

**EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF YOUTH STREET MIGRATION
IN PATTAYA, CHIANG MAI, AND BANGKOK**

A Thesis

Presented to the

Faculty of

San Diego State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master

of

Social Work

by

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Fall 2010

SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

The Undersigned Faculty Committee Approves the

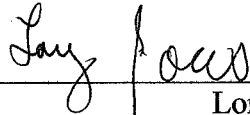
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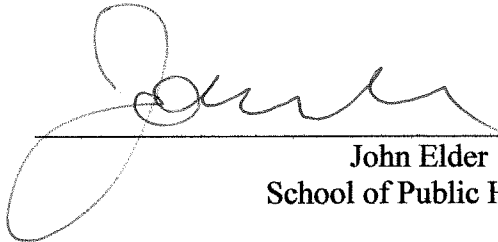
Chiang Mai, and Bangkok



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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all of the youth living and working on the streets worldwide, and to all of the kids of Thailand, in particular the ones at the Father Ray Foundation. If I ever have kids one day, I hope they are half as cool as you guys are.

There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is protected, that their lives are free from fear and want and that they can grow up in peace.

—Kofi Annan

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Exploring the Perceptions of Youth Street Migration in Pattaya,
Chiang Mai, and Bangkok

by

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Master of Social Work

San Diego State University, 2010

The problem of children living and working on the streets reflects economic, familial and societal conditions worldwide. In countries around the world, children migrate to the streets to find work, escape from negative family environments, and seek ways to survive from other harsh circumstances. In Thailand, youth migrate to the major urban areas of Pattaya, Chiang Mai, and Bangkok for these reasons. In addition, families migrate to these areas for economic reasons, and often times their children are vulnerable to working on the streets. From a human rights perspective, youth living and working on the streets are denied their rights to a safe and happy childhood. This qualitative study explores the perceptions of the reasons for youth street migration from the staff members working directly with these populations, using a human rights framework. A semi-structured interview guide was used to collect qualitative data from seven professionals working in social service agencies in Pattaya, Chiang Mai, and Bangkok. These three urban cities were identified as having considerable populations of street children. Interview contents were subject to content analysis using specific coding to identify the emerging themes, with attention to consistent themes found between the three cities.

Findings of this study are generally consistent with the literature, indicating that the primary reasons for youth street migration are due to negative family dynamics and economic factors. The collected data shows that youth living on the streets have left abusive or neglectful family environments, while other youth live with their families yet work on the streets out of economic necessity. The direct services provided by the staff vary between the three cities, but it is clear that trust and relationships are essential to any effective approach. The researcher also recommends that attention must be paid to economic opportunities and community development, and support from the government towards the organizations working with these youth.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my thesis chair, Dr. David Engstrom, for his guidance, support, and invaluable feedback, sometimes from half a world away. *Korp khun mak ka*, Arjan David, for helping me navigate everything from the river taxis in Bangkok to the completion of a qualitative study. I am lucky to have you as a mentor, this *singha* is for you! For my thesis committee members, Dr. Loring Jones and Dr. John Elder, thank you both for playing such an important role in this learning endeavor, your time and commitment is much appreciated.

Thank you to both San Diego State University and Thammasat University for giving me an opportunity of a lifetime. I have fallen in love with the beauty of this country and its people, and I am in deep gratitude for the lessons I have learned about myself and this great wide world. Special thanks to Arjan Chanon for his support and *sabai sabai* attitude, still waiting for some more karaoke *sanuk!* To the Mercy Centre in Bangkok and the Y.M.C.A. in Chiang Mai, thank you for allowing me to see the good work being done for the good kids of this country, and for taking the time to answer my questions. And to all of the staff, volunteers, and kiddos at the Father Ray Foundation in Pattaya-I will carry the smiles and memories with me forever. I am very blessed to have been part of such an amazing organization.

And of course, gratitude to my parents, Dr. Greg and Mrs. Suyapa Faulk. Cajun Man, you were right, that was a lot of work! Thank you for your advice and guidance during this process, you knew when to be a professor and when to be a dad. And Mom Lady, it is because of you that I have grown up with a deep desire for getting out and seeing this amazing world, and the heart you have towards others only inspires me more to do the same. Thank you both for all that you have done to motivate and encourage me. I love you guys and cannot wait to see y'all, when Chi-Chi graduates???

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In a world with increasing globalization, the opportunities for economic equality become limited in many poor or rural areas, creating family stressors and demanding ways to find economic survival. For countless families, this means migration to more urban areas in a search for broader work opportunities. In these efforts to survive, the children in these families may be sent to the streets to beg, sell flowers, or find other ways to earn money. Still, other youth migrate to the streets on their own for similar reasons, or to escape abusive familial environments caused by these stressors. For whatever reasons that youth live or work on the streets however, life for them remains a challenge and limits their opportunities for a safe and healthy childhood. While this problem spans all corners of the globe, this study will focus on Thailand, and in particular, the three urban cities of Pattaya, Chiang Mai and Bangkok. Thailand is considered a medium-developed country with strong economic and social growth, emerging as a donor nation as opposed to solely a recipient of international aid. However, it is also a prime example of a nation with a disparity between relatively wealthy urban areas and poorer rural areas, creating conditions conducive to youth street migration. Thailand's cities have grown faster than its countryside; poverty is a genuine concern, still widespread in the rural northeast and far north of the country. A human rights framework, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, will be used in an effort to create a mutual understanding and perspective for the researcher, reader, professional, and any individual or organization concerned with creating a more peaceful and just world for these youth.

A HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE

When youth are resigned to life on the streets, they are denied some of their rights as an individual, and even more specifically, their rights as a child. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25 states that everyone "has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself, and of his family, including food,

clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control” (United Nations, 1948). The families of these children have a right to the socio-economic opportunities that will allow them to be able to provide for their children. Positive rights, or second generation human rights, expound on this by calling for an adequate standard of living. This includes a right to health care, clothing, housing, food and living wage jobs (Jewell, Collins, Gargotto & Dishon, 2009). These rights imply that the government should share a large part of the responsibility of ensuring that families and individuals have access to the necessary components of adequate living. This, in turn, would reduce the number of children forced to leave their homes for reasons of inadequate food, housing, or economic security.

Furthermore, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) has set forth basic standards for every individual under the age of 18. The CRC was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in November of 1989, and was the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate the full range of human rights, including civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. The 54 articles and two Optional Protocols are based on four core principles of the Convention: non-discrimination; devotion to the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and the respect for the views of the child. Countries which have ratified the Convention (which includes every nation-state except for United States and Somalia) are legally responsible for ensuring these rights that are meant protect children and maintain their best interests.

With regards to homeless children and street children, there appears to be serious violations of some of these rights. In Article 27, it is recognized that every child has the right to a standard of living adequate for the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development (United Nations, 1989). It is expressed in this article that the parents have the primary responsibility to secure the conditions of living necessary for the child’s development; however, the State Parties shall take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programs, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing. Because many street children leave their homes due to poverty and substandard

living, more needs to be done to create opportunities for parents and families if this article is going to be fully realized.

Article 32 states the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social violations (United Nations, 1989). Children on the streets are engaged in work that is considered harmful, sometimes selling their bodies, sometimes scavenging through trash to find food or items of value. They are not likely to attend school, and are particularly at risk for hazardous or harmful work environments.

Stateless children, or those without national identification status, are considered an especially vulnerable population in regards to opportunities such as education and healthcare. Article 7 mandates that all children be registered immediately after birth, and shall have the right to acquire a nationality. This article attempts to reduce the number of stateless children who otherwise are not guaranteed state rights. Children who are not registered at birth are at an increased risk of poverty and consequently turning to the streets for economic activity.

Thailand ratified this Convention on March 27, 1997, effectively declaring a legally-binding national agenda to protect the fundamental rights to survival, development and protection for youth.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions concerning the various reasons for youth street migration in three urban cities of Thailand: Bangkok, Pattaya and Chiang Mai. There are an estimated 30,000 children living on the streets of Thailand (Khaopa, 2010). The larger, more metropolitan areas of these three cities attract youth and families looking for increased economic opportunities. In many cases, however, youth ultimately end up living or working on the streets in their efforts to find an income or livelihood, and the reasons for this migration warrant the attention of anyone who is concerned with the rights of children.

A qualitative method has been chosen for this study due to the exploratory nature of the research-no published research on the problem focusing on Thailand exists in English. This format will allow for more in-depth answers to the research questions. The research

questions being answered are: (1) What are the reasons for youth street migration in Thailand to the urban cities of Pattaya, Chiang Mai, and Bangkok? (2) What are the challenges and vulnerabilities that these children face? (3) What particular vulnerabilities do stateless children have in living or working on the streets? (4) What are the available services provided by agencies to street children and their families, and what additional services are needed to further assist these populations?

Key staff members from three agencies working directly with street children and/or their families will be interviewed. These agencies have been chosen due to their mission to provide services and support to these populations. They are the Mercy Centre in Bangkok, the Y.M.C.A. in Chiang Mai, and the Father Ray Foundation in Pattaya. The observations and findings from each agency will be addressed separately, due to the differing contexts of each city. However, major common themes found between the three will be explored in the discussion section.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The problem of children living and working on the streets reflects economic, familial and societal conditions worldwide. Their presence is an indication of urbanization, environmental degradation, inequitable distribution of wealth and income, and breakdown of traditional family and community values and structures (Silva, 2002). In countries around the world, children migrate to the streets to find work, escape from negative family environments, and seek ways to survive from other harsh circumstances. UNICEF estimates have put the number of street youth at 100 million: 40 million in Latin America, 30 million in Asia, 10 million in Africa, and the remaining 20 million in Europe, Canada, the United States and Australia (Embalch, 1993).

