivation and suggested, *"the government allocates us resources, but the local leaders embezzle it. What will the poor like us get?"*

Most street-connected children referenced the role of the government in deciding their fate. A young participant shared, *"The best option is the government's help. If the government could provide me with meals, a house for my mother and sister, and a school for me and my friends, we would study there. I need a bathroom as well. It is embarrassing to use an open pit."*

Participants' expectations of government help could be grouped into two groups: major expectations and minimum expectations. Those who advocated for major expectations suggested that the government should address their and their families' needs. According to this view, if their families are solvent, they will be able to study and achieve their dreams. In line with this theme, a participant shared:

"My father needs two cows. Goat as well. A sewing machine for my mom. I need food and then a school uniform. These things will energize me. I will be able to do some work. The government should give me school texts and notebooks for free... The government needs to make a home for us. We could set up a store in one part and I could run it. I could study and work. I could go to the school in the morning and then run the store, and study at night."

Some participants were more conservative in their expectations. They expected that the government would provide two things, a regular source of income and the costs of education. A participant shared, *"If the government sponsors my educational costs and employs my mother or elder brother, nothing else will be needed. We will do well."*

A group of participants were more conciliatory in their expectations. According to them the government might not be able to address all their needs and thus the government should inquire about the most urgent ones and meet those so that they can pursue their dreams. A girl suggested that if she were given a chance, she could document her needs in a video clip and the government could decide which ones they can afford. Several participants promoted a libertarian view, suggesting that if the government allows them to pursue their dream instead of abusing them, that would be able to reach to their dreams. As one suggested, *"The government does not help us. The government's people harmed us. The government knows what we go through, but they do not care."* Many more participants expressed their skepticism about any form of government help in realizing their dreams.

Participants expected the help of service providers (NGOs) in their journey toward realizing their dreams and ranked it as the second source of hope. There appeared to be trustworthy relationships between NGOs and children, and participants often spoke about them positively. Some compared the government and NGOs and suggested, *"They [NGOs] do not harm us. The government does."*

However, participants were well aware of the limitations of NGOs and suggested that their help is less than what they need. For instance, a participant shared, *"the other day brother and sister from NGOs gave us food. This was one meal. I know they cannot afford more. Besides, they cannot manage a safe shelter for us."* Others said, *"they give us something, but they cannot find a job for us."* There was also the suggestion that government and NGO could unite in helping the participants, and that both could work together to avoid overlap in services. A participant shared, *"Brothers and sisters [NGO] can run our school, but the government manage shelter for us."*

Other than these two entities, participants also hoped that the rich and certain members of their social networks might be helpful in pursuing career dreams. Some counted family members' commitment for allowing them to study and pursue their careers. However, a sense of pessimism was also evident in some responses as some participants shared that those dreams appeared to be beyond their reach.

Recommendations Overview

Informed by the needs of children and families and the input from stakeholders, we present streamlined recommendations guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child's 3 Ps model: Provision, Protection, and Participation. These suggestions aim to enhance current policies and programs without being exhaustive.

Policy Adjustments

- **Strengthening the Children's Act:** Amend sections III, IX, and X to improve child welfare board composition, enforce protections against child cruelty, and enhance alternative care provisions. Emphasize the implementation and accountability of these sections to prevent homelessness and ensure the safety of street-connected children. Ensure there is a budget and the rules attached are approved for smooth implementation.
- **Development of New Policies:** Initiate policies targeting the prevention and eradication of youth and family homelessness, with a focus on pre-emptive support for vulnerable families and addressing the unique challenges faced by single-parent households. This includes comprehensive case management systems down to the village level and connections to social protection as well as other supports.

Program Enhancements

- **Pre-migration Interventions:** Develop programs that address the root causes of street migration by providing resource distribution, family conflict resolution, educational support, and safety net connections for at-risk children and families.
- **Street-centered Services:** Increase funding for basic needs provision such as food, shelter, and healthcare for street-connected children. Implement a *"shelter first"* approach and establish child-friendly saving schemes to improve their quality of life. Outreach and working with the children where they are is key to ensuring long-term recovery and reintegration.
- **Harm Reduction and Recovery:** Introduce and culturally adapt harm reduction programs and recovery services for substance-using children. Engage peer networks for support and crisis intervention. Avoid institution-based services as they are known to cause harm.
- **Education and Skill Development:** Provide educational support and skills training tailored to the aspirations and needs of street-connected children. Implement preparatory schooling and integrate formal education with skill development initiatives to facilitate economic independence. Have an alternative learning pathway which allows for a catch-up program so those children on the street can complete school and have other life opportunities.
- **Family and Kin Reintegration:** Prioritize safe and supportive family reintegration efforts based on individual circumstances and consent. Implement interventions addressing the root causes of separation and ensure protective measures against future harm. This will require hundreds of outreach social workers to be working with the children on the street and connecting with their families to begin to bridge the gap between them and the streets.

- **Social Service Workforce Expansion and Extension:** All these programming priorities require an expansion and extension of the current social service workforce to focus on case management and risk mitigation for children and their families. This requires a professionalization of the workforce as well as case workers that do urban outreach and case workers that work in villages. Connecting and linking these most vulnerable children and families to services.

Broader Social and Systemic Interventions

- **Combatting Stigma:** Launch public awareness campaigns to educate and sensitize the community about the challenges faced by street-connected children.
- **Sexual and Reproductive Health:** Incorporate sexual and reproductive health in programs for children, parents, and educators, as well as education on the prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation, to reduce incidences and support survivors.
- **Reducing Official Violence:** Implement training and accountability measures for police and government officials to prevent violence against street-connected children. This includes increasing the number of CAPOs and allowing them to do outreach work too. Also ensuring traffic and tourist police in urban areas are including in the training.
- **Sector Collaboration:** Enhance cooperation among government, non-government, and international organizations to develop comprehensive child protection systems and expand service outreach. Suggestion and LCG meeting group of development partners with government. Enhancing referral pathways and strengthening partnerships across the sector and outside of emergencies.
- **Empowering Children:** Respect children's rights to self-determination in program and policy development, ensuring their needs and voices guide interventions.
- **Data Collection Improvements:** Refine poverty measurements to capture individual-level impacts, addressing the unique challenges faced by children. Invest in further research to understand the cost of not supporting these children who suffer from all the adverse childhood experiences.

These recommendations should be seen as actionable items, presenting a precise and professional outline of a path forward to improve the welfare of children and families in the most vulnerable situations, aligning with international child rights standards.

Conclusion

This study confronts the harsh realities faced by vulnerable children living and working in streets or public spaces, a situation that starkly contrasts with the protective and nurturing environment societies should offer as mandated by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Despite efforts from the Bangladesh government, non-governmental agencies, and UN organizations to mitigate hazardous conditions for these children, many continue to endure life on the fringes of urban society. This research aims to illuminate the conditions of street-connected children and propose pathways forward.

Our findings paint a grim picture of the adversities faced by these children, driven primarily by poverty, familial disorganization, and violence. The daily lives of these children are marked by hunger, lack of shelter, injury, and abuse, yet they display extraordinary resilience, contributing economically to their families and surviving against the odds. Their efforts to carve out livelihoods in the informal urban economy are often thwarted by fierce competition and the necessity to engage in dangerous work.

The study underscores the children's desire for basic needs fulfillment and their aspiration for a better future through government support and reintegration into family or kin care. However, it also acknowledges significant limitations, including the non-generalizability of findings due to the qualitative nature of the study and the challenges in gathering comprehensive data from young or traumatized participants.

The pressing question remains: ***How can we significantly improve the lives of these children, ensuring they are not condemned to a life of deprivation and unfulfilled potential?***

The study calls for a concerted effort from state actors, international bodies, and civil society to address both the immediate needs and long-term aspirations of street-connected children, ensuring a brighter future for this vulnerable segment of society.

Annexes

Annex I

Review of Literature

I. Definition and Population

Around the world, millions of young people fall within the ambiguous category of street-connected children (Seidel et al., 2018). The precise number of children who live, work, or spend most of their time on the streets is unknown. Globally, countries with high numbers of street-connected children struggle to protect the rights of these children through the provision of safety, food, shelter, and other crucial services (Motala & Smith, 2003).

Labels and typologies for street-connected children have evolved over time and across cultural, national, and practical contexts. There is no singular, established definition of the street-connected child. These labels and typologies serve a variety of purposes; some are less accurate and more stigmatizing than others. Labels and typologies have a direct influence on the measurement and assessment of children who work and/or live on the streets and, in turn, measurements and assessments affect attitudes, behaviors, policies, and programs targeting street-connected children. Social constructionist perspectives focus on the production of these categories and the functions they serve in particular times, places, and situations (Cosgrove, 1990).

Describing children who live and/or work on the streets using a single, global definition is challenging for a variety of reasons. The population is diverse and challenging to accurately track, particularly in countries with less extensive social infrastructure. Academic and humanitarian terms and definitions can lack cultural relevance and fail to alter social perceptions and practices on the ground. Despite the diversity of life experiences and needs among children in this category, projects aiming to measure and assess the needs of this group must utilize a specific definition. The unit of measurement and assessment of population characteristics is dependent on the definition and typology chosen by researchers and practitioners (de Moura, 2002; Lucchini & Stoecklin, 2020). De Benitez warns that alternative, deconstructivist definitions of street-connected children *"risk dispersing or 'silo-ing' knowledge and research of children's shared experiences both thematically and geographically"* (de Benitez, 2011, p. 10). At the same time, any label or typology risks homogenizing the group it describes. Placing a population under a label without critical attention to the group's diverse array of backgrounds, lifestyles, and needs inevitably produces insufficient political and programmatic interventions.

Definitions and measures vary dramatically across the literature, limiting the field's capacity to draw comparisons and conclusions across studies and national contexts. The plethora of terms used to classify street-connected children leads to inconsistent measurement and categorization of children across studies, institutions, and cultures. Global population estimates are thus highly varied and approximate. The number of children in street situations has most likely risen alongside global urbanization and population growth. Reaching an accurate understanding of the size and geographic distribution of street-connected children is needed, but the inhumane conditions of these children must remain the primary focus.

This report utilizes the term 'street-connected child,' defined by the UNHCR as *"a child for whom the street is a central reference point–one which plays a significant role in his/her everyday life and identity."* This term does not aim to evaluate the moral nature of the child's connections to the street,

instead framing these connections as sources of social relationships and methods of survival, coping, and identity development (UNHCHR, 2012). Social stigma and prejudice contribute to the maltreatment of street-connected children in interpersonal, community, and policy contexts. Because the term *'street children'* may inaccurately suggest that streetism is an inherent quality of this demographic, this review instead employs the more accurate term *"street-connected children."*

Labels, Stereotypes, and Social Exclusion

The relationship between labels and social exclusion of street-connected children remains an unsettled question. The UNHCHR identifies two primary stereotypes associated with children in street situations: the *'victim'* and the *'delinquent'* (UNHCHR, 2012; World Food Programme, 2001). These stereotypes arise often across literature on street-connected children and are common beliefs among the public. Both stereotypes assert a view of children as powerless, lacking rights and agency. Slurs and other negative labels arise from each of these stereotypes. Common epithets such as '*rag-picker'* and *'vagrant'* stem from the view of street-connected children as deviant delinquents.

These stereotypes motivate particular programmatic responses to street-connected children. While the victim stereotype is associated with a charity-oriented approach to intervention, the delinquent stereotype is associated with a repressive approach centered in punitive control of children who work or live on the streets. Influential agencies including United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) and the Human Rights Council argue that each of these approaches fail to prioritize the rights and interests of the child (Makofane, 2014; UNHCHR, 2012). Other analyses argue that newer definitions and approaches continue to interpret street-connected children as victims or delinquents despite attempts to depart from harmful stereotypes (de Moura, 2002; Lucchini & Stoecklin, 2020).

Other scholars and practitioners frame social exclusion and deviance as defining attributes of the social category of street children. The stigmatization of people who live on the streets may be in part a result of their visibility. Prejudicial attitudes toward poverty, lack of sanitation (whether real or perceived), a lack of parental figures, and deviation from other social norms produce conditions of social exclusion. Inversely, Lucchini and Stoecklin (2020) argue that street-connected children are *"children out of place"* who do not fit the social role of the child. As a result, they come to represent a variety of social and moral ills within the social imagination. Social exclusion severely limits children's access to basic rights and exposes them to social violence (de Moura, 2002; Fantahun & Taa, 2022; Julien, 2022; UNICEF, 2002).

'Street Child'

Humanitarian aid organizations originally created the term 'street child' as a comparatively humane categorical identifier for children who were otherwise labeled with slurs (Makofane, 2014). Beginning in the 1980s, this label referred to *"any girl or boy [...] for whom the street (in the broadest sense of the word, including unoccupied dwellings, wasteland, etc.) has become his or her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood, and who is inadequately protected, supervised or directed by responsible adults"* (Commission on Human Rights 1994). In the 1990s, *'street child'* was determined to hold negative and dehumanizing connotations. This development occurred in tandem with shifts in the understanding of children, including attention to children as full agential subjects and rights-holders. As a result, selected agencies and academics began use of the term *"children in street situations"* in an effort to problematize the child's context rather than the child themselves. General consensus emerged amongst those working in the realm of children's rights that *'street children'* is a socially constructed category (de Benitez, 2011; de Moura, 2002; UNHCHR, 2012).

Typologies

The ambiguous labels children *'on'* and 'of' the streets are frequently used to categorize street-connected children and distinguish between children with stronger and weaker ties to family. In its most commonly used form, this typology consists of three categories: children on the street, who work on the street and return to their family homes at night; children of the street, who live and work on the street with limited but still existing family ties; and abandoned children, who live entirely absent of family support and connection (UNICEF, 1986). Bhukuth and Jerome (2015) define children of the street as those who understand the street to be their home. Lusk (1992) altered this typology to include family-based street workers, independent street workers, *'children of the streets,'* and children of street families. Children of the streets, who maintain no contact with family and do not hold employment, make up a small portion of street-connected children. Although Lusk notes that street-connected children do not fit these categories as individuals, he recommends that they be operationalized to identify broad differences in need across categories. These terms remain in common global use today across many children's advocacy and service delivery organizations. De Moura (2002) argues that this typology inaccurately suggests a step-by-step process in which children move from one level to the next in a linear fashion. Others argue that the distinction between children *'on'* and *'of'* the streets is not particularly useful because it does not reflect the reality of children's lives (de Benitez, 2011). Hong and Ohno advocate for a typology based on factors that caused a child's migration to the streets as well as the child's present living situation, arguing that this would improve the efficacy of interventions (Hong & Ohno, 2005).

Street-Connected Children in Bangladesh

The number of children who live and/or work on the street in Bangladesh has likely increased across the past half-century as a result of inequality, population growth, urban migration, poverty, natural disasters, epidemics, and political instability. Several factors, including differences in methodology and definitions, contribute to inconsistent population estimates. In 2005, BIDS estimated the total population of street-connected children in Bangladesh to be 679,728. This same report suggests that Bangladesh's population of street-connected children has continued to steadily rise across the past decade, from 1.1 million in 2014 to an expected 1.56 million in 2024 (Atkinson-Sheppard, 2019; UNICEF, 2009; Wazed, 2010). Other sources estimate a current population range from as low as 380,000 to over one million (Barkat et al., 2012; Islam, 2015; Reza, 2016). With a rising general population and increasing urban migration, the conditions of street-connected children in Bangladesh have become a focus of global concern (Mia & Islam, 2021).

Within Bangladesh, a majority of street-connected children live in the city of Dhaka, with the cities of Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, and Sylhet also being home to significant numbers of street-connected children (Islam, 2015; UNICEF, 2009). Approximately half of street-connected children in Bangladesh are 10 years or younger and the remaining are between 11 and 19 years of age. Only one quarter of the total group is estimated to be female (Islam, 2015). 45 percent live with parents and 22 percent live alone (Uddin et al., 2014). These various groups require specialized programs that acknowledge their unique experiences and struggles.

The percentage of children engaged in work is similarly difficult to assess. Statistics vary dramatically across studies, but 10 to 44 percent of children in Bangladesh were estimated to be working as of 1998 (Banu et al., 1998). At the time, 10 percent of working children reported living in public or open spaces (Rahman, 1997). As rates of streetward migration rise in Bangladesh, accurate data is increasingly essential.

II. Migration

In recent decades, migration studies have paid increasing attention to the mobility of children and their migratory experiences (Van Blerk & Ansell, 2006). Understandings of child streetward migration are shaped by the theories of child agency researchers choose to adapt. The emergence of the study of street-connected children in the late 1980s produced two dominant theories of child streetward migration: the economic poverty hypothesis that children leave home due to familial poverty, and alternatively, the aberrant family hypothesis that abuse and violence at home motivate children to leave. Studies of child streetward migration remain in conversation with these initial frameworks identified more than three decades ago (Aptekar, 1988, 1994).

Studies and analyses from the perspective of the poverty hypothesis focus on the economic context of the family and the pressures poverty exerts on the family system (Ballet et al., 2013). Family economics are the most common reason for child street migration and parental abandonment across many studies both globally and within Bangladesh (Ahmed et al., 2011; Diriba, 2015; Foundation, 2018; Hai, 2014; Islam, 2015; Osmani & Hossain, 2020; Ward & Seager, 2010). Ward and Seager (2010) argue that while other factors exist, poverty is the root cause of South African children migrating to the street. Critics of this theory emphasize that only a small percentage of children living below Bangladesh's poverty line do migrate to the street. Street-connected children also do not solely come from impoverished families; in a survey of street-connected children in Dhaka, only 48 percent of children came from poor or severely poor households (Conticini & Hulme, 2007). Although poverty remains central to theories of child migration, support for the poverty hypothesis has decreased in recent decades as attention has shifted to an array of overlapping push and pull factors (Young, 2004).

The aberrant family hypothesis has been critiqued as an oversimplification of migratory processes. Further, *"most families of street-connected children have experienced persistent discrimination, poverty and social exclusion within societies where inequalities are high and/or growing"* (UNHCHR, 2012, p. 7). **Within individuals and populations, migration does not have singular causes. Instead, a confluence of factors pushes and pulls individuals, families, and groups to migrate.** Within the literature on street-connected children, the most common push factors are: violence, dysfunction, and breakdown within the family; economic forces as they relate to family dynamics; addiction and criminal involvement among family members; lack of access to basic needs for a variety of reasons; and broader sociological and environmental forces, including climate change, urbanization, and social exclusion. The street environment pulls children to migrate for diverse reasons, the most commonly cited being financial opportunities, a space of relief from the suffering children endure at home, freedom, pleasure, adventure, and modernity, and social connections with other street-connected children and adults (Ballet et al., 2013; Bhukuth & Jerome, 2015; Osmani & Hossain, 2020; Plummer et al., 2007; Reza, 2016).

Push Factors

Although the aberrant family hypothesis is not unilaterally supported, violence, dysfunction, and breakdown within the family are among the most common factors that push children to migrate streetward. These factors can include abuse, overly strict discipline, conflict, and neglect, as well as breakdowns in family structure, such as divorce, remarriage, and parental death and illness (Abdullah et al., 2014; Chimdessa, 2022; Diriba, 2015; Foundation, 2018; Hai, 2014; Kaiser & Sinanan, 2019; McAlpine et al., 2010; Shibeshi et al., 2013; UNICEF, 2002; Vameghi, Sajadi, et al., 2014; Ward & Seager, 2010; Young, 2004). Cultural practices can increase the risk of abuse and neglect, such as patriarchy, adultism, and the normalization of abuse (Bhukuth & Jerome, 2015). Within Bangladesh, cultural norms consider

physical punishment a primary component of childrearing that is in the interest of the child. Children may distinguish between violent punishments that are fair and those that are unfair, and children may have dissimilar understandings of similar punishments. Children who understand the violence enacted against them as unjust may be more likely to leave home to find a safer environment (Conticini & Hulme, 2007). Patriarchal polygamy can lead men to abandon wives and children, threatening the family unit's stability, livelihood, and social capital. Stepchildren are not understood to be equal to biological children and can be viewed by stepfathers as economic tools. Conversely, stepmothers may view stepchildren as threats to their biological children's economic wellbeing and future. Abuse and neglect of stepchildren is normalized, and they may therefore be provided insufficient food, healthcare, and education. Quantitative analyses may struggle to identify these overlapping causes of migration (Reza, 2016).

