Strategies Applied By Humanitarian Organizations As Interventions To Foster Refugee Children Needs At Kakuma And Kalobeyei Refugee Camps, Kenya

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Abstract:

In Africa, 15,000 people are displaced every day. Despite the acknowledgment of special needs of unaccompanied and separated children, questions still abound on the role of existing humanitarian organizations in providing these needs. The study was underpinned by the Ecological System theory. The study was conducted in Kakuma 1 & 2 taking care of the old Kakuma camp and in Kalobeyei villages. The study employed descriptive survey research design. The study utilized both probability and non-probability sampling techniques. Data was collected through the use of questionnaires, focus group discussion and key informant interviews. Qualitative data was analysed via content and thematic analysis while Quantitative data was analysed using Social Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 26 to generate descriptive statistics the findings revealed the most commonly used strategies to foster intervention for refugee children included Coordination and facilitation of relief assistance supported by 179 (62.6%) of respondents and Policy development and advocacy as supported by 143 (50%) of the respondents. The study concludes that the humanitarian organizations have applied various strategies as interventions to foster refugee children needs

Key words: *Refugee camp, Unaccompanied and Separated children, Humanitarian Intervention, Foster Care*

1.0 Introduction

Children's migrations travels, whether with their families or alone, are fuelled by a combination of reasons such as violence, distress, and hardship, as well as a desire for fresh possibilities to fulfil their goals for a better life (No Mother Wants Her Child to Migrate-UNICEF 2016). Refugee children face the worst of the burden, as they are frequently forced to spend their whole childhoods in exile, wondering about their future. They are also more likely to be victims of violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation than adults. Because of the disruptions that refugee life causes, particularly for displaced families in camps, children's family and other social support networks may be diminished, and education may be disrupted, having a significant impact on children (UNHCR, 2014).

As of December 2018, there were 187,349 registered refugees and asylum-seekers at Kakuma camp and Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement, hailing from South Sudan, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Somalia, and other countries. Of the 187,349 (53% male, 47% female), refugees in Kalobeyei and Kakuma camp, 60% (50,875 girls/60,307 male) are children aged below eighteen years. 75% of these children are of school going age (5-17 years old). 13% (14,569 children, comprising of 5578 girls and 8991 boys) are unaccompanied, separated and vulnerable children. Given that three quarters of the population are in the age bracket requiring services among them over 14000 UASC, there are glaring implications on the demand for child protection services. Wasonga (2017) found that humanitarian groups working to promote children's rights in Kakuma refugee camp experienced a number of problems, raising concerns about their capacity and efficacy in meeting the

needs of unaccompanied and separated children in the camp.

Since the camp was established in 1992, humanitarian actors have directly supported the welfare of the refugee population, although, more emphasis has been focused on integrating health and nutrition issues, supporting vaccination campaigns and repairing strategic water points (UNICEF,2019). However, despite the efforts of UNHCR, UNICEF and implementing partners, the sheer number of refugees and displaced children and adolescents have made child protection a big challenge with agencies devising new ways to make child protection more effective. In addition despite the constitution of Kenya 2010 having a provision for citizenship eligibility for children under 8 years (Kenya 2010 Constitution Section 14 (4), UASC under 8 years do not qualify since their country of origin is known and most of them know their parents.

As indicated earlier 58% of children in Kakuma/Kalobeyei are aged 14 years and below, who are not only children of primary school going age but also happening to contribute to the highest number of children requiring protection services. Of the above population of children, 13% (14,569 children, comprising of 5578 girls and 8991 boys) are unaccompanied, separated and vulnerable children. Buchanan & Kallinikaki (2018) indicated that providing alternative interim care to the child while they are separated from their family or until a more permanent solution can be found provides a protective environment for the child. In Kakuma and Kalobeyei, new arrival UASC are assessed to identify their and family vulnerabilities and an action plan is developed to address the identified vulnerabilities.

The category of unaccompanied children require placement in interim alternative care. The most appropriate being foster care to ensure that the children are nurtured and brought in a family system. According to Tissington, (2008) Putting parenting in perspective, Children and adolescents who experience positive parenting (warmth and affection, sensitive and responsive care, consistent positive and non-violent discipline) are more likely to achieve their developmental potential. Children who have experienced positive parenting are also more likely to transfer these skills to their own children, strengthening the inter-generational transfer of nurturing child care and development, as well as positive non-violent relationships.

In addition Kolucki B. & Lemish, L (2011) (Communicating with children), different styles of communicating with children of different ages enables them to develop and feel that they are loved, feel good about new learning and experiences including developing resilience by learning to bounce back and to ask for help which is mainly cultivated through a family. Foster care placement entails adequate planning which includes creating awareness, identification and training of potential foster parents. However, due to the sheer numbers of the unaccompanied children, the number of identified and trained foster parents are not adequate to foster the entire case load. As such, the situation at the Kakuma and Kalobeyei refugee camp warrants placement of children who are not accommodated through foster care to be placed in supervised child headed households, independent living or in group care.