UNICEF has described three categories of street children. “Children at risk” are of the urban poor and they form the reservoir from which street children emerge. “Children on the streets” still maintain regular family contact. They come to the streets to find employment and income, and return to their families or households at night. A significant number attend school on a part time basis. For “children of the street,” the streets are where they work and reside. They typically have little contact with caregivers (Ali, Shahab, Ushijima & de Muynck, 2004; Lator, 1999).

In developed or industrialized nations, the majority of street children leave home to reside or work on the streets to escape dysfunctional families, abuse, and neglect or out of a desire for freedom, not because of socio-economic factors (Price, 1989). Homeless youth are likely to come from abusive or dysfunctional families. The typical street children are youths from middle or higher income homes who have left home temporarily. These children have typically been unable to cope with interpersonal or other family problems (le Roux, 1996). In the United States, various estimates have put the number of runaway or homeless youth between 500,000 and 2.8 million (Slesnick, Dashora, Letcher, Erdem & Serovich, 2009). Abuse is an oft-cited reason for leaving home. Youth report leaving home, or being asked to leave home because of family conflict, physical or sexual abuse and/or parental

unwillingness or inability to care for them (Slesnick et al., 2009). Prior studies reveal that 50%-83% of these youth have experienced physical and/or sexual abuse, neglect, and parental rejection (Martinez, 2006; Sullivan & Knutson, 2000; Thrane, Hoyt, Whitbeck & Yoder, 2006; Tyler, Hoyt, & Whitbeck, 2000; Whitbeck, Hoyt, & Bao, 2000). It can be noted that homeless youth in the United States leave their homes not due to reasons of economic survival; but instead, for reasons of independence and mental, physical or emotional survival.

While there is no published literature detailing the issue of street children in Thailand, there is information concerning the issue from developing countries around the world. Common concerns throughout many developing countries include poverty or economic factors, migration to more urban areas, and access to education or other services. These can be applied to some of the children and families in Thailand.

ECONOMIC CAUSES

Economic causes and subsequent poverty are salient factors for children to live and work on the streets. Studies in Ibadan and Lagos, Nigeria have indicated that most of the youths were driven to the street for economic survival and took up jobs consistent with local commercial patterns of activity (Aderinto, 2000; Olley, 2005). In India, economic hardships experienced by families in rural areas coupled with the promise of employment and better living conditions in the urban centers are among the main reasons for families migrating to Bombay. Children in these families may turn to the streets in order to find opportunities to contribute financially to household income (D'Lima & Gosalia, 1992; Patel, 1990; Rane & Shroff, 1994). A study in Pakistan found that three-fourths of the street children had fathers with little or no education, resulting in unemployment. Many of the street children had families who had migrated the larger cities in an effort to find employment opportunities. The high cost of city living made it very difficult for families to make ends meet; thus, child labor became crucial for family survival (Ali et al., 2004). Migration to more urban areas becomes complex as families struggle to survive.

Similar underlying reasons are found in other parts of Africa. In Khartoum, Sudan, most working boys and girls reported that they began working on the streets because of economic factors, such as not having enough food at home, needing to contribute financially to their poor family, and being unable to pay their school fees (Plummer, Kudrati, & Dafalla

El Hag Yousif, 2007). Economic poverty has been related to family crisis and identified as a major cause of street children in Uganda (Young, 2004). In Nigeria, two studies showed that only 4% of fathers of street children attended higher institutions, and 68% of mothers had no formal education. The inability of parents to provide to their children played a prominent role in the child leaving the home (Aderinto, 2000).

Related economic reasons are found in Latin America. Families of origin of these youth typically live in extreme poverty. The vast majority of street youth find themselves there due to economic factors, and nearly all are engaged in some form of economic activity (Rizzini & Lusk, 1995). Scheper-Hughes describes the situation in Brazil as a failed economic development model, contributing to familial poverty (Scheper-Hughes & Hoffman, 1998).

In Vietnam, both family poverty and a lack of comprehensive formalized support at state level lead children to a life of working on the streets. Vietnam has limited resources and burgeoning national debts; this country does not have the means to assist the impoverished families and children (Burr, 2006). Finding work on the streets becomes an identifiable solution to family poverty.

Overwhelmingly, poverty and economic factors contribute to children residing or working on the streets in developing nations worldwide. Families and children may feel that it is imperative for a child to contribute to the household income.

FAMILY DYNAMICS

Abusive or neglectful family environments are significant reasons for children to leave home and move towards the streets. In Rio de Janeiro, a common theme found in narratives of street children includes some form of violence in the home. Incidents of prison or death of family members can also be identified (Butler, 2009). In one study, nearly 30% of Ethiopian street children reported leaving the home because of family disharmony. In Latin America, children residing on the street reported that the quality of home life in their family or origin was lacking in affection and stability and that the street community was a comparatively preferable alternative (Rizzini & Lusk, 1995).

Sudanese street children report leaving home because of family disagreements, physical abuse or exploitation, and being thrown out of their home (Plummer et al., 2007). In

Nigeria, polygamy plays a role as a father takes many wives. This results in very large families, with children feeling neglected (Aderinto, 2000). Many runaway youth in Singapore note conflict with parents and express bitterness about their family and personal situations (Khong, 2009). 34% of street children in Kampala, Uganda stated that mistreatment by parents or guardians was the primary reason for leaving home (Young, 2002).

Negative family dynamics, including abuse and neglect, result in the decision for some children to leave home. The streets offer an escape from harmful family environments.

EXTERNAL CAUSES

Other factors contributing to street migration include becoming orphaned, and displacement due to violence and conflict. In Uganda, HIV/AIDS contribute to parental deaths and children becoming orphaned. 30% of street children in one study resided on the streets due to becoming orphaned (Young, 2002). A Sudanese study reported that large proportions of children living and working on the streets had one or both parents die. Approximately half of the children came from war-torn southern states or drought-afflicted western states (Plummer et al., 2007). In these states where resources are scarce, many families are at risk for disease or malnourishment, and subsequently, mortality.

Many children are affected by internal displacement in Columbia. Violence has led to decades of mass migrations of population inside the country, and many of the street children in this group fall under the age of 5 (Pinzon-Rondon, Hofferth, & Briceno, 2008). As families evacuate their homes in fear of violence or death, children begin to turn to the streets as a way to find economic activity.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY OF STREET CHILDREN

Street children can be found participating in a variety of economic activities across the world. In Latin America, children can be found singing on buses in Bogota, acting as tour guides in Rio, transporting or selling cocaine in Cochabamba, vending newspapers in San Salvador, shining shoes in Guatemala City, begging in Brasilia, or selling sex in Mexico City. The list of wares or services provided is limited only by the imagination of these survivalist children (Rizzini & Lusk, 1995).

Vending goods seems to be the primary economic activity of street children in Khartoum, Sudan. Boys mainly vend plastic bags, produce, water or other items. For girls,

work primarily consists of selling fried beans or ground nuts, and vending small items, such as toys, handkerchiefs, and bracelets (Plummer et al., 2007).

Data obtained in a study of southwestern Nigerian street children showed a more laborious employment landscape for street children. Children served as porters in the market places, served as bus conductors, washed cars, and pushed trolleys. They carried many different items in the trolleys, such as food items, water and debris (Aderinto, 2000).

Scavenging for recyclable materials such as paper, plastic and metal is the major economic activity for street children in India (D'Lima & Gosalia, 1992; Srivasta, 1995). In Pakistan, nearly half of the street children participating in a study were flower vendors or street peddlers, 24% car washers, 9% scavengers, while the rest were shoe shiners, newspaper sellers, or beggars (Ali et al., 2004).

CHALLENGES FACING STREET CHILDREN

Children living and working on the streets face numerous challenges and hardships. In many cases, basic needs, such as warm clothing and access to bathing and toilet facilities are not met (D'Lima & Gosalia, 1992; Patel, 1990; Rane & Shroff, 1994). Some of these include abuse and neglect, harassment from authorities, exploitation, rape, and lack of nutrition and medical care. These experiences impact development and can contribute to feelings of depression and low self-esteem.

Street children are more likely to have suffered trauma due to past and present circumstances. In a study of 200 street children in India, all of them reported some form of abuse. The six different types of abuse explored were: general abuse and neglect, health abuse, verbal abuse, psychological abuse, and sexual abuse. Abuse was found both working on the streets and from their family, and were demonstrated in the form of lack of adequate care and protection, absence of hygienic and sanitary living conditions, physical beatings, exposure to morally disturbing events, and rape (Mathur, Rathore, & Mathur, 2009).

Street children also face harassment from police or other authorities. Children in Bombay reported police and authorities as being corrupt, at times breaking the laws themselves. Incidences were narrated of police extorting money from the street children, threatening to arrest them if they did not comply (Kombarakaran, 2004). Interviews with 28 street boys in Addis Abbaba, Ethiopia revealed that one-third of them were beaten on a

weekly basis (Lalor, 1997). 61% of street children in Pakistan declared having been harassed and physically abused by police or had their daily earnings snatched away (Ali et al., 2004). Children in Latin America point to brutality from police, those who are meant to safeguard their survival. Many view street children as predators, linked to crime. Questions have been raised about the issue of the murder of street children who have been targeted by death squads and vigilantes, who rationalize this 'street cleaning' (Rizzini & Lusk, 1995). It is reported that between the years of 1988-1990, close to five thousand street children and adolescents were murdered in Brazil (Scheper-Hughes & Hoffman, 1998). The Candelaria massacre in Brazil is perhaps the most extreme example of this violence. In July of 1993, five men open fired on a group of more than 40 street children asleep in front of a church. A total of eight children died; six immediately, and two at a nearby beach where they were taken and killed execution-style. Several ex-police officers were accused and tried for the murders. (Scheper-Hughes & Hoffman, 1998).