The interplay between economic forces and family dynamics can also create conditions that push children to leave the home environment or migrate to the street. When families are unable to provide sufficient resources for every family member, children are encouraged, directly or indirectly, to seek resources outside the home. Child streetward migration can often also be directly connected to the migration of parents for economic reasons (Foundation, 2018). Street-connected children are more likely to come from larger families with lower levels of education and literacy (Abdelgalil et al., 2004; Abdullah et al., 2014; Bhukuth & Jerome, 2015; Shibeshi et al., 2013; Vameghi, Sajadi, et al., 2014). In Lesotho and Malawi, children's migration was found to be a household strategy for meeting the needs of children in times of stress (Ansell & Van Blerk, 2004). Other scholars have found that insufficient resources due to poverty is one of several forces influencing children to migrate (Shibeshi et al., 2013). While the poverty hypothesis cannot fully explain the global influx of street-connected children in recent decades, poverty undoubtedly creates strain on households, and this can push children to seek resources outside the home.

Addiction, criminal involvement, and incarceration among family members is another common factor encouraging child streetward migration (Abdelgalil et al., 2004; Foundation, 2018; Vameghi, Rafiey, et al., 2014). Goodman et al. (2017) finds a positive correlation between childhood adversities of mothers and children's risk of migrating to the street, as well as mothers' schooling. Alcohol use, self-reported HIV status, low school enrollment, and low social support made this link stronger. Household contexts beyond poverty thus have a strong influence on children's likelihood of migrating to the street.

Other studies emphasize the influence of structural and sociological changes on migration, including neocolonialism as a cause of rural poverty, land capture, and a shift away from communal living. Children are particularly vulnerable to negative impacts of these broad transformations. Urbanization, climate change, and large-scale violence can threaten children's access to basic needs, making migration preferable (Chimdessa, 2022). In times of crisis, communities that historically raised children within extended kindship structures are no longer able to move children across networks of households within communities.

Urban migration may be a substitute response to household crises (Ansell & Van Blerk, 2004; Chimdessa, 2022; Gayapersad et al., 2020; UNICEF, 2002). Political, governmental, and social changes also impact migration (Young, 2004). In Vietnam, the destruction of social safety nets has led children to work in urban areas to support their families (Fern, 2006). Evaluations of child streetwarmigration that focus solely on family dynamics and ignore structural forces may produce insufficient interventions.

Pull Factors

Studies highlighting pull factors often emphasize the role of children's agency in migration processes and frame migration as a survival strategy. These studies argue that children and families are shaped by structural injustice and inequality, but that children do express agency and autonomy in their decisions to migrate to the street. While the Children's Rights framework treats children as passive victims, other scholars advocate for a framework that acknowledges the complexity of children's victimhood and agency, such as Klocker's *'thin'* and *'thick'* agency. Within this framework, child workers' agency is *'thinned'* by the dynamics that control and restrict children's available choices, such as age, gender, ability, and economic situation, but children do possess agency. They also note researchers' power to *'thicken'* children's agency through including them in participatory research processes. Rather than children's vulnerability dissolving their agency, vulnerability is viewed as the basis for human agency. Mizen & Ofosu-Kusi suggest that *"awareness of one's own vulnerability may itself constitute the basis for action"* (2013, p. 369).

Within this frame, children are unable to depend on their families and communities for a variety of reasons, and they respond by making the active decision to leave home. This is an act of agency and self-determination, but the choices available to them are significantly constrained. This framing clarifies the poverty hypothesis, which finds a direct causal link between poverty and the decision to leave home. Instead, children's paths to streetward migration are a complex interaction of the social roles children navigate, the constrained resources available to them, and awareness of their vulnerability (Bordonaro, 2011; de Benitez, 2011; Klocker, 2007; Mizen & Ofosu-Kusi, 2013; Young, 2004).

Children across the literature view migration as a solution to problems they experience at home. Several pull factors are commonly cited in global research.

- Families often send their children to urban areas to earn additional income. Children may also make independent choices to migrate to support themselves or their families (Bordonaro, 2011; Plummer et al., 2007; Shibeshi et al., 2013; Vameghi, Rafiey, et al., 2014)
- In migrating to the streets, children experiencing abuse or neglect can find relief from the suffering they experience at home, believing that they may be better able to survive on independently than in the family environment. For children in impoverished or high-conflict families, children can view streetward migration as a method of preserving the harmony of their household (Bhukuth & Jerome, 2015; Hai, 2014; Vameghi, Rafiey, et al., 2014)
- Many studies find that the street environment offers freedom, pleasure, adventure, modernity, and financial independence (Bhukuth & Jerome, 2015; Chimdessa, 2022; Plummer et al., 2007; Shibeshi et al., 2013)
- Children can also be pulled to life on the streets through preexisting social connections with other street-connected children or adults. Some children migrate with relatives, including adults or other children (Chimdessa, 2022; Foundation, 2018; Hai, 2014; Plummer et al., 2007; Shibeshi et al., 2013; World Food Programme, 2001)

Children and families seek to meet particular needs in migrating to the streets. Understanding and responding to these needs can improve the quality of programs, policies, and practices aimed at children in street situations.

Patterns of Migration

Streetward migration is not a linear process, and children can become more or less entrenched in street life as they age. The migration process is complex in part because it can be a child's attempt to escape a harmful home environment. Children interviewed in Hai (2014) did not want to return home because the problems that pushed them to the streets had not been solved. In seeking to understand child migration patterns, Bhukuth and Jerome (2015) focus on the factors that lead children *'on'* the street—those who return home at night—to become children *'of'* the street, who identify the street as their home. They argue that the factors leading children to become children on the street do not entirely overlap with those that lead children to increasingly cut off contact with their families. As they become socialized into stigmatized life and labor on the streets, their shame may increasingly prevent them from maintaining their relationships with their family.

Some children migrate directly to the street upon leaving home, while others seek alternate shelters, or ***transit environments,*** such as relatives' homes, NGOs, and other institutions that care for children. When these transit environments fail to provide sufficient safety and security, they may subsequently choose to migrate to the street (Conticini & Hulme, 2007).

Another model used to understand child streetward migration splits factors into two categories: indirect causes, referring to contextual factors that may make migration attractive, plausible, or likely, and direct causes, referring to immediate triggers of migration, often named by the child themselves as their reason for leaving home. While indirect causes may include low educational level of family members, school departure, large family size, or other such factors, direct causes are more likely to include child abuse at home or at work, pressure from friends or family members who have already migrated to the street, or a desire for freedom and pleasure. This typology accounts for the complexity of children's decision-making processes and highlights early indicators of migration, such as low school attendance (McAlpine et al., 2010; Vameghi, Sajadi, et al., 2014; World Food Programme, 2001).

This typology maps onto another common model of migration that identifies risk and protective factors, those respectively associated with an increased and decreased likelihood of migration. In a community-focused survey, Seidel et al. (2018) find that protective factors against child streetward migration in Kenya include positive parent-child relationships, parental monitoring, the promotion of responsibility, discipline, and work, healthy communication, and flexible parenting, gender, and domestic roles, while McAlpine et al. (2010) finds community cohesion to be a protective factor. This model highlights possibilities for intervention at individual, family, and community levels.

Studies often describe the impermanence of street-connected children's locations, micro-level migration, or the movements children make across cities. Many street-connected children's lives are typified by constant movement throughout the day or week. Children move to avoid police, social workers, or violent civilians; they also move to access work, safe places to sleep, or other resources (Blerk, 2005; Jones & de Benítez, 2009). Micro-level migration structures the lives of street-connected children and should be considered in the design of programs aimed at this group._

Gender Differences in Migration

Across international contexts, boys are more likely than girls to migrate. Although girls experience domestic sexual abuse at a higher rate than boys, they constitute a small percentage of street-connected children. There are several well-documented reasons for this disparity. Factors that tend to push boys

to migrate streetward are experienced differently among girls. Because of gendered differences in childrearing, girls must experience extremely severe situations in order to be pushed to migrate to the streets. Independence is encouraged among boys, while dependence is encouraged among girls. Families also control girls' behavior, movement, and social relationships more strictly than boys, making leaving less likely (Abdelgalil et al., 2004). Girls are taught to tolerate poverty within the home and seek support from relatives and other community members. In Ethiopia, girls are more harshly impacted by household poverty because their needs are not a priority; this may be true in other nations as well (Shibeshi et al., 2013). While girls are expected to engage in domestic work, boys are expected to earn wages outside of the home, so street work is more readily accessible for boys. It is also comparatively less culturally acceptable for girls to live on the street (Bhukuth & Jerome, 2015).

III. Livelihoods and Labor

There is a dearth of research evaluating the impacts of work and economic activities among street-connected children. Studies of street-connected children's livelihoods are entangled with theories of child agency and autonomy. In the field, there is an emerging focus on the resourcefulness children exhibit and a push to frame children's labor as *'careers.'* Critics warn that children do not have the level of autonomy the *'career'* label suggests and that this framing may exacerbate harms of child labor (de Benitez, 2011; Sorber et al., 2014). While child employment includes children in any kind of work, including informal work, child labor describes work that is demanding and that is carried out by children under the minimum working age, as well as particularly hazardous work. Child labor is understood to undermine children's social, psychological, physical, and educational development; not all work children engage in is included in the category of child labor. In 1996, 18.3 percent of children in Bangladesh were estimated to be involved in work (Rahman, 1997). As urbanization and climate change continue to create a higher demand for urban industrial and service labor, an increase in child labor in Bangladesh's cities is expected (Banu et al., 1998; Global Estimates of Child Labour: Results and Trends, 2012-2016, 2017).

The role street-connected children play in urban economies is another emerging focus within the literature. Children's work options are constrained, but they can make a wide spectrum of meanings out of the labor they perform. They can understand their work as forced labor, survival, opportunity, or as a career (de Benitez, 2011). Children must compete against adults in the labor market (Reza & Bromfield, 2018). As they age into adulthood, formal career opportunities become more limited. They struggle if they are unable to adapt to these changes (de Benitez, 2011).

Across the globe, children tend to engage in similar categories of street-based work. In Bangladesh in particular, the most common sources of livelihood are begging, domestic labor, collecting trash, hawking, and restaurant work, although jobs are diverse (Islam, 2015). In a survey of street-connected children in Rajshahi, Bangladesh, girls were vastly more likely to engage in domestic work, sex work, and laundry, while boys were comparatively more likely to engage in day labor, rickshaw peddling, political procession, smuggling, or mobile vending. Other sources of livelihood were similarly common among all children, such as factory work, restaurant work, garbage scavenging, wood fuel sales, and luggage transport (Osmani & Hossain, 2020). Children engaged in begging are especially likely to have a disability and are more likely to be young. About 20 percent of girls who are child beggars are married before the age of 18 (Barkat et al., 2012).

Children's incomes are affected by the high cost of living in an urban area, as well as the taxes or bribes required from ***mastaans,*** community leaders, police, and other adults in positions of power (Islam, 2015). In a study of street-connected children in Dhaka, 65 percent earned 100 BDT (.94 USD) or less per day (Islam, 2015).

Gender and Labor

Gender and patriarchy structure the labor and financial environment for street-connected children in Bangladesh as well as internationally (Sorber et al., 2014). Girls are vastly underrepresented in child labor statistics because the domestic work they engage in is invisibilized and devalued (Banu et al., 1998). In a survey of street-connected children in Bangladesh, girls reported paying disproportionally higher taxes than boys, with some girls being taxed of more than half of their income. Boys' taxes made up 30 to 50 percent of their income. Girls also had limited access to wage-based work in comparison to boys (Conticini, 2005). In a study of street-connected children in Kenya, girls were found to have lower daily income and fewer economic opportunities than boys, and earned less than boys for similar work (Sorber et al., 2014). Policies, programs, and practices must attend to these gender-based disparities.

Financial Management

Children in street situations engage in financial activities including cash management, savings, remittances, credit, and debt, learning how to participate in these activities after migrating to the streets. Peer networks are a core aspect of street-connected children's livelihoods. They provide support in managing children's precarious financial situations. System of reciprocal financial exchange within social networks serve as protective resources that allow children to survive despite the consistent hardships they face. In a study in Dhaka, children reported leaving their savings in the protection of money-guards whom they trusted, including friends, siblings, social workers, and others. Social ties and financial resources may also discourage children from engaging in harmful survival activities like substance use. Street-connected children may save less when they do not see a future for themselves or when they become chronically ill, suggesting that financial management is a sign of hope among children in street situations (Conticini, 2005; de Benitez, 2011; Reza & Bromfield, 2018).

Organized Crime and Illegal Work

Children become more likely to engage in illegal activities when they are excluded from mainstream society and deprived of basic needs. Adults, including ***mastaans*** and political parties, also manipulate children into carrying out illegal work (Sharmin & Disha, 2021). Because children who work or live on the street are defined as a social problem, policies are often aimed at *"[protecting] the society from antisocial children rather than protecting the children from societal violence"* (Sharmin & Disha, 2021, p. 44). Further, research struggles to accurately capture the portion of children involved in illegal work, primarily due to fear of punishment.

Prostitution is one of several categories of illegal work street-connected children are likely to carry out. Estimates of street-connected children engaged in sex work vary widely. According to de Benitez (2007) 50 to 75 percent of street-connected children globally are estimated to be engaged in sex work; however, Barkat et al. (2012) concluded that 10 percent of street-connected children in Bangladesh have been forced into prostitution. Child sex work is often categorically understood as a form of violence and exploitation. Child sex workers are particularly stigmatized and experience high levels of violence (de Benitez, 2007).

During periods of severe political instability, street-connection children are exploited into instigating violence. Children are vulnerable to this type of exploitation because they are forced to rely on economic systems maintained by adults. Though children may experience these patron-client relationships as communal or familial, Rahman et al. asserts that they are based in manipulation and control. Children

become involved in these violent activities not just because of financial rewards but also because of a need to maintain patron-client relationships (Rahman et al., 2018).

In Bangladesh, organized crime groups or ***mastaans*** are comprised of adults and children and engage in a variety of criminal activities including political violence, drug selling, extortion, illegal land grabbing, and sometimes contract killing. ***Mastaans*** often control access to basic services such as water, gas, and electricity, particularly in impoverished informal settlements. Through their monopoly on violence, they provide social protection and mobility to people in poverty, including children. Street children are the laborers of these groups. Atkinson-Sheppard (2017a) understands this phenomenon as a form of concurrent governance arising out of Bangladesh's rapid economic development. She develops the concept of *'protective agency,'* the active decisions children make to engage in social networks and behaviors that will allow them protection and safety. This idea accounts for the complex situation of street-connected children; they are not solely powerless victims, but they are particularly vulnerable to exploitation due to their physical and mental developmental stages. Street-connected children who are involved in organized crime experience their involvement as inevitable and necessary (Atkinson-Sheppard, 2017a, 2019; Rahman et al., 2018).

IV. Post-Migration Violence and Abuse

In studies of street-connected children globally, violence is present in almost all children's daily lives and relationships. Social and cultural norms permit the abuse and mistreatment of children in poverty, particularly children viewed as deviant (Chimdessa, 2022; Hills et al., 2016; Julien, 2008; Ribeiro & Trench Ciampone, 2001). Street-connected children in Bangladesh experience violence at alarming rates. Between 80 and 100 percent of street-connected children have experienced physical or sexual violence (Bromfield et al., 2023; Chowdhury et al., 2017; Sayem, 2011; Woan et al., 2013). Control, emotional violence, physical violence, and sexual violence are the four primary types of violent acts against children (Conticini & Hulme, 2007).

Stigma against street-connected children produces and legitimizes the structural and individual neglect and violence children experience. Civilians, police, and social service workers engage in stigmatization of and discrimination against street-connected children. Stigmatization occurs through a process of labelling, segregation, and association of the group with negative traits. This process results in discrimination that limits the rights, opportunities, and resources available to children, reproducing the disadvantages they experience. Gayapersad et al. (2020) argue that the stigmatization of street-connected children absolves government institutions of their failure to protect the wellbeing and rights of children. With a strong stigma and stereotype in place, the suffering children experience appears to be a result of their own misbehavior and irresponsibility rather than governmental neglect.

Sexual violence, harassment, and rape are commonly experienced by street-connected children, resulting in sexual and psychological trauma. Permitting sex can also be a means of survival and protection (Chimdessa, 2022; Kaiser & Sinanan, 2019). Although all genders experience sexual violence, rates are higher among girls (Sayem, 2011). Kaiser and Sinanan (2019) found that experiences of sexual violence often led girls toward sex work. Further, children who had been sexually abused were perceived as morally bad and treated as such (Kaiser & Sinanan, 2019).

Rather than providing protection from physical and sexual abuse, police regularly commit acts of violence against street-connected children, including theft, extortion, groundless arrest, physical assault, sexual

abuse, and rape (Ali et al., 2004; Kaiser & Sinanan, 2019). Studies attending to the relationship between street-connected children and police show that regular violence at the hands of law enforcement leads children to fear the police. This violence often occurs in public spaces with little objection or attention from onlookers. Bromfield et al. place the acceptance of public violence in historical context, arguing that *"State and institutional failures and broader cultural acceptance of corporal punishment can partially explain extensive police violence and abuse against street-connected adolescents in Bangladesh"* (2022, p. 10). Because children often were subject to assault and rape shortly after their arrival to Dhaka, it is possible that police intentionally target those who are unfamiliar with the street setting. Some police were also involved in child sex trafficking, using their power to force street-connected children into sex work. In these cases, police may have been collaborating with ***mastaans***. Within a study of all street-dwelling populations in Dhaka, children 18 years and younger were most frequently harassed by police and physically abused (Ahmed et al., 2011). Rather than protecting children, police are a source of danger and violence. The social exclusion of street-connected youth allows police to engage in this abuse. Their traits as children and as *'street people'* render street-connected children undeserving of protection within the social imagination (Bromfield et al., 2022).

Experiences of severe violence and abuse prior to migration have ongoing effects on the lives of street-connected children. Children in Conticini and Hulme (2007) experienced the highest frequency of violence within government institutions and on the streets, but violence was understood to be most intense within the homes the children had fled. As a result, they argue that the street environment should be understood not solely as a source of suffering and insecurity, but also as a haven for children who have experienced traumatic violence within the home and judged the street to be a safer place (Conticini & Hulme, 2007).

V. Health and Basic Needs

Street-connected children in Bangladesh experience high rates of illness and injury (Chowdhury et al., 2017; Hakim & Rahman, 2016; Islam, 2015). This is consistent with international studies as well (Cumber & Tsoka-Gwegweni, 2015). Health literacy also tends to be low among street-connected children in various national contexts (Amoah et al., 2017). Some researchers frame poor health outcomes among this group as a result of the abnormal social role to which street-connected children belong, which separates them from mainstream society and significantly heightens their exposure to disease. These cycles of disease, poverty, and violence perpetuate one another. Poor nutrition, exposure to waste and environmental pollution, substance use and addiction, lack of protection from rain, heat, and cold, lack of health care, and experiences of abuse and violence all play a role in the poverty-disease cycle (Abdullah et al., 2014; Hakim & Talukder, 2016).

Urban infrastructure and planning may play a role in the health outcomes of street-connected children. Lugalla and Mbwambo (1999) argue that many health and hygiene problems among street-connected children are a result of poor hygiene and cleanliness of public spaces, including public water sources and toilets. Other studies point to traffic and auto collisions as a source of injuries among street-connected children (Cumber & Tsoka-Gwegweni, 2015). Skin diseases, particularly scabies, are especially common, as living areas are overcrowded, sleeping areas are unhygienic, baths are often taken irregularly, and clothes cannot be laundered or changed frequently (Chowdhury et al., 2017).