In the recent past, resources channeled for implementation of humanitarian services have decreased tremendously and in addition, protection and provision of children needs have not been given priority, as such translating minimal funding earmarked for children needs and protection. Wasonga (2017) found that humanitarian groups working to promote children's rights in Kakuma refugee camp experienced a number of problems, raising concerns about their capacity and efficacy in meeting the needs of unaccompanied and separated children in the camp. It is against this backdrop that this study was anchored; broadly investigating efficacy of humanitarian agencies' interventions towards fostering protection needs of refugee children in addition to seeking to addresses this gap

within the context of Kakuma/Kalobeyei Refugee Camp

2.0 Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on ecological System Theory. According to this theory, all of the systems work together to create a safe environment for children. The kid is located inside a series of environmental systems, according to ecological systems theory. Individual qualities of the kid interact with, influence, and are influenced by environmental system features. The systems are as follows: Microsystem: the institutions and groups that surround a child directly, such as family, school, peers, and the community. Mesosystem: interactions between microsystem actors such as parents and teachers, or parents and classmates. Ecosystem: the link between a kid's social environment and other factors that influence it, such as the caregiver's job environment, which might have an indirect effect on the child.

Identity, values, social status, poverty, and ethnicity are all part of the macro system in which the child lives. The chronosystem is the pattern of events and transitions in a child's life. This could include the impact of an emergency or displacement, as well as the impact of separation and loss on a child's life trajectory (Tissington, 2008). This methodology establishes a framework for determining suitable responses to separation. When children are removed from their primary caregivers, other members of the children's microsystem may be able to provide continuous care and safety. The loss of a caregiver alters the dynamics of the mesosystem, which can have an impact on a child's life trajectory. Factors in a child's macro system can interact with the child's particular features to strengthen or weaken his or her resilience and coping methods (Yoo, 2008).

Researchers have recently applied ecological systems theory to better understand and explain organizational settings (Johnson, 2008; Tissington, 2008; Yoo, 2008). The application of ecological systems theory to organizations aids in defining how humanitarian groups respond to child protection issues (Johnson, 2008). In the complex environment of a child welfare agency, the ecological systems theory provides a natural framework for investigating the nested systems of organizational culture, climate, and individual aspects. Ecological systems theory is relevant as a theoretical basis for interventions with UASC in the sense that children's wellbeing is influenced by the ecosystem around them, and that institution and groups immediately surrounding the child, such as family, school, peers, and community, have authority. Mesosystem assesses whether the welfare of all UASC members is positive or negative. The theory is especially appropriate for the research since it depicts the occurrence that organizational characteristics at each level have a direct impact on UASC client results and needs.

2.0 Research Methodology

The study was conducted in Kakuma 1 & 2 taking care of the old Kakuma camp and in Kalobeyei villages. The study employed descriptive survey research design. The study utilised both probability and non-probability sampling techniques. The study sample was drawn from this group of individuals. Caregivers, managers from non-governmental organisations such as DRC, LWF, FCA, NRC, and Waldorf working in Kakuma refugee camp on child protection requirements to UASC, and humanitarian workers and social professionals dealing with UASC were among the study's target group. This figure was used by the researcher to account for UASCData was collected through the use of questionnaires, focus group discussion and key informant interviews. Qualitative data was analysed via content and thematic analysis while Quantitative data was analysed using Social Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 26 to generate descriptive statistics

4.0 Findings

4.1 Caregivers Satisfaction with the Strategies applied by Humanitarian Organization to Support UASC

The study sought to establish Caregiver's level of satisfaction with the services applied by humanitarian organizations to support UASC. The

respondents were asked the extent to which they were satisfied with the services provided by humanitarian organization. The results from the 286 caregivers revealed that 161 (56.25%) agreed, 72 (25%) strongly agreed, 36 (12.50%) disagreed while 18 (6.25%) were undecided. The results are as indicated in Figure 4.1.

The findings were partially supported by FGD participants. During one of the FGD meetings in Kakuma, one of the participants stated that;

> *I am fairly satisfied because their strategies do not adequately support all the needs of the vulnerable children nor the support required to enhancing the services rendered by the block leaders and Caregivers group. They should do more in terms of ensuring all vulnerable children's needs are met as well as supporting movement of community committees and refresher trainings/consultations and developing community action plans which should be jointly reviewed (FGD participant on 20th February 2021).*

Figure 4. 1: Caregivers Satisfaction with the

Strategies applied by Humanitarian Organizations to Support UASC
Source: Field Data, 2021

When it comes to responding to UASC's demands, there are several variables to consider. Proper planning based on accessible data or information is one such component. According to Rubenstein *et al.* (2015), the lack of comprehensive, dynamic data on UASC in emergencies makes it impossible to raise necessary and timely funds, implement suitable programs for affected people, adapt programs to changing UASC needs, and influence separation policy. As a result, approaches that can better capture changes in the frequency and character of separations over time are urgently needed.

4.2 Strategies used by humanitarian organizations to Successfully Support interventions for UASC
The study sought to establish the extent to which the respondents believed the strategies shown in Table 4.1 were used by the humanitarian organizations successfully to support interventions for UASC. The respondents were asked to rank each of the strategies on a scale of 1-5; where (*1=Least used and most Successful; 2= rarely used and most Successful; 3=Sometimes used and most successful; 4=Often used and most Successful; 5=Most often used and Most Successful*). The results were as indicated in Table 5.1:
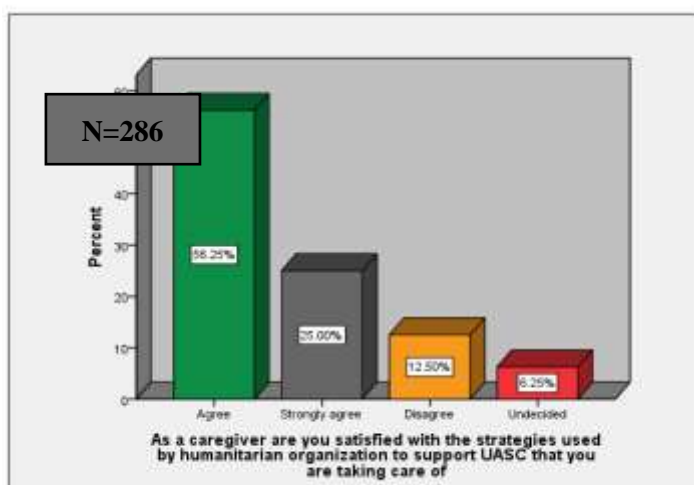
interviewees from the humanitarian organizations stated that coordination and facilitation of relief assistance was used in the area however, due to under-funding and logistical challenges there was general dissatisfaction by the refugees who felt that most vulnerable children and caregivers do not