Due to a lack of caregiver protection, street children are vulnerable to rape and sexual abuse. A study in Ibadan, Nigeria revealed that 100% of the female respondents engaged in sex work, and that 89% of them had been raped (Olley, 2006). A majority of a sample of street girls in Ethiopia reported fear of rape and that they did not feel safe on the streets. The average age of first experience of rape was 13.8 years. Almost all street girls were routinely solicited for sex, and over 40% resorted to prostitution at some point (Lalor, 1999). Exposure to sex work, and sexual abuse places these females at a higher risk for sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy.

Children exposed to the magnitude of traumatic events such as abusive households and extreme poverty are impacted emotionally, behaviorally and mentally. Behavioral and emotional difficulties, particularly depression, were marked features of a study on street children in the Ukraine. The majority of respondents expressed feelings of hopelessness and sadness. Ten percent had harmed themselves in the past, with suicidal intent (Kerfoot et al., 2007). Street children in Nigeria display antisocial and risky behaviors such as street fighting, drug use, refusal of school, and alcohol abuse (Olley, 2006). Glue-sniffing and substance abuse were also reported by a large number of begging street boys in Kenya (Kaime-Atterhog & Ahlberg, 2008). Risky behaviors are also noted in children living on the streets in Rio de Janeiro. Living in the moment, or enjoying the freedoms and consumption

while living on the streets, is associated with fatalism, an attitude that believes that death may come at any moment. Such an attitude, which can on occasions represent a reckless disregard for one's own safety, encourages the taking of greater risks and engagement in dangerous activities (Butler, 2009).

Nutritional, hygiene and physical risks are also harsh conditions which street children face. In Pakistan, only 27% of sample street children were able to eat three meals a day. Only a third of children were able to access toilet and bathing facilities. A quarter of the sample had stunted growth, and another quarter were under-nourished (Ali et al., 2004). Many of the employment forms these children participate in, such as scavenging through garbage dumps or engaging in sex work, pose a dangerous threat. There are reports of children in Indonesia who have been buried alive while climbing onto the tops of trash trucks being emptied (Parker, 2002). Homeless children are enticed to work on jermals, or fishing platforms located kilometers off the coasts of Java and Sumatra. Up to ten children work on wooden platforms 50x70 m in size, being held hostage amidst dangerous waves, little food, and bad working conditions (Saufian, 1999).

STATELESS FAMILIES AND CHILDREN IN THAILAND

There are several universal reasons why 51 million children a year across the globe are not registered at birth. These reasons include a lack of awareness of the importance of registration; the costs in both time and money of registering a new birth; the distance to a registry office; uncertainty that the child will survive; political turmoil; legal, social or cultural barriers; and the fear of persecution by authorities (Heap & Cody, 2009). In the area known as the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) migration is high as poverty pushes people from rural areas to the more urban areas to find work. Of the six countries studied in one report-Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, China's Yunnan province and Vietnam-the bulk of the migrant worker flow has been to Cambodia, Thailand and China's Yunnan province (Macan-Markar, 2006). Economic factors are perhaps the primary reasons why families migrate to more urban areas. Many migrant families from Cambodia and Burma take dirty and dangerous work in farms, factories, fishing boats, construction sites, and middle class homes, earning less than local people, but more than they would in their country of origin (Bryant, 2005).

There are an estimated one million children in Thailand without birth registration documents, which severely restrict their access to education, healthcare and legal protection from abuse (UNICEF, 2010). The Thai government has instructed all state-run hospitals to issue birth registration documents to any baby born to any parents, regardless of their backgrounds. However, in practice, many hospital staff reportedly fail to do so in the case of migrants. Most Burmese women who are not registered migrants dare not go to state-hospitals to give birth, as they fear arrest and deportation if the hospital notices they are unregistered. As a result, they deliver their children at their work sites using local midwives (Thawdar, 2009).

OVERVIEW OF THAILAND, POLICIES FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD WELFARE

Thailand is near the top of the medium human development category, with a ranking of 87 on the United Nations Human Development Index. The population is close to 67 million, with a literacy rate at 92%. 33% of the population lives in urban area, and 20% of central government expenditures are allocated to education, with UNICEF figures indicating a primary school enrollment ratio of 94. Some of the issues facing vulnerable children in this country include child labor, human trafficking, lack of legal identification, and barriers to opportunities such as education (UNICEF, 2010). Those especially at risk are from minority groups in remote or very poor areas, often along Thailand's borders with Cambodia, Lao and Myanmar.

The legal minimum working age in Thailand is 13. Employment of children at night between the hours of ten p.m. and six a.m. is prohibited. While in theory the government has laws to combat child labor, enforcement is weak. In many of the slums of Chiang Mai, staff members from non-governmental organizations report a large number of children who work on the streets at night. Many of the children are sent to the tourist areas at night to beg or sell flowers (personal communication, April 8, 2010). In labor camps in Pattaya, children sell flowers, beg, and even work in restaurants and bars during late night hours (personal communication, March 2010).

The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS) is the overseeing agency responsible for the social welfare of Thai nationals. The responsibility of the MSDHS is to promote social development and to create public equality and social justice.

MDHS provides assistance to vulnerable children from birth to age 18. In many instances, families are unable to provide for their children. Social workers monitor children who are in vulnerable home environments. Many social welfare employees receive a designation as a Child Protection Officer. These employees may work in either the public or private sector, but all are authorized by the Thai government to ensure the safety of children. They are legally allowed to remove a child from the home, and determine appropriate placements and plans for the child. In most cases, children are placed in shelters or group homes. Foster families may also be provided for children who cannot remain in the home. This is a relatively new practice in Thailand, with few available foster homes. Foster families receive a small stipend from the government. The office is also responsible for studying and analyzing social situations, and implement and monitor programs concerning social welfare. This office allocates and administers resources, including the Social Development and Human Security Fund, as well as the Child Protection Fund. Under the umbrella of MDHS, Provincial Social Development and Human Security offices are located in each of the 75 provinces of Thailand.

Child welfare policy in Thailand is framed by the Child Protection Act (CPA) of 2003. This legislation was designed to protect children and promote child welfare within the context of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The enactment of the Child Protection Act of 2003 was the Thai government's effort to promote child welfare on a national level. Regarding the treatment of a child, a person is forbidden to force, threaten, induce, encourage, consent to, or act in any other way that results in a child becoming a beggar, living on the street, or use a child as an instrument for begging or committing crimes, or act in any way that results in the exploitation of a child. Section 32 guarantees that street children are eligible for welfare assistance, while Section 68 states that the government shall set aside a budget for the establishment of the Child Protection Fund at the Office of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security for use as capital for providing welfare assistance, as well as safeguarding and behavior promotion of child and child's family and foster family (Thailand, 2003).

In Thailand, certain groups of children face barriers to accessing education. While the law states that all children are eligible for education, regardless of legal status, students must have legal identification in order to receive certificates acknowledging school attendance. In

addition, matriculation past grade six requires these certificates. Migrant children are particularly at risk, as moving makes it more difficult to obtain or maintain residence identification. In addition, the education system in Thailand does not provide free transportation for all children. Families must either take the children to school themselves, or use public transportation. Families must also pay for school uniforms and materials. Government education is only free through grade nine; grades ten through twelve cost money for families. If a student wishes to enroll in these high school grades, then families must be willing to pay for tuition, books and material fees, and transportation. For impoverished families, these incurred expenses may prove to be too much to afford, invariably resulting in lower enrollment rates.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This is an exploratory, qualitative study that used semi-structured interviews and participatory observations to study street children in Thailand. The researcher of this study identified the Thai cities of Bangkok, Chiang Mai and Pattaya as having significant numbers of street children. Though no exact numbers have been determined regarding street children in each location, the urban environment and larger population numbers in these cities suggest there would be higher incidences of youth street migration, as well as agencies and staff members working with these populations. During the time of data collection, the principal investigator was completing a field placement for Master of Social Work requirements at the Father Ray Foundation Drop-In Center and Outreach Work for street children in Pattaya, Thailand. Semi-structured interviews with key informants were at an agency in each city to explore their individual perceptions of youth street migration. Informed consent was obtained prior to each interview (see Appendix A). Interviews were conducted at the Mercy Centre in Bangkok, the Y.M.C.A. in Chiang Mai, and the Father Ray Foundation in Pattaya. Focus was placed on the reasons of youth street migration, and the available and imperative services that are offered to them and/or their families. This study was conducted with the approval of the San Diego State University Institutional Review Board.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study utilized a qualitative and exploratory design to answer the research questions. This design was chosen because of the varied responses possible for youth street migration. A semi-structured interview and open-ended questions were used to provide for in-depth responses (see Appendix B). In addition to questions concerning the reasons for youth street migration, questions were asked about interventions utilized by the agency, and those that are considered to be the most important, effective, or suggested. In addition, questions were asked about the context of the villages and communities that youth and their families originate from. The purpose of this is to identify some of the most effective

approaches in working with these populations, as well as identify imperatives for addressing migration. Data was collected through these interviews, which lasted between 40 minutes and one hour. Interviews were digitally recorded, with the permission of the participants. Interviews were completed in private rooms, and each respondent was thanked at the end of the interview. No identifying information was placed on any of the transcriptions or notes.

SAMPLING

The sample frame consisted of key staff members at one agency in each city, three agencies total, who work directly with street children and/or their families. A smaller, more focused sample size was used to allow for deeper explorations. The sample frame was recruited through established contacts made through faculty at Thammasat University in Bangkok, and staff at the Father Ray Foundation in Pattaya. Three key staff members were interviewed at the Father Ray Foundation Drop-In Center for Street Children in Pattaya. Two staff members were interviewed at the YMCA Street Children and Child Workers Project in Chiang Mai. Two staff members were also interviewed at the Mercy Centre in Bangkok. All participants are native Thai nationals over the age of 18, and worked as professionals in their respective agencies. Two males and five females were interviewed. At the beginning of each interview, participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and asked if they had any questions. Participants were given the informed consent form, and each participant willingly signed the form. All interviews were conducted in English. Due to the small staff size of the agencies, detailed demographics of each participant were not collected. Revealing specific demographics such as age would be a challenge to maintaining confidentiality.