One of the largest points of debate among researchers studying street-connected children's health is whether these children are worse off than their non-street connected peers of similar socioeconomic

status. Greksa et al. (2007) found energy reserves among full-time street-connected children to be significantly larger than in children who live with family in informal settlements. They hypothesize that children who are considering streetward migration may be more likely to choose to migrate to the streets alone if they are biologically fit. Dutta (2018) finds that children living with parents had better access to health care facilities than children living without parents.

Several studies find that street-connected children experience growth deficiencies, low self-esteem, and other signs of barriers in development (Julien, 2008; Ribeiro & Trench Ciampone, 2001). Deprivation from the attention and intimacy of a caregiver, particularly at a young age, can harm the development of a child's language skills, abstract reasoning, and personality. The relationship between a caregiver and a child deeply impacts a child's ability to develop a sense of basic trust, autonomy, independence, and industry (Ribeiro & Trench Ciampone, 2001).

Globally, street-connected children are at high risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV (Cumber & Tsoka-Gwegweni, 2015; Sohail et al., 2021; Uddin et al., 2014). Children engage in survival sex to protect themselves against violence and to earn money (Chowdhury et al., 2017; Sohail et al., 2021; Uddin et al., 2014). Sex can also act as a source of comfort, particularly for boys (Chowdhury et al., 2017; Motala & Smith, 2003). Bangladesh has a low national prevalence of HIV but is considered to have a high vulnerability to it. Rates have increased in recent decades (Uddin et al., 2014). In their survey of street-connected children in Dhaka, Uddin et al. (2014) found low levels of knowledge of disease transmission and condom use. Children who returned to their families has night had more limited knowledge about condoms in comparison to children who did not live with their families. Friendship through the sharing of blood, also called ***rokter bondhu*** or blood brotherhood, is a common practice among street-connected children in Bangladesh, which increases the chance of exposure and transmission of HIV and other blood-borne diseases (Uddin et al., 2014). Policies and programs aiming to decrease rates of infectious diseases among street-connected children must account for subcultural norms and structural constraints that lead to high rates of disease among this population.

Nutrition

It is clear that street-connected children have limited access to nutritious foods and nutritional knowledge. Malnutrition and its consequences are prevalent among street-connected children globally as well as in Bangladesh. In a 2016 study, 67 percent of children living or working on the streets were underweight and 73 percent suffered from chronic malnutrition (Hakim & Rahman, 2016). Studies primarily use stunting and wasting as indicators of nutrition status in children; few studies measure meal patterns or content (Greksa et al., 2017) Malnutrition among street-connected children presents a significant challenge. Worldwide, malnutrition is the foremost contributor to child mortality, and poverty is the primary determinant of malnutrition.

Street-connected children lack access to safe drinking water, nutritious foods, shelter, and hygiene tools and practices (Hakim & Talukder, 2016). In a comparison of the diets of children who spend all their time on the street and those who return to family at night, the former were more likely to have irregular meal patterns (Greksa et al., 2017). Stunting is an indicator of other health and nutritional problems and is associated with lower education outcomes and lifetime earning potential. It also increases children's risk of non-communicable diseases and increases health care costs. Stunting (low height for age) and wasting were critical problems in Mulu et al. (2022). Age, loss of appetite, and substance use all corresponded with stunting. Stunting was twice as common in children who used substances. Substances are often appetite suppressants and less expensive than regular food. Wasting is negatively associated with childhood neuroanatomical, behavioral, and emotional development (Mulu et al., 2022).

Existing research pays significant attention to the nutrition and food access of street-connected children; however, few studies provide comparisons between street-connected children and non-street-connected children of similar socioeconomic groups. Some scholars argue that street-connected children are at heightened risk of malnourishment, while others argue they have comparable or superior health status to their peers in the same socioeconomic group (Ali et al., 2004). In their comparative study, Ali et al. (2004) found that street-connected children in Pakistan experienced higher rates of stunting, but similar or lower rates of wasting in comparison to non-street-connected children. They hypothesize that children who must rely on themselves may have greater access to food than children who rely solely on caregivers to access food. Greksa et al. (2017) similarly supports the theory that street-connected children are not at comparatively higher risk of biological and psychological harm than other children in the same socioeconomic class, proposing that children who have the skills to manage street life are also more likely to make the decision to migrate to the streets.

Mental Health

Across global literature on street-connected children, mentions of trauma, mental illness, and psychosocial disorders are frequent. Intensive analyses of the mental health of this demographic, however, are uncommon (Cumber & Tsoka-Gwegweni, 2015; Hills et al., 2016; UNICEF, 2009).

Mental health interventions are rarely discussed. In a systematic review of international literature, Watters and O'Callaghan (2016) found only five articles empirically evaluating mental health and psychosocial interventions for street-connected children and adolescents in low- and middle-income countries. Rehabilitation programs that do not attend to mental health and psycho-social wellbeing are associated with higher drop-out rates (Taylor et al., 2019).

Substance Use

Street-connected children use substances at high rates, negatively impacting physical health and cognitive development (Hakim & Talukder, 2016). In Islam et al. (2013), 28 percent of survey respondents reported having a drug addiction. Tobacco, cannabis, dendrite or glue, and alcohol are the substances most frequently used by children in street situations (Islam, 2015; Masud et al., 2018). Substance-related terms are defined and used inconsistently across studies of street-connected children. *'Addiction'* and 'use' are often used interchangeably, resulting in imprecise assessments of the popularity of drugs and the prevalence of addiction among children in street situations. While risky substance use can indicate future or present addiction, children experiencing addiction require additional support and treatment (Wittchen et al., 2008).

Street-connected children engage in substance use for a variety of reasons. Some researchers apply the protective and risk factor framework to understand how and why some children come to use and abuse substances while others do not (Oppong Asante, 2016). Children often engage in substance use to cope with the suffering they experience in daily life. Sniffing glue and other common illicit substances can reduce feelings of extreme hunger, cold, and physical and mental pain (Motala & Smith, 2003). Substances are also used as a tool of socialization. The vast majority of children (88 percent) in Masud et al. (2018) began using substances through initiation into street-based peer groups. In the same study, 70 percent of participants hoped to cease their use of substances, suggesting that there may be demand for drug cessation programs. Substance use may also be a risk factor for other behaviors that threaten quality of life, such as risky sexual behavior (Oppong Asante et al., 2014).

Shelter and Sleep

Street-connected children are found to lack access to clean, stable, and protected sleeping arrangements within Bangladesh as well as globally (Hakim &Talukder, 2016). In low- and middle-income countries, insufficient shelter is associated with disproportionate morbidity as a result of infectious illness, psychiatric disease, reproductive health, and growth (Woan et al., 2013).

The most common areas in which children sleep are streets, slums, parks, and transit stations (Chowdhury et al., 2017; Development, 2003; Islam, 2015). In a 2015 survey of street-connected children in Dhaka, less than 6 percent reported sleeping in shelters. Kaiser and Sinanan (2019) note that shelters provided some protection from abuse and harassment unsheltered children experienced, but also reported rumors that shelter homes commit violence against children, including forced conversation to Christianity. In a comprehensive 2003 survey, approximately three-quarters of street-connected children in Bangladesh considered the location where they currently slept to be their permanent sleeping location (Development, 2003). When children decide to sleep in a new location, this was most commonly due to orders from security guards, police harassment, or a general lack of safety. A majority of street-connected children report sleeping alongside other children for safety, while others sleep with family members (Barkat et al., 2012; Development, 2003; Islam, 2015).

VI. Education

Globally and within Bangladesh, street-connected children are excluded from mainstream education systems, often because schooling requires funds and prevents children from participating in IGAs (Datta & Banik, 2014). Rates of formal education among street-connected children tend to be lower than the general population (Chowdhury et al., 2017). Education may have a positive correlation with successful community or family reintegration. In Harris et al. (2011), prior formal education was a predictor of successful community reintegration. Children in a study in Turkey reported received the largest amount of social support from their schoolmates. Many children worked during school time, but they did not want to leave school entirely because of these relationships (Sevinç et al., 2020).

Studies focusing on street-connected children's interactions with schooling tend to investigate individual programs or cases in lieu of proposing broadly applicable theories or models (de Benitez, 2011).

VII. Social Networks

Contrary to the perception that street-connected children are individual, solitary actors, a growing body of literature highlights their group life and the structures and functions of their social networks. The social relationships of street-connected children were first examined in Aptekar's 1988 ethnography ***Street Children of Cali,*** where Aptekar describes the economic and psychological purposes social networks serve. In the decades following Aptekar's work, consensus has emerged that social relationships play a fundamental role in the daily experiences and survival of street-connected children. These relational networks are often referred to and experienced as family, with scholars applying terms such as fictive kin, surrogate family, or street family to street-connected children's peer relationships (Aptekar, 1988; Reza, 2017; Smith, 2008; Webster, 2011). Street-based social relationships can also pull children to migrate streetward. In some cases, connections among current street children begin developing prior to more permanent streetward migration. This can be a gradual process in which they slowly transition from spending nights at home to spending nights on the street (Aptekar, 1988; Beazley, 2003; Chimdessa, 2022; Foundation, 2018; Hai, 2014; Plummer et al., 2007; Shibeshi et al., 2013; World Food Programme, 2001).

Peer networks of street-connected children take diverse forms across the globe, but they share common patterns. Many studies make note of how subcultural capital and hierarchies structure their social networks. These analyses build on the broader concept of cultural capital, *"a system of social relationships, networks, connections, obligations and identities, which provide support and access to resources"* (Stephenson, 2001, p. 534). Particular children may hold more social capital in networks by virtue of their experiences, intelligence, self-sufficiency, and access to resources. Developing and maintaining subcultural capital allows children to access higher ranks within networks. To earn membership in a network, a child must demonstrate that they are *'streetwise'* and understand and share the group's norms and values (Beazley, 2003; Webster, 2011). Processes of social control also may be present in street children's social networks. Several studies document the process through which networks determine or revoke membership. Children can be pushed out of their network if they are deemed to not fit in with the group's norms, values, or expectations of behavior (Beazley, 2003; Conticini, 2005; Hasan Reza & Henly, 2018).

Patriarchal preferences and the broader social contexts structuring girls' behavior play a distinct role in shaping group membership. In Indonesia, girls were purposefully excluded from street networks; in India, the most visible networks were made up of boys, for whom it was safer to move throughout the streets and develop relationships; in Bangladesh, girls were less mobile than boys and felt most comfortable with people they already knew. Girls' peer support methods may be limited in comparison to boys' because they have fewer resources and because public visibility is likely to expose them to harassment or danger. As a result, girls have been found to provide more emotional and counseling-based rather than play- or food-based support to friends. In general, studies of street children's social networks tend to focus on boys' relationships because girls are less likely to be included as members and less likely to be accessible to researchers (Beazley, 2003; Conticini, 2005; Reza, 2017; Smith, 2008; Webster, 2011).

Social Networks & Needs Fulfillment

Recent studies have emphasized the function social relationships play in street-connected children's resilience in response to hardship and deprivation. Atkinson-Sheppard (2017) develops the concept of *'protective agency,'* the active decisions children make to engage in social networks and behaviors that will allow them protection and safety.

Street-connected children provide and receive support through their social networks in a multitude of ways. In Reza (2017), the most common form of peer support was sharing information about situations or people who may be dangerous, such as warning their peer networks when law enforcement will be arriving to arrest street children. Reza & Henly's 2018 study of street children in health crises found that sick or injured street children received life-saving support from their close friends and networks. Many authors note that street children's social connections are a crucial determinant of their ability to successfully transition through adolescence and into adulthood (Aptekar, 1988; Atkinson-Sheppard, 2017b; Jones et al., 2008). Taking advantage of relationships with powerful or reputable individuals can allow them access to jobs in childhood and in the transition to adulthood. Peer networks can act as a source of stability, particularly when other forms of support are insufficient.

Street-connected children also gain physical safety from being part of a network. Among marginalized groups in general, *"[s]ecurity networks emerge because individuals lack resources, and need to help one another in the struggle for everyday survival"* (Beazley, 2003, p. 118). By sleeping and transiting in groups, children receive some security against potential abuse and exploitation. The majority of children in Reza (2017) reported sleeping next to a friend at night, which served to protect them from being robbed or pickpocketed.

Another crucial way social networks of street-connected children provide support to one another is through responding to one another's emotional needs. In the aftermath of difficult or traumatic events, the children listened to and comforted one other, validated one another's feelings, bought food for one another, and invited one another to play (Beazley, 2003; Reza, 2017; Reza & Henly, 2018; Webster, 2011). Street-connected children in Dhaka identified *"feelings of love and trusted friends"* and *"cooperation"* as some of the most important aspects of their lives (Conticini, 2005, p. 73).

While social networks are a vital source of needs-fulfillment, the vulnerable conditions of street children can make them susceptible to involvement in organized crime. Children become involved in organized crime primarily for the purpose of gaining protection and social mobility. Relationships within criminal organizations can often be experienced as familial, with younger members performing tasks for older members in order to receive protection and support in return (Atkinson-Sheppard, 2017b, 2019).

Street-connected Children Networks and Adults

Street children's networks are generally separate from adult street-dwellers' networks, although children may maintain some relationship to adults in their lives. Many children in Webster (2011) had biological family relationships that were abusive or neglectful. They found alternative emotional and problem-solving support within their peer networks (Webster, 2011). Forming these networks may also allow children to protest mistreatment received from adults. Reza (2017) finds that children would sometimes demand better treatment by complaining to an adult's superiors. With support from peers, these protests could be successful. Another method was to report the experience of exploitation to a powerful member of their social network who had the ability to seek justice against the perpetrator on behalf of the child. Street children use their social networks as a tool to navigate a world dominated by adults.

VIII. Aspirations

Limited attention is paid to the topic of street-connected children's aspirations or hopes for the future. The priorities of street-connected children are likely shaped by their unmet basic needs; they may be unable to consider their education and future because their circumstances require that they remain focused on their present. In Barkat et al. (2012)'s survey of child beggars in Bangladesh, 41 percent of respondents reported satisfaction with their profession of begging; this may reveal the limited scope of possibility presented to children in street situations. In an assessment of the life priorities of children in Tanzania, Nalkur (2009) Street-connected children most highly prioritized *"obtaining good advice from adults," "having a dependable place to sleep,"* and *"having time for enjoyable activities."* Formerly street-connected children and non-street-connected children placed education as their highest priority. Within the study, the priorities of former street-connected children were similar to those of non-street-connected children within only one year of rehabilitative care.

IX. Policies and Programs

Current Policies and Programs

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 was a milestone in recognizing the human and fundamental rights of children. It advocates a holistic approach to the protection and wellbeing of children, and focuses particularly on states' responsibility to protect the rights of disadvantaged and vulnerable children (Manjengwa et al., 2016). The Convention engendered collaboration among UN bodies, non-governmental organizations, and government agencies to improve programs protecting

children. Countries subsequently formulated laws or modified laws to ensure children's rights and welfare after ratifying the convention. The government of Bangladesh ratified the Convention in 1990.

In a step toward implementing the Convention in practice, the government of Bangladesh formulated the National Child Development Policy 1994, amended and renamed the National Child Policy in 2011. This policy took some major decisions for the development and wellbeing of the children in health and nutrition, education, reducing child labor, psychological and cultural development, children's legal rights, and children who are abandoned, orphan, disadvantaged, and homeless. This policy incorporated fundamental principles of international conventions on child rights and wellbeing, protecting children from abuse and discrimination, eliminating child labor, and listening to the voices of children. The policy also contained preventative aspects, including extending social safety net and rehabilitation programs and offering additional benefits for families in poverty. In addition, Bangladesh also formulated the National Child Labor Elimination Policy 2010 to protect children from all forms of child labor, including hazardous and worst forms of child labor. The Constitution of Bangladesh incorporated some principles and directive guidelines for child rights and welfare in Bangladesh. The Bangladesh Labor Act 2006, The Children Act 2013, The Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act 2012, Suppression of Violence against Women and Children Act 2000 and other laws were formulated to protect the children from violence and abuse and ensure their rights and wellbeing.

Broadly, social protection programs that support families in meeting the needs of children act as preventative measures against child streetward migration. The government and UNDP jointly undertook a project named ARISE (Appropriate Resources for Improving Street Children's Environment) in 1999 to serve street-connected children. Later, PCAR project was implemented by the DSS and AB with the support of UNICEF to fulfil the crucial needs of street-connected children. Specific programs and services offered to the street children include outreach, shelter and housing, drop-in-centers, family reunification, community reintegration, education and training, and food and health services (Ward & Seager, 2010). In 2011, the list of NGOs providing direct services to street children included six drop-in centers, seven night shelters, seven hostels, four open schools, four vocational training centers, and two drug rehabilitation centers (Ahmed et al., 2011).

Rehabilitation centers run by government and non-government organizations use police and civilians as informants to learn of children who have newly arrived on the streets or have no place to live, and thus bring the children to rehabilitation centers. Within these centers, children are provided meals, education, and sleeping areas, and are able to take showers, watch television, and enjoy other available facilities in the centers. four stages of non-formal education before getting admission in formal educational institutions. Children may also receive technical and vocational education in different trades through collaborations with outside institutions such as Trust Technical Training Institute, UCEP, and MoWCA, allowing them to sustainably and safely support themselves after leaving the rehabilitation center (Jahan, 2019).

Program Coverage

The majority of street-connected children in Bangladesh remain outside the coverage of GO/NGO services. Currently, there are two rehabilitation centers in Dhaka, one at Karwan Bazar and another in the area of Kamalapur. Approximately 250 street children utilize the services offered by these two organizations annually (Jahan, 2019).

Challenges and Barriers

Along with government services and programs, NGOs in Bangladesh play a significant role in delivering services to meet the needs of the street-connected children; however, they struggle to utilize their full capacity and fail to access the majority of their highly mobile service population (Kaiser & Sinanan, 2019). The most difficult challenges care workers face is to convince the children to stay in rehabilitation centers and consistently engage with services offered. Children often leave rehabilitation centers in favor of returning to the streets, where they may enjoy greater freedom, familiar peer networks. Children who use or are addicted to illicit substances may also find street life less favorable than the highly controlled environment of rehabilitation centers. Further, remaining in a rehabilitation center can restrict a child's ability to earn an income. In response to the challenges of persuading children to remain in rehabilitation centers, social workers engage children in motivational counseling. They avoid the use of force in preventing children from returning to the streets. Long-term counseling is needed to keep the children at rehabilitation centers (Jahan, 2019).

Evaluation of Programs

There are no national evaluations assessing ongoing social welfare services and programs run by the government of Bangladesh for street-connected children.

Psycho-social interventions using a residential approach in different low- and middle-income countries were found to successfully aid the reintegration of street children into their communities. Resilience and emotional regulation training, forensic offender rehabilitation narrative exposure therapy and psychodrama helped improve psychological wellbeing, emotional regulations, and reduce self-reported offenses and PSTD (Watters & O'Callaghan, 2016). But the family reunification program is largely unsuccessful (Ward & Seager, 2010).

Annex II

Extended Methodologies

Study Design

The study utilized a qualitative approach. Usually, a qualitative approach is preferred for a study that delves into a complex phenomenon such as street-living children's life experiences and service needs. Since the study required insights and experiences of multiple stakeholders with the goal of developing policies and programs, the application of the qualitative approach best suits this study.

Geographic Coverage

Eleven existing administrative divisions of the country and all city corporations will be included; however, a priority focus will be on the city of Dhaka, the hub of most street-connected children in the country (see attached)

Sample Categories and Definitions

Nine groups of stakeholders comprised the sample. Some variations across certain stakeholder categories were included. The following definitions were used as inclusion and exclusion criteria for the sample:

Street-connected children: Children and adolescents who are 5-17 years old and spend considerable amounts of time on the street, use the street or similar public spaces for livelihoods and may or may not go to adults' care at night.

Friends and Survival groups (children): Apart from the regular group of street-connected children, a diverse group of street-working and street-living children — including children with disabilities, children who use drugs and/or alcohol, and children in conflict with the law — will be part of this group.

Families of street-connected children: Both biological and stepparents, relatives, and caregivers of street-connected children.