Strategy	1 Freq	1 %	2 Freq	2 %	3 Freq	3 %	4 Freq	4 %	5 Freq	5 %	N	%
Coordination and facilitation of relief assistance	36	12.6	179	62.6	35	12.2	18	6.3	18	6.3	268	100
Information sharing	36	12.6	125	43.7	89	31.1	0	0	36	12.6	286	100
Policy development and advocacy	53	18.5	36	12.6	143	50.0	36	12.6	18	6.3	286	100
Networking and referral for services	89	31.1	71	24.8	72	25.2	36	12.6	18	6.3	286	100
Building opportunities through emergency preparedness	107	37.4	72	25.2	89	31.1	18	6.3	0	0	286	100
Engaging Communities as Agents of protection	18	6.3	71	24.8	72	25.2	53	18.5	72	25.2	286	100
Promote participation and leadership of children in humanitarian programming	72	25.2	72	25.2	36	12.6	53	18.5	53	18.5	286	100

Table 4. 1: Strategies applied by humanitarian organizations to successfully support interventions for UASC
Source: Field Data, 2021

N=286, Freq=Frequency, (1=Least used and most Successful; 2= rarely used and most Successful; 3=Sometimes used and most successful; 4=Often used and most Successful; 5=Most often used and Most Successful)

Based on the findings in Table 4.1, regarding the Coordination and facilitation of relief assistance 36 (12.5%) of the caregivers indicated that it was least used and most successful, 179 (62.5%) indicated that it was rarely used and most successful, 35 (12.5%) stated that it was sometimes used and most successful, 18 (6.3%) indicated that it was often used and most successful and 18 (6.3%) revealed that it was most often used and most successful. To support the findings from Caregivers one of the

receive adequate supplies to meet the minimum standard requirements.

Similar ideas came up during the FGDs with community block leaders who also gave their perspective into why they thought that coordination and facilitation of relief assistance was not effective. One of the participants stated that:

> Community block leaders are involved in identification of most vulnerable beneficiaries as well as in distribution process for accountability. However sometimes the relief items are not adequate and village committee members are blamed by those families not included (FGD participant in Kakuma Refugee Camp, 23 April, 2021).

Regarding information sharing as a strategy used by humanitarian organization the study revealed that 36 (12.5%) were of the opinion that it was least used and most successful, 125 (43.8%) indicated

that it was rarely used and most successful, 89 (31.3%) stated that it was sometimes used and most successful and 36 (12.5%) stated that it was most often used and most successful. In support of the findings from the Caregivers , during an interview one of the NGO managers opined that there were established referral and information sharing channels through social media platforms, toll free numbers for respective organizations. They further stated that social workers attached to these organizations were also called for regular meetings to discuss and plan based on emerging issues in the respective blocks and villages.

The findings agreed with Maiers, Reynolds & Haselkorn (2005) who opined that an NGO's ability to store and manage information and knowledge is a critical component of organizational capacity, disaster response, post-disaster assessment and institutionalization of lessons learned. Knowledge management tools and strategies are just being recognized in the sector as potentially valuable ways to improve and refine performance for future disasters. In the past, humanitarian relief organizations have focused on response activities, but now there is increased interest in learning activities as well. If NGOs are to move from a focus on doing well in the current emergency to adding the equally important job of doing a better job the next time, they will need to develop and apply ICS to the capture and application of past experiences. Despite the growing recognition of the importance of information and knowledge management, this activity is generally handled poorly across the humanitarian relief sector and, to a great extent, the sector reinvents itself with each new catastrophe. While it is important to understand the extreme difficulties of operating in highly chaotic, resource and information poor environments, operating within chaos is not the only factor that works against effective information management in NGOs. Other major constraining factors include: insufficient time, energy, and financial resources; workforce turnover and lack of professional standing; multiple organizational perspectives on the appropriateness and role of information infrastructures; focus on technology rather than on organizational culture; and differences as to the value and implementation of ongoing assessment and improvement strategies

Regarding Policy development and advocacy 53 (18.8%) of the caregivers indicated that it was least used and most successful, 36 (12.5%) indicated that it was rarely used and most successful, 143 (50.0%) stated that it was sometimes used and most successful, 36 (12.5%) indicated that it was often used and most successful and 18 (6.3%) revealed that it was most often used and most successful. During the interviews with one of the NGO managers, it emerged that there were a number of policies that were adhered to with regards to child protection within the refugee camp.
 Among the policies and tools that were used by the organizations include; HR policy, child safeguarding policy, COC, IEC materials, Radio shows, Social media engagement and Calendar events. Results from FGDs revealed that block leaders were not involved in policy development and advocacy. One of the block leaders stated that:

> Rarely are block leaders involved, this is done internally by agencies without our involvement. We are only involved in development of community level committees TOR and constitution which guides block elections (FGD Participant, 9th April 2021).