Each of the chosen agencies is located in an urban area, and brief descriptions of the three cities are presented here in order for the reader to have a contextual understanding of the environment.

Chiang Mai

Located in the mountainous northern area of Thailand, Chiang Mai is Thailand's second largest city with a population of 250,000 in the city and 1.6 million in the province. The northern part of Thailand is largely agricultural, with many hill tribes in the area. Hill tribe populations are mostly stateless, and are not recognized by the government as Thai nationals. This lack of legal status creates particular vulnerabilities for these populations,

including barriers to education, no access to social healthcare services, lack of labor protection, and a risk for human trafficking. The major sources of revenue in Chiang Mai are the service sector, industry, commerce and agriculture. The city is a major cultural attraction, surrounded by natural beauty with centuries-old temples. Chiang Mai receives millions of visitors per year, both Thai and foreigners, and the service sector is the largest source of revenue.

Bangkok

Bangkok is the capital and the largest city in Thailand, with an estimated population of ten million, and 31.6% of the urban population in Thailand lives primarily in Bangkok. The per capita income in Bangkok is more than triple the national average. Residents from all provinces of Thailand migrate to the city for work, education or other opportunities, with 8.6% of the population having migrated in the previous five years. Bangkok receives the largest number of visitors per year in Thailand, and the tourism industry is a major source of revenue. This city of variety is home to many high-rise condos and office buildings, as well as slum communities.

Pattaya

Pattaya is located on the eastern seaboard of Thailand, approximately two hours southeast of Bangkok. Pattaya has a population with estimates between 80,000 and 100,000. Precise figures are difficult to determine due to the transient nature of the city-many expatriates reside there permanently and semi-permanently, while Thai nationals work in Pattaya yet continue to be registered as residents of their native communities. Tourism is the largest economic industry in Pattaya, receiving approximately five million visitors per year, and the city is infamous for the sex tourism industry. Visitors travel from all over Thailand as well as all over the world, while thousands of Thai residents migrate to Pattaya to work in the tourist industry. The city is well-developed, with continuous emerging construction projects which provide opportunities for migrant laborers.

INSTRUMENT

A semi-structured interview guide was used for data collection. The principal investigator/author of this thesis designed the interview instrument. The interview guide was

designed based upon information found in the literature review regarding the reasons for youth street migration, as well as participatory observations made by the principal investigator through the field placement at the Father Ray Foundation Drop-In Center in Pattaya. The principal investigator spent time with agency staff members performing outreach work on the streets of Pattaya, as well as visiting slum communities where children working on the streets lived with their families. In addition, the researcher worked at the Drop-In Center with youth full-time, observing their behaviors and interactions with agency staff. These observations contributed to the general inquiries concerned with youth street migration.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Two types of data collection were used in this study, interviews and field observations. Prior to conducting the interviews, the researcher visited the Mercy Centre in Bangkok and the Y.M.C.A. in Chiang Mai. The principal investigator collected and wrote field observations from these visits in a notebook, later typing them on private files. These notes were used to inform the study. Interviews conducted with key staff members were also crucial to informing the study about the reasons for youth street migration. The familiarity with interviewing as a social work skill shows how social workers already have some connection with a key ability required for social work research (D'Cruz & Jones, 2004). An interview guide relies on some general themes to be explored with all informants. However, while there is some structure, the researcher can ask probing questions and follow up on responses as needed to develop the depth required (D'Cruz & Jones, 2004). The semi-structured open-ended interviews with staff members allowed for individual perceptions of youth street migration to be explored. The interviews were conducted on-site at each agency, in a location of the participant's choosing.

DATA ANALYSIS

The measures were intended to explore the reasons for youth street migration from key staff members and their respective cities of Pattaya, Bangkok and Chiang Mai. Semi-structured interviews were conducted privately between the researcher and participants. Each interview was transcribed verbatim, the original recorded files were kept, and content analysis was used to identify themes of the collected data and compare to the existing

literature. The investigator read through the interview data as well as the field observation data several times to identify patterns or common themes. The process of reading through the data several times allowed the researcher to look for additional insight in each of the interviews. Specific coding was then attached to the collected data, and content analysis was used to analyze the data. Content analysis can be described as involving the development of codes and categories the researcher based on theory and literature (D’Cruz & Jones, 2004). The responses of the interviews were clustered according to the identified themes. Informant’s responses were grouped under the specific themes, and were presented in the research according to these themes. These themes were also compared to the field observation notes. Through major and minor themes, the researcher was able to link the data to previous literature and concepts.

TRUSTWORTHINESS AND CREDIBILITY

One way in which trustworthiness was established was through the development of an early familiarity with the culture of the participating agencies. Preliminary visits were made to both the YMCA in Chiang Mai, as well as the Mercy Centre in Bangkok. Through these visits, the principal investigator was able to establish a relationship of trust with the individuals taking part of the study. In the case of the Father Ray Foundation Drop-In Center, the principal investigator had been completing a field placement internship. The researcher worked in a full-time capacity at the Center working with street children and staff members. Through this field practicum, the researcher was able to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of these youth, and the interactions between them and the staff. In all three locations, the principal investigator was able to gain an adequate understanding of the background and context of the agencies.

Validity was also established by comparing the results of this study to the existing literature concerned with these issues, and corroborated themes were identified. In addition, the themes were reviewed independently by a second reader, and were discussed with the principal investigator until a consensus was reached. A strategy of triangulation was also used to cross-check information and conclusions (Johnson, 1997). The identified themes found in the transcribed interviews, field observations and existing literature were compared for corroboration. The common major themes are examined in the discussion section.

LIMITATIONS

This study had four limitations including limited English proficiency on behalf of the participants, a small sample frame from each agency, only professionals were interviewed, and data was looked at by only one independent reviewer. First, while all of the participants were generally fluent in English, deeper themes or explorations may not have been revealed due to the inability to effectively communicate the correct words in English. Second, each agency interviewed had a small staff working directly with the populations, limiting a more varied sample frame, and not all themes may have been saturated. Third, only professional staff members were interviewed, which provided a lack of explorations of perceptions from current or former street children, and their family members. Finally, the data was not subjected to an independent review, limiting a more objective analysis.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The findings from the field observation notes and the interviews conducted in Pattaya, Chiang Mai, and Bangkok are mostly consistent with the themes identified in the literature review. The two primary reasons for youth street migration according to the data collected indicate economic factors and family dynamics. Youth living and/or working on the streets find various forms of economic activity, including begging and selling. They are vulnerable to prostitution, diseases, and drug- and human trafficking. The agencies observe that education opportunities are one of the most important interventions offered to the youth. In addition, participants state additional imperatives that must be addressed while working with this population.

In an effort to preserve the integrity of the interviews and data collected, the responses will be written here verbatim. Some sentences may be grammatically incorrect in English; however, the investigator feels that the general concepts and intentions of these responses are still capable of being understood.

REASONS FOR STREET MIGRATION

In all three cities of Pattaya, Chiang Mai, and Bangkok, the two primary reasons for youth street migration are economic factors and family dynamics, according to the findings of this study. These two main reasons are consistent with the literature regarding this issue. For children of the street, family dynamics appear to be the primary reason, while for children on the street, economic factors push them to the streets. In Pattaya and Chiang Mai, participants noted that children come from all parts and regions of Thailand.

In Chiang Mai, however, both staff agreed that youth come from Chiang Rai province, the neighboring province of Chiang Mai province. They also both noted that a small percentage come from Myanmar and Laos, and one participant noted that an estimated ten percent migrate from Hill Tribe areas.

New insight was found in Bangkok, where one participant noted a new phenomenon among street children.

There are a new group of street children that their parents go with them, this is a new topic that we found in Silom and Sanam Luang area. It is a new group we have just found, the street children and their families that live with them. These families have been street kids from the beginning. They are street kids and then that get married together. They have a new generation, so that most of them used to be street kids at the beginning, and when they grow up, they live their life like that. The man and woman stay together.

What is being described in these responses is a situation in which children who have lived and worked on the streets become accustomed to this lifestyle, and continue to be homeless into adulthood and child-rearing. This attitude contributes to their children living and working on the streets.

Children of the Streets

Children of the streets have been defined as those who live on the streets, with little or no contact with family members. Interestingly, the two staff members interviewed in Chiang Mai noted the low incidence of children of the streets in this major city. Said one participant, “If they do not have a place to stay, they will move to Bangkok or Pattaya by themselves.”

In Pattaya, all three participants agreed that children living on the streets leave home because of family dynamics. Said one participant, “I think it is because of the failure of the family. That is the first reason. The children do not feel loved in their families, by their parents.”

A second staff member echoed this sentiment, when asked why youth begin living and working on the street:

They have problems with their families, some come from broken families, for some of them it is very hard to live with their families for several reasons. Because in this economic situation, most families have to work. Parents concentrate on working and making money, then less time to concentrate on kids. Kids need more than money: they need time, they need love, they need a person to talk to, someone to help them solve their problems.

In Bangkok, these children of the streets were referred to as “permanent street children,” and both participants agreed that family dynamics were the reason for children to live on the streets. “The main reason that the street kids come to Bangkok is not because of

money, but the problem of the broken family. When they are not happy in the family, they will run away from the family.” Another participant, when asked why the youth leave their homes to come to Bangkok, notes “most of the family problems. Broken families, when the families are broken, nobody takes care of them. So they need to find a way by themselves.” When asked to clarify what is meant by the term broken family, this participant noted that it was a family situation in which the parents had become divorced or separated. These findings are consistent with the literature review, which acknowledges the significant role that family dynamics plays in youth street migration.