Street families: Families with children who do not have a permanent residence and primarily live on the pavement of the street or public places in makeshift shelters.

Former street-connected children: Adults between 18-25 years of age who previously lived and/or worked on the street. They should have at least a regular source of income and shelter off the street.

Successfully reintegrated children: Former street-connected children who have been reunited with the family or placed into institutional care.

Unsuccessfully reintegrated children: Current street-connected children who returned to the family, caregivers, or institution for a brief period of time and returned to the street upon unsuccessful integration.

Street brokers: Adults who actively influence children's lives through social contact, employing children in businesses or other economic activities and engaging them in legal or illegal activities.

Government officials: Employees of the Government of Bangladesh who are currently or potentially

engaged in developing, implementing, and evaluating policies and programs for street-connected children.

UN Organizations: Members of the UN agencies who are currently or potentially engaged in developing, implementing, and evaluating policies and programs for street-connected children. A total of 3 representatives of UN organizations participated in the study.

NGO Partners: Members of nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) who are engaged in developing, implementing, evaluating, and advocating for policies and programs for street-connected children.

Sample Identification and Recruitment

Children and adolescents 6-17 years of age living and/or working on the streets as well as caregivers of children 0-4 years of age living and/or working on the streets were recruited through NGOs (street outreach programs/shelters), DSS (Child Protection Service Hubs), and DWAs (drop-in centers). Key informant interviewees were purposively selected to include officials and service providers who have policy-level and on-the-ground viewpoints. Details of how each sample group was identified and recruited are discussed below:

Sample Identification and Recruitment

Children and adolescents aged 5-17 years who lived and/or worked on the streets, as well as caregivers of children aged 0-4 years in similar circumstances, were recruited through NGOs (street outreach programs/shelters), DSS (Child Protection Service Hubs), and DWAs (drop-in centers). The methodology for identifying key informant interviewees was purposive, as it was deemed critical to collect data from officials and providers with policy-level and on-the-ground service provider viewpoints. Details of how each sample group was identified and recruited are discussed below:

Target Group	Number and Geographical Coverage	Sampling/Recruitment Procedure
6–17-year-old children living and/or working on the street.	Total: 174 participants Dhaka = 43 Chittagong = 26 Sylhet = 25 Khulna = 22 Rajshahi = 25 Mymensingh = 5 Cumilla = 5 Narayanganj = 7 Gazipur = 6 Rangpur = 5 Barishal = 5	A purposive sampling process was employed to recruit participants from this group. Each city has major hubs where street-connected children are concentrated. UNICEF's child protection officers and social workers from each city corporation were involved in the recruitment process. Social workers who run various activities as part of the street outreach program were the initial bridge between data collectors and children. If social workers were not available, nonprofit agencies (NGOs) that operate in the city was a go to place. The Department of Social Service of the Government of Bangladesh helped compile the list of NGOs in each area. The department's office outreach workers were also involved in the recruitment process. Two strategies were employed to recruit children for the interview: a) some children were purposively selected and *'hand-picked';* and b) a snowball technique was used where the first effort was not effective. Both strategies were employed to meet the pre-defined criteria of a cross- sectional sample (i.e., age, sex, location).

Target Group	Number and Geographical Coverage	Sampling/Recruitment Procedure
Friends' and survival groups (FGD).	Total: 52 participants Dhaka = 26 Chittagong = 6 Sylhet = 4 Khulna = 4 Rajshahi = 4 Narayanganj = 4 Gazipur = 4 Total: 52 [Friends' groups were comprised of regular, substance abusers, and gang-involved children. Five major hubs (Kamlapur, Sadarghat, Airport, Mirpur, Gabtoli/Aminbazar/Dhaka University area) were selected from Dhaka, including at least two female groups. Other cities were Chittagong, Sylhet, Rajshahi, Khulna, and two other city corporations. Each group comprised 3-4 kids. Two special groups of kids- children with disabilities and sex workers – were included.]	Several strategies were employed to recruit this diverse group of participants. *'Regular'* street-connected children were recruited from Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet, Rajshahi, and Khulna city. Presumably, Dhaka and Chittagong had the largest concentration of street-connected children, *"female groups"* and *"children with disabilities groups"* were specifically recruited from Dhaka and Chittagong. Major hubs in each city were identified through consultations with governmental (GO) social workers and non-governmental organization (NGO) outreach workers. Data collectors visited outreach programs and invited children to participate. Groups of substance users (addicted children) and *"gang-involved"* children were recruited after consulting with outreach workers. Outreach workers, familiar with individual children, recommend those who met the sample criteria.
Families (mothers/ stepmothers/ father/ stepfathers)/ caregivers of street-connected children.	Total: 96 participants Mothers: 75 Dhaka = 35 Barishal = 4 Chittagong = 4 Sylhet = 4 Khulna = 4 Rajshahi = 4 Gazipur = 5 Narayangangj = 3 Cumilla = 4 Rangpur = 4 Mymensingh = 4 Fathers: 21 Dhaka = 11 Barisha = 1 Chittagong = 1 Sylhet = 1 Khulna = 1 Rajshahi = 1 Gazipur = 1 Narayangangj = 1 Cumilla = 1 Rangpur = 1 Mymensingh = 1	A two-fold strategy were employed to recruit parents/caregivers of street-connected children. At first, efforts were made to recruit parents of children who participated in in- depth interviews. Data collectors along with social workers reached out to parents/ caregivers and invited them to participate. Participating children were consulted before their parents/caregivers were invited for participation. When the desired number of samples were not obtained, a second strategy was applied to recruit the rest. Social workers/ NGO outreach workers were consulted to identify parents whose children had left home for street-based work. Once parents fitting the sampling criteria were identified, they were invited to be interviewed. This process continued until we reached the target.

Target Group	Number and Geographical Coverage	Sampling/Recruitment Procedure
Former street-connected children, now aged 18-25 years. Successfully and unsuccessfully reintegrated street-connected children, aged 11-17 years .	Total: 10 + 22 = 32 participants Former street-connected children, now aged 18-25 years. Dhaka = 2 Barisha = 1 Chittagong = 1 Sylhet = 1 Khulna = 1 Rajshahi = 1 Gazipur = 1 Cumilla = 1 Rangpur = 1 Successfully and unsuccessfully reintegrated street-connected children, aged 11-17 years. Total 10 participants Dhaka = 5 Barisha = 2 Chittagong = 2 Sylhet = 2 Khulna = 1 Rajshahi = 2 Gazipur = 1 Narayangangj = 1 Cumilla = 2 Rangpur = 1 Mymensingh = 3 Total: 22 participants	The study included *"former street-connected children aged 18-25"* and *"successfully and unsuccessfully reintegrated street-connected children aged 11-17"* in two phases: i) identification of the former street-connected children population; and ii) recruitment. Identifying adults who had previously been street-connected children posed a challenge due to the absence of clear markers distinguishing them from other vulnerable youth groups. Two approaches were considered to identify former street-connected children. First, data collectors consulted experienced and long-serving outreach workers from both governmental organizations (GOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) familiar with their whereabouts. Second, recruiters also searched for them in informal hubs where some were engaged. To identify successfully or unsuccessfully reintegrated street-connected children, data collectors relied on social workers/ outreach workers from the Department of Social Services (DSS) and NGOs. The official reintegration process, involving service agencies and law-enforcing agencies before returning a child to the family, left a sufficient paper trail for identifying former street-connected children. Names were collected from each city, and data collectors traveled to the homes of children, inviting them to participate. Children who did not reintegrate into their families and returned to the streets were identified through outreach workers and subsequently recruited.
Street brokers	Total = 34 participants Dhaka = 8 Barisha = 3 Chittagong = 3 Sylhet = 3 Khulna = 3 Rajshahi = 3 Gazipur = 1 Narayangangj = 2 Cumilla = 3 Rangpur = 2 Mymensingh = 3	Social workers/outreach workers from DSS and NGOs, other influential actors (e.g., officials, porter leaders), and, most importantly, local police (i.e., railway police, police serving in market areas) were consulted to identify this group. They were approached by data collectors for participation. Support from social workers/outreach workers played a crucial role in recruiting both groups of brokers.

Target Group	Number and Geographical Coverage	Sampling/Recruitment Procedure
Government officials, NGO partners, UNICEF, ILO and other stakeholders.	Total = 99 participants • Department of Social Services (DSS) (5 officials) 1. Director General 2. National Project Director 3. Assistant Project Director, 4. Director, Institute 5. Manager, Bangladesh Child Helpline-1098 • Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (3 officials) 1. Project Director, APC 2. Program officer(DWA) 3. Asst. Program Officer(DWA) • Sheikh Rasel Child Training and Rehabilitation Centre (SRCTRC) (6 officials) 1. Social Worker, SRCTRC(chittagong) 2. Deputy Project Director, SRCTRC (Sylhet) 3. Case manager, SRCTRC(Rajshahi) 4. Case Management Officer,(Dhaka) 5. Deputy Project Director, SRCTRC(Barishal) 6. Probation Officer(khulna) City Corporation (CC): (33 officials) 1. Chief Executive Officer, DNCC(representative of mayor) 2. Chief Health Officer, DSCC(representative of mayor) 3. 1 Slum Development Officers from DNCC and 1 Assistant Inspector from DSCC 4. Mayors were not available, the CC's focal person who deals with children's issues were interviewed)-5 • Chief Executive Officer, Sylhet City Corporation • Chief Executive Officer, Rajshahi City Corporation • Chief planning officer, Khulna city corporation	Government officials were recruited through departmental processes. In the process of selecting officials, efforts were made to recruit individuals who either worked regularly with street-connected children or possessed policy knowledge for designing policies and programs related to this demographic. A particular challenge arose when recruiting mayors from each city corporation. Due to their busy schedules, not all mayors were available for interviews. As a workaround, deputy mayors and equivalent officials were recruited.

Target Group	Number and Geographical Coverage	Sampling/Recruitment Procedure
	• Project Deputy Director, Chittagong city corporation • Assistant Deputy Director, Barishal city corporation 5. Social workers-24 <u>Other officials (Government and other) (total = 14 individuals)</u> Railway: (7 officials) 1. Station Manager Kamlapur train station 2. DSTE, Bangladesh Railway 3. Station Manager Narayanganj train station 4. Railway Manager, Sylhet 5. Station Master, Rajshahi 6. Junior station master, Bangladesh railway, Khulna 7. Assistant Station Master, Chittaganj Railway Station **Port: (4 officials)** 1. Director, Port and Transport (BIWTA) 2. Assistant Manager, BIWTA, Chittagong 3. Transportation Inspector, BIWTA, Barishal 4. Project Assistant, River Port, Narayanganj **Bus Terminal: (3 officials)** 1. HR, Jatri Kollan Somity, Mohakhali Bus Terminal, 2. Bus authority, Sayedabad Terminal 3. Terminal In charge, Bus authority, Gabtoli, Dhaka	
	Police/security (24 officials) 1. Additional Police Commissioner 2. Sub Inspector, Motijhil thana 3. Sub Inspector, Kotwali thana 4. Constable, Kotwali thana 5. Sub Inspector, Paltan Model Thana 6. Constable, Poltan Model Thana 7. SI, Mirpur Model Thana 8. SI, Ramna Thana 9. Constable, Rajshahi Railway Police Station 10. SI, Shah Makdum thana, Rajshahi 11. Constable, Shah Makdum thana, Rajshahi	

Target Group	Number and Geographical Coverage	Sampling/Recruitment Procedure
	12. SI, Victim support center 13. SI, Khulna sadar thana 14. SI, Sonadanga thana, Khulna 15. SI, Kotwali thana, Sylhet 16. Constable, Kotwali thana, Sylhet 17. SI, Airport Thana (Shapna Chowdhury) 18. SI, Airport Thana(Sharmin Akter) 19. Constable, Chittagong Railway Thana 20. SI, Chittagong Railway Thana 21. Constable, Chittagong Railway Thana 22. SI, Kotwali thana, Barishal(M.A.K Ruma) 23. SI, Kotwali thana, Barishal(Nishad Sultana) 24. SI, Kotwali thana, Barisha(Monira)	
	Nonprofit (11 officials) 1. Executive Director, Aparejeyo Bangladesh 2. Project Manager, Aparejeyo Bangladesh 3. Human Resources Officer, Aparejeyo Bangladesh 4. Founder and Executive Director(LEEDO) 5. Information and Public Relation Officer(LEEDO) 6. Director Finance(LEEDO) 7. Head Teacher (Shurovi) 8. Assistant Teacher(Shurovi) 9. Joint Director, Dhaka Ahasania Mission 10. Team Leader, Rights Section(Ahsania Mission) 11. Coordinator, Counceling Service (Ahsania Mission) **UN Organization (3 officials)** 1. Chief of Child Protection UNICEF 2. Child Protection Officer UNICEF 3. Senior Programming Officer, ILO.	

Data Collection Tool

The following data collection modalities were used to meet the key parameters of the study

- In-depth interviews (IDIs) with families and children living/working on the street
- Key informant interviews (KIIs) (some as group interviews) and stakeholder consultations with organizations and other actors working with and for street-connected children
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with children and other stakeholders (i.e., NGOs, DSS and relevant government agencies)

These data collection modalities were complemented by eleven sets of questionnaires. These questionnaires or interview protocols (see appendix) were used to interview various stakeholders

Data Collection Process

Interviews with street-connected children and families were conducted in a convenient place of their choice close to where they worked/lived. The interview sessions began by reading the consent form, explaining the purpose and potential use of the research. The content of the consent assured them that their interest and safety would not be compromised in any way and of their right to withdraw from the project at any point. During the interview, frequent inquiries were made about their comfort with the session. Gender sensitivity and cultural norms were followed in the data collection process.

Female interviewers conducted most interviews with children and female caregivers. A mixed group – both male and female data collectors – was used in other target groups. Interviews with stakeholders, service providers, and policymakers were conducted in person.

A notebook/e-tablet will be used to record the interviews/discussions. In most interviews, a data collector and a facilitator were present. For the focus groups, a facilitator/moderator and a note-taker were present.

Following the completion of data collection, the data collectors uploaded the recorded interviews to a secure, password-protected drive accessible to data collection agency and the technical expert.

Quality Assurance of Data

The data collection agency – Mitra and Associates –, the technical expert, and UNICEF collaborated to ensure the quality of the data. A weekly meeting was set up to identify and address any data collection and quality issues. Besides the agency, the lead expert and UNICEF examined the quality of transcribed data on a rolling basis.

The data collection agency ensured the quality of the data. Quality control procedures were assured through supervision and monitoring of interviewing teams during fieldwork. Team supervisors were responsible for the performance of their teams. In addition to the internal supervision of each field team, the quality control officers overseen the performance of the field team through field visit. Quality control officers spent all the time in the field during the period of data collection.

In addition to one Research Officer, two quality control officers were deployed for quality control checking of the survey data. Quality control checking was designed to physically verify whether the interviewer had completed the questionnaires by interviewing the right respondents in the right places by asking the right questions. They directly observed the interviewers' work while interviewing a respondent.

Data Analysis

Each interview was audio-recorded using e-tablets and stored on the agency's data server. Each audiotaped interview and FGD were assigned a unique identification number. Themes or categories grounded in the data were the unit of analysis, whether expressed in phrase or paragraph. A code book was developed around a set of key themes defined by the research questions. Applied thematic analysis (Guest et al., 2012) was used to conceptualize major themes. Applied thematic analysis integrates methods from many other qualitative frameworks, and is a *"rigorous, yet inductive, set of procedures designed to identify and examine themes from textual data in a way that is transparent and credible"* (Guest, et al., p. 15). To this end, the researcher read each transcript and outline the parts of the conversation that relate to the research questions. Topics that recur in and across cases were identified. Each of these topics was grouped and assigned a code or label. Next, the researcher looked for the relationships among the codes and grouped them into larger themes or categories. Once all the texts around the core and subtheme were identified, the data was analyzed to explain how the themes and data were interrelated and influenced by each other. Key findings were then outlined in the report. Relevant translated verbatim responses of the participants were included in written findings as well as interpretations of the results.

Demographic information (e.g., age, gender, education) was entered into the statistical software SPSS. Descriptive statistics (frequencies) calculated to profile the entire sample and to answer the research questions.

Recruitment of Data Collectors and Training

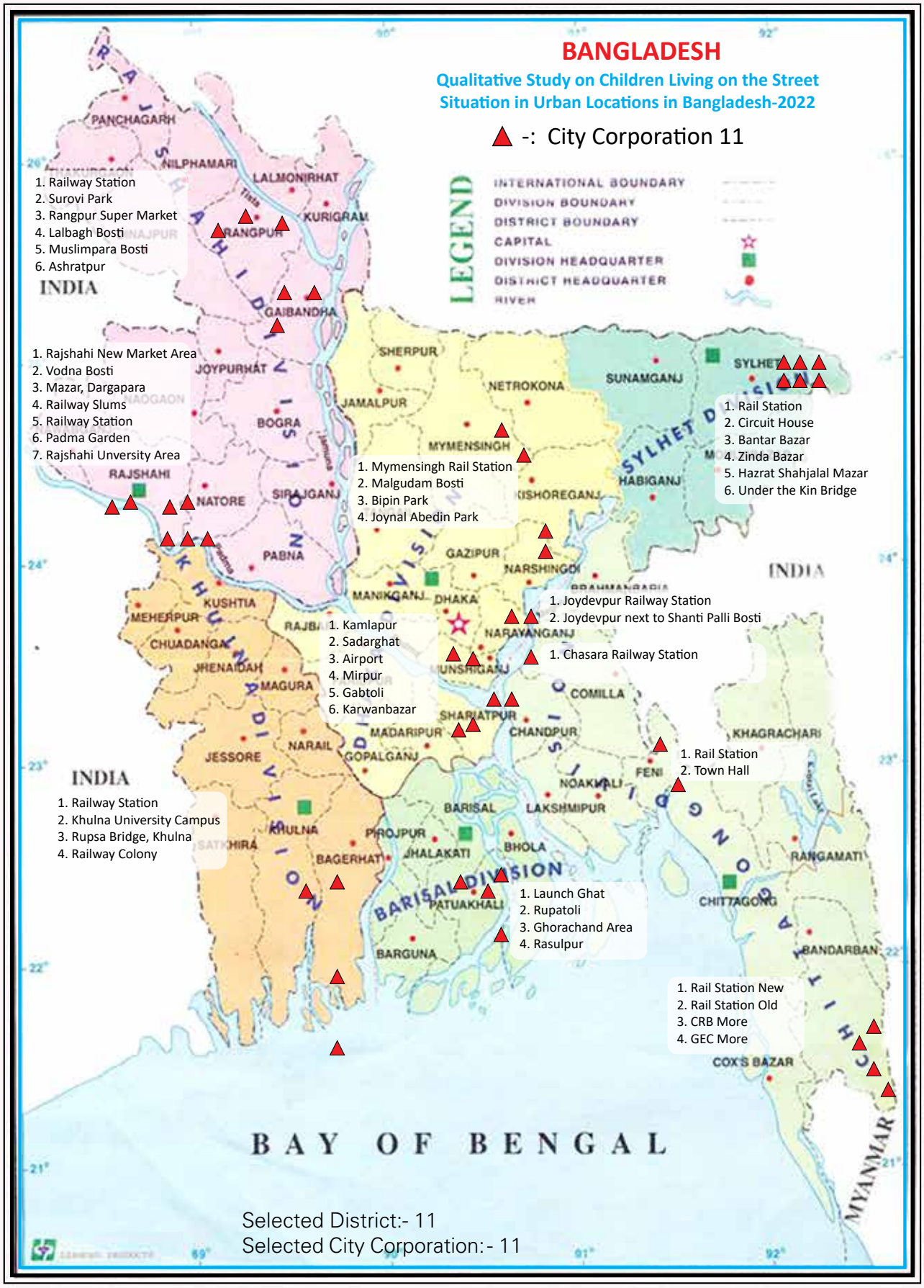
Recruitment of data collectors was arranged by the data collection agency- Mitra & Associates. A total of Twenty-three research assistants were employed. Data collectors were recent graduates of social work, sociology, anthropology, and development studies programs. Among 23 trainee research assistants fourteen were male and nine were female. Moreover, two organizers and four supervisors were employed.