Based on the findings in Table 4.1, regarding the Networking and referral for services 89 (31.3%) of the caregivers indicated that it was least used and most successful, 71 (24.8%) indicated that it was rarely used and most successful, 72 (25.2%) stated that it was sometimes used and most successful, 36 (12.5%) indicated that it was often used and most successful and 18 (6.3%) revealed that it was most often used and most successful.

The findings from the NGO managers also revealed that there are established referral pathways however; the main contact for referrals is through the respective social worker responsible for the block. According to the findings in Table 4.1, regarding the Building opportunities through emergency preparedness 107 (37.5%) of the caregivers indicated that it was least used and most successful, 72 (25.0%) indicated that it was rarely used and most successful, 89 (31.3%) stated that it was sometimes used and most successful, 18 (6.3%) indicated that it was often used and most successful.

The block leaders indicated during the FGDs that as members of the community they were rarely involved in building opportunities through emergency preparedness. One of the participants stated that the humanitarian organizations come with tailor made solutions and informed them since they were the experts. Based on the findings in Table 5.1, regarding engaging communities as agents of protection, 18 (6.3%) of the caregivers indicated that it was least used and most successful, 71 (24.8%) indicated that it was rarely used and most successful, 72 (25.2%) stated that it was sometimes used and most successful, 53 (18.8%) indicated that it was often used and most successful and 72 (25.0%) revealed that it was most often used and most successful.

Members of the community were actively involved in protection activities, according to the findings of the focus groups. One of the participants stated that;

> Yes, we free we are more and more involved in discussing with our communities protection concerns affecting them and opportunity for engaging at our level to find solutions for welfare and benefit of entire community and children (FGD participant in Kalobeyei, 10th April, 2021).

The findings in Table 4.1, show that regarding Promotion of participation and leadership of children in humanitarian programming, 72 (25.0%) of the caregivers indicated that it was least used and most successful, 72 (25.0%) indicated that it was rarely used and most successful, 36 (12.5%) stated that it was sometimes used and most successful, 53 (18.8%) indicated that it was often used and most successful and 53 (18.8%) revealed that it was most often used and most successful. In contrast to the results from the Caregivers, the findings from the FGDs revealed that the children were involved in various programs that dealt with humanitarianism.

One of the FGD participants stated that;

> Yes our children are allowed to participate through child rights clubs in schools as well as through child friendly spaces (CFS).The only problem is that the population of children is very high and facilities do not have room to accommodate all as well as long distances to access CFS (FGD participant in Kakuma, 10th April, 2021).

An assessment conducted by Ager *et al* (2011) revealed that child protection for UASC faced challenges that made it difficult for various factors involved in child protection to fully implement protection strategies to completion. In this regard, the evaluation procedure provided valuable insight into the displaced children's child safety status. The following are some of the assessment's findings: To protect the safety of children, collection centers

have to be enhanced. Families were unprepared for events such as the loss of mobile phone networks, which resulted in temporary separation; high levels of physical and psychological abuse by parents and teachers were observed at home and in schools.

This appeared to exist both before and after the displacement; parents and teachers seemed to have little understanding that humiliation and verbal punishment were types of abuse. Those who were informed said they used them anyhow due to a lack of other disciplining options. Parents needed support recognizing and responding to their children's psychological discomfort and trauma-related behaviours; internally displaced children needed programs to help them transition into host schools, and Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centers for children up to the age of two years were missing.

These concerns were evidently wide-ranging, encompassing not only child protection but also education, healthcare, and general emergency readiness. There were attempts to get feasible solutions relating to state policies and collaboration amongst agencies for a variety of underlying difficulties in order to cope with these issues.

4.3 Ways to Improve Strategies applied by humanitarian organizations to successfully support interventions for UASC

The study sought to establish the caregiver's opinions on how best the strategies used by humanitarian organizations to support interventions for UASC could be improved. The respondents were expected to give their responses on whether the improvements of these strategies should be done on the basis of availability, accessibility or quality. The responses for each strategy were as indicated in the subsequent sections:

4.3.1 Coordination and Facilitation of Relief Assistance

The study sought to establish how best the caregivers believed coordination and facilitation of relief assistance could be improved. Results from

the 286 caregivers revealed that 178 (62.5%) believed that it was best to improve on availability of this strategy, 36 (12.5%) believed that improvement should on accessibility while 72 (25%) were of the opinion that improvement should be based on the quality of coordination and facilitation of relief assistance. The findings are as presented in Figure 4.2.
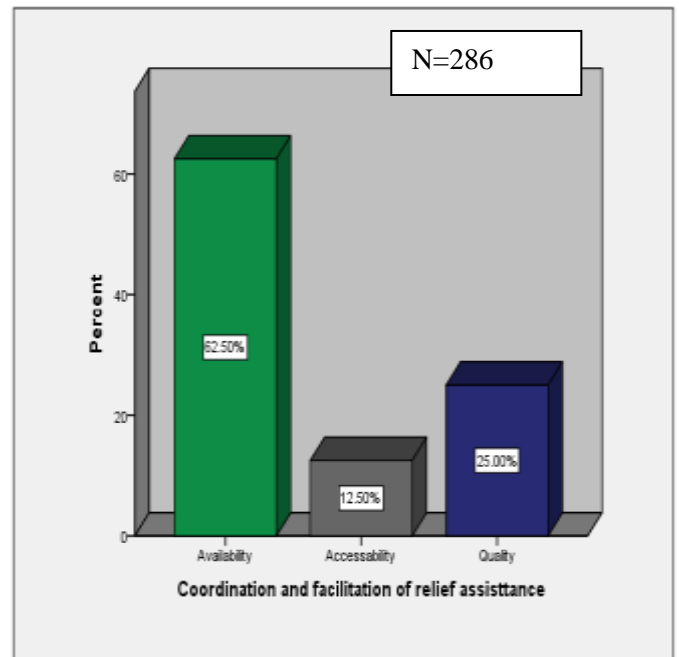