Children on the Streets

Children on the streets are the population who live with either their parents, family members of some other form of guardian, and who work on the streets either day or night. In most cases in Pattaya, Chiang Mai and Bangkok, these families have migrated from other provinces in Thailand, and a significant portion of them are “stateless,” and/or have immigrated from a neighboring country.

In Pattaya, many children on the streets migrate with their families. In most cases, the families migrate from rural areas of Thailand in search of construction or labor jobs, and families will live in camps, or areas that are referred to as slums. These families mainly migrate from the Northern or Northeastern part of Thailand, and face economic difficulties in their communities of origin. Observes one participant: “Most families are from the Northeastern part of Thailand. These families have a lack of education, and are farmers, work at the labor level. During the rainy seasons, they can do their work. During the dry season, they have to look for other work to find ways to survive.”

Most of the children working on the streets of Chiang Mai live with family members. The main reason that they migrate to Chiang Mai is economic. Notes one staff member, “they need to earn more money.” Youth who migrate to Chiang Mai alone typically end up living with a relative such as an uncle or cousin. “In Chiang Mai, it is different from the kids in Bangkok or Pattaya. When they move to town, they move in with their family. For example, if they have a family, they have a cousin, a sister, and aunt or uncle, that stays in Chiang Mai. Their family stays on the hillside, and they send their children to stay with an

aunt or uncle.” Families will send their children to the urban city to find more economic opportunities than are available in their native communities.

However, many youth move to Chiang Mai with their immediate families, as these families search for increased economic opportunity. Many of the families come from agricultural communities, and are no longer able to sufficient income from farming and agriculture. Most of these families come from Chiang Rai province, and a small percentage come from Myanmar and Laos. About ten percent come from Hill Tribe areas. According to one staff member, the number one reason that these families come to Chiang Mai is because they do not have any land for agriculture. “Previously, they had land, and they would go around the mountains and use the land. But the government said they could not do that, because they cut up the big trees. The trees are the resources for the water. When they cut up the big trees, they will not have water in the future.”

Some of the farmers had not been using the land in sustainable ways, resulting in removal of their livelihoods by the government. In these cases, families had little recourse left but to migrate to the larger city in search of other livelihoods.

In Bangkok, staff members note that the children on the streets, who continue to live with their family, mainly go to the Asok area of the city to find money. “The children come along from the villages, Khlong Thoei. They will walk to Asok to find the money. That one we call half street kid/half village kid,” said one staff during an interview. Khlong Toey refers to the area where the agency is located, which is one of the largest slum areas of Bangkok. In contrast, Asok is an affluent area located in central Bangkok, with a high percentage of Westerners living and/or working among the numerous high-rise office buildings and condos. This prosperous area provides a viable place for street children in search of money to migrate towards.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

In Chiang Mai, staff members estimate that the majority of the youth working on the streets sell flowers. Notes one, “They sell flowers to Thai people, to the locals who take the flowers to the temple for prayer.” One staff member estimated that 80% of the youth sell flowers. She estimated that the other 20% of youth on the streets mainly work in the service

industry, working in restaurants and doing jobs such as cleaning and bussing. Another staff member observed that only very few youth beg on the streets for money.

The relative few numbers of youth begging on the streets of Chiang Mai is significantly different from the observations by staff regarding street children in Pattaya. In this city, all three staff interviewed noted that begging is the primary source of economic activity. “The first step is begging,” stated one participant, while both of the other participants listed begging first when asked about economic activities of the youth.

In Bangkok, begging was recognized as a source of economic activity, though not the primary one. “They clean the windows of cars on the street, and they beg to make money,” said one participant. Another participant noted that while the children do beg in Bangkok, it is more often during the day, not at night.

First job they work during the night, they work at the market, also at the shops along the streets, so that the children help the owners carry boxes. Each box they carry, the owner gives them ten baht. That is at night, but during the day, he will be a beggar, making the money along the street.

Other form of economic activity mentioned, particularly by all three participants in Pattaya, was stealing. “They steal money, or steal something they can sell,” said one, while a different participant noted that the youth sometimes steal money to buy food to eat. The third participant stated “they pickpocket, steal. Any way that they can survive, they do it. They do not care if it is wrong or right.” Two participants in Pattaya also noted the how youth will sell their bodies in the city’s infamous sex industry. “They will sell their bodies,” explained one, while the other noted how the youth will “go with the foreigner to sell body.” This is a highly relevant theme in the context Pattaya’s environment, as noted by the field observations of the researcher, and will be addressed further in later sections.

Responses varied among the three locations of Pattaya, Chiang Mai and Bangkok, yet were consistent within each agency. These findings suggest that there are high incidences of begging in Pattaya and Bangkok, yet less incidences occurring in Chiang Mai. Selling flowers is the primary work activity of youth in Chiang Mai.

SURVIVAL AND CHALLENGES FOR STREET CHILDREN

Basic survival, such as food and shelter, is something that these youth must find on a continual basis, sometimes resorting to finding food in the trash bin, according to one staff member in Pattaya. No major theme was found for the survival of street children, although

several of those interviewed did mention the presence of foundations, NGOs and government outreach workers or policemen. “Right now, many NGOs and government officers do outreach work, give information to the other kids, give advice,” said one staff member in Pattaya, while another one added “I think in Pattaya we have many foundations. Some foundations have shelters, and some kids go to other shelters.” Another staff member in Pattaya voiced a similar response. “They find resources from outreach workers, from policemen.” The idea here is that kids may choose to visit or stay at a shelter, receiving resources which could ultimately move them to a life off the street.

In Bangkok, staff at the agency may provide food or distribute resources such as toothbrush and toothpaste. “If they find us teachers, we can support them, but only one meal,” explained one staff member.

In Pattaya, one participant observed the role of *wats*, or Buddhist temples, specifically for food or shelter. “Temples will usually give the children some food. Sometimes the children will also sleep there.”

Sadly, street children face additional challenges as they struggle to survive on the streets. These challenges are varied, and while no single challenge is central to the responses, all staff members interviewed can mention difficulties encountered by these children. In Chiang Mai, both staff members interviewed agreed that the children who sell on the streets at night are in harm’s way for accidents. If youth are selling flowers on the streets at night, they are at risk for being physically injured by passing motorists. “For police, the transportation law, they do not allow people to sell things along the side of the road. It is dangerous for the children, so many accidents with the motorcycles.”

One staff member in Pattaya mentioned fighting, among themselves or with other gangs. At times, street children have been robbed. They can also encounter physical abuse, by either staff or young adults. These concerns lead to creations of self-protection for the youth.

Everything on the street is very dangerous. Not a safe place, when they sleep they always have to be careful. For example, the first time this one particular boy moved to our shelter, the first week he would sleep, he would try to touch a staff member all night, to make sure someone was always there, that someone would not leave him. Outside, everything is scary for them.

The constant vigilance that must be kept to protect oneself while living on the streets also translates into issues of fear and trust for these youth. “One of the biggest challenges is that they are scared to believe, scared to trust people,” noted another staff member in Pattaya.

When street children live in this state of mistrust and vulnerability, they are at risk for turning to coping mechanisms such as drugs or alcohol. “Most of them sleep under a bridge,” said a participant in Bangkok. She continued, “Most of them are drug addicted, drink alcohol, sniff aerosol cans.” She estimated that these youth averaged spending 60 baht on three aerosol cans each day. Youth also become at risk for contracting HIV because of drug use, noted this staff member. “Some kids are drug addicted. Heroin, they become infected with HIV because of the drug addictions. So the needles are infected, they also use amphetamines. Some of them, they use like a tablet, and after they do that, they die. They do not know how to use it, they overdose.”

One common theme found in both in Pattaya and Bangkok is the incidence of either having been or becoming trafficked. “The kids may become victims, and carry drugs for the seller,” states one participant in Bangkok. Said another in Pattaya, “Sometimes they join agents who work for drug trafficking, human trafficking. Sometimes they become involved.”

One participant in Bangkok noted how “immigrant” youth, or those that are not Thai nationals, have more likely been trafficked into the country, or the city, by so-called “gang leaders.” She stated

Thai street kids, they come to Bangkok by free will themselves, but the immigrant children are forced by gang leaders. They can come from Cambodia, Burma. The traffickers will cut their hands, take out their eyes, cut their legs to be a beggar on the street. These are immigrant children, not Thai children.

Another participant in Pattaya observed, “If they are on the streets begging, and look cute, somebody, the big man, comes to take care, rents them a room, gives them good food, gives them a lot of money. Then after that, the big man gets the kids to trust them, then after that, they sell their bodies to foreigners. It is like gangsters.”

A different participant in Pattaya mentioned the vulnerability of stateless youth, or those living in labor camps and who do not attend school during the day. For a child to be eligible for free education, he or she must be registered as a legal resident of Pattaya City.

If they do not come from Pattaya, they have to pay more money to go to school. Families want their children to go to school, but it is more expensive. During the day, the parents have to go to work at the construction zones all day, and they

worry about leaving their children at the camps all day. Very dangerous to leave daughters alone at the camps. Some guys can come up and do something to them.

INTERVENTIONS AND APPROACHES

Each of the agencies provides their own interventions, according to their perceived needs of the community being served. For this reason, this section will be divided according to location. A brief description of each agency from the researcher's field observation notes is also presented prior to the interview findings.

The Chiang Mai YMCA Street Children and Child Worker Project (SCCWP) has been in existence for ten years, and provides outreach services to ten rundown or "slum" communities in Chiang Mai. Currently there are approximately 200 people receiving services from the program. The families in these ten slums typically come from mountains and villages surrounding Chiang Mai. The families are a mix of Thai nationals and migrants from neighboring Burma. In some cases, the family members were born in Thailand, yet still do not have Thai legal status. The adults work mainly in construction or labor jobs, and the primary economic activity of the children is selling flowers in the streets and bars. The target population of this project is children on the streets and their families.