Data collectors attended training that includes lectures on interviewing techniques, the content of the semi-structured and structured guides and observation checklists, additional safety and security precautions (situational awareness, COVID-19, etc.), street-connected children sensitivity, and response and self-care techniques. Mock interviews between trainees were utilized to gain practice experience. Once mock interview training was completed, data collectors visited the field to gain onsite experience. Data collectors were trained by the project director of social services department of the government of Bangladesh, UNICEF experts, and the lead expert.

Ethical Considerations

The research team strictly adhered to the ethics of data collection outlined by the technical expert and the technical leads from UNICEF and Mitra & Associates. These protocols were approved by the ethics board. Informed consent, confidentiality, and managing appropriate boundaries were the guiding principles. There was not any physical risk from participation. There is a minimal psychological risk involved in the process. If participants felt uncomfortable sharing their experiences, they were encouraged to be honest and open, and to share as much information as they wanted. However, they were not under any pressure to divulge information. Participants were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time.

Moreover, alongside UNICEF, the technical expert with the assistance of the local research agency developed a detailed plan of action in case a participant was in need of assistance due to his/her participation in the study or for any other reason. A separate *'self-care'* module was developed for data collectors. Participants were compensated for their potential loss of income.


BANGLADESH
Qualitative Study on Children Living on the Street Situation in Urban Locations in Bangladesh-2022
-: City Corporation 11
LEGEND
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
DIVISION BOUNDARY
DISTRICT BOUNDARY
CAPITAL
DIVISION HEADQUARTER
DISTRICT HEADQUARTER
RIVER
1. Railway Station
2. Surovi Park
3. Rangpur Super Market
4. Lalbagh Bosti
5. Muslimpara Bosti
6. Ashratpur
1. Rajshahi New Market Area
2. Vodna Bosti
3. Mazar, Dargapara
4. Railway Slums
5. Railway Station
6. Padma Garden
7. Rajshahi Unversity Area
1. Mymensingh Rail Station
2. Malgudam Bosti
3. Bipin Park
4. Joynal Abedin Park
1. Rail Station
2. Circuit House
3. Bantar Bazar
4. Zinda Bazar
5. Hazrat Shahjalal Mazar
6. Under the Kin Bridge
1. Joydevpur Railway Station
2. Joydevpur next to Shanti Palli Bosti
1. Chasara Railway Station
1. Kamlapur
2. Sadarghat
3. Airport
4. Mirpur
5. Gabtoli
6. Karwanbazar
1. Railway Station
2. Khulna University Campus
3. Rupsa Bridge, Khulna
4. Railway Colony
1. Launch Ghat
2. Rupatoli
3. Ghorachand Area
4. Rasulpur
1. Rail Station
2. Town Hall
1. Rail Station New
2. Rail Station Old
3. CRB More
4. GEC More
INDIA
MYANMAR
BAY OF BENGAL
Selected District:- 11
Selected City Corporation:- 11

Annex III

Data Collection Tools

Questionnaire 1
A Qualitative Study on Children Living on the Street in Urban Locations in Bangladesh

In-Depth Interview Guide Street Living Children (5-17)

Welcome

Hello! Our names are_____

How are you?

Thank you for being willing to meet with me/us. I am a part of a team, trying to learn about children who live and work on the street.

We are interested in learning about your lives. We would also like to explore children and their families' needs.

Since you have so many experiences, sharing those will be very helpful for us.

Two organizations UNICEF and the Department of Social Services, the Government of Bangladesh have sent us to know about you. Both of these organizations help children like you.

Today we will do the followings:

- We will find a quiet and private place to sit with you to ask you about your experiences.
- We will talk with you for about 45 minutes to an hour. You can take break if you like to.
- You can stop talking to us at any time during the interview.
- You can also skip any question that we ask that you do not want to talk about.
- We will NOT ask you about it again, if you don't want to answer any question or want to stop altogether.
- We will begin the interview by asking you some questions about yourself and your family. We will ask about your age, your education, your income. We will also ask you how long you're on the street and why you left home/or why you work here.
- We will ask about your life on the street – how you manage work. We will also ask about your needs and how these needs could be met.
- We will not discuss anything you say to us with anyone else, unless you tell us you want to hurt yourself, and then we would have to get you help.
- You cannot get in trouble for anything you say to us.
- Nothing you say to us will be connected to your name, and we will not write down your name.

The information we gather will be used to write a report, but we will not be able to guarantee any further help or services.

Your name will never be identified, and your information will be confidential.

Can you tell me how you understood what I just explained?

Demographics

1a. Name (Pseudonym)	
1b. Gender (to be filled by the interviewer)	1 = Male 2 = Female 3 = Transgender
1c. Location (to be filled by the interviewer) Division: District: City Corporation: Name the exact location where the participant was Found/interviewed (i.e., bus/train terminal, market area):	
1d. Age (to be filled by the interviewer)	
1e. Highest level of education achieved:	1 =None 2 = Literacy (did not complete grade 5) 3 = Primary 4 = Below Secondary (did not complete grade 9 or 10) 5 = Secondary
1f. Length of time living on the street from the first time to the present* (in months)	
*Note: The respondent might not be able to provide an accurate answer to this question. If the respondent is not sure about his/her age, ask for an approximate age. If the respondent does not know about his/her age, ask if his/her parents ever told the respondent how old s/he was on any occasion before the respondent left the parental home. Calculate the approximate age using the following guide: a) in which year (and month, if that is also known) the child first learned from their parent(s) what is his/her age + b) the period from knowing his/her age to the year (and month) the child left home + c) the duration of stay on the street + d) any extended period of time that the child returned to live at home (excluding short visits to parents).	
1g. Where do you live now? (Marks those are most relevant. The participant could live in multiple sites. In such a case, mark the first two that are used most frequently)	1 = On the street 2 = In a shelter 3 = Under a bridge 4 = Market 5 = Parks 6 = Railway station 7 = Bus terminal 8 = Slums 9 = Launch ghat 10 = Home (slum) 11 = Other (write down)

1h. With whom do you live now?	1 = Alone on the street 2 = With other children on the street 3 = In a shelter 4 = In a business/store (where the child is employed) 5 = With parents on the street) 6 = With parents in a slum/home 7 = With sibling(s) on the street) 8 = With sibling(s) in a slum/home 9 = With relatives 10 = Other (write down)

Questions

1. Family and Other Background Info:

We would like to know about your family and your reasons for leaving home.

1a. Please tell us about your family. Tell us about your life while you were living with your family.

[Note to the data collectors: If participants are unable to understand the question, explain it for them. You may say where their parents are from, whether parents live together, what their parents do for a living, how he or she felt when s/he was living with parents and so forth]

1b. Tell us whether you help your family/parents economically. Tell us everything about how you help them.

1c. Please tell us about your siblings.
[Note to the data collector: Help participants remember whether any siblings live with him/her on the street, whether s/he visits them sometimes]

Since you live here, tell us your reasons why you left home.

2. Livelihood Practices

We would like to know about your livelihood—how you make money to survive in the streets.

2a. Tell us everything about how to get money on the street.

2b. Tell the story that led to you getting this job/livelihood.

2c. Tell us everything about how this work makes you feel.

2d. Tell us everything about what worries you about this work.

2e. In addition to your main job, do you have any other source of income to help you to meet your expenses or needs?

2f. Please tell us about your dream job or jobs (jobs that you would love to work). How do you plan to have a dream job?

[Note to the data collectors: If participants give any lead to any of the above questions, follow up with more clarifying questions. Always refer to the story point they are sharing with you. For instance, if a participant responds to the question 2c implying that the job he or she performs is hard follow up with a question as such: *"You mentioned that the job you do is hard, tell me a bit more how the job is hard".*]

3. Street Experiences

We would like to learn about your positive and negative experiences living here.

3a. Tell us everything, positive and negative, about your life on the street.

[Note to the data collector: If participants are not sure about positive and negative things, give them some examples of good things (i.e., friends, freedom, can go anywhere) and bad things (i.e., uncertainty, difficult to earn money etc.)]

3b. Tell us everything about your friends.

3c. Tell us how friends help (i.e., financially, emotionally) you.

3d. What accidents did you have to endure while living and working here? What was the worst one?

[Probe: when did it happen? How did you treat it? Did you go to the hospital? Who took you? How did the hospital staffs treat you? How did the doctors/nurse treat you? Who took care of the expenses?]

3e. What are the challenges you feel while living here? Do you feel that you do not want to live here?

4. Service Support

Now, we would like to learn whether you have received any support from anyone or any service agency. Please share.

4a. Tell me everything about the services you use while living on the street.

List of services:

[Note to the data collectors: Services may include shelter, school, health care, advice, life skills training etc. They might not remember/articulate these services. Offer some examples, if needed]

4b. You said you used this service, tell me everything about that experience.

[Note to the data collectors: If participants use several services, ask the same question until you cover all the services]

4c. If you have used any services from NGO apas/bhaiyas, tell me everything about it.

4d. If you have used any services from the government, tell me everything about it.

[Note to the data collector: Carefully listen to children's service experiences, especially how helpful these services are. Avoid using a direct question about how 'good' or 'awful' their experiences are. However, if they give you any clues about the usefulness of the service ask them follow up questions such as: *"You mentioned NGO apa/bhais' services were good. Tell me everything about it".* You may find that children's experiences with the government services are negative. If they give you any clues, ask them follow up questions using the same format.]

4e. We have learned that sometimes children do not want to take any help from NGO apas/bhaiyas or the government. Tell us everything why that may be true. What are they doing that is not helpful?

5. Short and Long-Term Needs

We would like to learn about the needs of children like you and what could be done to help.

5.a Tell us everything about what you think the needs are of children like you. Give us a list…

5.b You mentioned the following needs, tell me about the most important need?

5.c We know that some children might not return home for various reasons. What could be done to help those who neither want to go home nor want to live on the streets (i.e., finding shelter, job, education)? What could be done to let children know that there is help for them.

5.d Tell me everything about what you know about the shelters and why you think children may not want to go to them?

5.e What could be done to help those who want to return home but can't go right now (i.e., a stipend, food help, sensitize family/community, etc.)?

6. Meeting Needs

We would like to know who could help you meet your needs.

6a. Tell me everything about who could help you meet your needs.

6b. You said this can help meet your needs – tell me everything about that

6c. Tell me everything about what it would look like for you to return to your family or caregivers?

6d. Tell me everything about the time, if ever, when you tried to return to home, or do you know someone who has?

6e. If you are not interested in living with your parents, is there anyone else/any other family you would prefer to live with? Who would that person/family be? Please explain.

6f. Say with the help of government/NGO, a family wants to take you in and wants you to stay with them. What are your thoughts on this idea? Would you accept this offer? Why or why not?

7. Future Aspiration and Hope

We have talked about so many aspects of your life here on the streets.

7a. Tell me everything about what your future could look like?

7b. Tell me everything about what you would need for this future to become real…

7c. Tell me everything about where you see yourself in 5 years…

7d. How do you plan to realize your dreams? Did or does anyone provide you with any hope to realize your dreams?

Thank you for your participation.

Questionnaire 2
A Qualitative Study on Children Living on the Street in Urban Locations in Bangladesh

In-Depth Interview Guide Street Working Children (5-17)

Hello! Our names are_____

How are you?

Thank you for being willing to meet with me/us. I am a part of a team, trying to learn about children who live and work on the street.

We are interested in learning about your lives. We would also like to explore children and their families' needs.

Since you have so many experiences, sharing those will be very helpful for us.

Two organizations UNICEF and the Department of Social Services, the Government of Bangladesh have sent us to know about you. Both of these organizations help children like you.

Today we will do the followings:

- We will find a quiet and private place to sit with you to ask you about your experiences.
- We will talk with you for about 45 minutes to an hour. You can take break if you like to.
- You can stop talking to us at any time during the interview.
- You can also skip any question that we ask that you do not want to talk about.
- We will NOT ask you about it again, if you don't want to answer any question or want to stop altogether.
- We will begin the interview by asking you some questions about yourself and your family. We will ask about your age, your education, your income. We will also ask you how long you're on the street and why you left home/or why you work here.
- We will ask about your life on the street – how you manage work. We will also ask about your needs and how these needs could be met.
- We will not discuss anything you say to us with anyone else, unless you tell us you want to hurt yourself, and then we would have to get you help.
- You cannot get in trouble for anything you say to us.
- Nothing you say to us will be connected to your name, and we will not write down your name.

The information we gather will be used to write a report, but we will not be able to guarantee any further help or services.

Your name will never be identified, and your information will be confidential.

Can you tell me how you understood what I just explained?

Demographics

1a. Name (Pseudonym)	
1b. Gender (to be filled by the interviewer)	1 = Male 2 = Female 3 =Transgender
1c. Location (to be filled by the interviewer) Division: District: City Corporation: Name the exact location where the participant was Found/interviewed (i.e., bus/train terminal, market area):	
1d. Age (to be filled by the interviewer)	
1e. Highest level of education achieved:	1 =None 2 = Literacy (did not complete grade 5) 3 = Primary 4 = Below Secondary (did not complete grade 9 or 10) 5 = Secondary
1f. Length of time living on the street from the first time to the present* (in months)	
*Note: The respondent might not be able to provide an accurate answer to this question. If the respondent is not sure about his/her age, ask for an approximate age. If the respondent does not know about his/her age, ask if his/her parents ever told the respondent how old s/he was on any occasion before the respondent left the parental home. Calculate the approximate age using the following guide: a) in which year (and month, if that is also known) the child first learned from their parent(s) what is his/her age + b) the period from knowing his/her age to the year (and month) the child left home + c) the duration of stay on the street + d) any extended period of time that the child returned to live at home (excluding short visits to parents).	
1g. Where do you live now? (Marks those are most relevant. The participant could live in multiple sites. In such a case, mark the first two that are used most frequently)	1 = On the street 2 = In a shelter 3 = Under a bridge 4 = Market 5 = Parks 6 = Railway station 7 = Bus terminal 8 = Slums 9 = Launch ghat 10 = Home (slum) 11 = Other (write down)

1h. With whom do you live now?	1 = Alone on the street 2 = With other children on the street 3 = In a shelter 4 = In a business/store (where the child is employed) 5 = With parents on the street) 6 = With parents in a slum/home 7 = With sibling(s) on the street) 8 = With sibling(s) in a slum/home 9 = With relatives 10 = Other (write down)

Questions

1. Family and Other Background Info

Please tell us about your family

(Probe: Tell us about your parents- a) Are your parents (father and mother) still alive? If both parents are alive, do they live in the same household? Describe the type of work your father and/or mother do for a living? Do you help your parent(s) economically? f) How frequently and how much (in a month)? g) If you do not help your parents, what do they tell you? Do they ask you to earn more?)

1a. Please tell us about your siblings. How would you describe your relationship with your siblings?

[Probe: Do any of your siblings work with you on the street? If so, how do you help him/her? Do you have to look after him/her? If not, do they come to visit you?]

2. Livelihood Practices

We would like to know about your livelihood—how you make money.

2a. Please share with us what you do to earn money.

2b. Please share with us why you have to work on the streets.

2c. Please tell us the story of getting and managing this job.

[Probe: Tell us how you found this job. Tell us what you have to do in this job and for how long you have to work. Please let us know how much you make and whether you give any of your earnings to someone else. If employed, please tell us what any other benefits are associated with this job; (i.e., shelter, food]

2d. Have you thought about leaving your current job/livelihood? If yes, please tell us why.

2e. Please tell us the hard things you have to do in your job.

2f. In addition to your main job, do you have any other source of income to help you to meet your expenses or needs?

Please tell us about your dream job or jobs (jobs that you would love to work). How do you plan to have a dream job?

3. Street Experiences

We would like to learn about your positive and negative experiences working here.

3a. Tell us everything, positive and negative, about your life on the street.

[Note to the data collector: If participants are not sure about positive and negative things, give them some examples of good things (i.e., friends, freedom, can go anywhere) and bad things (i.e., uncertainty, difficult to earn money etc.)]

3b. Tell us everything about your friends.

3c. Tell us how friends help (i.e., financially, emotionally) you.

3d. What accidents did you have to endure while working here? What was the worst one?

[Probe: when did it happen? How did you treat it? Did you go to the hospital? Who took you? How did the hospital staffs treat you? How did the doctors/nurse treat you?]

3e. What are the challenges you feel while working here? Do you feel that you do not want to work on the street anymore?

3f. Tell me everything about how you protect yourself from dangers while being on the street.

4. Service Support

Now, we would like to learn whether you have received any support from anyone or any service agency. We would also like to know what could be done to support you. Please share.

4a. Since you've been working on the street, please share with us about adults who helped you and how? Please tell us about adults who are kind to children like you.

4b. Tell me everything about the services you use while working on the street.

List of services…

[Note to the data collectors: Services may include shelter, school, health care, advice, life skills training etc. They might not remember/articulate these services. Offer some examples, if needed]

4c. Do NGO *apas/bhaiyas* help children who work here in any way? What help or services did they provide? Please explain.

Does anyone from the government help children? What help do children receive?

5. Short and Long-Term Needs

We would like to learn about the needs of children like you and what could be done to help.

5a. Tell us about the needs of children like you. Give us a list.

5b. You mentioned the following needs, tell me about the most important need?

5c. Do you like to work on the street? If yes, for how long?

5d. Tell us what could be done to help you and others so that you do not have work on the street?

5e. What could be done to help your family so that they do not have to send you to work? What are the most important ones?

6. Meeting Needs

We would like to know who could help you meet your needs.

6a. Tell us who could help you meet your needs?

6b. You said this _____ can help meet your needs – tell me everything about that

6c. Anything else come your mind about helping you out?

7. Future Aspiration and Hope

We have talked about so many aspects of your life here on the streets

2a. Tell me everything about what your future could look like?

2b. Tell me everything about what you would need for this future to become real.

2c. Tell me everything about where you see yourself in 5 years.

2d. How do you plan to realize your dreams? Did or does anyone provide you with any hope to realize your dreams?

Thank you for your participation.

Questionnaire 3
A Qualitative Study on Children Living on the Street in Urban Locations in Bangladesh

Focus Group Discussion with Current Street Children

Hello! Our names are_____

How are you?

Thank you for being willing to meet with me/us. I am a part of a team, trying to learn about children who live and work on the street.

We are interested in learning about your lives. We would also like to explore children and their families' needs.

Since you have so many experiences, sharing those will be very helpful for us.

Two organizations UNICEF and the Department of Social Services, the Government of Bangladesh have sent us to know about you. Both of these organizations help children like you.

Today we will do the followings:

- We will find a quiet and private place to sit with you to ask you about your experiences.
- We will talk with you for about 45 minutes to an hour. You can take break if you like to.
- You can stop talking to us at any time during the interview.
- You can also skip any question that we ask that you do not want to talk about.
- We will NOT ask you about it again, if you don't want to answer any question or want to stop altogether.
- We will begin the interview by asking you some questions about yourself and your family. We will ask about your age, your education, your income. We will also ask you how long you're on the street and why you left home/or why you work here.
- We will ask about your life on the street – how you manage work. We will also ask about your needs and how these needs could be met.
- We will not discuss anything you say to us with anyone else, unless you tell us you want to hurt yourself, and then we would have to get you help.
- You cannot get in trouble for anything you say to us.
- Nothing you say to us will be connected to your name, and we will not write down your name.

The information we gather will be used to write a report, but we will not be able to guarantee any further help or services.

Your name will never be identified, and your information will be confidential.

Can you tell me how you understood what I just explained?