Figure 4. 2: Improvement of coordination and facilitation of relief assistance
Source: Field Data, 2021

The findings from the NGO managers were consistent with those from the caregivers. From the interviews, it emerged that coordination is done through existing child protection working groups comprising of NGOs, UN agencies , Government Refugee Affairs Secretariat (RAS), DCS and community support structures to ensure equity and fairness targeting the most vulnerable. Coordination which also involves partnership among various actors can also be an important part of coordination as revealed by Halvorsen (2005) in her study titled *Alone and far from home: Are separated refugee children adequately protected?* Her study which is in tandem with the findings of this study revealed that in the 1990s, the situation in South-Eastern Europe led many refugees and asylum seekers to

flee to Western Europe.

Among these were also considerable numbers of separated children. Concern about the circumstances of this particular group of refugees and asylum seekers and to allow effective response to their protection and assistance concerns, UNHCR, in partnership with the International Save the Children Alliance in 1997, established the Separated Children in Europe Programme (SCEP). This joint initiative brought together UNHCR's responsibility for the international protection of refugee and asylum seeking children with the mandate of the International Save the Children Alliance to protect and realize the rights of all children. Together, the organizations would work to improve the conditions of separated children at the national, regional, and international levels through research, policy analysis, and advocacy.

The SCEP initially covered the fifteen countries of the EU, Norway and Switzerland. In 2000, it was expanded to Central Europe and the Baltic States (CEBS), bringing the total to twenty-eight countries. The main objective of the programme was to promote common policy and ensure that the principles and standards regarding separated children's rights were upheld through good practices at national and regional levels. The programme started by strengthening the capacity of all organizations involved with the protection and assistance of separated children. Initially, this included only UNHCR and NGOs. Later, government partners also joined. It was expected that linkages and networks would be built and that responsibility and decision-making would be decentralized.

4.3.2 Information Sharing

The study sought to establish how best the caregivers believed information sharing could be improved. Results from the 286 caregivers revealed that 90 (31.35%) believed that it was best to improve on availability of this strategy, 178 (62.5%) believed that improvement should on accessibility while 18 (6.25%) were of the opinion that improvement should be based on the quality of

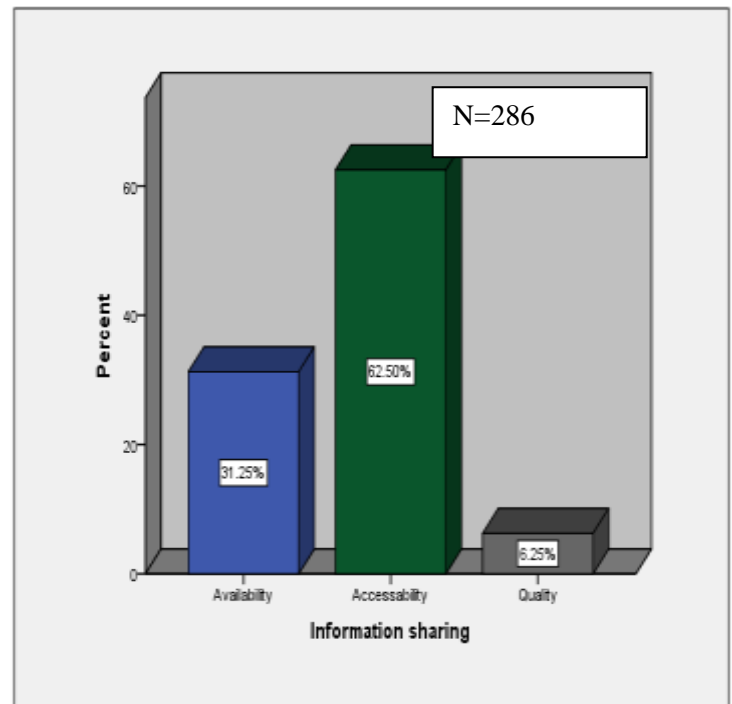information sharing. The findings are as presented in Figure 5.3.

Figure 4. 3: Improvement of Information Sharing
Source: Field Data, 2021

The findings from interviews with social workers revealed that case management of vulnerable children was accessible and was managed through an information management system which has different levels of accountabilities and governed by data sharing protocols to ensure confidentiality is maintained and safety of information. On a need-to-know basis, only non-identifiable data and analysis can be shared during referral for services and/or to inform programming. The findings are in agreement with Maiers, Reynolds & Haselkorn (2005) who opined that an effective information and communication system (ICS) is a central component of successful humanitarian relief efforts.