The Mercy Centre is located in the Khlong Thoei area of Bangkok, home to the largest slum community in the city. The Mercy Centre is home to a shelter for over 180 abandoned, orphaned and trafficked youth, in addition to homes for children and adults with HIV/AIDS. There is a Legal Aid Clinic onsite for poor children, and a community drop-in centre for anyone in need. There are also staff members who perform outreach work for children living and/or working on the streets.

The Drop-In Center and Outreach Work, a project of the Father Ray Foundation in Pattaya, is able to accommodate up to thirty youth at one time, and serves mainly as a temporary shelter for youth who stay an average of three months. Typically there are 15–20 youth staying at any given time, ranging in age from toddler to late-teens. Youth residing at the shelter attend area schools, while older residents receive vocational training or find employment with the support of staff members. Residents transition to more permanent housing, such as the Father Ray Foundation's Children's Village or Children's Home. The youth arrive at the Drop-In Center for varied reasons, from slums in Pattaya to surrounding

areas of the province. Staff members from the Center perform outreach work in the streets of Pattaya, with most youth being found in the dense tourist areas of the city.

Pattaya

Staff members at the agency in Pattaya strive to secure legal identification cards for the youth aged 15 and older staying at the previously mentioned Drop-In Center. This lengthy process involves fact-finding missions and confirmation from family members or previous neighbors verifying place and time of birth. This process is not always successful, however, and many children do not receive the white Thai national identification cards.

This agency can register youth staying at the shelter as residents of Pattaya, giving them increased access to education. All youth staying at the shelter attend school, and staff consider this an effective way to prevent youth from a life on the streets. “At these camps, when we take these kids to drop-in, it is an example of protection work. Before, the kids go outside, run away to the streets. We protect them by taking them to the agency. We take them to study in school.” Staff members talk to the families about providing the children more permanent housing at other agency projects. When families are unable to financially care for their children, they agree to this transition so that the youth are ensured opportunities such as education. Observes one staff member, “They (the families) want their kids to go to school, so we help them with the decisions to move their children to another project because the families will not have the money to send them to high school, to university.”

Staff members from the agency also offer support, advice and counseling to youth and families living in the migrant camps. “We talk with mom and dad, about taking responsibility, we to talk about mom and dad saving for their future, so they can back to their hometowns and farm and do many things by themselves, then in the future they will be able to take care of their kids. They can take their kids back to their hometown, they have a good chance.” Another participant mentions the importance of financial responsibility. “We talk to them about not spending so much money. That they could go back to their hometowns and grow their own food, their own rice and vegetables.” If the families are able to return to their villages and find ways to farm, and create and save an income, then in the future, they will be able to support their children and be a cohesive family once again.

Chiang Mai

One approach that the agency in Chiang Mai uses is to work with the government in policy and advocacy. They collaborate with local partners such as the police and local government to advocate policies that protect youth. One example of this is a policy that youth can only sell flowers or work in food shops and restaurants. They are not allowed to be in pubs or clubs. In addition, they are not allowed to work past 9:30 p.m. If they are caught working past this hour, they are subjected to fines from the police.

Another collaboration that the agency has with the local government addresses the issue of lack of land for the families in the rural villages. When asked about if the government was doing anything to address this problem, one staff member responded:

This is a big problem. We want to have a meeting with the government, to have them help to let people go back to their village, for the government to give them back their land. The farmers are depleting all of the resources by cutting all of the trees. We want to the government to find ways to help their families, farm their lands correctly and sell their products. The government wants to help the families, asking this agency to be the coordinator, talk to the families in the community. They are asking us to connect with the people in the communities.

However, this staff member points out that while the government may have the good intention of helping community members in the villages, implementation is not necessarily carried out. “Sometimes the government talks, but doesn’t do.”

Informing families about available resources and local laws, especially regarding education, is also an important component of agency activities.

For the Thai government, the policy is now that there is education for all of the people through junior high school. Every child must finish at least junior high school. For our project, five or six years ago, we had a problem that the families did not know about this policy. We go to the community, let them know that they have to send their children to school. Our duty is to let the families know about education, to talk to them, to say let your children go to school, to have a better life. It is hard work. We talk about government policy, the law. Thai people must know and understand the land. But many times they do not know about the law. We talk about the law with them.

By going into the communities and providing this knowledge to the families, staff members from this agency in Chiang Mai are doing the important service of increasing school attendance for the youth in these families. Staff also believe that access to education is central to the effort of preventing and removing youth from a life on the streets. Says one staff member, “We get them to think by themselves. For example, if they do not let the kids

go to school, the children will not have a better life. We help families think about the future, to think about a better life, more than selling flowers.” One staff member visits the slum communities on a regular basis, averaging one visit to each community per week. During these visits, the staff member does informal educational activities with the youth. This provides support and encourages the youth to continue their studies. Scholarships are available for students to continue through high school, and even university if desired. The agency currently provides 35 youth with scholarships.

It is also important for the staff members to incorporate life skills lessons, and to serve as role models for the youth. “We go to the communities every day. Not only to help them with education, but to help them with other things, such as teamwork, life skills.” Staff members had previously identified youth leaders in each community, who also serve as role models for other youth. These are now teenaged youth who have been with the project for the last ten years, who are a good influence for the other youth, and who also serve as reminders of how community outreach and opportunities for education can help youth improve their futures.

Bangkok

In Bangkok, staff members use outreach interventions with the street children. They spend time on the streets talking with the youth, and refer to themselves as teachers. Initially when outreach first began, staff members used an informal education approach. Explains one,

At the beginning, it was education, and included art, but also teaching them how to write their names, and write in Thai. But things have changed now, and the students get bored, studying education and art. Now I have a conversation, ask them what is going on in their lives, and what is lacking in their lives, and how I can support them. So we have changed the way to teach them.

This staff member will typically see the same youth every week. “The same group, the same area. Sometimes there are new ones, each month, new kids join the group. But we always include the old ones.” It is normally 16–17 youth per week, but the number may occasionally be as high as 30.

The other participant uses a similar outreach approach, spending time with the youth in their environments on the streets. He estimates working with about 23 youth per week, and he also has changed his approach with the youth.

At the beginning, I used music with the street kids, but now there has been a transformation. Now the street kids have changed, because they know how to take care of themselves, they know how to be smart on the streets. And they know how to be a sex worker, how to find money from the foreigner. So it has changed, from using education and music on the streets to teaching them how to take care of themselves, how to use a condom, how to protect themselves from HIV.

This amount of time this staff member spends with the youth varies, anywhere from five minutes to two hours, depending on the topic they are talking about. He appeared to be conscious about taking up too much of the youth's time. "The kids work along the streets, and they need the time to make the money. If I talk to them too long, then the kids have no time to sell the flowers along the street, or sell something so they can have money. This is the reason I may not spend too much time talking to them, because they have to make the money."

Support can come in the form of a meal, or informing them about the shelter offered by the agency. Says one teacher, "Every time we see them, we teach them the education, we provide them soap, if they want to go to school we help to provide them to go to school." Another important intervention is to help these youth attain their legal identification cards once they reach the age of fifteen. "In my area, when the children grow up, to the age of 15, I take them to get their papers. It is my duty to take them to the government to get their papers." She explained that she has contacts within the government to help get the identification cards for the youth. These identification cards will establish a legal identity for the youth, and they will be able to access government services. In addition, this identity may be able to protect them as they survive on the streets.

The papers will help them for the security life, to be able to go see the doctor, you don't have to pay anything when you have the number. Also, when the police cross them, they can show the cards to the policemen. Every child needs that card to show the policeman that they are not immigrant children, that they are Thai children, that they have a card.

One of the avenues used to obtain these cards for the youth is through the legal aid clinic component offered by the agency. "We have social services, we help them with education, we help them if they have been abused with other people. We have a legal aid clinic. We go to the court, when we have a legal case we help them." This could be considered as social welfare and child protection measures, intending to give youth and/or families needed formal support.

IMPERATIVES FOR PRACTICE

For all of the good intentions, interventions, and hard work from the staff members who work with street children, there is acknowledgment that additional implementations and resources could be beneficial for these populations. In addition, the participants note that there are some effective approaches that are imperative to the helping process. The following sections address these important perceptions.

Establishing Trust and Relationships

In all three interview locations, participants mentioned the importance of establishing trust with street kids and/or their families. If any progress is going to be made with these populations, it is imperative that staff members first establish trust with the ones they are reaching out to. “We have to be sincere, make them trust us,” states a participant in Pattaya. Establishing trust with youth on the streets is a process that involves sincerely becoming connected and emotionally or mentally invested in the children, according to this participant. “In my opinion, if I want someone to believe in me, I think about being a mom, and what I would do if the kids were my own kids, my son or daughter, and then I do that.”

Another participant agrees with the importance of trust and establishing relationships. “First, you have to get close with them. And then, you have to make them trust you and make them believe that there is someone who believes that they can have a better life, and make them understand and realize that their life has value, help them create more self-esteem. When the children trust us, believe in us, they can move off the street. And we can prove this is true, we have examples of this working for our children.”

One staff member in Chiang Mai also agreed with the importance of establishing trust. When asked about examples of helping families, he stated “It takes a long time. I work very hard, go into the community every day, it takes a long time for the families to trust me. It is important to establish relationships with the families, to help them with development, to give them knowledge.”

In Bangkok, participants also are in accordance with the importance of trust. One staff member interviewed, when asked about some of the most important approaches being used at that agency, stated “To make friends with them, to be their friends, to be their consultant. To establish relationships with them, this one.” In all three cities, at least one

participant stressed the importance of establishing trust and relationship with those they are reaching out to. No matter the location or agency, having trust and relationships are imperative when helping these communities.

Education Opportunities

Education opportunities for street youth is perhaps one of the biggest challenges for agencies to provide, yet also one of the most essential if the children's well-being is to be ensured. All three agencies provide some form of education opportunities for street children, and most staff agree that these opportunities are an important service provided.