Demographics [up to 5 participants]

	A	B	C	D	E
1a. Name (Pseudonym)					
1b. Gender (to be filled by the interviewer) 1= Male 2= Female 3 = Transgender					
1c. Location where the child was found (to be filled by the interviewer): Division: District: City Corporation Name the exact location where the participant was found/interviewed:					
1d. Age (to be filled by the interviewer)					
1e. The highest level of education achieved 1=None 2= Literacy (did not complete grade 5) 3= Primary 4= Below Secondary (did not complete grade 9 or 10) 5= Secondary					
1f. Where do you live now? (Mark those are most relevant. The participant could live in multiple sites. In such a case, mar the first two that are used most frequently) 1 = On the street 2 = In a shelter 3 = Under a bridge 4 = Market 5 = Parks 6 = Railway station 7 = Bus terminal 8 = Slums 9 = Launch ghat 10 = Home (slum) 11 = Other (write down)					

	A	B	C	D	E
1h. With whom do you live now? 1 = Alone on the street 2 = With other children on the street 3 = In a shelter 4 = In a business/store (where the child is employed) 5 = With parents on the street) 6 = With parents in a slum/ home 7 = With sibling(s) on the street) 8 = With sibling(s) in a slum/ home 9 = With relatives 10 = Other (write down)					
1i. Length of time living on the street from the first time to the present*					

Questions

1. Leaving Home, Street Transition, and Family Integration

1a. Please tell us why children decide to leave home and live on the street

1b. Tell us everything what the home to street transition experiences are like for most children.

[Probe: What did children have to do to survive? Do they have money to buy food? Where did they sleep? What were things many children did not know how or what to do at first? How do most children feel at the beginning of the transition?]

1c. Did most children consider going back home at first? Please explain why children do not want to go home. Do families search for their children?

1d. When a child arrives on the street for the first time, who helps him/her to get used to the street life? Tell us what role other street children play.

2. Livelihoods

2a. Please share with us everything what children like you have to do to make a living here.

2b. Please tell us types of jobs children do…Why do they do these jobs?

2c. Please tell us what barriers/problems (i.e., less money, no pay) children face while working in this location.

2d. Tell us about ideal jobs children such as you like to pursue. Give us a preferred list…Why do you like to do these jobs?

2e. Do all of you have friends? How do friends help each other to find a job?

3. Violence and Abuse in Street Life

We have learned that children living on the street might face some risks. We would like to know about them.

3a. Please share everything about the dangers or risks of living on the street.

3b. If children are in danger here, what do they do? How do they cope with it? Do they seek help? Where?

3c. Tell us everything how police treat children on the street.

3d. What accidents do children have to endure while living and working here?

3e. Do children have to face any serious illnesses/accidents (cuts, falls under cars/trains/launches, fevers) while living or working here? How do they treat it?

[Probe: Do they go to the hospital? Who took them? How did the hospital staff treat children? How did the doctors/nurse treat children? Who took care of the expenses?]

4. Support Received

Now, we would talk about any support you have received from a person or any service agency.

4a. Please tell us about people who are kind to children like you.

4b. Please tell us everything how NGO ***apas/bhaiyas*** help children.

4c. Please tell us everything if anyone from the government help children.

4d. Sometimes children do not want to take any help from NGO ***apas/bhaiyas*** or the government. Tell us why that may be in your experience or from others you know.

5. Needs and Priorities

We would like to learn about the needs of children like you and what could be done to help them.

5a. Tell us about the needs of children like you. Give us a list…be as specific as possible.

5b. Among all the needs you listed, what are the most important ones for survival on the streets?

5c. We know that some children might not return home for various reasons. What could be done to help those who neither want to go home nor want to live on the streets (i.e., finding shelter, job, education)?

5d. Tell us why some children do not want to live in shelters?

5e. What could be done to help those who want to return home but can't go right now (i.e., a stipend, food help)?

5f. If children are not interested in returning to their family, do you think they can leave the street and go somewhere else? Where? Please explain.

5g. Say with the help of the government/NGOs a family wants to take street children in to raise them. What are your thoughts on this idea? Do you think your friends will accept this arrangement? Why or why not?

6. Expected Service Providers

We are almost at the end. The last thing we would like to know is who could help you.

6a. Tell us who could help you meet your needs? NGO ***apa/bhaiya***, the government or both. Why?

6b. Other than an NGO or the government who else could help children like you? How do you expect them to help you?

6c. Anything else come your mind about helping you?

Thank you for your participation.

Questionnaire 4
A Qualitative Study on Children Living on the Street in Urban Locations in Bangladesh

In-Depth Interview Guide with Families (mothers/stepmothers/father/stepfathers/ caregivers of street children)

Welcome

My name is_____. Thank you for being willing to talk with us/me. We are conducting a qualitative study to explore street-connected children's survival. We are interested in learning why children leave home, what they experience in the street in terms of livelihood, victimization, and service. We would also like to explore children and their families' needs in order to develop appropriate policies and programs. This study is a joint project of UNICEF and the Department of Social Services, the Government of Bangladesh. We plan to interview current and former street-connected children, their families, government officials, and other stakeholders as part of the study. We consider you to be important source of information since your children live on the streets. The information we gather will be used to write a report. Your name will never be identified, and your information will be confidential. You can skip questions that you do not want to answer and you can withdraw at any time. The research report will inform policymakers, UNICEF, and other nonprofit agencies to initiate new policies and programs.

Demographics

1. Name:	
1a. Location (to be filled by the interviewer): Division: District: City Corporation: The exact location where the participant was found/interviewed (i.e., home/bus/train terminal/market area):	
1b. Participant's age:	
1c. Participant's relationship with street children:	i. Biomother_____ ii. Biofather_____ iii. Stepmother____ iv. Stepfather_____ v. Other____
1d. Current family members living with participant:	# Girls_____ # Boys_____

1e. Highest level of education achieved: 1 = None 2 = Literacy (did not complete grade 5) 3 = Primary 4 = Below Secondary (did not complete grade 9 or 10) 5 = Secondary	Mother _____ Father _____
1f. Do all school-aged (5-17 year) children attend school?	Boys: Yes_____ No_____ Girls: Yes_____ No_____
1g. Any previous marriage:	Mother: Yes_____ No_____ Father: Yes_____ No_____
1h. Any child from previous marriage/relationship:	Yes____ No_____ Not applicable_____ If so, how many____
1i. Current occupation:	Mother_____ Father_____
1j. Monthly income:	Mother_____ Father_____
1k. Any other member is employed?	Yes_____ No_____

Questions

1. Leaving Home and Family Circumstances

We would like to know why your child/stepchild left home to live on the streets. We would like to know your relationship with her/him and the family circumstances that led to her/his departure.

1a. Please tell us why your child left home. Did anyone from the family (i.e., you or your husband/wife) encourage her/him to leave home? Please explain why did s/he do this?

1b. When your child left home, what were your family's economic or social conditions? Do you think any of these problems contributed to his/her departure? How?

[Note to the data collector: Discuss whether the family faced hardship, divorce of any parents, violence in the home, death of the breadwinner, disaster etc.]

1c. When s/he left home, did s/he tell you that s/he is leaving? What reason(s) did they mention? How did you know that s/he was gone?

1d. Do you know where s/he lives now? How is s/he doing out there? Did s/he tell you how his/her life is/was in the streets?

2. Return and Reintegration

We would like to learn about whether your child returned home and how s/he acted while at home.

2a. How do you feel that your child no longer being with the family? Would you like to see him/her come back? Permanently or just for a visit? Please explain.

[Note to the data collector: If the participant answer *"just for a visit"* ask why s/he want him only for a visit, not permanently]

2b. After her/his departure, please tell us whether you told them to come back or went after them. What did s/he say when you asked them to come back? Why do you think s/he did not return home and live here?

2c. Do you think any of your other children may also leave home? If this is a possibility, why is it the case? Will you allow him/her to leave?

3. Family Challenges

We would like to learn about challenges you face, especially how you manage everything from making an income to performing everyday family chores (i.e., childcare, cooking)

3a. Please explain some of the challenges you and your family are currently facing. Please give us a list. Which ones are most challenging?

[Probe: Do you have any financial challenges? What financial challenges do you have? Do you work? Does your husband/wife work? Who takes care of your children when you are at work? How do you manage work if any of your children are sick?]

3b. Tell us about your experiences of leaving your child at home or in others' (non-relatives/ neighbors) care when you are at work.

[Probe: Who takes care of them? How reliable are they? Are you comfortable with the fact that you leave them alone or others' care? Did you face any trouble (i.e., accident, disappearance of kids, someone abused kids?]

3c. Tell us whether your husband or other family members participate in any of the child rearing activities (i.e., cooking, cleaning, looking after children).

[Note to the Data Collectors: This question is for mother/caregivers only]

[Probe: Does he look after any of the children? When you're at work, does he help the children in any way?]

4. Services Received

We would like to know whether you or your family members have received any help/service from the government.

4a. Please share whether you asked for/received any help from the government (i.e., food for work, VGD cards, allowances for destitute/widow). What help did you receive, if any, and for how long? Are you still receiving any help? When did it stop/will stop? If it has stopped, why?

4b. If you have not received or asked for any help, what barriers did you face (i.e., chairman/ commissioner denied your application, asked for bribe/money, etc.)?

4c. Other than the government, did you ask or receive help from any NGOs (i.e., loan, business help, childcare, children's schooling)? What organization exactly? What was the help provided? What was the outcome? Please explain. If you have not requested any help from any organization, why not?

5. Services Needed

We would like to know what services could provide help to you and your family. More precisely, we would like to know about the things that could be done to prevent any of your child's anticipated departure.

5a. Presumably, you are not happy that your child lives on the streets. I would like you to think about measures you could have taken to prevent her/him from leaving. In other words, what things were needed to prevent your child from moving out of home?

5b. Are you or your family (husband/in-laws) willing to bring her/him back? In order to bring him/her back, what services (i.e., money, childcare) are needed? Please give us a list and tell us which ones are the most important ones.

5c. If your child is unable to live with you for some reasons (for example, s/he works in the city and can't be home), is there anyone else/any other family you would recommend him/her to stay with? Who would that person/family be? Please explain._

5d. Say your son/daughter is unable to or does not want to stay at your home. With the help of the government/NGOs a family wants to take your son/daughter in and raise him/her. What are your thoughts on this idea? Will you accept this arrangement? Why or why not? Do you think your son/daughter will like this idea?

5e. Who do you think could help you to get some of the services you listed? Please tell us how the government could help you. What about NGOs? What role do you think they could play? How would you like to receive their help (i.e., cash, food support, free childcare)?

5f. Please share anything else that comes to mind about services or the governments' role.

Thank you for your participation.

Questionnaire 5
A Qualitative Study on Children Living on the Street in Urban Locations in Bangladesh

In-Depth Interview Guide with Street Families (mothers/stepmothers/father/ stepfathers/caregivers of street children)

Welcome

My name is_____. Thank you for being willing to talk with us/me. We are conducting a qualitative study to explore street-connected children's survival. We are interested in learning why children leave home, what they experience in the street in terms of livelihood, victimization, and service. We would also like to explore children and their families' needs in order to develop appropriate policies and programs. This study is a joint project of UNICEF and the Department of Social Services, the Government of Bangladesh. We plan to interview current and former street-connected children, their families, government officials, and other stakeholders as part of the study. We consider you to be important source of information since your children live on the streets. The information we gather will be used to write a report. Your name will never be identified, and your information will be confidential. You can skip questions that you do not want to answer and you can withdraw at any time. The research report will inform policymakers, UNICEF, and other nonprofit agencies to initiate new policies and programs.

Demographics

1. Name:	
1a. Location (to be filled by the interviewer): Division: District: City Corporation: The exact location where the participant was found/interviewed (i.e., home/bus/train terminal/market area):	
1b. Participant's age:	
1.c Current marital status: (Select that applies) [Note to the data collectors: In street situation, some girls/ women *'informally marry'* men who offer them protection and support. This marriage does not have any legal basis (i.e., registration). In some instances, a woman and a man just pretend to be married (based on mutual understanding/ commitment). Ask participants which category fits their marriage arrangement.]	1. Formally married and lives with husband: 2. Formally married but abandoned by husband: 3. Informally married and lives with husband: 4. Informally married and lives with husband: 5. Divorced: 6. Widow

1d. Current family members living with participant:	# Adult female (if any) Relationship: 1. # Adult male (if any) Relationship: 1. Children: 1. Age: Sex: 2. Age Sex: 3. Age Sex:
1e. Highest level of education achieved: 1 = Non 2 = Literacy (did not complete grade 5) 3 = Primary 4 = Below Secondary (did not complete grade 9 or 10) 5 = Secondary	Mother _____ Father _____
1f. Do all school-aged (5-17 year) children attend school?	Boys: Yes_____ No_____ Girls: Yes_____ No_____
1g. Any previous marriage:	Mother: Yes_____ No_____ Father: Yes_____ No_____
1h. Any child from previous marriage/relationship:	Yes____ No_____ Not applicable_____ If so, how many____
1i. Current occupation:	Mother_____ Father_____
1j. Monthly income:	Mother_____ Father_____
1k. Any other member is employed?	Yes_____ No_____
1l: Add any other relevant information about the participant: (i.e., where the family migrated from, whether the participant is pregnant or not, any mental impairment)	

Questions

1. Leaving Home and Family Circumstances

We would like to know why you left your home of origin to live on the streets.

1a. Where did your family live prior to coming here? Do you have any family back in your home of origin? What was your life back in your home of origin? How did you make a living there?

1b. Please tell us what brought to living or working on the streets? Why did you come to this location?

[Note to the data collector: Discuss whether the family faced hardship, divorce of any parents, death of the breadwinner, disaster etc.]

1c. Since you are on the street, have any of your children left the family to live any other parts of the city? Please tell us why your child is not living here with you. How do you feel that your child no longer being with the family? Would you like to see him/her come back? Permanently or just for a visit? Please explain.

[Note to the data collectors: If the family lives together, SKIP question 1c]

2. Family Challenges

We would like to learn about challenges you face, especially how you manage everything from making an income to performing everyday family chores (i.e., childcare, cooking)

2a. Please explain some of the challenges you and your family are currently facing. Please give us a list. Which ones are the most challenging?

[Probe: Do you have any financial challenges? What financial challenges do you have? Any other challenges? Do you work? Does your husband/wife work? Who takes care of your children when you are at work? How do you manage work if any of your children are sick?]

2b. Tell us whether your husband or other family members or friends participate in any of the child rearing activities (i.e., cooking, cleaning, looking after children).

[Note to the Data Collectors: This question is for mothers/caregivers only]

[Probe: Does he look after any of the children? When you're at work, does he help the children in any way?]

2c. Have you experienced any kind of physical or emotional abuse (i.e., slapped, hit, yelled) from anyone? If so, from whom? Please provide more details about this situation, as you are comfortable.

2d. Have you experienced any kind of sexual abuse (i.e., indecent proposal, molestation) by anyone? If so, from whom? Please provide more details about this situation, as you are comfortable.

2e. Have you had any contact with law enforcement or similar officials? Did they ask you to leave this place? Please describe that experience.

2f. Did you have to pay anyone to stay here? Please describe that experience.

3. Children's Need

We would like to know your children's needs, especially those who are young and living here with you.

3a. How do you feel that your child is being raised here on the street?

3b. Please tell us some of the things (i.e., food, clothe, safety) you can't afford for your child/children.

3c. Has s/he ever been abused (i.e., yelled, slapped, pushed) by anyone (i.e., other people, older children, security, police)? Did anyone try to abduct him? Please explain.

3d. Please share with us any incident where your child/children's life was at risk. How do you protect yourself and your children from the dangers of living on the street?

3e. If we ask you to list your child's needs, what that list will look like?

3f. What are your experiences as a caregiver of your child/children? How do you manage everything (i.e., childcare, cooking, self-care) here?

3g. Tell us about your experiences of leaving your child at home or in others' (relatives/neighbors care when you are at work or go somewhere.

[Probe: Who takes care of them? How reliable are they? Are you comfortable with the fact that you leave your children alone or others' care? Did you face any trouble (i.e., accident, disappearance of kids?]

4. Services Received

We would like to know whether you or your family members have received any help/service from the government or NGOs.

4a. Please share whether you asked for/received any help from the government (i.e., food for work, VGD cards, allowances for destitute/widow). What help did you receive, if any, and for how long? Are you still receiving any help? When did it stop/will stop? If it has stopped, why?

4b. If you have not received or asked for any help, what barriers did you face (i.e., chairman/ commissioner denied your application, asked for bribe/money, do not know where to seek help etc.)

4c. Other than the government, did you ask or receive help from any NGOs (i.e., loan, business help, childcare, children's schooling)? What organization exactly? What was the help provided? What was the outcome? Please explain. If you have not requested any help from any organization, why not?

5. Services Needed

We would like to know what services could provide help to you and your family.

5a. Presumably, it is difficult for you and your family to live on the street. I would like you to think about the services you would need to end your family's street life. Please give us a list…

5b. It might not be possible to offer all the services you have listed at once, which ones (i.e., shelter, childcare, a decent job) would help to end your family's street life the most?

5c. If there are not a lot of other services (e.g., housing, job, food assistance) except a childcare center nearby where you could leave your child to go to work, would this be helpful for you? How helpful will this be for you? Will you take this opportunity?

5d. Who do you think could help you to get some of the services you listed? Please tell us how the government could help you. What about NGOs? What role do you think they could play? How can they help (i.e., cash, food support, free childcare)?

5e. What are your suggestions or recommendations as a caregiver to improve the quality of life of other street families and help them off the street? What would work and you need more of? What would not work (or should stop).

Please share anything else that comes to mind about services or the governments' role.

Thank you for your participation.

Questionnaire 6
A Qualitative Study on Children Living on the Street in Urban Locations in Bangladesh

In-Depth Interview Guide for Former Street Children

Welcome

Our names are _____. Thank you for being willing to talk with us/me. We are conducting a qualitative study to explore street-connected children's survival. We are interested in learning why children leave home, what they experience in the street in terms of livelihood, victimization, and services. We would also like to explore children and their families' needs in order to develop appropriate policy and program interventions. This study is a joint project of UNICEF and the Department of Social Services, the Government of Bangladesh. We plan to interview current and former street-connected children, their families, government officials, and other stakeholders as part of the study. Since you used to live on the streets and have so many experiences, sharing those will be very helpful for us. The information we gather will be used to write a report. Your name will never be identified, and your information will be confidential. You can skip questions that you do not want to answer and you can withdraw at any time. The research report will inform policymakers, UNICEF, and other nonprofit agencies to initiate new policies and programs to support families and their children living on the streets.

Demographics

1a. Name (Pseudonym):	
1b. Gender (to be filled by the interviewer):	1 = Male 2 = Female 3 = Transgender
1c. Age (to be filled by the interviewer):	
1d. Location (to be filled by the interviewer): Division: District: City Corporation: The exact location where the participant was found/interviewed (i.e., home/bus/train terminal/market area):	
1e. Total length of time spent living on the street in the past (in months):	

1f. Where do you live now?	1 = Don't have a permanent place wherever I can lay down [Note to the Interviewer: Identify these places and write down] 2 = In a shelter 3 = In a business/store (where the participants is employed or the business owner allowed him/her to stay) 4 = In a rented place (slum/low-income neighborhood) 5 = In a relative's place 6 = Other (write down)
1h. With whom do you live now?	1 = Alone in a rented place (slum/low-income neighborhood/makeshift shelter) 2 = With family (wife/children) in a rented place (slum/low-income neighborhood/makeshift shelter) 3 = With other youth in a rented place 4 = In a shelter 5 = Alone or with others in a business/store (where the participant is employed) 6 = With parents in a slum/home/makeshift shelter 7 = With sibling(s) in a slum/home/makeshift shelter 8 = With relatives in a slum/home/makeshift shelter 9 = Other
1g. Highest level of education achieved:	1 = None 2 = Literacy (did not complete grade 5) 3 = Primary 4 = Below Secondary (did not complete grade 9 or 10) 5 = Secondary
1g. Current job:	
1h. Monthly income:	

Questions

1. Past Street Life

Tell me about your family life before moving to the streets and your earlier life as a street child

1a. Please share your life story with us.

(Probe: Where are you from? Why did you leave home? At what age? Were your parents aware when you left home? Did they come with you or take you to the streets? Did they tell you anything when you left?)

1b. If you had a job or earned money while on the streets, please estimate how much you made and how you spent your income (lifestyle).