An ICS involves not only IT but also people, practices, policies, and organizational environments. Not only must ICS support basic transportation and logistics issues, but it also must support organizational communication that is greatly complicated by a diverse landscape of players, including the United Nations, donor governments, multi and bilateral agencies, governments of countries affected by the crises,

NGOs, philanthropic foundations, corporations, the giving public, and those who have suffered during the crisis. The scholars further argue that a clear and comprehensive communication system is critical to managing relationships among players in the relief landscape. Such a system consists of far more than information and communication technology (ICT) - even more problematic are human, political and organizational aspects of an effective ICS. Therefore In order to reduce human suffering in the face of natural disasters and man-made emergencies, organizations need established communication channels, infrastructures, strategies, agreements, education, and training in place in order to adequately respond.

5.3.3 Policy development and Advocacy

The study sought to establish how best the caregivers believed Policy development and advocacy could be improved. Results from the 286 caregivers revealed that 196 (68.75%) believed that it was best to improve on availability of this strategy, 72 (25%) believed that improvement should on accessibility while 18 (6.25%) were of the opinion that improvement should be based on the quality of Policy development and advocacy. The findings are as presented in Figure 4.4.
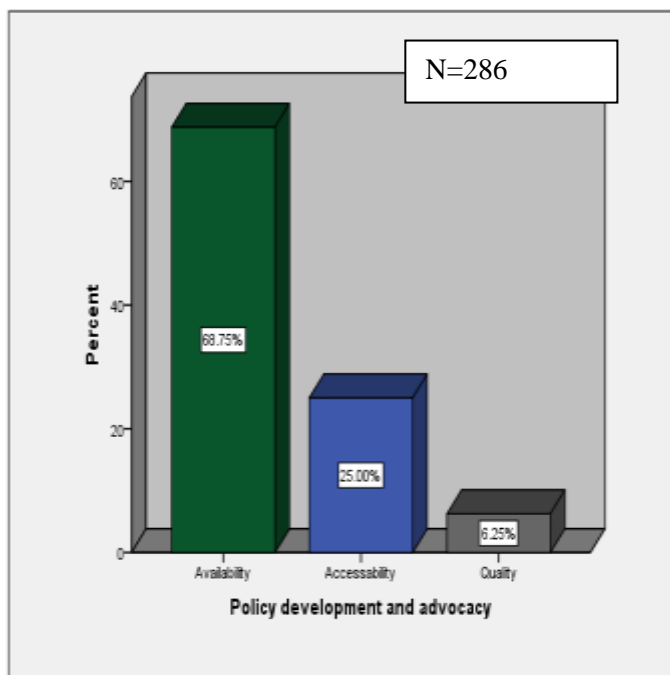

Figure 4. 4: Improving Policy development and advocacy

Source: Field Data, 2021

In agreement with the findings from the caregivers, interviews with social workers revealed that, improving policy and advocacy was key. They further revealed that all child protection implementing agencies align their policies with the national and global standards. Before agencies enter into partnerships with UN agencies, micro assessments are conducted to identify risk levels (for example, financial system micro assessments and sexual exploitation and abuse prevention) (PSEA).

According to the findings of the Save the Children in Serbia (2015) study, which was based on their advocacy for alternative care options for UASC, they commissioned an analysis of the implementation of the UN Guidelines on the Alternative Care of Children in Serbia, which identified many system-wide obstacles to providing appropriate alternative care for UASC and emphasized that the current reception and reintegration of UASC is inadequate. The study found a number of recommendations for improving UASC care, including enhancing various forms of foster care and investigating other forms of alternative care, such as supervised independent living arrangements or small housing units.

4.3.4 Networking and Referral for Services

The study sought to establish how best the caregivers believed networking and referral for services could be improved. Results from the 286 caregivers revealed that 143 (50%) believed that it was best to improve on availability of this strategy, 72 (25%) believed that improvement should on accessibility while 72 (25%) were of the opinion that improvement should be based on the quality of networking and referral for services. The findings are as presented in Figure 4.5
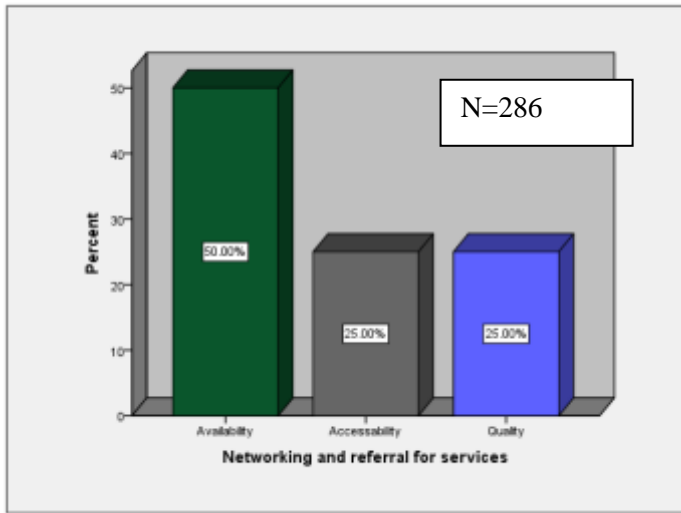
Figure 4. 5: Networking and referral for services
Source: Field Data, 2021

The results from the NGO managers revealed that improving the availability of the of network and referral services was key in supporting UASC. They indicated that the case management implementing agencies have established referral pathways for affective and efficient service delivery among service providers as well as through the community support structures. In a study conducted by Ager (2011) there is need to take actions to respond to the needs of various UASC. The response activities performed should be based on a variety of criteria, including available resources and existing response mechanisms.

