

The contemporary forms of exploitation faced by street-connected children in the hostile economic environment of Zimbabwe

Prince Dzingirayi

University of KwaZulu Natal_ Department of Psychology

princdzingirai@gmail.com

+263719938570

Loreen Musemburi

Women's University in Africa _ Department of Psychology Lecturer

musemburilo@gmail.com

+263778027412

Child exploitation is a global topical concern in developing countries with hostile economic situations such as Zimbabwe. The hostile economic environment has exhibited street-connected children to fall prey into all forms of contemporary exploitation such as slavery, forced drug abuse, human trafficking, violence, criminal activities, joining criminal gangsters, sexual exploitation, loitering, begging and many more. The complex living conditions of people living and connected in the streets made them to be susceptible to different forms of exploitations. There is a great link between street-connected behaviour and daily economic demands. Living in the streets is tantamount to failed social services and this will ultimately taint community development. Street-connected children are psychologically, physically, socially and spiritually vulnerable as they are exposed to unreliable access to food, lack of education and medical care. Homeless children are often recruited for economic gains by exploiters. Children living in the streets are at high-risky to all forms of complex abuse. Factors which trigger some individuals into streetism vary over time and these includes loss of contact with the family members, poverty, violence, discrimination, mental health issues, peer pressure, offspring of prostitutes, family rejection, disability among others. Some researchers have indicated that each child has a unique story. The exploitations of children living in the streets start as an abuse and later changed to become a hobby. This paper will explore the contemporary form of exploitation exhibited to children living in the streets of Zimbabwe. The paper shall use the mixed research method and auto-ethnographic research design to explore the contemporary exploitative conceptions faced by children living in the streets of Harare. The researcher shall use purposive and snowball sampling method to select the participants. Data shall be analysed in line with mixed research method.

Key word: Exploitation, abuse, contemporary, hostile, homelessness, streetism