[Probe: What were the types of job you had worked in the past? What did you have to do for those jobs? How hard were those jobs for you? Why did you quit those jobs? Did anyone *(Mastans, Boro-bhai)* force you to do any illegal jobs? What did you have to do in illegal jobs? Why did you quit those illegal jobs? How did you quit them? Did you have to flee to avoid any repercussions? Please explain.]

1c. Did you experience any abuse (i.e., yelling, threatening), violence (i.e., being beaten with or without a stick, being slapped or kicked) or exploitation (i.e., was not paid, forced to work while on the street? If so, from whom and how? Please explain.)

1d. Please share with us one of your most painful experiences (incident) you had during that time. Who inflicted it? Did any consequences come to this person for this? Why or why not (no reporting, reporting didn't help, etc.) How did the incident change you or affect your street life?

[Note to the Interviewer: Discuss how some significant incidents pushed children to be involved with sex work or other unethical/illegal activities/drug abuse]

1e. How did you cope with the incident you described or other negative experiences in the street environment? Did you have any friends/relatives who helped you? Any NGO? Any government organizations?

1f. Did you seek help or protection from law enforcement or similar officials? Did you have any contact with law enforcement or similar officials? Please describe that experience.

1g. What were some of the most attractive things on the streets? What were the parts that were most difficult?

Issues of Reintegration (ask section 2 or 2.1 depending on reintegration status)

2. Children Who WERE Not Successfully Reintegrated

Despite facing all these challenges and problems (e.g., food, shelter, abuse), please share with us why you did not return to your home or your family.

2a. Did you ever attempt to return to home and stay there? What happened? Why did it not work for you? Please explain.

2b. What were some of the barriers that prevented you from returning home. Please list them.

2c. Did your family/relative(s) ask you to return home? Did your family look for you? Did you ever return? Please explain why you came back to the street.

2d. Did any agency outreach worker (***apa/bhaiya*** NGO or the government) approach you saying that they would help you return to home? What did you say? If you did not accept their help, why not?

2e. What could have been done differently to make your return smooth?

2f. If you had friends who did not return, please share with us why your street friends did not return home. What were some of the things that prevented them from returning home? What are some of the most attractive things in the street for them?

2g. In your opinion, who could help children return to their home (i.e., family, NGO, police)? How?

2h. If children are not interested in living with parents, is there anyone else/any other family you would recommend? Who would that person/family be? Please explain.

2i. Say with the help of the government/NGO a family wants to take street children in to raise them. What are your thoughts on this idea? Do you think children will accept this arrangement? Why or why not?

2.1. Children Who WERE Successfully Reintegrated

We would like to learn why you returned to your home/family or other places (shelter/relative).

2.1a. Why did you decide to return home? Did you return after your first attempt, or did you leave and return home multiple times? If multiple times, what are the final reasons for returning home? What happened in this final situation that made it successful?

OR

[Note to the interviewer: If the participant graduated from a shelter/relative's place ask the following question]

Why did you go to a shelter/relative's place? How long did you stay on the street? Did you return to the street after your first attempt, or did you leave and return to the shelter multiple times? Did you return to the same shelter/relative's place? If multiple times, what are the final reasons for returning there? What happened in this final situation that made it successful?

2.1b. Did your family/relative/shelter bring you back home? If not, did they try to find you? Were you in touch with your family members/relatives/shelters while on the street? What did they say to you? Please explain.

2.1c. Did any agency outreach worker *(apa/bhaiya* NGO or the government) approach you saying that they would help you return to home/shelter? What did you say to this? If you had accepted their help, please explain how they did it.

2.1d. Please share with us why some children do not want to return home/shelter. What could have been done differently to make them return to their home? In your opinion, whose role is most important? Why and how?

2.1e. If children are not interested in living with parents, is there anyone else/any other family you would recommend? Who would that person/family be? Please explain.

2.1f. Say with the help of the government/NGOs a family wants to take street children in to raise them. What are your thoughts on this idea? Do you think children will accept this arrangement? Why or why not?

3. Service Availability

3a. Please share with us whether you received any help from an NGO (NGO *apa/bhaiya/shelter)* and/or the Government.

3b. What services or assistance did you receive while being on the street? If yes, what was it? Did it help you? How? Please explain. Were there any parts of the services provided/not provided that did not help or hurt you in some way? How?

3c. If you did not receive any help, what was the reason(s) (i.e., service was not available, you did not like available services, services were not good, services did not offer what you needed, etc.)

[Note to the interviewer: Based on the answer expand this section]

3d. Please share with us why children who live on the street do not want to go to government or NGO services (health, education, shelter, training, etc.).

4. Transition to New Life

We would like to learn about your thoughts on transition and current life off the streets.

4a. Now that you are out of street life, why do you think you made it out? Please explain.

4b. Now that you are out of street life, how would you compare your new life with previous life? Please explain.

5. Services Needed

There are hundreds of children who are currently living on the street. We would like to learn from you what should be done to help them.

5a. In your view, what are the most important needs of children living on the streets?

5b. Tell us what can be done (give us a list of things) to help the following children:

i. Children who want to live on the streets

ii. Children who want to leave the street and go home or any other place? What would be a good alternative place for them if they do not want to go home. What should that place look like?

iii. Children who have disabilities

iv. Girls

5c. In your opinion, who should come forward to help street children? Where do you see responsibility lies – from protecting rights, upholding religious doctrine, etc.?

5d. What do children expect from the government?

5e. What do children expect from NGOs?

5f. What do children expect from the community or public? Please explain.

5g. What advice do you have for kids that want to get off the street?

5h. Could you please make a list of things that must stop because of being not helpful for children living/working on the street (i.e., government/NGO services for children, 'catch car' that rounds up children).

5i. Could you please make a list of things that must stop because of being harmful to children living/working on the street (i.e., police beating children, children working in hazardous jobs)

6. Future

Tell me about your life now and any plans for future:

6a. Are you working now? Are you in school? Tell me about your family situation. What are some of the best things of your life? What is not so good?

6b. What are your plans for the future?

6c. What do you need for your future?

6d. Who could help you with your future plans?

Final Thoughts/Advice

7. If you could tell kids living on the streets one thing – a word of advice or help – what would it be?

Thank you for your participation.

Questionnaire 7

A Qualitative Study on Children Living on the Streets in Urban Locations in Bangladesh

In-Depth Interview Guide Street Brokers

Welcome

My name is_____. Thank you for being willing to talk with us/me. We are conducting a qualitative study to explore street-connected children's survival. We are interested in learning why children leave home, what they experience in the street in terms of livelihood, victimization, and service. We would also like to explore children and their families' needs in order to develop appropriate policy and program interventions. This study is a joint project of UNICEF and the Department of Social Services, the Government of Bangladesh. We plan to interview current and former street-connected children, their families, government officials, and other stakeholders as part of the study. Since you interact with children frequently and have knowledge on their life circumstances and survival activities, we would like to learn from you. The information we gather will be used to write a report. Your name will never be identified, and your information will be confidential. The research report will inform policymakers, UNICEF, and other nonprofit agencies to initiate new policies and programs to support families and their children living on the streets.

Demographics:

1a. Name (Pseudonym):	
1b. Gender (to be filled by the interviewer):	1 = Male 2 = Female 3 = Transgender
1c. Location (to be filled by the interviewer):	
1d. Length of time living on the Street from the first time to the present:	
1e. Age (to be filled by the interviewer):	
1f. Level of Education:	1 =None 2 = Literacy (did not complete grade 5) 3 = Primary 4 = Below Secondary (did not complete grade 9 or 10 5 = Secondary
1g. Current business/trade/profession (title)	

Questions

1. Livelihood and Lived Experience of Street Broker

We would like to begin by asking you to share some of your experiences here. We would like to learn about your livelihood practices. Please share with us your history of living/working here.

1a. How long have you been here?

1b. When did you start working here or start your business here?

1c. What did you do to earn a living at the beginning?

1d. Did you change your livelihood being here? How many times?

1e. What do you have to do in your current job/current economic engagement. Please explain.

1f. Where do you live (here in this location or somewhere else)?

2. Perception/Experience of Interaction with Street Children

Since you live/work here, we assume you interact with street children and street families on a regular basis. Please share some of your experiences/observations/opinions about them. From your knowledge, please explain how prevalent street children are in this area:

2a. How many street children are regularly in this area? How many street families are here?

[Probe: Please explain boys vs girls ratio. What is their age range? Do you see any age difference between boys and girls when they arrive here? Where do they (boys, girls, and families come from (i.e., rural, urban areas)? Do you know their education level?]

2b. How many have been here for a long time? Explain how long. Do they go to other places and come back, always move around or stay here? What about the families? Do they follow the same pattern (move around or stay here)?

2c. How many are new? Why do the new children/families come?

2d. How do they act/behave when they arrive first? How does it change over time?

3. Please explain your interaction/relationship with street children

3a. Please explain the frequency of your meeting with children (i. e., always, everyday).

[Probe: Why do you meet them (i.e., they come to you/you see them around here/they need work)? How would you describe most interactions with them (i.e., because they need you/you need them/just see them and talk sometimes)?]

3b. What type of children do you see most (i.e., age, gender, disability status, families with children)? With which group do you interact most? Why?

4. Children's Livelihood Practices and Exploitation

You know most street children are forced to work in order to survive. We would like to learn about their livelihoods practices and how they are being treated and/or exploited. Please share with us children's work and living arrangements.

4a. In your opinion, why do children come to live and/or work on the street? Where do they sleep?

4b. How do these children stay alive and earn money for food?

4c. List the types of work they do.

4d. What are the bad things (sex work, drug trafficking, begging) they have to do to earn money?

4e. How do they spend money?

4f. Do they send money to their families?

5. Many people (e.g., shop owners, restaurant owners, contractors) engage street children for work and other purposes. Please explain how they are being used.

5a. Please explain how different people use children (i.e., employment, forced them to work free, take money from them) [NOTE to interviewer, if anyone suggests about free work ask about detail.]

5b. Do you use street children in any aspect of your business? If yes, please describe.

5c. Some people who engage children abuse/exploit them. Please explain how these people abuse street children here.

[Note to the interviewer: Prompt some examples- reluctant to pay, penalized them for alleged underperformance, delay payment- in case participants do not respond]

6. Abuse

We have learned that many street children are being abused by people in their surroundings. You have probably seen that children are being abused by adults. Please share with us about abuse you may have knowledge of.

6a. What are the types of abuse you have seen (e.g., physical, emotional, sexual, financial)?

6b. How frequently do you see people beating/scolding/emotionally or sexually assaulting children? What are the most common types of abuse?

6c. Others have said that girls are being sexually abused, what are your thoughts on this?

6d. Who are the people that abuse children?

6e. Please share how police and security treat street children.

6f. Do you know any child being trafficked? By whom? How frequently does it happen? For what purpose (sex, labor, organ, etc.)?

6g. Some people who engage children in illegal activities (i.e., sex work, drug trafficking). Who are these people? Please explain how these people abuse street children here.

[Note to the Interviewer: Ask about the process of recruitment, financial arrangements, threats? How frequently do you see it happen?]

7. Children's Needs

We believe your experience with children will help us understand their needs. Please share with us the needs these children and their families have and what could be done to help them.

7a. Please explain what street children's needs are. Which ones are the most important?

7b. What could be done to help them so that they do not stay on the streets?

7c. Do you think street children have skills that could be used to help them integrate into the job market and ultimately to the society?

7d. For those who want to stay here, what could be done to help them to develop into healthy citizens?

7e. What is your view on what the government and society should do to care for street children better?

Thank you for your participation.

Questionnaire 8
A Qualitative Study on Children Living on the Street in Urban Locations in Bangladesh
Key Informant Interview Guide

KIs Checklist: (DSS, M of WCA drop-in center, Aparejeyo Bangladesh, Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Shurovi, Leo Foundation, SW-CC*, LEEDO)

Welcome

My name is_____. Thank you for being willing to talk with us/me. We are conducting a qualitative study to explore street-connected children's survival. We are interested in learning why children leave home, what they experience in the street in terms of livelihood, victimization, and service. We also would like to explore children and their families' needs in order to develop appropriate policy and program interventions. This study is a joint project of UNICEF and the Department of Social Services, the Government of Bangladesh. We plan to interview current and former street-connected children, their families, government officials and other stakeholders as part of the study. Since you interact with children frequently and have knowledge on their life circumstances and survival activities, we would like to learn from you. The information we gather will be used to write a report. Your name will never be identified, and your information will be confidential. The research report will inform policymakers, UNICEF, and other nonprofit agencies to initiate new policies and programs to support families and their children living on the streets.

Demographics

1a. Name of the Key Informant	
1b. Designation:	
1c. Gender (to be filled by the interviewer)	1 = Male 2 = Female 3 = Transgender
1d. Age (to be filled by the interviewer)	
1e. Organization/Institution's Name	
1f. Job duration: (in current position)	
1g. Total length of service (in similar or other positions)	
1h. For how long did you serve (have you been serving) the street children or supervised/monitored (have you been supervising/monitoring) street children related interventions/programs or services?	
1i. Address	

Questions

1. Leaving Home and Street Experiences

Perhaps you are aware that tens of thousands of children are living and working on the streets by themselves or with their families. Based on your direct knowledge or perception, how prevalent is this issue in your area (working area)? Explain different groups (e.g., children with disabilities, children with families, children with other children, girls) in your areas.

1a. Please explain major reasons why children leave home and stay on the streets.

1b. Why do you think children with families move and stay on the street/public places?

1c. In your view, what happens to them once they are on the street? How do their experiences differ by age, gender, and disability status? Please explain.

1d. Despite experiencing uncertainty, abuse, and violence in the street environment, why do some children not leave the street and go back home or to their care providers?

1e. Tell me about their livelihoods. How does street life affect their health and wellbeing. How do they manage everything on their own?

2. Perceptions of Street Children

Some people perceive street-connected children negatively. Children are called names such as 'Tokai' and often treated harshly. We would like you to share your thoughts on perceptions of street-connected children.

2a. Please tell us how the general public view street kids and their families. Why do they think street children exist or do the things they do? What drives their perceptions? Why do these perceptions linger?

2b. What do some organizations (both government and nongovernment) find challenging about serving this population (i.e., people may question why serve them or what benefit is there for you)?

2c. Are there any repercussions from communities for serving these groups? Please explain some of these for us.

2d. Do you think there are differences in how government (public) and non-governmental (nonprofit) organizations view and treat these groups? (For example, does the government's bureaucracy and hierarchical nature inhibit its ability to understand the challenges of these groups)?

3. Needs of Children

Based on your understanding, what are the needs/wants of children on the streets?

3a. If we ask you to rank them in order of necessities, how would you rank them?

3b. Please explain how their priorities may vary by age, gender, and disability status (for example, boys might not have the same needs as girls, physically disabled children are likely to have different needs than their counterparts)

[Note to interviewer: If needed, guide the discussion towards: a) basic human needs such as - food, clothing, shelter, education, healthcare; b) emotional needs such- recreational facilities, empathy, compassion, love, security; and c) Future: training, work opportunities, etc.]

4. Current Programs and Services

We are interested in learning about the programs and services that your organization offers and their effectiveness.

4a. Please explain the programs and services that your organizations run to support street children

[Probe: Who is eligible for receiving services? How do you screen service seekers? How long does each program serve children? What happens to the service seekers once the program ends? What do you do when children/families do not meet your organization's eligibility criteria?]

4b. In your opinion and the children themselves, which of the existing services and programs for street children in your organization have played an effective role for ensuring children's wellbeing?

[Probe: What has worked well? Which programs or services met the needs of children? Why has this been the case? Could you also share what some of your beneficiaries have positively said about your services?]

4c. In your opinion and the children themselves, which of the existing services and programs for street children in your organization have not played or is not playing an effective role in child wellbeing? If none, are there other organizations that are conducting services or programs that are detrimental or in the least, not helpful?

[Probe: What has not worked well? What are the reasons behind ineffectiveness? Is this because the implementation of the services has not been strong, the services are irrelevant, or the services are not yielding the anticipated results? Was it because of the number of policies or programs, lack of institutional response, lack of budget, lack of skilled and qualified social service workers, lack of inter-agency collaboration (Go and NGOs)? What have your beneficiaries said that support this critique?]

4d. Why are some street children/families disinterested in agency services or quit the agency protection and rehabilitation measures/programs? What challenges do you face while serving the children in the street environment? How do you address them?

5. Suggested Policies/Programs

We are interested in learning about policies and programs that could best help children and families in street situations.

5.a In your opinion, what are the things that need to be changed to better serve children and their families, i.e. what are the solutions for the substantial numbers of children living and working on the streets?

5.b Please provide recommendations in three focus areas: a) policy (i.e., reintegration to family and community, foster care where another family takes care of children); b) programming while they are on the streets (prevention program such as cash transfer for taking care of children, access to health care for the disadvantaged children); and c) programming for helping them transition off the streets (reintegration) (for example, relative care for the abandoned children, employment program for disadvantaged youth). What policies and services will you offer, and which ones should be prioritized?

5.c *List of Policies ….

[*Note to the interviewer: before you ask this question, carefully study what policy or program means. It has been explained at the end of the questionnaire.] (Some examples of policies are: 'Prevention policy', 'Harm-reduction policy', 'Public awareness-raising policy, 'Home/community reintegration policy', 'Street to community transition policy', 'Community care for street-connected children policy')

[Probe: Any additional policy you would recommend? Among the policies we have mentioned, which ones are most important to you and why? Should there be the same policies for all age groups (5-17 years)? How about boys and girls? Should policy differ for boys and girls? What about children with special needs? How policies should be different considering their vulnerabilities?]

5.d ** Services/programs to serve them on the streets...

(Some examples of programs are: Shelters for boys and girls, Basic life-skills development programs, Free meal vouchers for street-connected children, Free health and mental health care program, Substance abuse reduction program, Community- based violence prevention program for street-connected children)

[Probe: Any additional program you would add? Among the programs we have mentioned, which ones should we consider on a priority basis? Should there be the same programs for all age groups (5-17 years)? How about boys and girls? Should programs differ for boy and girls? What about children with special needs? How different should services be to meet their needs?]

5e. Services/programs to help them transition off the streets (reintegration)...

(Some examples of program are: Family reunion and incentive program', 'Relative/community care for abandoned children, *'Employment for disadvantaged youth program*', Skills development and employment placement program for youth)

[Probe: We have mentioned a few ideas of programs for children's transition from the street. Would you add anything new? In your view which programs are most important for children's transitions of the street? Should there be the same policies for all age groups (5-17 years)? How about boys and girls? Should policy differ for boys and girls? What about children with special needs? How services should be different for them?)]

6. Implementing Suggested Polices/Programs

Tell us about how your proposed policies/programs should be implemented.

6a. What is needed to improve and promote the capacity of institutions and individuals implementing proposed/current policies and services to children and families living and working on the street (consider different needs based on age, gender, disability status of children)? How can this be accomplished?

[Probe: Would you recommend more budget? How about training? Should organizations (both government and nongovernment) hire more staff to implement programs/policies? How would you ensure better supervision/accountability? Should we start at the Upazila level and scale up at the national level?]

6b. Is this the responsibility of the GoB, other actors, or a combination of both? Please discuss.

6c. How do you view coordination and cooperation systems between government (GoB) and non-government service providers engaged in this? What role should social workers play in implementing these policies/programs?

6d. What could be done for active community engagement (e.g., other people, organizations) in those proposed policies and services? How can they best be involved to benefit street children?

Thank you for your participation.

Questionnaire 9
A Qualitative Study on Children Living on the Street in Urban Locations in Bangladesh
Key Informant Interview Guide

KI Checklist: (LGD, DoPMEdn*, DoTEdn*, Mayors/CEO City Corporation)

Welcome

My name is_____. Thank you for being willing to talk with us/me. We are conducting a qualitative study to explore street-connected children's survival. We are interested in learning why children leave home, what they experience in the street in terms of livelihood, victimization, and service. We also would like to explore children and their families' needs in order to develop appropriate policy and program interventions. This study is a joint project of UNICEF and the Department of Social Services, the Government of Bangladesh. We plan to interview current and former street-connected children, their families, government officials and other stakeholders as part of the study. Since you interact with children frequently and have knowledge on their life circumstances and survival activities, we would like to learn from you. The information we gather will be used to write a report. Your name will never be identified, and your information will be confidential. The research report will inform policymakers, UNICEF, and other nonprofit agencies to initiate new policies and programs to support families and their children living on the streets.