For example, the survey discovered that efforts to develop a referral network were already underway (the Child Protection Referral System). Although the assessment was used to help draw more attention to child protection issues in conflict-affected regions that were included in the piloting of the referral network, the assessment was used as a way to help draw more attention to child protection issues in the conflict-affected regions that were included in the piloting of the referral network (Ager *et al*, 2011). The survey also found that the perception of those involved in the assessment is still a source of worry.

The findings agree with Halvorsen (2005) who stated that Networking should be established at

country levels to improve in the provision of the children need . In her study she opines that these networks must be comprised of NGOs, UNHCR, anti-government partners. An NGO and a UNHCR focal point should be appointed in each of the concerned countries for the training on the rights of children, collecting and disseminating information on separated children, and advocating at the EU and country levels.

4.3.5 Building Opportunities through Emergency Preparedness

The study sought to establish how best the caregivers believed Building opportunities through emergency preparedness could be improved. Results from the 286 caregivers revealed that 214 (75%) believed that it was best to improve on availability of this strategy, while 72 (25%) believed that improvement should be based on Building opportunities through emergency preparedness. The findings are as presented in Figure 4.6
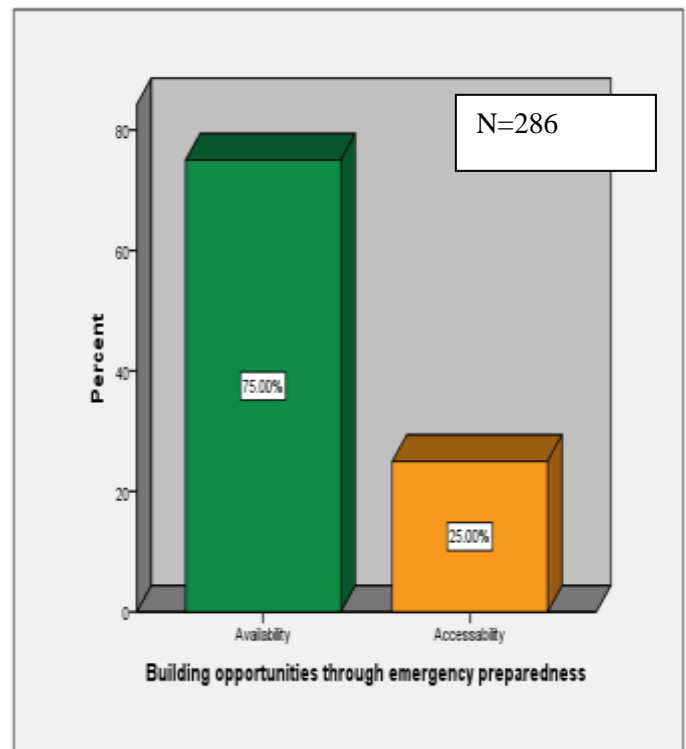

Figure 4. 6: Improving Building opportunities through emergency preparedness
Source: Field Data, 2021

In support of the results from the caregivers, the NGO managers and Social workers opined that agency emergency contingency plans were developed for the entire refugee operation and regularly revised based on the emerging issues.

One of the NGO managers stated that;

> *During COVID-19, every agency had to develop a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) includingreprogramming of activities to adapt to new challenge (Interview with NGO Manager, 10th April 2021).*

UNICEF (2017) stated that at the inter-agency level, humanitarian agencies working in children's protection and other partners, under the patronage of communicating with disaster-affected communities' network, in line with the study's findings. The initiative's goal is to improve the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian and emergency responses by providing standardized, timely, systematic, and predictable collective communication and community engagement services, such as learning opportunities, knowledge management, and shared surge capacity.

4.3.6 Engaging Communities as Agents of protection

The study sought to establish how best the caregivers believed Engaging Communities as Agents of protection could be improved. Results from the 286 caregivers revealed that 107 (37.5%) believed that it was best to improve on availability of this strategy, 107 (37.5%) believed that improvement should on accessibility while 72 (25%) were of the opinion that improvement should be based on the quality of Engaging Communities as Agents of protection. The findings are as presented in Figure 4.7

The results from the NGO managers and social workers supported the idea of improving

community engagement for protection. They revealed that there are established community support structures examples-village/block leaders, village child protection committees, Caregivers forums etc. the respondents stated that all these initiatives have been useful and there is need to make them even better.According to the study's findings, a discussion paper published by Save the Children (2008) stated that a number of community-based child protection organizations have been employed to assist with child protection. Anti-trafficking committees in India, for example, are tackling the issue of child trafficking for the purposes of exploitative types of labour such as domestic employment and fraudulent marriage, both of which can lead to sexual assault. Prevention work; raising public awareness about traffickers and what constitutes trafficking; identifying and supporting particularly vulnerable children; tracking the whereabouts of traffickers; and ensuring that all children are enrolled in school and thus less likely to be trafficked are among the activities they have been successful in. Children's groups' active engagement has been critical to their success. Rehabilitating traffickers and involving them in community committee and prevention activities has been a very innovative strategy to prevention in one place.
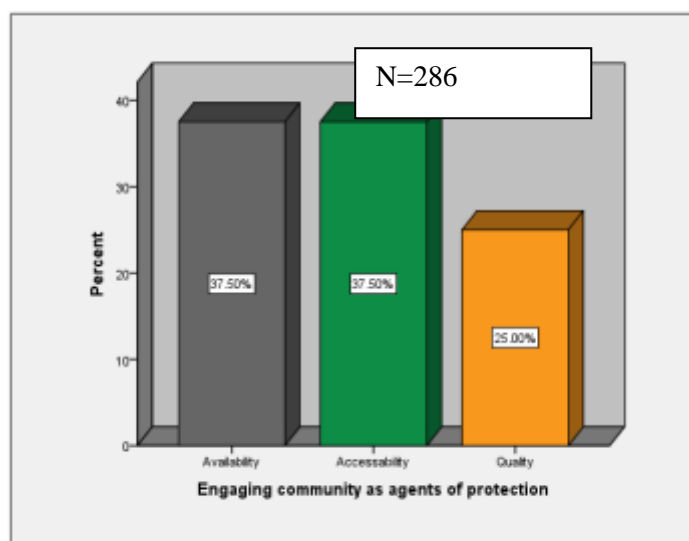