“Most of the street kids do not go to school,” says one participant in Bangkok. Even the youth living with their parents in labor camps are at risk for not attending school. “Most of these families are day laborers. They have family, kids, no money, no way to send them to school, then the kids go to the streets,” said a different participant. He continued about the challenge of youth attending school:

We help the children go to school, but not for long, because they (the parents) take the children out of school, and they go to the street again. They turn their backs and go to the streets because it is the easy way to make money because of the background, because of the family, because of the lack of education. There are many people, it is difficult to try to help many people, but we never stop. It takes many years for the children to go to school and study and have graduation, the easy way is to take the children out of school and go to the streets. Some of them are successful, and they do not need to come back and see us for help.

In Chiang Mai, staff members provide additional education opportunities by visiting the slum areas and doing informal educational activities with the youth. In addition, they advocate sending the children to school, and let families know about government policies regarding education.

Every child must go to school, from seven to fifteen years old. Some families say that they do not have enough money to send their kids to school. The government has a new policy that it is free for children to go to school. But uniforms, books, families must pay. The government helps some, but not enough. This is why our agency has a scholarship, to help some of these families. Currently we have 35 youth on this scholarship. We have an agreement with these families that these 35 cannot sell flowers.

The staff members in Chiang Mai value education for these youth, and try to impart these values onto the families they work with. Adds another staff member, “Our duty is to let the families know about education, to talk to them, to say let your children go to school, to

have a better life. We have one case, that we helped a child go to school, and now she works in a hospital. She went to university, and she is our first example.”

These staff members in Chiang Mai are committed to using their established relationships with the families to provide the knowledge and support needed to get (and keep) these children in school. They staff believe that education is ultimately the best way to prevent these children from a long life on the streets.

In Pattaya, all youth living at the shelter attend school. But for many of the families living in the labor camps, they are unaware of government policies regarding education for their children. Says one staff member:

Most of the families would like to send their children to school, but not all. But most of them know it is important to send their children to school. But when they arrive in Pattaya, they do not know how to get their kids to school. They do not know who can help, because they are not originally from Pattaya. So when they know who can help them, they will agree (to sending youth to school), but they still need a lot of support.

The staff in Pattaya note that informing parents about the education process and giving them support is imperative to getting these youth into school. This support includes getting the parents to take responsibility themselves for sending their children to school. When asked about the most important things being done, and what else needs to be done, for the youth to go to school, this staff member continued:

Well the first is for the children to go to school. We are successful with this one. The next is to try to reduce our support. I talk to the parents, that they have to take responsibility. This means for them to start to take care of their children, send the children to school by themselves. This is the first responsibility, try to do this by themselves. And other parents will learn from the families, which is very important.

Professionals who work directly with street children and/or their families generally agree that it is important to provide them with education opportunities.

Outreach and Community Work

One minor theme found in these interviews addresses the importance of outreach and community work, particularly in migrant camps. All staff interviewed in Pattaya noted the importance of outreach in communities. “It is important for us to go into the communities and do more outreach work, and provide education in the field,” said one participant. Added another, “I think if we take the kids from the street, that is the last step. I think we have to

work in the community, like a project, to help the families before the kids run away from homes.” Working with families in prevention projects could reduce the number of children that would ultimately end up living or working on the streets. The third participant stated, “Try to help mother and kids in the beginning steps. Like how to prepare, how to get more knowledge, help with the paperwork at the beginning, otherwise it is too late, and this prevention work may help reduce the number of the children who go to shelters, maybe the mother does not go to the street to sell body.” These approaches could prove effective in preventing the migration of youth to the streets, according to the staff in Pattaya.

Collaboration and Support from Government

While the importance of government involvement in working with street children is a minor theme, it is still salient. One staff member in Bangkok stressed the importance of this issue. “We need to ask the government to do more, ask them to have a special department that works with street children,” she said. “The government needs to set the priority to help the street children first, in social welfare.” This staff member pointed out that the government could help by increasing funding for this work.

Before, the government had a fund for the project, very few but enough for the work on every street kid. We made a project for this year and present to the government, but they cut everything out, and gave very few money to us. The government should make a priority and give more money in the social welfare, and not have it be last, and give more budget, not very few budget for us. Enough for all of the street kids.

This staff member noted that if the agency had more money, they could do more activities for this population.

Economic Opportunities and Community Development

Though overall the participants have not all mentioned economic opportunities and community development as important issues, attention must be given to how they could play a role in preventing youth street migration. It is indirectly acknowledged that if youth and families had economic opportunities and if communities had better resources, then they maybe would not have to leave in the first place. Staff members recognize that the main reason families and youth migrate to Pattaya is due to economic reasons. Consequently, it is important for economic opportunities in rural areas to be increased, allowing for families to

remain in their communities and be able to provide. “They don’t have land to farm to make money in their villages, and mom and dad usually have little education. They come here to earn money,” says one participant.

Said another staff member, “The migrant families are farmers in their communities, and they have a lack of education. During rainy seasons, they can do their work. During dry season, they have to look for other ways to survive.” These findings suggest that if families had more economic opportunities in their communities, then they (or the children) would not be forced to the streets of bigger cities out of economic necessity.

In Chiang Mai, both staff members mentioned the lack of economic opportunities and development in their communities of origin. “The families come here because they have no land for agriculture,” said one. She continued “In the areas that have a lot of hilltribe people, most of them move around the mountains, they cut up and cut up trees. This will be a big problem in the future for our country. The government wants to solve this problem, they need to find out what is the cause of this problem.” Attention must be paid to the economic and community development opportunities in these native villages when addressing youth street migration.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter will provide a discussion of the findings, limitations of the study, implications for future research and the researcher's recommendations. The conclusion contains an analysis of the findings with a human rights perspective.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Existing literature and the findings of this study both point to economic causes as a major contribution to youth street migration. Studies conducted in Nigeria, Sudan, India, Vietnam and Latin America find that youth move to urban areas in search of more economic opportunities. The findings of this study show that economic factors are the primary reason of migration for youth living with a family member and working on the street. As one staff member from Chiang Mai states, "they need to earn money."

Family dynamics play another major theme linking the literature and the collected data. Results from studies in Latin America, Sudan, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Singapore suggest that youth leave home due to abusive or neglectful family environments. Participants in these studies cited incidences of physical abuse, violence in the home, and mistreatment by a parent or guardian (Butler, 2009; Khong, 2009; Plummer et al., 2007 & Young, 2004). Interview data from this study suggest similar reasons for youth leaving home towards the streets of Bangkok and Pattaya. "The main reason that the street kids come to Bangkok is not because of money, but the problem of the broken family. When they are not happy in the family, they will run away from the family," said one staff member interviewed in Bangkok.

Children working or living on the streets engage in numerous forms of economic activity according to the literature, with examples that include singing on buses in Bogota (Rizzini and Lusk, 1995), vending goods in Sudan (Plummer et al., 2007), serving as porters in the market in Nigeria (Aderinto, 2000), and scavenging for recyclable materials in India (D'Lima & Gosalia, 1992; Srivasta, 1995). In Pakistan, it was noted that half of street children sold flowers (Ali et al., 2004). In Chiang Mai, staff members stated flower selling as

the primary source of economic activity for children working on the streets. However, in Pattaya, begging was the primary source of finding money, and in Bangkok, youth beg but also work in markets. Also, the staff members in Pattaya were the only participants who mentioned stealing and selling their bodies in the sex industry.

While professionals working with street children and the literature enumerate challenges and vulnerabilities facing the youth, no one common theme or major challenge has been identified. Some of the findings of the literature name a lack of basic physical needs being met ((Patel, 1990; D’Lima & Gosalia, 1992; Rane & Shroff, 1994), harassment from police or authorities (Ali et al., 2004; Kombarakaran, 2004), poor nutrition and hygiene (Ali et al., 2004), dangerous working conditions (Parker, 2002; Saufian, 1999), and vulnerability to rape and sexual abuse (Olley, 2006). Participants in this study cite challenges and vulnerabilities for street children such as being in harm’s way for accidents or injuries, drug and alcohol abuse, and being lured into by “gang leaders” into drug or trafficking circles. It must also be noted that staff members in Bangkok mention that stateless youth are more likely to have been trafficked into Bangkok. However, in Pattaya and Chiang Mai, stateless youth are more likely to live with their family members in slums or labor camps.

The literature and findings of this study corroborate the fundamental premise that life on the streets is not safe or conducive to the healthy childhood these youth deserve. The different agencies used in this study implement approaches they deem warranted in the context of their urban location. Providing education opportunities is a main priority for the participants of this study. It is agreed that if the youth attend school, they will have more options in their future than a life solely on the streets could give them. Another priority is obtaining legal status for eligible youth, which will allow them to have even further opportunities for education and social services. However, these approaches will not be effective unless trust is established between staff members and the youth and families they work with.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overwhelmingly, the two main reasons that youth migrate to the streets to live or work are due to economic factors and family dynamics. For youth living on the streets, participants of this study state that negative family dynamics is the primary reason that

pushes these youth away from their homes and towards the streets. For youth living with their families, however, the families will most often migrate to these cities to find job opportunities. Many of these children will go to the streets to beg or find other ways to contribute to the family income.

Begging is the primary source of economic activity in Pattaya, prominent but not the primary source in Bangkok, and infrequent in Chiang Mai. In Bangkok, both participants noted many youth wash the windows of cars and trucks to make money. In Chiang Mai, the primary form of economic activity, according to the two staff members, is selling flowers on the streets. Additional economic activities listed among the three cities include stealing money or items that they can sell, working in bars or restaurants, and sex work.

At times, street children have been robbed, and they are also vulnerable to fighting, among themselves or with other gangs, and to drug and alcohol abuse. They can also encounter physical abuse, by either staff or young adults. These concerns lead to creations of self-protection for the youth. The constant vigilance that must be kept to protect oneself while living on the streets also translates into issues of fear and trust for these youth.