Demographics

1j. Name of the Key Informant	
1k. Designation:	
1l. Gender (to be filled by the interviewer)	1= Male 2= Female 3 = Transgender
1m. Age (to be filled by the interviewer)	
1n. Organization/Institution's Name	
1o. Job duration: (in current position)	
1p. Total length of service (in similar or other positions)	
1q. Address	

Questions

1. Leaving Home and Street Experiences

Perhaps you are aware that tens of thousands of children are living and working on the streets by themselves or with their families. In your view, how prevalent is this issue your area? Explain different groups (e.g., children with disabilities, children with families, children with other children, girls) in your areas.

1a. Please explain the major reasons why children leave home and stay on the streets. Why do some families with children do the same?

1b. In your view, what happens to them once they are on the street? How do their experiences differ by age, gender, and disability status? Please explain.

1c. Tell me about their livelihoods. How does street life affect their health and wellbeing?

1d. Do you think it is a social problem? How concerning is this issue for your organization?

2. Perceptions of Street Children

Some people perceive street-connected children negatively. Children are called names such as *'Tokai'* and often treated harshly. We would like you to share your thoughts on perceptions of street-connected children.

2a. Please tell us how the general public view street kids and their families. What drives their perceptions? Why do these perceptions linger?

2b. What do some organizations (both government and nongovernment) find challenging about serving this population (i.e., people may question why serve them or what benefit is there for your organization)?

3. Needs of Children

3a. Based on your understanding, what are the needs/wants of children on the streets and families?

3b. If we ask you to rank them in order of necessities, how would you rank them?

3c. Please explain how their priorities may vary by age, gender, and disability status (for example, boys might not have the same needs as girls, physically disabled children are likely to have different needs than their counterparts)

[Note to interviewer: If needed, guide the discussion towards: a) basic human needs such as - food, clothing, shelter, education, healthcare; b) emotional needs such- recreational facilities, empathy, compassion, love, security; and c) Future: training, work opportunities, etc.]

Current Programs and Services

We are interested in learning about the programs and services that your organization offers and their effectiveness.

4a. Do you have any policy or program to address the needs of street children?

IF YES

4b. Please explain the programs and services that your organizations run to support street children and their families.

[Probe: Who is eligible for receiving services? How do you screen service seekers?

How long does each program serve children? What happens to the service seekers once the program ends? What do you do when children/families do not meet your organization's eligibility criteria?]

4c. In your opinion, which of the existing services and programs for street children in your organization have played an effective role in ensuring children's wellbeing?

[Probe: What has worked well? Which programs or services met the needs of children? Why has this been the case? Could you also share what some of your beneficiaries have positively said about your services?]

4d. In your opinion, which of the existing services and programs for street children in your organization have not played or is not playing an effective role in child wellbeing?
[Probe: What has not worked well? What are the reasons behind ineffectiveness? Is this because the implementation of the services has not been strong, the services are irrelevant, or the services are not yielding the anticipated results? Was it because of the number of policies or programs, lack of institutional response, lack of budget, lack of skilled and qualified social service workers, lack of inter-agency collaboration (Go and NGOs)? What have your beneficiaries said that support this critique?]

IF NOT

4e. Do you or your organization consider this to be a significant social problem that requires immediate attention? Why or why not?

5. Suggested Policies/Programs

We are interested in learning about policies and programs that could best help children and families in street situations.

5a. In your opinion, what are the things that need to be changed to better serve children and their families, i.e. what are the solutions for the substantial numbers of children living and working on the streets?

[Note to the Interviewer: Please ask the above question if the organization runs any policy/ program. If they do not, SKIP]

5b. Please provide recommendations in three focus areas: a) policy (i.e., reintegration to family and community, foster care where another family takes care of children); b) programming while they are on the streets (prevention program such as cash transfer for taking care of children, access to health care for the disadvantaged children); and c) programming for helping them transition off the streets (reintegration) (for example, relative care for the abandoned children, employment program for disadvantaged youth). What policies and services will you offer, and which ones should be prioritized?

5c. *List of Policies ….

[*Note to the interviewer: before you ask this question, carefully study what policy or program means. It has been explained at the end of the questionnaire.]

(Some examples of policies are: *'Prevention policy', 'Harm-reduction policy', 'Public awareness-raising policy, 'Home/community reintegration policy', Street to community transition policy', 'Community care for street-connected children policy')*

[Probe: Any additional policy you would recommend? Among the policies we have mentioned, which ones are most important to you and why? Should there be the same policies for all age groups (5-17 years)? How about boys and girls? Should policy differ for boys and girls? What about children with special needs? How policies should be different considering their vulnerabilities?]

5d. **Services/programs to serve them on the streets...

(Some examples of programs are: Shelters for boys and girls, Basic life-skills Development programs, Free meal vouchers for street-connected children, Free health and mental health care program, Substance abuse reduction program, Community-based violence prevention program for street-connected children)

[Probe: Any additional program you would add? Among the programs we have mentioned, which ones should we consider on a priority basis? Should there be the same programs for all age groups (5-17 years)? How about boys and girls? Should programs differ for boys and girls? What about children with special needs? How different should services be to meet their needs?]

5e. Services/programs to help them transition off the streets (reintegration)...

[Some examples of program are: Family reunion and incentive program', 'Relative/community care for abandoned children, 'Employment for disadvantaged youth program', Skills development

[Probe: We have mentioned a few ideas of programs for children's transition from the street. Would you add anything new? In your view which programs are most important for children's transitions of the street? Should there be the same policies for all age groups (5-17 years)? How about boys and girls? Should policy differ for boys and girls? What about children with special needs? How services should be different for them?]

6. Implementing Suggested Polices/Programs

Tell us about how your proposed policies/programs should be implemented.

6a. What is needed to improve and promote the capacity of institutions and individuals implementing proposed/current policies and services to children and families living and working on the street (consider different needs based on age, gender, disability status of children)? How can this be accomplished?

[Probe: Would you recommend more budget? How about training? Should organizations (both government and nongovernment) hire more staff to implement programs/policies? How would you ensure better supervision/accountability? Should we start at the Upazila level and scale up at the national level?]

6b. Is this the responsibility of the GoB, other actors, or a combination of both? Please discuss.

6c. How do you view coordination and cooperation systems between government (GoB) and non-government service providers engaged in this? What role should your organization play in implementing these policies/programs?

6d. What could be done for active community engagement (e.g., other people, organizations) in those proposed policies and services? How can they best be involved to benefit street children?

Thank you for your participation.

Questionnaire 10
A Qualitative Study on Children Living on the Street in Urban Locations in Bangladesh
Key Informant Interview Guide

KIs Checklist: Other Officials (Bus/Railway Station Authorities)

Welcome

My name is_____. Thank you for being willing to talk with us/me. We are conducting a qualitative study to explore street-connected children's survival. We are interested in learning why children leave home, what they experience in the street in terms of livelihood, victimization, and services. We would also like to explore children and their families' needs in order to develop appropriate policy and program interventions. This study is a joint project of UNICEF and the Department of Social Services, the Government of Bangladesh. We plan to interview current and former street-connected children, their families, government officials, and other stakeholders as part of the study. Since you interact with children frequently and have knowledge of their life circumstances and survival activities, we would like to learn from you. The information we gather will be used to write a report. Your name will never be identified, and your information will be confidential. The research report will inform policymakers, UNICEF, and other nonprofit agencies to initiate new policies and programs to support families and their children living on the streets.

Demographics

1r. Name of the Key Informant	
1s. Designation:	
1t. Gender (to be filled by the interviewer)	1 = Male 2 = Female 3 = Transgender
1u. Age (to be filled by the interviewer)	
1v. Organization/Institution's Name	
1w. Job duration: (in current position)	
1x. Total length of service (in similar or other positions)	
1y. Address	

Questions

1. Perception of Children

Perhaps you are aware that thousands of children are living and working on the streets by themselves or with their families. Based on your direct knowledge or perception, how prevalent is this issue in this area (i.e., train station/bus station/ferry terminal)? Explain different groups (e.g., children with disabilities, children with families, children with disabilities, girls) present here.

1a. From your interactions with children or perception, please explain major reasons why children with or without families leave home/community and stay here. Where do the majority come from (urban/rural)?

1b. In your view, what happens to them once they are on the street. How do their experiences differ by age, gender, and disability status?

2. How are street children and their families perceived by people (e.g., passengers, workers, officials, shop owners, police/security) around here? Why do these perceptions/treatments exist?

Needs and Survival Activities

3. You're aware that children leave home for various reasons. Once they are on the streets, they engage in various survival activities to meet their basic needs. Based on your understanding, what are their necessities/wants on the streets?

3a. If we ask you to rank them in order of necessities, how would you rank them?

3b. Please explain how their priorities may vary by age, gender, and disability status.

[Note to interviewer: If needed, guide the discussion towards: a) Basic human needs such as - food, clothing, shelter, education, healthcare; b) Emotional needs such- recreational facilities, empathy, compassion, love, security; and c) Future: training, work opportunities, etc.]

4. In your experience, please tell us what they do to earn a livelihood.

4a. How do they find a job/work here and what are the types of job/work they do? How do these types of jobs (e.g., porter, scrap collection, sex work) affect children's wellbeing? Explain how these differ by age, sex, and disability status.

4b. Please estimate how much they make and how they spend their income (lifestyle).

4c. In your opinion, what negative experiences (e.g., abuse by elders, exploitation by employers, extortion by adult workers) do street children face while working on the streets? Explain how these differ by age, sex, and disability status.

4d. Please share with us how adults (officials, security, workers) abuse and exploit children. Why do they do this (i.e., their motivation or incentive)

5. Conflict with the Law

Some children engage in delinquent activities and are in conflict with the law. We would like to learn about this issue from you.

5a. Please share with us, why some children get involved in criminal activities, drug addiction, and/or sex work. What is the percentage split here? Does this split differ by age, sex, and disability?

5b. How do they get involved in negative activities (substance abuse, criminal activities)? Do they do it willingly or other people (criminal, older adults) lure/force them into it?

5c. In your opinion, what happens to them once they are involved in such negative activities?

5d. What could be done to protect children from drug abuse, different forms of child abuses, prostitution, and involvement in criminal activities? What could be done for their physical safety?

5e. From your experience, how do police and security treat these children? Does this differ by the age, sex, disability (i.e., young children are treated less harsh) of the child? Do they treat them as 'children' who are victims of life circumstances or more like 'criminals' who have chosen to engage in illicit activities?

Needs and Programs for Street Children

5. Do you know any organization(s) (e.g., NGO or Government) that work for street children/families here? Please share with us what the organization(s) do. In your opinion, how effective are these programs in solving the problems many street children face. Do organizations cover all groups of children you see here (i.e., boys, girls, gender, disabilities, all ages)?

6. Please provide recommendations in three focus areas: a) policy (i.e., reintegration to family and community, foster care where another family takes care of children); b) programming while they are on the streets (prevention program such as cash transfer for taking care of children, access to health care for the disadvantaged children); and c) programming for helping them transition off the streets (reintegration) (for example, relative care for the abandoned children, employment program for disadvantaged youth). What policies and services will you offer, and which ones should be prioritized?

7.a *List of Policies ….

[*Note to the interviewer: before you ask this question, carefully study what policy or program means. It has been explained at the end of the questionnaire.] [Some examples of policies are: 'Prevention policy', 'Harm-reduction policy', 'Public awareness- raising policy, 'Home/community reintegration policy', 'Street to community transition policy', 'Community care for street-connected children policy']

[Probe: Any additional policy you would recommend? Among the policies we have mentioned, which ones are most important to you and why? Should there be the same policies for all age groups (5-17 years)? How about boys and girls? Should policy differ for boys and girls? What about children with special needs? How policies should be different considering their vulnerabilities?]

7.b **Services/programs to serve them on the streets...

(Some examples of programs are: Shelters for boys and girls, Basic life-skills development programs, Free meal vouchers for street-connected children, Free health and mental health care program, Substance abuse reduction program, Community-based violence prevention program for street-connected children)

[Probe: Any additional program you would add? Among the programs we have mentioned, which ones should we consider on a priority basis? Should there be the same programs for all age groups (5-17 years)? How about boys and girls? Should programs differ for boys and girls? What about children with special needs? How different should services be to meet their needs?]

7.c.*** Services/programs to help them transition off the streets (reintegration)...

(Some examples of program are: Family reunion and incentive program', 'Relative/community care for abandoned children, 'Employment for disadvantaged youth program', Skills development and employment placement program for youth)

(Probe: We have mentioned a few ideas of programs for children's transition from the street. Would you add anything new? In your view which programs are most important for children's transitions of the street? Probe: Should there be the same policies for all age groups (5-17 years)? How about boys and girls? Should policy differ for boys and girls? What about children with special needs? How services should be different for them?)

Implementation of Recommended Policies/Programs

8. What is needed to improve and promote the capacity of institutions and individuals implementing proposed policies and services to children and families living and working on the street (consider different needs based on age, gender, disability status of children)? How can this be accomplished?

8a. Is this the responsibility of the GoB, other actors, or a combination of both? Please discuss.

8b. Please explain what role your organization (train/bus/ferry station authority) could play in supporting these children and their families. Given your organization's scope, identify the things (i.e., allowing children live here, engage in illicit activities) that you are unable to support.

Thank you for your participation.

Questionnaire 11
A Qualitative Study on Children Living on the Streets in Urban Locations in Bangladesh

Key Informant Interview Guide

KIs Checklist: Police and Security Officials

Welcome

My name is…Thank you for being willing to talk with us/me. We are conducting a qualitative study to explore street-connected children's survival. We are interested to learn why children leave home, what they experience in the street in terms of livelihood, victimization, and service. We also would like to explore children and their families' needs in order to develop appropriate policy and program interventions. This study is a joint project of UNICEF and the Department of Social Services, the Government of Bangladesh. We plan to interview current and former street-connected children, their families, government officials and other stakeholders as part of the study. Since you interact with children frequently and have knowledge of their life circumstances and survival activities, we would like to learn from you. All information you provide will be strictly confidential. We will not use your name or any other identifiable information. The information we gather will be used to write a report. The research report will inform policymakers, UNICEF, and other nonprofit agencies to initiate new policies and programs to support families and their children living on the streets.

Demographics

1z. Name of the Key Informant	
1aa. Designation:	
1ab. Gender (to be filled by the interviewer)	1 = Male 2 = Female 3 = Transgender
1ac. Age (to be filled by the interviewer)	
1ad. Currently posted	
1ae. Job duration: (in current position)	
1af. Total length of service (in similar or other positions)	
1ag. For how long did you serve (have you been serving) in jobs where you dealt with/have been dealing with street children?	

Questions

1. Perceptions of Children

Since you have direct/indirect experience of dealing with street children, we want to know your perceptions/views about children living and working on the streets.

1a. Who are they? How old are they? How frequently do you see them? Do you see girls on the streets? Compared with the boys, how prevalent are girls? What about children with physical, emotional, or intellectual challenges? Why do they live on the streets? What do they do for living? What are your thoughts about street families?

2. Children and Legal Procedure

Kindly share your knowledge about Bangladeshi laws and legal procedures to deal with vulnerable children, especially children in extreme disadvantaged situations (i.e., street children, under-age sex workers)?

2a. What are some of the major laws and provisions that deal with street children? In your view, are these adequate to protect children's rights?

2b. Do you follow any instructions/guidelines/professional ethics from your department or your immediate senior authority about how to handle the issues/cases related to street children/ vulnerable children?

2c. What did do or how would you handle the following circumstances? (Explain any circumstance that fits your experience or knowledge)

i. Provided shelter or maintaining safety of the street children
ii. Helped rehabilitate/re-integrate children with family or handed over to GO or NGO shelter homes
iii. Protected children from abuse or violence in the streets
iv. Protected children from the traffickers
v. Protected children from drug abusers
vi. Protected children from criminals
vii. Protected children from exploitation of employers/others
viii. Protected children from worst form of child labor

3. Conflict with the Law

Some children engage in delinquent activities and are in conflict with the law. Sometimes, they take part in such activities willingly and sometimes they are being coerced by criminal actors. We would like to explore this issue from your knowledge and experiences.

3a. What do you do when street children do not conform to the rules of order while you are on duty (for example, moving on the roof of train or inside the train, or vehicles, quarrelling, moving/ begging in restricted places, etc.)?

3b. What do you usually do when you find a street child taking drug/selling drugs/working under drug smugglers or associated with drug abusers?

[Probe: How frequently does it happen? Do you have any order/protocol from your superiors how such a case might be dealt with? If police do not follow the protocol, what measures are in place to ensure compliance? In your view, what measures are needed to control and protect children from drug abuse and drug trafficking?]

3c. Please explain why and how some street children are involved with criminal networks or committing crimes? (consider age, gender, disability status)

[Probe: What do/did you do when you find a child involved in criminal activities or criminal networks? Are police able to protect those children from their involvement in crime and delinquency? Under what circumstances are police unable to protect children from involvement in crime and delinquency? What are your suggestions to minimize street children's involvement in crimes or criminal gangs?]

3d. What do you do usually when you find an under-aged street girl working as a sex worker?

[Probe: i.e., caught "red-handed" during sex work, contracting for selling sex, rescued or arrested at a hotel or other places, travelling with clients or pimp? Please describe such a case/ incident. What was the issue/incident? What you did and what happened at the end?]

3e. Despite the attempts taken by the police, there is evidence that under-aged girls are engaged in street-based sex work. Why do the police fail to prevent street-based child prostitution or control it?

4. Allegations Against Police

There are some unfortunate allegations that some members of police (i.e., railway police) are reluctant to help children or abuse them. How would you explain the following allegations? Do you know of any instances where this has happened? Please explain.

4a. A recent study shows that some police personnel sexually abused street girls.

4b. Police/security forces sometimes release adolescent sex workers after taking bribes.

4c. Allow children to continue sex work.

4d. Police often ignore the issues of adolescent sex work neglecting their professional responsibility.

4e. Only in few cases street-based child sex workers are sent to the court for rehabilitation.

4f. What would be your suggestions to control street-based child prostitution or to protect street children from prostitution?

5. Needs of Street children

You're aware that children leave home for various reasons. If we can identify their needs and meet those needs, the number of children on the street is likely to decrease. Please share your thoughts on their needs that, if met, would help reduce the number of children on the street.

5a. What are the major needs of street children from the law-enforcing agency's point of view?

5b. Please share with us your thoughts on how to meet those needs?

5c. Please think about recommendations on how to resolve street children's issues in three areas a) services needed on the street, b) reintegration into the family/community, c) protection from criminal gangs and drug abuse). Please share your recommendations.

5d. What facilities/resources do you need to overcome challenges of serving street children properly?

5e. Please explain the role of police and security officials in implementing those recommendations

5f. Based on your experience, would you kindly offer any other suggestion to ensure the safety, protection, and wellbeing of the street children?

Thank you for your participation.

IRB Approval Letter

Institute of Health Economics

University of Dhaka

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Ref. No. IHE/IRB/DU/07/2023/Final

Date: 13 March 2023

Mr. S. Fuad Pasha
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Title: A Qualitative Study on Children Living on the Street Situation in Urban Locations in Bangladesh

Dear Fuad Pasha,

The Institutional Review Board of the Institute of Health Economics (IHE-IRB), which is approved by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Federalwide Assurance (FWA) No. FWA00026031 had reviewed your submissions, both the initial and the subsequent responding comments of the IHE-IRB for the ethical approval of the proposal "A Qualitative Study on Children Living on the Street Situation in Urban Locations in Bangladesh."

IHE-IRB is providing ethical approval of the proposal. With thanks and regards,

Dr. Muhammod Abdus Sabur Chair
Institutional Review Board

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