Figure 4. 7: Improving Engagement of Communities as Agents of protection
Source: Field Data, 2021

Community groups have encountered increasingly substantial hurdles in terms of response work, particularly the problem of how to combat stigma and discrimination. Selected women in West Africa have been taught and encouraged to serve as gender-based violence focal points in their communities, addressing issues of sexual abuse and exploitation. These ladies are proving their ability to respond to specific instances, assess a child's needs and preferences, make sensitive referrals, and provide practical support to child victims in areas where services are lacking.

4.3.7 **Promote Participation and Leadership of Children in Humanitarian Programming**

The study sought to establish how best the caregivers believed Promoting participation and leadership of children in humanitarian programming could be improved. Results from the 286 caregivers revealed that 89 (31.25%) believed that it was best to improve on availability of this strategy, 89 (31.25%) believed that improvement should on accessibility while 108 (37.5%) were of the opinion that improvement should be based on the quality of Promoting participation and leadership of children in humanitarian programming. The findings are as presented in Figure 4.8
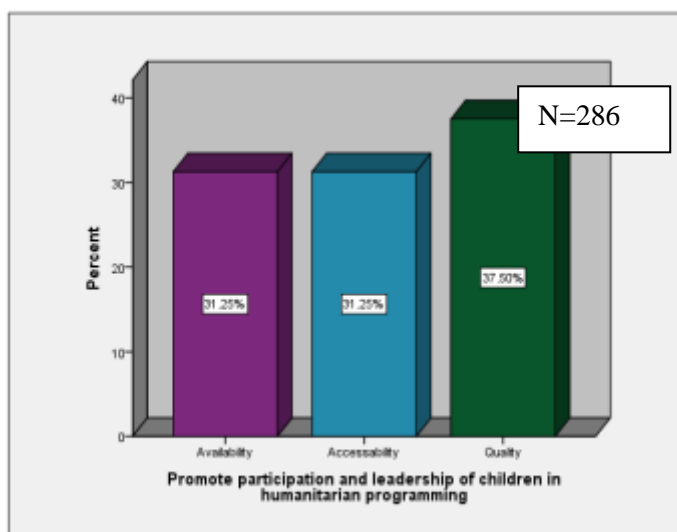

Figure 4. 8: Improving Promotion of participation and leadership of children in humanitarian programming
Source: Field Data, 2021

The results from the social workers revealed there a number of activities that helped in improving child participation and leadership. The social workers further stated that child participation is encouraged through formation of child rights clubs in all primary and secondary schools, children's parliament that participates in county and national level forums to get their voices heard.

According to the conclusions of the study, good practice for children's engagement should focus on how participation can be meaningful, safe, and ethical, as stated by Save the Children (2008). Children have a critical role in providing effective community protection, according to evidence from Save the Children's community-based protection programs. This is significant because children may have a distinct understanding of local risks, and they may be able to reach out and discover other vulnerable children in the community. Children can learn confidence and abilities in expressing their opinions, which can help them protect themselves. Children's involvement was regarded as critical in Honduras for addressing the issue of commercial sexual exploitation at the local level and involving communities more broadly (Save the Children, 2008).

Children were enrolled in local networks and given training in recognizing and reporting sexual abuse and exploitation. They learnt how to respond to suspicious cases and how to help other children who have been harmed. The boys and girls who took part became powerful advocates in their communities for the prevention of such abuse. Some community care forums in South Africa work with older children (aged 6–18 years) to support younger peers (aged 0–6 years) on child safety problems (Save the Children, 2008). For younger children, this is a comforting pastime, but for older children, it is a powerful exercise. Leading awareness-raising activities; identifying younger children who are at risk; providing practical care and protection for younger children, such as listening and talking with a child who has been abused or exploited, providing information, and referring a younger child to a responsible adult; and mentoring younger children

are all examples of how older children support younger peers.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the humanitarian organizations have applied various strategies as interventions to foster refugee children needs. The strategies employed to support UASC interventions include the Coordination and facilitation of relief assistance, information sharing as a strategy, Policy development and advocacy, Networking and referral for services, Building opportunities through emergency preparedness, engaging communities as agents of protection, Promotion of participation and leadership of children in humanitarian programming. These strategies are good and needed more improvement in number of areas.

Recommendations

The study recommends that host government should work closely with humanitarian agencies and provide additional support through inclusion of refugee children in national child protection systems and collaboration for enhanced protection of refugee children. Additionally, more open approach by humanitarian organizations when coming up with intervention strategies. They should involve the community members as much as possible in planning and policy development through public participation.

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