One common theme regarding vulnerability found between Bangkok and Pattaya is the incidence of either having been or becoming trafficked. In both cities, staff members recognize the role that trafficking may play for children living or working on the streets. In Bangkok, many of the youth living on the streets that are “immigrant” or stateless have been trafficked in by so-called gang leaders. In Pattaya, children of the streets are vulnerable to being used by these gang leaders to sell drugs, or become prostitutes. Female youth living in the labor camps are also at risk for being taken by these gang leaders.

While each of the agencies works with youth of or on the streets, the approaches and interventions vary between the three. However, a common theme of the importance of education is found. All three agencies offer education opportunities to the youth. Staff members in both Chiang Mai and Pattaya spend time in the communities and offer support, guidance and knowledge to parents and families. An additional intervention offered by staff members in Pattaya and Bangkok focuses on attaining identification cards for the youth once they turn 15 years of age. The fact-finding process is difficult and lengthy, but it will give these youth access to education and healthcare, along with other opportunities.

For all of the good intentions, interventions, and hard work from the staff members who work with street children, there is acknowledgement that additional implementations and resources could be beneficial for these populations. In addition, all participants note that there are some effective approaches that are imperative to the helping process. Staff members across all three locations stress the importance of establishing trust and relationships with both youth and families. If any progress is going to be made with these populations, it is imperative that staff members first establish trust with the ones they are reaching out.

Though overall the participants have not all mentioned economic opportunities and community development as important issues, attention must be given to how they could play a role in preventing youth street migration. It is indirectly acknowledged that if youth and families had economic opportunities and if communities had better resources, then they maybe would not have to leave in the first place.

Children living or working on the streets is a salient issue, as it violates the protected rights of these youth. For this reason, it is important to examine this topic from this human rights framework, especially a legally-binding one such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is recommended that advocates for youth, professionals working with vulnerable children, and anyone studying this issue understand it through the same general lens. In this manner, collaborations and stronger networks can emerge for people intending to protect the rights of youth and ensure that they receive their deserved opportunities for a safe and healthy childhood.

Article 27 of the CRC declares that State Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. The Convention recognizes that the parents or others responsible for the child have the primary responsibility to secure, within their abilities and financial capacities, the conditions of living necessary for the child's development. Thailand has duty is to ensure that this responsibility can be fulfilled, and is. With an estimated 30,000 youth living on the streets of Thailand, it is clear that many youth are not being provided the rights that are guaranteed to them. The many thousands more who live with family members yet continue to work on the streets are also vulnerable to being denied education opportunities (Article 28) as well as protection from work that threatens his or health, education or development (Article 32).

The Convention states that the responsibility to protect the rights of children lies primarily within the parents or guardian. However, when families are unable to effectively protect these rights and provide an adequate environment for the children, the responsibility then becomes directed towards the State, a condition that Thailand has formally recognized. The findings of this study suggest that many families have failed in these efforts, due to economic reasons or harmful intra-family dynamics. For youth living on the streets, staff members note that they leave their homes and migrate to the streets because of these negative family dynamics. The CRC declares the State shall protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation by parents or others responsible for their care of the child (Article 19). Children who migrate to the streets and live with their families do so for economic reasons, according to the participants of this study. Families who migrate to larger urban cities do not have the financial resources to be able to provide for themselves in their communities of origin, suggesting that more work needs to be done to create viable economic opportunities in these communities. One issue that remains critical to child welfare is the attainment of legal status. Article 7 maintains that every child has the right to acquire a nationality. For the countless youth who are considered stateless, or who have no legal Thai identification card, opportunities for post-compulsory education and healthcare remains limited.

There are five significant imperatives to regard when working with these populations, according to the research in this study. The first is to establish trust with youth and the families if possible. Second is to provide education opportunities for youth living or working on the streets. The third is to implement outreach and community work in the areas where youth live with their families. Fourth is to seek collaboration and support from the government. And finally, it is imperative to pay attention to economic opportunities and community development in the areas which youth and families migrate from.

In many cases of street children, the actual implementation of their rights falls under the domain of civil society organizations, such as the agencies used in this study. These organizations work to ensure that the rights of the youth are protected, and that they have opportunities for education, access to shelter and healthcare, and a chance to have a safe and healthy childhood. When family members and the government fail the needs and rights of these youth, it is crucial that these organizations exist for them. Continued and additional

funding and support for these organizations are essential if the lives and futures of street children are to be improved.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study is part of a worldwide examination of the issue of street children. There is no available published literature in English concerning street youth in Thailand, and the intention of this study is to provide an introductory overview on the issue, specifically focusing on three large urban areas of the country. Highlighted by this study are the recognition of the lack of economic opportunities in communities of origin, the role that family dynamics play on street migration, the vulnerabilities facing street youth, and the importance of the work being done by civil society organizations who work with these youth. Viewing these issues through a contextual human rights framework can provide a mutual understanding for those concerned with youth street migration.

The scope of this study was limited to the three large urban cities of Pattaya, Chiang Mai and Bangkok. The researcher recommends that further exploration be done in other areas of the country, and particularly among border regions. Attention should be paid to these areas that have a higher number of unauthorized or stateless migrant youth. In addition, it is also important to consider the context of the rural areas from which youth and families migrate. Community development and economic opportunities in these communities cannot be ignored when discussing the reasons for youth street migration.

LIMITATIONS

This study had four limitations including limited English proficiency on behalf of the participants, a small sample frame from each agency, only professionals were interviewed, and data was not looked at by an independent reviewer. First, while all of the participants were generally fluent in English, deeper themes or explorations may not have been revealed due to the inability to effectively communicate the correct words in English. Second, each agency interviewed had a small staff working directly with the populations, limiting a more varied sample frame, and not all themes may have been saturated. Third, only professional staff members were interviewed, which provided a lack of explorations of perceptions from current or former street children, and their family members. Finally, the data was not subjected to an independent review, limiting a more objective analysis.

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APPENDIX A
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT

You are being asked to participate in an exploratory study about the reasons for youth street migration. You will be asked questions regarding your professional opinions and work experience with these populations. This study is being conducted by Mary Faulk, a graduate student at the School of Social Work, San Diego State University. This study is being supervised by Dr. David Engstrom, who will be residing in Bangkok, Thailand.

PURPOSE AND STUDY OF PROCEDURE

The purpose of this study is to explore the reasons for youth street migration to the urban cities of Pattaya, Bangkok and Chiang Mai, more specifically why they live or work on the streets. You will be asked about your opinions on what these reasons are. In addition, you will be asked about the impact of services provided by the agency you are employed with, and to determine what services you have seen to be the most successful in providing help to this population.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

There will be several staff members interviewed from agencies working directly with the street children population. We will ask you these questions here at your agency, in a private room where no one can see or hear us. Some of these questions may be hard to answer. Please try your best to answer everything that you can remember, as honestly as you can. There will be no identifying factors that would reveal your identity, and your privacy will be respected.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If at any time you do not want to participate any more, you are free to withdraw from the study. If you find the questions to be uncomfortable, you may withdraw from the study. Your confidential answers will be used to provide suggestions for those working with this population to provide the best and most effective services possible in helping the children. If you have any questions at any time, please contact me through the Center.

Thank you for your participation.

X _____
(participant signature and date)

X _____
(p.i. signature and date)

X _____
(participant name printed and date)

X _____
(p.i. name printed and date)

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Part I. For the first set of questions, I would like to ask you about your background working with street children and stateless children who are vulnerable to living or working on the streets.

1. What are your professional credentials and when did you receive them?
2. How many years have you worked with these populations?
3. Can you give me an estimate as to how many children you work with per week?
4. Can you describe some of your daily job functions in working with these children? In what ways do you provide direct services to these populations?

Part II. Now that we have some background information on your professional training and work experience with street children, I would like to ask you some questions regarding your professional experiences and opinions.

A. Children of the Streets. Children “of” the streets are considered those that no longer reside with their families, instead finding food and shelter on the streets. I will now ask you about this population.

1. Many children of the streets have migrated from other areas. Can you identify the main areas that these children come from?
2. Why do you think these youth begin living and working on the streets?
Probe: How much do economic factors play a role? Do you find that these children have previously received education?
3. What do you identify to be the main sources of work (or economic activity) for these children?
4. How do you think these children find resources such as food or shelter? Do you find that they seek out available social services from agencies such as yours?
5. What resources are most needed by street children to move off the streets?
6. What are some other challenges and risks that street children face?

Probe: health, exploitation)

7. What do you think are some of the most important services provided by your agency regarding this population?
8. Do you have any suggestions for ways that direct or indirect services at your agency could be improved for this population?

B. Children on the Streets. Children on the streets are those that live with a family or guardian, but migrate to the streets for reasons such as economic factors. I would like to focus these questions towards stateless children, and those living with their families in migrant labor camps.

1. For the families living in these camps, where do they migrate from?
Probe: Do most families come from certain areas more than others, and if so, where? Would you say that a large number of these families and children are stateless?
2. What are the main forms of economic activities for these families?
3. For the children who work on the streets, what are their main sources of economic activity?
4. Can you describe the context of what economic opportunities are found in this city (Pattaya, Chiang Mai, Bangkok) for the families who migrate here?
(example: Pattaya offers labor jobs due to tourism, hotels, condos, etc).
5. Do stateless children face more difficult challenges than Thai nationals? If so, can you describe in what ways?
6. Can you estimate the average educational experiences of these children? Do they have access currently?
7. Based on your experience, do these families value education?
Probe: Do the families place a higher value on work than they do on education?
8. What do you think are the most important services provided by your agency that help these children and families? Specific examples would be helpful as well.
9. Can you identify any additional services that should be implemented to further assist this population?